

God's Table

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Introduction

I searched through the Bible and cross-referenced the word *Table*. All throughout the Bible a table has significance. All the way from the table mentioned in the tabernacle for the shewbread located just outside the temple, to the table that David mentioned that was set in the presence of his enemies, to the table of the Lord mentioned in I Corinthians 10:21 (read that one), we see that tables are significant. There were many occasions in the scripture where tables are mentioned. Some were tables of fellowship, and some were tables of honor. Some were tables where to sit at them, obedience was required. Some were tables of sacrifice. Some were tables of blessing. We will be talking about the different tables in the scripture and their significance, and how we can sit at these tables today. This may seem like a boring book, a book about tables, but bear with me. I think that you will agree with me when you've finished it, that it was a blessing.

When you read this book whether it be for one of the extension college courses that are used in New Life Bible College and Seminary extensions, or if it be as a pastor or minister reading it on your own, or if you are not a pastor or minister, keep this in mind. When I write books, I try to fill them with scripture. Whenever you see a scripture reference, please get out your Bible and read that scripture. Sometimes we cut ourselves short on the amount of food that we get from the Lord because we just read what the author of a book says, and we fail to get out our Bible and hear what "thus saith the Lord". It is one thing to read what an author says, but it is a whole totally different matter when we read what THE AUTHOR of it all has to say. That will change our lives. That is the meat that we can feast on that will fill us up and make us strong, able to overcome. When we feast at the table of the Word of God, we can be changed and renewed.

As you read this book, get out your Bible and read the references mentioned. Read the verses around the verse that is mentioned. Get the whole idea from the scriptures that are around the verses mentioned. Get the whole picture. Sometimes we can just zero in on one scripture, and we don't see the whole idea. We look at just one little tree, and miss the forest full of knowledge around it. We pick out scriptures and isolate them, and really by doing that, if we aren't careful, we can get a warped view of God's Word. Read it all. Study it all as a whole. If you are in a class of an extension college, read the course and think about the scripture. Don't just skim over it quickly as part of the book. Digest it. Let the Word become part of you. It will not return forth void. It will do a work in your life. How do I know? God said so. Where did I find this out? In His Word.

As you read about these different tables found in God's Word, think about the tables where you have sat. Any table that you sit at will have chairs. I have seen many tables in my life whose chairs looked so welcome and inviting that before I

knew it, I was sitting down fellowshiping. I have seen some tables whose chairs were worn, and that made them even more inviting because I could tell that many people had spent many hours enjoying the bounty of that table. I have seen some tables that looked so stiff and formal, definitely not inviting, and I dreaded sitting there. I have seen some tables that I could tell that those who sat there were sacrificing just to be able to sit there, but I knew that those chairs were seats of honor. There are tables like all these in God's Word. Pull up a chair, any chair for now, and let's look at some of those tables, and the people who sit there. You will find many tables that you will long to sit at. You will discover many tables that may be new to you and you will find some that you may have sat at for years that were even more blessed than you realized. You may find some tables that after we discuss them, you will pry yourself up from those chairs and move on and move up in God's Word. You may even find some that you will run from. You will find some that look so priceless that you have always counted yourself not worthy or unable to sit in such splendor, and you may find out that many of those have your name engraved on them. So let's begin. Pull up a chair. There is definitely a place at the table for you.

Chapter 1. *A Table for Two*

When I first started praying about this book, this was one of the first chapters that I thought about. This is one of the key chapters for the book. You could say that this is the main table that I want to talk about. You might even say that if we don't sit at this table, we can't sit at any of the other tables that I will talk about. Let's see what I mean.

What does it mean to be saved? Different people from different walks of life, different churches, different denominations, all answer this differently. Some say that we are saved because we confess salvation. Some say that we are saved because we are baptized. Some say that we are saved because we do certain things, or because we don't do certain things. Some say that we are saved because we dress in a certain way. I say that we are saved because we sit at the table that I am going to discuss in this chapter. It is the most wonderful table of all. It has plenty of room for us all. But it is a very unusual table; it is a table that is only built for two. Here is a song that talks about *A Table For Two*.

Chorus

I have a place that's a table for two in my heart.
A place for Jesus and me, where I rest in His arms.
No other place can give me strength, peace of mind, or a brand new start,
Like this table for two in my heart.

Verse 1

I know in heaven there's a banquet table ready as far from end to end as eyes can see.
Spread with all the good things you could imagine, waiting for His invitation to complete.
But as precious in my heart there's a table where He draws me aside from my struggle.
It's a quiet little place, this table for two.
But I feast there and I'm hungry Lord to be with you.

Verse 2

When He draws me aside at this table, it's so personal this relationship with Him.
He loves me like no other though I'm one in the whole world, so very special I feel.
We sit sometimes He talks and I listen, or I pour out my heart, He always hears.
I've traveled the world over, no more precious place I've seen,
Than that table where Jesus sits with me.

When I think of what it means to be saved, I think of scripture that is found in Matthew 7:21-23. One of the goals of salvation is to be able to enter into heaven. It shouldn't be our main reason why we are saved, but it is a final outcome, or destination that comes from our salvation. Here in this scripture Jesus is talking about who gets to enter into heaven. "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. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity."

There are a couple of sections that are key here. One of the main keys is understanding how important obedience is. That is a table that we will discuss later in another chapter. However, the part of the scripture that I want to discuss in this chapter is "depart from me for I never knew you". Who can enter in to heaven according to this scripture? Those that obey the Lord, and those that know Him. Those who sit at His table of fellowship. To explain more, I am going to include here a chapter from my book, *Salvation That Sticks*. It is a book that discusses salvation, and the depth of what possessing salvation means.

I was first saved in a church service when I was about in the fifth grade. An altar call was given and I knew that people expected me to go. You could say that the pressure was on. I went up to the altar and did what they told me to do. I prayed what they told me to pray. I confessed my salvation before the church. I really didn't know anything about what I had done. I kind of knew. But I didn't have a salvation that sticks. How do I know? Several years later I went away to college. Boy, did I learn a lot. It all wasn't in the books either. I got into everything bad that there was to get into. I totally wrecked my life in just a matter of a couple of years. What happened to my salvation? I forgot about it for the most part. Except for those brief intervals when the Lord dealt with my heart. I never forgot what Word of God that I had been exposed to. The sin that I was doing perverted the Word, though. I had so long made excuses for what I was doing that I had a weird way of looking at God's Word. I had so long self-justified myself that I had a weird version of the scripture. That is what we do when we excuse ourselves of our sin. We often "rewrite" the Bible. The truth didn't leave me, though.

Proverbs 22:6 tells us, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." I never forgot the Word of God that I had been exposed to as a child. That is one promise that my mother and mothers down through time have held close to their hearts as they watched their children take off down the wrong road. God's Word didn't leave my heart. My salvation, though, just didn't stick. Yes, I was a Son of God because of my confession as a child. But I was a disobedient Son. (No, I'm not a boy, but the Bible calls us all sons.)

Would I have gone to heaven if during that time in my life I had wrapped my car around a tree in one of my drunken stupors? I'm not here to argue about that. Some say yes. Some say no. I am saying that you are a fool if you gamble that way with your eternal soul, taking the chance that you can do whatever you want to after you have been saved and still make it to heaven. You have to agree with me on that. Praise God, I don't have a definite answer for that one myself. Why do I say it that way? Because I didn't have to find out. God, through His mercy, kept His hand on me protecting me until the day when I turned around and stopped running. That day salvation became real to me. I met the One whose nail pierced hands reached out for me. I found that love so rich and real. I learned that He died for me as much as He died for the whole world. I got filled up and baptized with the Holy Ghost. I found the victory this brought to my life. I found salvation, and praise God this time it stuck. It is still sticking after 25 years. It will be sticking for the next 25. It won't rub off. Now if I turn my back on God and I choose to disobey Him. If I do not repent of my sin, and die in that unrepented sin, then I walk away from my salvation. As long as I have a hold of God, He will surely hold onto me.

So what was the difference between those two times of my life? Some may argue that I really didn't get saved the first time. I believed. I confessed. That is what the Bible says to do in Romans 10:9-10 which tells us, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Didn't I confess and believe. Yes, I did. Was my salvation real that first time? It was as real as I knew how to make it. I walked in the light that I had, but it wasn't light enough to light up my life and heart. Why didn't it stick? Haven't you wondered why it seems some people's salvation just doesn't stick? How can we find a salvation that sticks, a relationship with God that will stick through the thick and through the thin? How can we find an experience with God that will last through the fire and the flood? One that will last through the battles. One that will out last the storms of life. You can find this same salvation. The experience that never says quit. The kind that grows sweeter and sweeter every day. If you have that kind of relationship with the Lord, then keep on reading. Rejoice and read on. Maybe it will help you to be able to share that experience with someone who is new to this. Someone who is just now standing at the edge of that ocean ready to dive in. Whether you are standing on the edge, or just starting in the water. Read on. We are going to get wet in God's love.

Now you can't jump all the way into something that you can't see. Why weren't you saved before you were saved? Have you ever wondered about that? Because you didn't see what salvation was until then. When you really understood it, you hungered for it. God opened it up to you and it became real. We can't understand

salvation or any of the things of God until the Spirit of God reveals it to us. We can't see it because it is not a natural thing. It is a spiritual thing. We can't see it unless God shows us by His Spirit. Do you remember how it was when you tried to read God's Word before you got saved, and it just didn't make any sense to you. All those thee's and thou's. But it was more than that. The whole thing seemed so confusing. You just couldn't understand it at all. Then you got saved. God's Spirit came into your heart. Then you read it. All of the sudden, things started making sense. I John 2:27 tells us, "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." This verse is not saying that we don't need any man to teach us. There are too many other scriptures that say that God anoints preachers, and teachers to teach us. What then is it saying? It says that the anointing is what will open up God's Word to us when we abide in Him.

How many times have you opened up the Bible, and that particular verse to encourage your faith leaped off of the pages to strengthen your heart? How many times have you needed guidance and picked up God's precious Word, and that section of scripture opened up your eyes to the direction you needed to go in? How many times have you needed God's love to pour through you? When you read of His love for you, you were able to love that one that was crying out. They saw God's love in you and were able to reach out to Him because of that love. How many times has satan wrapped a chain of bondage around you that you couldn't see, but God's Word opened your eyes and you were able to cast it aside? The anointing of God will open God's Word to us. Without that anointing, we can't understand it. Unless God reveals what salvation is to us, we can't even see it or understand it. It can't be seen through the teaching of doctrines and traditions. It can't even be found in the salvation of others. We can't see it unless God Himself reveals it to us and leads us to receive it. It won't happen until God's Spirit opens it up to us and draws us. Praise God for His anointing. Without it God's Word has no life.

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) 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 20 some 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 may 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 20 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.

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. Get rid of the sin that separates you from His love. Don't excuse it away so that you can hide from it. Don't justify yourself. Get rid of it so that it doesn't separate you from God. 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.

Now I can just hear some of you men. We can't get that way? You know, I agree that is harder maybe for some of you than it is for women. I have heard our pastor say after his being in the ministry for over 40 years, that it is easier for a woman to have a relationship with the Lord than it is for some men. It is harder for men to let themselves go enough to fall in love with Jesus. They have to think too much about it. They don't just go ahead and jump in. Sure, salvation isn't all just based on our feelings. Sure it is based on what we know and how we think. But a relationship with God is also based on our love for Him and His love for you. Let Him love you. Fall in love with Him. Your salvation will be much stronger than it is if all you have is what you think. Part of the reason why it is harder for men to find this real relationship with God is that they have to yield and submit to be able to do this. This is the opposite of what they have had drilled into them to do. That man pride rears its ugly head up and prevents them from yielding.

Some of the manliest men I know have fallen in love with Jesus. Think of Paul, David, many of others in the Word of God. God is your father. Some of you know what it is like to be a Dad. You know how you want your children to love and respect you. You know how you want your children to respond to your love. Should you love your heavenly Father any less and respond less to His love. We need to never get too “manly” to receive love and to love. Sometimes we get as much of God's love as we are able to receive from the people around us. If we are shut up and can't easily receive love from others, it's a given fact that it will be hard for us to have a loving relationship with God. I John 4:8 tells us, “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” I John 4:12 tells us, “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is

perfected in us.” There is a lot of truth in those two verses. If you want to find a deeper relationship with the Lord, love His people. Sometimes, too, we can shut ourselves up, closing ourselves away from people because we have been hurt. We are afraid of making ourselves vulnerable to being hurt again. That will also shut us away from God’s love. We get only as much love as we open ourselves up to receive. Open up wide to God. Open up wide to Jesus. I have seen that picture of Jesus on the cross that says, “Jesus said I love you this much, and then He spread open His arms wide and died.” You are loved. That is what salvation is all about.

So what am I saying in this? I am saying that we all know how to be saved. The Bible tells us in Romans 10:9-11 how to be saved. But we all know that there is much more to salvation than just confessing. One of the first things that you need to have to have salvation that sticks is the knowledge of what you have. That knowledge has to come from God’s Word, not from the doctrines and traditions of man. You also have to know the depths of God’s love for you. You have to personally receive His love and love Him in return. That love will change your life. We talked about how important it is to return to that first love that you once had. Salvation is finding that personal relationship with God and wrapping yourself in His love. When you do, your salvation will stick.

The key to finding a salvation that sticks is finding your place at that precious table for two. Finding that fellowship with God that is real. No other place will work. Just like in that scripture that we talked about at the beginning of the chapter, Matthew 7:21-23, if we don’t have that fellowship with God, if He doesn’t know us, then we won’t enter into the kingdom of heaven.

At the end of each chapter, I want to close with a time for reflection. How about you? Are you seated at that table for two? How long has it been since you basked in the presence of God’s love? How long has it been since you pulled up that chair to his table of fellowship? When is the last time that you lifted up your hands to feel His presence and feasted on His Spirit that flowed down covering you, lifting you up? I’m not just talking about doing this in church. I mean in the still quiet hours of the morning when it is just you and Him. That is when you know if your salvation is real. When you have fellowship with Him. It’s time to do a REALATIONSHIP check. When I wrote this, I had a typo and spelled relation REALATION. I thought to myself that is a new word and a good one. Get real with your relationship with God.

Time for Reflection: As a leader or teacher, it is easy to get caught up in the mechanics of things. We focus on the people we are ministering to. (Just as a side note, when we focus more on our congregation than we do our fellowship with the Lord, we are in danger of losing it all. We are in danger of being there for all the wrong reasons.) Have you lost your first love? It is easy to do. The demands of

the ministry, the pull of the cares of life and this world, lack of time, strength and energy all steal us away from His presence. If when you read this chapter you realize that you have not been seated at His table for two, go home to Him. Run to Him. You won't last if you make it a priority to sit at this table. After all, why do you want to miss out on the sweetness of His presence.

We hinted earlier about the next table that we are going to discuss. It is definitely a table of action. What does obedience have to do with anything? It is such an important topic that I have put this table next. Let's talk about that in the next chapter—*The Table of Obedience*.

Chapter 2. *The Table of Obedience*

We mentioned how important obedience was in the last chapter. We mentioned that without obedience, we can't be saved. We have God's Word for that, not only the last scripture that we talked about, but it is also discussed throughout God's Word. There is another key to receiving salvation that we will talk about in the next chapter. It is *The Table of Faith*. It is very important, and some might say more important than obedience, but I am putting an emphasis here on obedience. I am doing this mainly because in today's church world, it is a topic that is getting sadly left out. I want to give it a place of recognition. Even Jesus said in his own words in Matthew 7:21-23 which we talked about in the last chapter, how important it is. Without obedience we can't get into heaven. So we'd better not leave this topic out of the book, or out of our lives.

If you could see in the natural a huge room with all the tables that I will be discussing in this book, you would get a glimpse of how important obedience is. Picture this room filled with tables. First you have to have faith that you can sit at them and be welcome. Faith is very important. Without it we can't even find salvation. But without obedience we won't even be able to find the room, let alone the table. Without obedience we won't even be able to find the chair and sit at the table. Without obedience, without doing it God's way instead of our own way, we would probably wind up sitting in a corner alone. So many people miss out on a relationship with God because they are not willing to submit and commit. Those two things are the basis for obedience. That isn't popular teaching. It may not be popular today to talk about, but it is needful. It is a key to unlock victory in your lives, and if you don't understand obedience, you can't unlock it to others who are depending on you to open it up to them.

When I think of obedience I think of a horse that I used to have when I was young. It was the fastest horse I have ever ridden. Its mother was a thoroughbred racehorse. Its father was a "want to be". That horse would fly, and he loved to run. He was definitely the fastest horse that anybody around where I grew up owned. We loved to run races in open fields at home. But even though I had the fastest horse I could never win a race. Why? Because that horse never finished up at the finish line. By the time that I could rein him in and get control of him, we would be over on the next mountain. We'd start out fine, but he would get the bit between his teeth and off we'd go elsewhere besides the final destination. He had a very independent streak. That was really one useless horse. His speed and endurance, all the talents and gifts he had meant nothing. They were useless. He had no purpose because he wouldn't yield to the master. He had no master other than himself. That didn't turn out so great. He passed through several owners after me, and nobody could do anything with him. The last thing I heard about

that horse was that he was headed to the dog food factory, (sad but true). Sometimes if we aren't careful we can be just like that horse. We don't want to commit it all. We don't want to yield. We want to do it our way and do our own thing. We bottom line don't want to let any one else control us. That is human nature. That is also the devil's nature. That is what got him kicked out of heaven to start with. He wanted control. We get the bit in our mouth and off we run. God has a perfect, wonderful plan for our life and we run everywhere else. We never take time to find it. Our life becomes a mess and a terror and we don't even take time to wonder why. We just blame the devil and keep digging the ditch of destruction deeper. The devil just sits back and laughs. He hasn't had to do anything. We did it all. We may have had a define purpose, gifts and talents that God loaded us up with, but without obeying God we are useless. Only by yielding to God's Word and His Spirit can we find our true purpose.

Let's talk about some people who found the hard way that obedience is important. Then we'll discuss scripture to back all this up. I remember in particular a gentleman who when I first met him was so excited about being called to the ministry. Every time we talked to him, he would mention it. Every time we talked to him for years. And years. But he never did anything about it. I am not sure why. It may have been that he allowed the enemy to tell him that he couldn't do it. I think though that he saw obstacles everywhere he looked. He allowed circumstances to be an excuse not to obey. He looked at his family and his money situation and told himself that he couldn't afford to work for the Lord at the time. He would have to work his job a while, then maybe things would work out where he could do something. His wife at one time didn't want to be a preacher's wife, so he waited until she made up her mind that she wanted to stand behind him. She never did. He would look at people who were obeying the Lord and people who the Lord was blessing, and it started being a goad in his spirit. Eventually it made him bitter. This bitter and disobedient spirit turned into health problems. Even doctors will tell you how these things can happen. Then he wasn't able to obey God because his health was bad. This man died in disobedience to the Lord. I am not God so I can't say, but I wonder if he even made it to heaven, because his disobedience had so separated him from God that at the end, you couldn't tell by looking at his life that he was saved. He was far removed from God.

I remember a young man who had a calling on his life to sing. He could sing the power of God down. He would march across the platform while he sang the victory of God. The anointing of God would fall in waves. To make things clear, he was definitely saved. There was no doubt about that. He was gloriously saved, and had been serving the Lord for years. One day he came in with an old t-shirt that had the logo on it, "Doing all I can to get by". That was a sign of something that was going on in his heart. He started at first doing the little things. Song of Solomon 2:25 talks about little foxes that spoil the vine. The devil will put little

things into our lives, which little by little will steal our salvation. He is smart. He doesn't get us to jump and leap away from our salvation. He knows that won't work. He is too sneaky for that. He lays a trail of little crumbs for us to follow that lead us away from God. Some people would say here that we can't lose our salvation, that it is eternal and we can do nothing to lose it. Hear me out and we'll discuss that later. This young man started doing just a few things that he knew better to do. He edged away from obeying the Lord. Where is he today? He has a homosexual lifestyle that has destroyed him. The last time I heard anything about him, he was in a mental hospital. His price of doing his own thing came dear.

I know a pastor who was saved from a rough life. He had been it all and done it all, but the Lord delivered him and set him free. Now you can't be delivered without being saved. That deliverance lasted a long time. Then we began to notice some changes about him. His appearance changed. We began to hear from those in the community who had known him before he was saved that he was doing some of the things he had done before salvation. His message that he preached began to change. One of the first things that will happen as a sign that a minister is beginning to back slide is that his message will change. He stopped preaching against sin and began preaching a watered down message that left out anything about conviction and repentance. Why has the church world today left out those vital subjects out of their message? It may be because so many preachers are so far from Calvary, and their own sin stops them from preaching the whole truth of God's Word, and nothing but the truth. They are covering up their own sin, or their desire to sin. Another thing that will happen when a minister is starting to backslide is that they will run away from the anointing of God. They will prevent the anointing from moving in their midst. They will do this, because it is the anointing that reproves us from sin.

John 16:8 tells us, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment..." God sent His Spirit into the world to convict us. When we are convicted, we repent, and turn from our sin. Without conviction, we wouldn't even know right from wrong. The Holy Ghost lets us know. He will do that until we continue to stop up our ears and harden our hearts until He can't get through. Then God will turn us over to our sin. How do I know? Read the whole chapter of Romans 1. Why is there so much unrighteousness in the world? Why is there is so much homosexuality? Do I blame the world outside the church? No. I blame the church. This scripture is talking about the people inside the church walls, not the ones outside. It says in verse 21, "Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful: but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Did you catch the first phrase in this verse-when they knew

God. This isn't talking about sinners outside of the church, this is talking about those who knew God and chose not to be obedient. What was the end of this? Read this chapter. I won't write it all here. Take God's Word for it. God turned them over to a reprobate mind. God gave them the desires of their heart, because what they wanted was their sin. We can't have sin and God. If you are choosing sin, and you refuse to allow God's conviction to work in your life because of that, then you are separated from God, and you won't have God's work in your life. Isaiah 59:2 says, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." I don't care how much you think that you can't do without whatever that is separating you from God, but it is not worth it.

What happened to this preacher that I mentioned earlier? Right now, he has gone back to drinking. He is chasing women. Probably he's caught a few. His marriage is falling apart. His church is growing though. If you aren't preaching against sin, and you are compromising to cover your sin, you will fill a church. That is the type of message that people want to hear. However, that isn't what will get you to heaven. I heard someone say the other day that the Lord showed them that the outcome of this church is that the devil is setting up this guy to fall down and fall down hard, to bring a reproach against Pentecostals in our predominately nominal town through his downfall. That is how it is. When a minister falls, we all have to suffer. We all feel the reproach.

Now let's switch tracks for just a minute from today's world to Bible times. Let's look a minute at a guy we all know named Saul. Now Saul had it made. God had sent a prophet to anoint him to be king. If he would have been obedient to the Lord, we would know him as a victorious king, but that didn't happen. He has a bad name even today. His story is found in the book of First Samuel. He first appears in I Samuel: chapter 9, verse 2, "And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier, person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." The story of Saul is one of the greatest stories of obedience. In it we can find a lesson of who not to be.

One thing that we notice about Saul is that he had God's Word. God sent a faithful prophet that always spoke His Word to guide Saul. I Samuel 3:19-20 says, "And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." From the very beginning Samuel was a key figure in Saul's life. Saul could not plead ignorant. In every major decision he had to make, Samuel was there to guide him. He knew which way was the best way to go. I was in a courtroom several years ago. A man approached the bench to hear his sentence. The judge asked him, "Sir, how do you plead?" The man

replied, "I plead ignorant." Needless to say that wasn't one of the right answers. His sentence was no different than if he would have answered guilty. We cannot plead ignorant before God. God has sent us someone to lead us who is more powerful, more sure, more dependable than faithful Samuel was to Saul. He is the Holy Ghost of God Himself that comes to live in us when we accept Jesus in our hearts. We can have as much of Him as we will let into our lives. He will lead us, and guide us into all truths. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak..." God didn't leave it there, but He set aside His church, His body of believers, to obey Him, flow in His Spirit, operate in His gifts, and reach out to His people. He also set aside preachers and apostles to speak the truth, to strengthen and lift us up. We have His Word that has the power to make us overcomers. When all things are taken into account, it is harder to fail than it is to win. But why, you ask, are there so many who fail. Even though Saul had all the knowledge of how to do right, he was not conditioned to obey. I watch people who from the time they were small have been "spoiled" to getting their own way. They become conditioned to rebel. Parents, we have no idea of the eternal damage that we can do to our children when we refuse to discipline and we allow them to rebel. They may never unlearn this. If we cannot obey those around us and we are conditioned to rebel against them, how do we expect to be in an obedient attitude toward God? Obedience is an attitude. It has to be a part of us. If it isn't a part of us toward the people that are in authority in our lives, then it won't be a part of our relationship with God. I was a very rebellious child growing up. It took years after my salvation for God to work this out of me so that I had a humble and obedient heart toward Him. If you have this type of nature, ask God to break this out of you so that you can have an obedient nature.

Just another side trip here. I am glad that God is not a Father who can get tricked into letting us do our thing our way. I am glad that He rebukes and chastises us. Here are some verses that talk about the chastisement of the Lord: Deuteronomy 8:5, Psalms 94:12, Proverbs 3:11-12, John 15:2, and Revelations 3:19. There are many more. Read these. God will do whatever it takes to get our attention when we are moving away from obeying His Word. He will do whatever it takes to stop us when we are failing to obey His voice. I am so thankful that He does this. How many of us can say that without God doing this, we wouldn't be here serving Him today?

We are part of that sad generation that believed punishment would hamper our children's creativity so we should let them do whatever they want to. About that time, it started being popular to take altars out of churches and to stop the Holy Ghost from convicting people of their sin. If you ask me that stopped God from being the Father He is committed to being. If there is nothing to wake us up out of our sin, then there is no conviction. Without conviction there is no repentance.

Without repentance, we won't make it to heaven whether we deceive ourselves into thinking we can get there or not. How much do you love the people you minister to? Do you love them enough to get real with them about their sin? Do you love them with the Father's love enough to chastise them even if you know they will get angry? There is a right way to do this, and that takes practice. You have to be able to chastise them with love at the right time saying the right things. That takes the anointing of God. Without the anointing of God, you will bruise and destroy them. Speak when God says speak and when you know you are anointed. Let the anointing take care of it. Do you love them enough to obey God? Do you love them enough to allow His Spirit, His anointing to work in their midst, to convict them and draw them to repentance?

One thing that can help you not to fail in serving God is studying those that do fail, learning from their mistakes. We not only can learn from those that are victorious in God's Word, those who overcome, but we also can learn from the mistakes of those that lost. Let's get back to Saul. One of the mistakes that Saul made we find in I Samuel 15:2. Here he says to Samuel, "...I have sinned for I have transgressed the commandments of the Lord and Thy Words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice." It is so sad to see the young people that fall away from God because it isn't popular in their crowd to serve Him. Saul lost out on serving God because he considered the opinions of the people above the opinions of God. We don't know for sure, but I wonder if He didn't lose out on God for eternity. Only God can give us eternity. Only God is perfect and worth serving. Only God can love us with that perfect love. I have seen so many people, young and old, forsake God for a relationship with someone. After they did, they found out the one they had forsaken Him for was far from perfect and even more times then not their relationship trapped them in a life of despair. Don't put anyone before God. I have even seen people put family above God, when it was God's will that they have that family, they just got priorities out of line, and placed them above God. Even good things can be made to be bad if we don't allow God to be number one and obedience a principal thing.

Also, when we let the people speak to us and hear their voice louder than God's voice, we will constantly be in turmoil and so will our church. We can't let the people rule, but we are set aside as the leader and we are answerable to the Lord for the decisions that we make. We have to do all this with sound counsel. We can't be over it all and not allow anyone to make a decision. We have to follow the scriptural formula for church leadership. But we can't allow flesh controlled, self centered, controlling people to control the decisions that are being made. We can't let the voice of the people be louder than the voice of God. That was Saul's mistake.

Another mistake we notice that Saul made is that he had God's Word, but he stopped listening. I'm sure that the incidence recorded in Chapter 13:13 was not the first time that he failed to hear God. It is important because it was the worst. It brought about his judgment. "And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." What does it cost us when we fail to obey God? Many of us could answer that. How many of you know the pain that has come from disobeying something God told you to do or not to do? Sometimes we pay for things the rest of our lives. Even though God forgives us, we still have to face the consequences and then later the scars. Galatians 6:7 tells us, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." We live in a world that preaches if it feels good do it. Thousands and thousands of people, young and old alike, are reaping the disaster of that message. It doesn't work. What you sow in your life will reap consequences that you will have to pay for. I heard someone say, "God is a loving God. How can He judge those that disobey Him?" He will and does. He is also a faithful and just God. He loved us enough to send His own Son to die to give us eternal life. If we fail to accept His gift and honor Him, then we will cause ourselves to be judged. Continued disobedience can eventually lead to our souls being doomed to hell for eternity. II Thessalonians 1:8 tells us, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Don't stop listening. When you hear God's voice speak, treat it as the number one priority in your life. Obey Him at all cost. Nothing else will work out as well. Another mistake that I think he made, Saul started thinking for himself. He became wiser in his own eyes than God. He had an answer or an excuse for his disobedience. God told him to do something; he wanted to do something else, so he did. We can't have it all our way. Then he excused what he did. He justified himself. What God wants for our lives is best. Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways, saith the Lord. 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 understand our own selves and our own lives most of the time. Yet we want to try to tell God, Who created it all, how it should be, what we want to do, and when we want to do it. If our children treated us the way we react to God when He speaks with something for us to do, we would stay angry with them. Does God, our heavenly Father, deserve less? Listen. Put yourself in neutral gear and obey.

I can't help but believe that somewhere along the line Saul lost his love for God. When we are in love with Him and we walk close enough to Him to really see Him like He is we don't want to lose sight of Him. We hunger to draw even closer. He is that wonderful. We want to do everything that we can to please Him. Obedience at whatever cost, is a joy. When we pull back and let other things come between us, that's when it becomes hard to obey. That's when we start to become number one instead of Him. That's when we can't hear Him. The more we talk and fellowship with God, the easier it gets to identify His voice. The more we obey Him, the easier it gets to be able to obey Him instantaneously, with joy, because we know our Lord and Master. John 10:4 tells us, "...and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice." Get close enough to Him to know His voice. Fellowship with Him, get to know Him.

Saul had gotten farther and farther away from God as time went on. Most of the account of his life tells us not of the great things that he did for the country that he loved or the God that he served, but of his obsession with David. David had done no wrong to him, but Saul became obsessed with finding and killing him. He allowed a jealous and bitter spirit to control his life. This kind of obsession seems a bit extreme, but over and over I meet people that are allowing other things to control their lives, except for the love of God. It may be bad attitudes like jealousy and bitterness, doubt, fear, or negativism. More often than not it is obsessions with things or activities, the pride of life, or what other people think, or other people that they have placed in a priority in their life over God. If we let other things control us what will be our end? We can only have what those things offer us. Jesus is Lord. God is supreme. If they aren't number one in our lives then a relationship with them doesn't really exist. How can we say we know God if He isn't Lord in our lives. The closer I grow to Him, the more He pushes out the lesser things. He is just that wonderful. I don't mean that we become obsessed so that we forget our jobs, our lives, and our families. I mean that when He is first, He enhances all the other, bringing them into focus, putting priorities where priorities should be, and turning everything around us into a much better life.

I recently asked someone dear to my heart to go with me to a ladies retreat. They had been suffering from a mysterious illness for years. I really believed that going could lead to their healing. They answered me that they couldn't go, because their children had an activity planned and right now their priority was on their children. Oh, how sad to see those who have other things in their lives before God and obeying Him for real. Only God can make a life whole. So many times I see parents catering to their children to make sure they are involved in all the right things. They push out obeying God in a day-to-day walk to get it all done. Their children grow up to be disobedient and don't respect God. The parents, who intended to be the best all along, wonder why. Don't put other things in your life

before obeying God. Don't influence your children to do the same. What you live before them will be how they live. No matter if it isn't what you tell them.

How does the story of Saul end? In I Samuel 31:4 we see that he takes his life at his own hands. Let God be a priority in your life. Let serving Him be number one. Let Him break your will and make you into His likeness. Choose His will instead of your own. All of the people in this chapter began with their own self-will as a number one priority. God has to break our will before we can serve Him. I have watched for years the people who never let God break their will. They haven't committed all their desires and thoughts to Him. The things that they refuse to commit about themselves are the things that the devil uses to destroy them in the end. It may be something small, but it is enough for him to use to take them to hell. Our self-will can destroy us. Jesus is like a rock. When you fall on Him, He breaks you; when He falls on you He crushes you. When you fall on Jesus and you find His love for real, you will be broken. You will no longer live for your self. You will no longer be the number one priority in your life. You will no longer want to direct your own paths. You will want to live for Him and to obey Him. He will become number one in your life. He is Lord and He is the one we have to worship. His will is number One. Mainly because He is so much wiser than we are. We don't even know what is right for ourselves let alone what we really want. We think we do. We even become right in our own eyes. Oh, but what He wants for us is so much better. When we allow Him to break our wills He can use us. When we become broken and allow Him to clean out our hearts and minds, then He can use us. When we allow ourselves to become broken and His Spirit can move us, we can even do the supernatural, because He is a supernatural God. If we are stubbornly trying to serve God on our own, we will quickly run out of strength, wisdom, love, long suffering, faith. If we are broken and allowing Him to work through us, we will have His strength, wisdom, love, long suffering, faith, because we will be tapped in to an inexhaustible supply. Don't be full of yourself like Saul, or full of your self will like the others in this chapter.

Let God take your self-will and break it. Let Him work in you and break you and mold you into a vessel that He can use. In Jeremiah 18:2 and 3 Jeremiah was told to go to the potter's house. We all need to go from time to time to a potter's house. He watched there "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." If you really want to be used by God, let Him break your self-will, so that you can be molded into a new vessel, "as seemed good to the potter", the Master potter. Let Him mold you, move and flow in His Spirit, reach out when He reaches out, speak with His Words, go where He sends you. You will then be able to make a difference in the lives around you.

Looking at the outcome of the lives of all those we mentioned in this chapter, how important is it to be obedient? How important is it as men or women of God to lead those we minister to into finding a walk of obedience? If we aren't submitted and yielding to God, how can we lead others to do something we aren't doing ourselves? I watch ministers come and go. I watch ministries rise and fall. Those who endure are those who have learned how to do it God's way, those who have learned to obey. We already mentioned Isaiah 55:9. God's ways work, our ways don't. We want to think that we are the greatest and that our way works, but it doesn't. We aren't much. The way to avoid a great deal of difficulty in our lives is to admit that. We need to listen to God and let Him lead us. That way will work. You don't have to prove to Him what you can do, just prove to Him that you know how to listen to Him. Listen and do. Or you'll feel. If you want to have a victorious, successful ministry, learn to listen, yield, commit, submit, and obey. That isn't popular preaching, but it will get the job done. If we don't learn to obey, we will not have a successful ministry. Now some ministries are built up because God, the truth, the anointing are left out. Those are not what I call successful. They may be big ministries, or big churches, but they are not successful. Successful churches are those who obey God, and allow His anointing in the midst to minister. Successful churches are those who obey God and they are His hands outreached. To be successful as a church, ministry, or minister or teacher, you have to obey.

There have been many times in my own life when if I had not been obedient, I would not be alive today. I spent some time in Russia and in Romania after the revolution. There was still enough violence going on there that the people prayed before they went out into the street. They listened to God's voice, and they obeyed, that was why they were still alive. Many of you in countries that have similar situations know how this is to live this way. You are yielded to God's Spirit, and that is why you are alive to do what you do for the Lord. You have learned the importance of obedience in a very dramatic way. I am glad for that experience of seeing this way of life. It has influenced me greatly to realize how important obedience is. I remember while I was there we had to travel across Romania into the Ukraine. God led me to take the train. The others in my group wanted to travel by van. God won out, and we traveled by train. When we got to our destination, we learned that there was a group of terrorists shooting people on the highway that we were to have traveled on if we had went by van. I thought much about that, but not as seriously as I did after I got home and talked to my grandmother. She told me that there was one day that the Lord had given her a burden to pray for us because our lives were in danger. She had circled that day on her calendar. It was the day we traveled. I knew that if we had not obeyed the Lord, we would not be alive today.

There are many times God has protected my life because I obeyed. You probably have instances in your own lives. What about those times when you found out later that if you had done it differently, you wouldn't be alive. What about those times when you later understood why God led you to do something a certain way, and knew you would have failed miserably if you hadn't obeyed. I have not always been obedient. There have been times when my stubborn flesh would raise up its ugly head, and I would do my thing. There have been times when I have been so busy, I didn't stop to hear that still small voice in my spirit. There have been times when I run by the ark so to speak. I have suffered the consequences of my disobedience. Sometimes, I have had to pay dearly. That has helped me to be more careful to obey. I am not perfect. I don't write these books, and do what I do because I am so righteous and perfect. I write them because a lot of what I write about, I have learned by my mistakes. I can't brag at all about myself because without God, I know what I am capable of. My only hope is in obeying Him.

If you think about it, there were many people in Noah's day that passed right by the ark. There were some were in such a hurry, they didn't even stop to think about that old boat that crazy guy had been working on. They ran right on past that ark. Some of them may have had the routine route of passing by it every day on their way home, or to work. They were probably the first to claw at the door when the rain started to flood. They may have held onto the sides as the ark floated, until it got too hard in the storm to hold on. We have to be careful that we don't get so busy that we run on past the ark.

Time for Reflection-Now it is time for some honest, soul-searching reflection. Do you have an obedient relationship with the Lord? Are you committing and yielding to Him, listening to His voice and obeying Him? When it comes right down to it, are you listening to His voice leading you, or are you listening more to the board of directors of your church, or the members of your congregation, or to your denomination headquarters? Are you leading your congregation, as you follow the Lord, or are you following someone else? Are the decisions that your church makes in obedience to God's will for your church? In your daily life, are you mindful of listening to God's voice? Are you letting sin into your life? Are you letting those little foxes that sneak in spoil your vines? Are you letting the devil steal your victory? How can you fix any of these things, any areas you are not as strong in? What will be the outcome if you don't?

Now let's go on and talk about *The Table of Faith*. It opens up a whole new room full of blessed tables that we can feast at to our heart's content. Join with me as we take a seat.

Chapter 3.

The Table of Faith

Faith is the key that unlocks all the things of God. Without faith, we can't know that God exists, because we can't see Him. Without faith, we can't come to Him and know that He will accept us. Without faith, we can't accept salvation. Without faith, we can't be changed. Without faith, we can't accept His Word, or receive its promises. Without faith, we can't serve the Lord and minister. So I guess you could say that faith is the place where we begin. It is one of the first tables that we sit at. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." We all know that faith is the key. What does it unlock?

Do a little word search here. Get out a concordance and study the verses dealing with faith. When you do this, take note of the scriptures that mention that we are to have faith in our own selves, in our own physical limitations, in our own spiritual worth. Are there any? We are nothing. Have you figured that out? Our only worth comes when we place our limitations and weaknesses in the Lord's mighty hands. Our worth comes when we obey Him and allow His Spirit to work through us. We can't have faith in ourselves. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Galatians 2:20 says, "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." Have you ever noticed that part in that scripture that says, the faith **of** the Son of God? It isn't faith **in** the Son of God. It is His faith this is talking about. If you are filled up with God's Spirit and filled up with His Word, submitted and committed to Him, it is His faith that will pour out of you, not your faith. That is the same way with the fruits of the Spirit. Faith is one of those. These are the fruits that the Spirit has. When we are filled up to the brim with God's Spirit and yielding to Him, we will have His qualities. One of those is faith. We can get all puffed up in what we do for the Lord and we will lose the anointing. Or we can be filled up with God, humble because we know where our faith and every other gift that we have comes from, and we will be used to do supernatural things through God and faith in Him.

I have heard Bishop Goad mention this several times. He gets really disturbed when he hears a pastor or minister introduce himself as Reverend so and so. I have heard Brother Goad say, "When I hear that, I know that they are showing how ignorant they are in God's Word. They are puffing themselves up in spiritual pride. The word says that no one is reverend, but God." I agree with him.

We can get so lifted up in pride if we aren't careful, and the Word of God says that pride goeth before a fall. We aren't anything. We are just a workmanship of God. By concentrating on our own selves, and our gifts, and our accomplishments, we are showing our ignorance. The Apostle Paul had a lot to brag about. But he mentioned several times that he had nothing to brag about. Matter of fact he mentioned that the only thing he had to glory about was his infirmities, and reproaches, persecutions and distresses. Wow! With that attitude the devil can't get you down. Let's read what he has to say about what he gloried in. This is the last red letter scripture quoting Jesus that is found before Revelations. Jesus told Paul in II Corinthians 12:9-10, "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for thy 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. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." That is an eye opener. There are a lot of preachers today who take pleasure in being recognized by others, in receiving a large salary, in being lifted up by those in their congregation, in being honored for their achievement. I work with a lot of pastors world over. I get so sick of this and I see this kind of spirit a lot. Spiritual pride is such a problem with pastors. I think that it is because we forget that the way to be strong is to admit that we are weak. When you are in front of others as a leader, it is hard to admit your weaknesses. It is hard to let people see that you are just human. You begin to think that in order to be a good leader you have to be a little better than everyone you are leading. They expect it. Then it is easy to go from that to just plain being full of pride. We forget that we aren't reverend, and that without God we are just plain old nothing.

Paul had learned this. He didn't glory in the things that pastors and ministers glory in today. He knew he had nothing but God's grace and God's strength to see him through. I think that this came because of his necessities, persecutions, and distresses. He knew how it was to be so weak that he couldn't go on. We read a lot in his writings how he was beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, many times he was left for dead. He knew how weak he was. But praise God he knew how to find the strength of God to continue. He knew that he didn't have faith in himself, but he had faith in the one who could raise him up and renew and restore him. He knew that when he was weakest, then he was the strongest, because he was depending on God, not on himself. To truly sit at the table of faith we have to remember that we are nothing. We don't deserve anything. We can't do anything. We have to remember that it isn't of ourselves, but it is all about Jesus. It isn't about what we can do, but it is all about what God can do through and in us.

There is a balance concerning faith. We can be filled with pride. We can be full of ourselves. On the other hand we can sit around in false faith and give it all to God and do nothing ourselves. I knew a businessman who had a large

conglomerate of businesses. He began to take the attitude that he had faith that God would take care of things for him. He got someone to take care of his business and started traveling for the Lord, as he called it. He wasn't a minister, he just traveled around going to meetings. If you asked him about his business, he would say that he trusted the Lord to work things out for him. He would say that he had faith that everything was working out fine. For a couple of years he didn't even check on it at all. Well, needless to say things didn't turn out that great. The person he put in charge didn't care about his business. He just cared about what he could get out of it. It only took a few years for this man to lose all he owned because of bad decisions that were made. We can't just sit back and say, "I give this to the Lord. I have faith in Him. He will just have to work everything out." That is faith without wisdom. That is faith without works. James 2:17 says, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. We have to show our faith by our works. We have to do something when God says do something. We have to obey Him. We show our faith by our obedience. That means day-to-day obedience.

Obedience is an every day walk. It isn't a once in a while occasion. We show our faith by our obedience. If you want things to work out in your personal life, obey God step by step. Trust in Him to lead you. Have faith that if you obey, it will work out. If you want things to work out in your ministry, do the same. If you want things to work out with those you minister to, do the same. Believe, obey, and believe some more. If you don't obey first, you may be like the man I talked about. Things won't work out no matter how much faith you apply.

Then there will be those times when you won't be able to work it out. You won't be able to do anything but trust God. When those times come, hold on. Believe. Trust in God. Then you have to do like it says in Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." He will see you through. He will do a miracle for you.

When you are going through a valley, hold on. Don't let go. There have been so many times in my life when the devil sat on my shoulder and tried to get me to give up. Why? Because just around the corner were victories that he wanted me to miss. If I would have given up, I would never have found them. Remember. Your victory could be just the very next day. If you quit, you will never know.

We do have an enemy that wants to destroy us. We can't fight him on our own. We can only fight him by filling up ourselves with God's Spirit, and His Word. We can rebuke Him through the Holy Ghost praying in tongues. We can stand against him and know that God will give us the strength to overcome. Ephesians 6 talks about our spiritual armor. Verse 16 tells the most important piece. "Above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery

darts of the wicked.” This isn’t faith in ourselves. It isn’t faith in our congregation. It isn’t faith in our denomination headquarters. Only through the faith of God, in God, can we stand against the devil who is trying to destroy us. The devil who is trying to destroy our family, our church, the lives of those we love who are committed to our care. If you don’t learn to rebuke the devil, you are in for a rough ride.

The devil will do everything to steal your faith. He will try to steal your relationship with the Lord through condemnation. He will send people to try to tear you down. He will send circumstances that will tear you in two. Most important he will attack your heart and your love for God and your love for those you minister to. I remember a time when the devil was really pouncing on me. God showed me something in the spirit. Now I am a little simple minded. Somebody has to explain something more than once for me to get it. I can hear something, but I can get it a lot easier when somebody shows it to me. God knows this, so often He will show me a picture to get His point across. I am glad that the Lord knows us and He knows how to teach us. I was just getting down and it was hard for me to get up. My strength was gone. I was having physical problems, and I knew it came from my spiritual battle I was going through. I asked the Lord to show me what was going on. He showed me a shield. That shield was all beaten up from the battle. It was bent all to pieces. It had dents all in it. He told me that my faith was weak from the battle. He said that I needed to renew it in Him. Praise the Lord that we can renew our faith when it is weak. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” If you want to renew your faith, get in the Word. It is like taking power vitamins to renew your strength. We get so busy giving out and pouring out, that we forget to take in for ourselves. Then the devil sees us weak, and in he comes like a roaring lion. We need to keep our minds renewed with the Word of God. We need to constantly keep our minds on His Word. I know someone who just recently got saved. He has been taking our college courses. They are filled with God’s Word. He has that hunger that a new child in the Lord has. He is constantly studying and he basks in the Word that God reveals to him. He opens his mouth and the Word of God just pours out. It pours out because he is pouring it in. He is excited in his newfound faith. Pour the Word of God in so that when you pour it out, you won’t be emptied out. Pour it in so that it will renew your faith. Don’t ever think that you have read it so much that you have it memorized, so why read it more. It is a living word. It is new each time you read it. The author will reveal more to you each time you read it. Keep reading.

Another way to build your faith is by praying in the Holy Ghost, praying in tongues. Jude 10 says, “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.” The gift of tongues through the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is a supernatural gift. It moves mountains through prayer.

It strengthens the Spirit of God inside us. It also builds our faith in a supernatural way. Take time to pray in the Spirit. If you don't have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, seek it and receive it. It is for you. We will talk about this gift in a later chapter. You can't do this thing without it. You can't minister to people without it. You can't lead people without it. You can't obey God without it. You can't lead a victorious life without it. Seek God for it. He will supply.

Time for Reflection- How is your faith? Are you relying on yourself and your spiritual pride? Are you submitting and yielding and allowing God's strength and faith to rise up in you? Is your faith strong, or has it become weakened by the battle? Are you able to minister to others about faith, because your faith has been tried and it has stood the test? Do you need to build up your faith?

Learn how to build up the faith of others: those you minister to and other ministers you come into contact with. Encourage them in the Lord as the Holy Ghost moves.. The battle sometimes gets hard. You all feel the same battle. Lift up one another. Lift up one another in prayer.

Faith is an important table to feast at. A key to feasting at the table of faith is feasting on the Word of God. The Word of God is called the Bread of Life for a reason. Coming up next—*The Table of the Bread of Life*.

Chapter 4.

The Table of the Bread of Life

Deuteronomy 8:3 tells us, “And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Job 23:12 says, “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips, I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. Psalm 119:103 says, “How sweet are thy words unto my taste? Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” Jeremiah 15:16 says, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the job and rejoicing of mine heart; for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.” The Word of God is our necessary food. It is needed to strengthen and sustain us. We have to understand fully the importance of preaching the Word of God to be effective ministers. Where would we be without God’s Word? How important is it?

When I was a young Christian I worked for a short time at a home for teens. One of the rules for counseling was that when we counseled them, we had to back up everything we told them with the Word of God. If we said something to help them, we had to give scripture for it. I remember thinking, how can I do that. Every answer for every problem people have isn’t in the Bible. I thought to myself, every thing I need to tell these young people isn’t in the Bible. Boy, was I wrong. The more I got into God’s Word I found out that all the answers that we need are in there. All the counseling advice we need is in there. All we need is there. We can give our congregations all kinds of advice. We can tell them all kinds of opinions as to how they need to handle situations. We can offer them all kinds of superficial words. But the greatest thing that we can give them is God’s Word. To do that, we have to study it. For real. I am the first person to tell you that Bible College is good. That is part of what we do. I can also tell you that a lot of colleges are about everything except God’s Word, and that is sad. We have so many students who transfer to us from other Bible colleges, world over, who have been filled up with church history, denominationalism, church doctrine, but they are not filled up with the Word of God. If you have been to one of those colleges, then you need to get your Bible off the shelf and start reading. Don’t just read it-study it. I have heard people tell me how many times they have read the Bible. But they don’t know it. They haven’t applied it to their lives. If you don’t live by it, don’t expect to be able to help others apply it. Realize that all the answers are there. All that we need is found in its pages. If we don’t apply it to our own lives then don’t expect those we minister to respect what we say.

If we aren’t careful, we can be like the man in the scripture who looked in the mirror, saw what a mess he was, and went away fixing nothing. When we do this,

we can't fix anything for anyone else. We will be like the man with the beam in his eye that was trying to get the speck out of his neighbor's eye. The Word of God is like a mirror. It will show us where we are failing. It will show us what we need to fix. It will show us our heart. That is why a lot of people don't study it. They don't want to see these things. So they begin to distort God's Word. They twist it around to excuse their sin. There was a young lady who visited our church. She had been living with someone that she wasn't married to for many years. I tried to talk to her about her sin. She eventually got very agitated with me. She told me that she had a close relationship with the Lord. She told me that He used her in a mighty way like she was. She said that since she had lived with this guy for a long time, God considered him to be her husband, even though they weren't married. Well, none of this matched up with God's Word. It didn't surprise me to hear that she was skipping from church to church and had no church home. She told me it was because the people didn't accept her like she was. After she heard the anointed Word of God at our church, she didn't stay there either. The Word of God is the same and has been the same. It doesn't change to fit our society. It doesn't change to fit our needs. If this young lady doesn't admit her sin, and repent, then she won't make it to heaven. She is in danger of being deceived. When we fail to admit our sin, confess, and repent from it, when we fail to turn from our sin, then we will begin to change the Word of God. We will begin to pervert the Word of God. That is how new sects and denominations come about. Somebody changes a little of the truth to be able to get by.

I heard someone say that this was the doctrine of their church. They said that God loves you. He doesn't want to make you uncomfortable. What is right for you might not be right for me, what is wrong for you might not be wrong for me. There is no absolute right or wrong. Whoever came up with that one has no knowledge of the Word of God at all. This has really become the end time doctrine that has deceived so many. God wants us to walk in the truth so that we can be set free. God wants us to know what sin is. If we don't know what sin is, then we will never be set free from it. How can we be delivered from something, if we think that it is fine to be bound? How can we even be forgiven, if we never realize that we have sinned? What hope is there if the truth is never preached? The Bible says that they will know the truth through the foolishness of preaching. That is what God called it. It is our job to reveal the truth.

Having and knowing the truth is so important. The Bible says this about the truth in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Halfway, compromised, watered down words won't get the job done. We have to preach the truth, we have to minister the truth, we have to give them the truth even if they don't want to hear the truth. It is the truth that will set them free. In John 1:1-5 we read, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and

the Word was 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.” In verse 14 we read, “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.” Now I am not sure how the Word became flesh, but I know that it did. I know His name is Jesus. If we don’t allow the truth of the Word of God to sink into our hearts and spirits, then we don’t know Jesus. If we don’t know Jesus, then we won’t make it to heaven. I don’t care what church, or what denomination, or what doctrine we follow, if we don’t follow Him, we won’t make it to heaven. We can be filled up with the truth of our denomination, but if we aren’t filled up with the truth of God’s Word, then we won’t make it to heaven.

What happens when things other than the truth are preached or taught? I remember when I was a young Christian I started going to a church. God started warning me about the doctrine that they taught. I kept going. He kept warning me to leave it. One of the things that I noticed about the church that it was filled with people who had illnesses. I mean crippling, life threatening illnesses. These people had no victory at all in their lives. They professed to be Holy Ghost filled, but showed little evidence of this. The anointing did not move in their midst. When I finally opened up and let God show me what was going on, someone came to me and explained their doctrine. It was really strange. It was definitely not the truth. Because it wasn’t the truth, the people were all bound. They did not have the truth, so they could not be set free. It is our responsibility as preachers, ministers of the Word, teachers, workers in the church, that we know the truth and we declare the truth of God’s Word. The Bible says that if we offend or hinder a young one in the Lord that it would be better that a millstone be tied around our neck and we be thrown into the water. God loves His people. He guards His people. He spends time wooing them with His Spirit, guiding them to His truth, making sure they receive His Spirit. We are His masterpiece. He uses ministers and teachers, but He does the greatest work. To put it another way, we may plant the seed, someone else may water it, but it is the Lord who gives the increase. If we haven’t learned to partner with the Lord in working in His fields, we will be useless as ministers. When we learn how precious the souls are that are under our care as shepherds or teachers, then we will understand just how awesome a responsibility is that we carry the truth of His Word to them. The whole truth and nothing but the truth. The Bible talks about ministers who were like whited sepulchers full of dead men’s bones. It warns against ministers who pervert the truth for filthy lucre’s sake. It warns about ministers who are like the blind leading the blind, and they all fall in the ditch. *Research what warnings the Lord gives for those who minister.* Take this seriously. It is.

Part of the job of ministers and teachers is to warn people about their sin. This isn't popular any more. We tend to want to pat sin on the back because we don't want to get controversial. God is controversial. God is loving and merciful, and He does not want His people to perish. He cares enough about them to set them straight. He doesn't want to see them destroy their lives with sin, so His Word is full of warnings against sin. He expects us to do the same. The Bible tells us in Ezekiel 33 that as watchmen over his flock, if we warn people about their sin, and they refuse to listen, then they will be judged, but it will not be laid to our charge. It tells us that if we fail to warn them, and they are judged for their sin, then it will be laid to our charge. What kind of table are you setting for those who eat at your table? Are you preaching the truth that will set them free? Are you warning them of the pitfalls of sin and of the enemy? This is the kind of pastors that the Lord wants you to be. Read Jeremiah 3:15, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Acts 20:28 says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made overseers to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Paul knew about being a minister. He knew about the power of the truth. It had set him free. When you want to know about how to handle a situation, read some of Paul's writings. You think you have problems in your congregations, you should read about some of his. Here is a powerful section of scripture that talks about ministering. I won't write it all here, so get out your Bible. It starts with I Corinthians 1:17 and goes to the end of chapter 2. You could even go on to chapter 3. I won't comment much about this section of scripture. Read this and think about what it means. There are so many points in this section of scripture that I can't cover them all in this chapter. It is definitely meat for a minister's table.

Time for Reflection. What kind of minister are you? Are you letting the Word of God flow out of you like a fountain of living water to touch the thirsty souls? Are you polluting with man's doctrine because you are afraid to stand up for the truth? Are you preaching what thus saith your denomination, or what thus saith the Lord? Are you twisting the truth to keep from allowing conviction to enter into your midst so that you have a cloak for your own sin? Are you studying the Word, filling up yourself so that you can pour it out? Are you compromising the truth to please or appease members in your congregation who are in control? Are you failing to be the Shepherd that the Lord called you to be?

Just as a final thought, and as a preview of the next chapter coming up, I want to tell you about a children's home where I once worked. It was run by a nominal denomination. They hammered the Bible into the kids. They had memory verses every day. They would even have to repeat their memory verses before every

meal. These were verses like, “The soul that sinneth shall die.” Most of the verses were pounding these kids into the pavement. They did not learn any verses about how to find victory in the Lord. They didn’t learn about how to walk in the Spirit, how to be filled with the Spirit, or how to let God’s Spirit touch them. They were only pounded with the Word. Talk about some rebellious kids. I watched some of these kids grow up. They became so hard against the Word of God. I am reminded of the verse, II Corinthians 3:6, “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament: not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” We will talk more in the next chapter about the importance of the Spirit of God, and how if we don’t allow Him to work in our midst and anoint what we teach or preach then we will kill and destroy instead of empower. Coming up, *The Table of the Holy Ghost*.

Chapter 5. *The Table of God's Spirit*

The table of feasting of God's Spirit has become a denominational thing. It isn't that at all, it is a Word of God thing. I am talking here about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. I am talking about praying in the Holy Ghost in tongues, God's prayer language. I am talking about praying and praising the Lord until the power of God falls in the midst and the lame walk, the blind see, the bound are delivered. I am talking about having the anointing of God so that when you speak your words do supernatural things. This is an exclusive table, only set for the obedient. There are many who profess to have a seat at this table, but in their private relationship with the Lord, they don't have a seat at all. There are many, too, whom the Lord welcomes, but they do not go because they think that they are not worthy, not holy enough to have a seat. We can't deserve this, earn it, (except by being obedient), or be holy enough to sit there because none of us are holy. We certainly can't go there because of our own merit. God doesn't give us a special seat at this table because we are the pastors, because we are reverend. That doesn't get far with God. He knows better. Come in and have a seat at this table.

The first several chapters have moments in them that encourage and lift. They also have several moments that chastise. We can begin to see our shortcomings, our failures. We see how important it is to be accountable before the Lord in our ministry, and then we begin to see our own failures. Then we begin to try to correct these on our own, in our flesh. Then we fail more. That just leads to discouragement, and more failure. Then we begin to give over to the flesh, and give over to false pride because that is what happens when we want to do something, and can't do it right after trying so hard. Then we might begin to come against those who are anointed, and who are doing it right. But you see, we can't do it right. On our own we are nothing. Only through the power of God's Word and His Spirit can we be who we need to be to be able to minister. Only through the power of His Spirit can we minister. This isn't a natural thing; it is a supernatural thing to do. We have to be in the supernatural, in the Spirit, to be able to do anything for God.

Let's start by talking about a fellow named Isaiah. We read about him in Isaiah 6:1-8. God was speaking to Isaiah. Isaiah was caught up in the spirit and saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. I am not sure what the train was that he saw. I believe that it was much like a wedding gown that has a train that flows back behind the gown. I see this, not as a wedding garment, but an honorary garment, a symbol of His presence. His presence and honor and glory filled the temple. The seraphims were testaments to this crying "Holy is the Lord". He is so glorious that before his throne there will always constantly be praise. We forget how holy He is. We take His righteousness, His

power, His glory for granted because we look at Him through flesh filled eyes and we look up from the cesspool of this world. We get these things in our eyes, and fail to see Him for what He is. He is Holy. He is almighty. He is above us as far as the heavens are above the earth. There is no reason why He should even be mindful of us. He not only is mindful of His, He sent His son to die for us. He is concerned about the affairs of men. He is concerned about you. He is able to see you through the battles. He is able to uphold you with the hand of His righteousness. He is able to use you in a mighty way. Why then do so many fail? I believe that it is because they fail to sit at this table of His Spirit. Isaiah went there. Let's talk about it.

When Isaiah saw all this he cried out, "Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." God was so huge, and mighty, and magnificent, that Isaiah was struck with his uncleanness before Him. I think that Isaiah had this moment in mind when he later wrote in Isaiah 64:6-9a, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away." We are like filthy rags in the presence of almighty Holy God. We need to always be mindful of this. Sometimes it is easy to take God for granted, to see Him as one of the boys because of His love for us. He is far from that. If we want to walk in His Spirit, then we have to be mindful of this. How can He even use us? How can we even come into His presence? Isaiah got the answer to that. In verse 6, "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me. And he said, Go and tell this people..."

We are nothing. But when we go to the Table of God's Spirit and we allow His Holy Ghost to touch us with a coal of fire from the altar, we are purged, and we are touched with the anointing. We are empowered with strength and boldness from on high. We are able to do God's will in the spirit, not through the weakness of our own flesh, but with the power from on high. Let God touch you with this coal of fire. Let His Spirit touch you. You will be changed. You will be able to go out and tell His people in a powerful way. That is the main objective. The beginning of all this comes when we receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that this has become a matter of denominations. The Pentecostal churches believe in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the nominal churches do not. I say, this is not a matter of denomination at all, but it is a matter of God's Word. God's Word says it, I believe it, and that settles it. It doesn't matter which denominations preach it. I

mentioned before how God gives me pictures to explain things. He once showed me a group of people crawling around on the ground, picking up little morsels of things. They were all excited about each little morsel that they found. I came closer and saw that they were picking up crumbs. The bigger the crumb, the more excited they got. They were rejoicing over those crumbs. Then God caused me to focus just above them, and I saw something that they didn't see. Just over their heads was a table. It was full of a wonderful feast with everything imaginable on it. They never saw the table because they were so busy crawling around gathering their crumbs. They could have pulled up and feasted to their hearts content, but they wouldn't. They had settled for the crumbs. God showed me that this was how many people do His Spirit. They settle for a taste when they could have the feast. They settle for the morsels when they could have their hearts desires. There are many tables that we do this with if we aren't careful. Let's pull up a chair and talk more.

Let's start by talking about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Trying to walk in the Spirit, serve God, minister to His people without having the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is like trying to race a 2012 sports car with a model T engine. You just won't have the power to win the race. I grew up not hearing about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. I grew up in an area that had been blinded and bound to think that this gift of the Spirit was not real. I was taught that when you were saved, you got all of God's Spirit that there was. I was taught that after salvation, you had it all. I grew up not knowing a thing at all about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Through a miracle, God brought me into contact with a church that believed in the Baptism of the Spirit. After I received it for myself, no one could tell me that it wasn't real. It was the key that brought me victory over a life that had been bound by sin, drugs, and alcohol. The devil had worked overtime in much of my life to destroy me because he knew that I would one day serve God. Maybe you are going through the same thing. Maybe it seems like every time you try to get up, you get knocked back down. You know in your heart that you should walk up-right before God, but every time you take one step forward it seems you get knocked three back. You may be about to give up in defeat, which is exactly what the devil wants you to do. It may be that he sees that up ahead, you will bust his little kingdom wide open in some area. You may be sitting there thinking that it is hopeless. That there is no use to keep trying. You won't make it. The devil has you where he wants you. You think it is because you are worthless. It may be because you are getting ready to rise up and be what God has chosen for you to be. It is your choice. If you give up now, you will never know. Maybe the key for you to overcome is the same as it was for me-the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. When I first learned about it, I got it. I grabbed hold and didn't let go. There was none of that intellectual twisting around that a lot of people do. I knew that this was the key for a victorious life and I turned it. Even though I had grown up hearing that it was not right, when it came time for me to accept it, I knew I needed it.

That settled that. Don't read about this and talk yourself out of thinking that it is real, and that it is for you. God said it is, so let that be the end of that.

I had to be hungry enough to submit myself to allow God to do things His way. I had to take Him and His Word at face value. I had to receive the gift that He had for me. I have never regretted it. God will allow His Spirit to control only the things that we allow Him to control. When we say, God, I have decided to do it your way. Come and fill me up to the brim. Then we are ready for the Baptism of God's Spirit. He fills us up all the way with His Spirit. That is what the Baptism of God's Spirit is all about. Here is what God has to say about it in His Word. We first read about it in Acts Chapter 2. Here we read that the disciples were all gathered in one mind and accord. In verse 4 it tells us, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." What was the outcome of this? These few who were hiding in fear after the crucifixion, became bold enough and so full of God's Spirit that they turned the world upside down. Without the Baptism, they would not have endured to start the church, and keep the Gospel that was committed to us today. Verse 41 tells of the outcome of that day, "Then they that gladly received His word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." This didn't stop here. We read about this throughout Acts. In Chapter 8, verses 14-17, these men received the gifts of the Holy Ghost. In Chapter 10, verses 44-48, the Holy Ghost is again on the scene filling the Gentiles. In Acts 19:1-6, these men also received the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they had believed. These men were already saved, but they had something in addition to salvation that they were about to receive. They answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." In verse 6 the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied. I think of myself when I read their answer to Paul, "We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost."

I hadn't heard, but God found me anyway. How do you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost? I was blessed to find a church that believed this way. The congregation laid hands on me and prayed for me in the same way that Paul laid hands on the men in Acts 19:6. But I still didn't receive it that night that they prayed. Several nights later, when I was by myself, the Holy Ghost fell on me and I was filled. I prayed in tongues for the first time that night. You can receive it through the prayers of others, or you can receive it through your own prayers. It is a gift of God that He has given us to empower us against the battle of Satan. It is a gift that gives us boldness in our witness, like it did those on that first day. It is for you. I have heard many people argue against the Baptism of the Holy Ghost being real. They argue that it is not for us today. When I hear this I know several things about those people. I know that they are ignorant of God's Word. In Acts 2:38-39 we read, "Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you in

the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” I would say that means us too. I also know when I hear people argue that the Baptism is not for us today, that these people do not know God. I know that He wants the best for His children. He wants us to overcome and be victorious. I also know that we live in the last days, which has to be one of the hardest times to live on the earth. Why would God give a gift to help the early disciples, tell us about it, and then deny us the right to have it or make it so that it is not available to us who need it the most? That is not the God I know.

I think that one of the things that hinders people in receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is that it comes along with the gift of speaking in tongues. For many, that is a stumbling block. This is because the devil wants to scare people away from our being able to pray in the Spirit, or pray in tongues. What it means when we pray in tongues is that the Spirit of God prays through us in His own language. He is praying directly through us using our vocal chords. We may not understand what He is saying, though sometimes He will allow us to interpret, or He will use others to interpret. Whether or not we understand, the devil knows when we start praying that something is being done to bind him and to loose the power of God on the scene. No wonder he works overtime to confuse people about this powerful gift. Have you ever wanted so badly to pray for someone but didn't know how to pray? All you could do was to say a general half way prayer, when you know you needed to do more. The Holy Ghost knows exactly how to pray in God's perfect will. When He prays through you that is a powerful prayer that will get the job done. Also, when we pray in the Holy Ghost it strengthens our inner man, Who is the Spirit of God in us. (Jude 20, “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.”) When we are filled and consumed with the Spirit of God, and we allow Him to pray in us, we are submitted to His Spirit in a way that nothing else can do. We strengthen His Spirit in us. We submit our flesh and our flesh man takes second place in our life. With all that going on our flesh doesn't stand a chance. God's Spirit rises strong in us and we take on His likeness.

Now you may interrupt me here to say, what about the people who receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and wind up turning their back on God, or they sin in a big way and take on a life of sin instead of a life with God? Just because you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost it doesn't make you perfect. You still have your flesh man. If you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost is still not allowed to control your life, then flesh will. That is why it is important to allow the Holy Ghost to move in you. Pray in the Holy Ghost daily. Don't hinder the Spirit of God when He starts to move in or through you, whether it is in church or at home. Allow God's Spirit to control. Then He will be there when you need

Him. One of the greatest stories I have ever heard about the power in the prayer of the Holy Ghost is this. The Holy Ghost moved on a man and began interceding through him. The man had no idea why, but he obeyed and yielded. God spoke to him to take note at what time this had happened. The next day he heard about a close friend who had been stabbed. That had happened at exactly the time that the man had prayed. The other man's life had been miraculously spared. Another time I heard about a man on a plane who had interceded through the Holy Ghost. After they landed, they were told of a mechanical failure that had nearly caused them to crash, but miraculously the failure had corrected itself. The man who had prayed had no idea, but God knew. Thousands of times I have heard stories about how the Holy Ghost had interceded by speaking in tongues through those who had the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The situation was corrected, the life was saved, the soul was saved, the person was delivered, or whatever need there was, it was met. There is no prayer that is more powerful than the prayer of the Holy Ghost Himself. If you do not have the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, ask God for this. Seek it. The Bible says that when we seek God, or His gifts, we will find them. Who says so? Jesus. Luke 11:9, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Read this section of scripture through verse 13. In verse 13 we read, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" *Think about times when the gift of speaking in tongues supernaturally saved you from disaster, operated in your life supernaturally doing a work that ultimately you in your flesh could not have done.*

When we have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost then we are able to walk in the Spirit. We have talked about this some. Let's talk more. In Romans 7:15-25 Paul talks about how he is not able to do what he knows he should do. Read this section of scripture together. He bemoans, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." He goes on in chapter 8:1 to say, "There is therefore now no condemnation..." That is where a lot of people stop. We want not to have condemnation so stop there, use this whole passage to make excuses for our sin, and we stop there. That is a comfortable place to stop. But stopping there will cause us to eventually spend eternity in hell with the people we deceive because if we stop there, then we will also stop there in our preaching and teaching. God doesn't stop there. He goes on. Read the rest of Romans 8 to see how to get the victory that God intends for us to have. Read this think about it.

We can't do this in the flesh. God knew that. That is why He created you to be a container to hold His Spirit. Through His Spirit, we can overcome, we can be victorious, and we can minister to others. Not on our own in our flesh. But in Him. We don't have anything to give. But when we fill up to overflow with His Spirit, when we receive His anointing, when we allow ourselves to be quickened

by His Spirit and by His Word, we can change our world and the lives of those around us who we love. We no longer will have to make excuses for our sin, or the sins of others. We can overcome and teach others to do the same.

There is a key word to enable all this to happen in our lives. That word is YIELD. We can either be full of ourselves or full of God. We can either do our will or do His will. We can either be full of flesh or Spirit of God. What determines all this is whether or not we yield to His Spirit, to His Word, to His will. We can be so full of ourselves and our pride that we prevent the Lord from being able to work a supernatural work in and through us. Yield to God. Yield to His Spirit. He will fill you. He will empower you. He will keep you.

We have an enemy. That enemy is a spiritual enemy, not a flesh enemy. The only way to fight him is to walk in the spirit. If we don't come against him, he will destroy us, guaranteed. If we don't learn how to fight him, he will destroy us, our families, our church, our ministry. He will steal our health, our strength, and even our desire to serve God. I believe that he is why so many people compromise and settle for less than God's best for them. He fights us and convinces us that it isn't worthy it, why go for the best. If we don't walk in the spirit we can't fight the devil. We read in II Corinthians 10:4, "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds). Ephesians 6:12 says, "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." It goes on from there to tell us about our armor, the armor of God. Then in verse 18 it mentions, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...". We can fight the enemy when we pray in the Spirit, when we pray in tongues in the Holy Ghost. Some of the most tremendous victories I have ever seen came when the power of the Holy Ghost fell in services and the entire congregation began to intercede in the Holy Ghost. It sounded like a mighty rushing wind, all those voices. The devil was pushed back, and the bondage broke, and the power of God came in like a roaring lion. People were delivered and healed. God came on the scene in all His glory through the power of His Spirit.

There have been times when it seemed like the devil would surly wipe me out. He was coming against me on every side. God's Spirit would begin to intercede through me. It may be that it took some time, but when He broke through, the victory came in like a flood. I remember a time just recently when I was caught up in the Holy Ghost praising the Lord. God showed me the devil throwing things at me to destroy me. He showed me that praising God and getting caught up in His Spirit was just like greasing me down. Everything the devil threw at me would just slide right off. It wouldn't stick. There have been many times when getting caught up in the Holy Ghost praising the Lord and praying have saved my

life. I remember a time when we were traveling with the tent. Bishop Goad was driving the tent truck. There was van behind him with some of our church members, and I was in a mini van behind that van. We were going down the interstate. The Lord came into our midst. We began interceding and praising the Lord, praying in tongues. The Holy Ghost filled our little van. Just after that, a tractor-trailer plowed into us all. The driver had fallen asleep at the wheel. The state police told us later that he had been going over 80 when he hit the van in front of our mini van, and then plowed into the tent truck. It hit the van in front of us so hard that it peeled the side off. The seats were bent back flat and twisted around. It then hit the tent truck so hard that it popped the bed off of the frame and set the bed over on the guard rail. The people sitting in the front seat of the van didn't have their seat belts on. The people in the second seats flew up and instead of going through the windows, landed on the people in the front seats and kept them from going into the windshield. There were many more circumstances about that wreck that were miraculous. The most amazing was that we all walked out of it with only minor injuries. When the police who first arrived at the scene saw the wreck they immediately called in the helicopter to transport critical patients to the hospital. When we all began to walk out of the wreck, they remarked that they had witnessed a miracle. They took us to the local rescue squad since no one had been hurt enough to take to the hospital. People kept coming by to see us. It was such a remarkable miracle. The local paper even printed an article about the interstate miracle. What the devil did to destroy us was turned into a lot of miracles. What would have happened if we had not been caught up in the Holy Ghost interceding and praising the Lord?

I can't stop this chapter without talking about the move of the Spirit of God in our churches. We have talked about how having God's Spirit makes a difference in our personal lives. It also makes a difference in our churches. We read in I Corinthians 12:1-11 about spiritual gifts. Verse 11 tells us how these things work: "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will?" These gifts are: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. These gifts were given to empower the church. Not just to empower the preacher or minister, but to empower all the saints of God in the church. This is where we find our power to overcome, through these gifts. Without these operating in our midst, we are playing church. Church isn't a social gathering. It is a place where God's Spirit can work in the midst of His people. Are the gifts of the Spirit in operation in your life? Are the gifts of the Spirit in operation in your services? If they aren't, then why not? Let's talk a little about what the church is supposed to be like.

We all talk about how the church used to be. Here is a little trip down memory lane. I could title this little section here, *Remember When*. Remember when the

church was a place where God was worshipped, where He was praised, where His Word went out with His anointing. People would gather no matter what they had to face to get there. For them, it was a way of life in obedience to what the Lord told them to do. While they were there they would obey the Lord, while they were outside of the walls of the church they did the same. During the week they lived a life that was yielded to the Spirit of God so that when they were within those walls of the church, they were yielded as well. During the week, they would sing praises to the Lord and thank Him for His blessings and His goodness. They would lift their hands in their homes and shout and praise Him and His anointing would flow. When they came to church it wasn't surprising at all that the same happened. The Spirit of God flowed in their midst bringing salvation, victory, deliverance, healing, overcoming power, strength, clear minds, peace, and all the fruits of the spirit to the people.

When it came time for the message to go out from the pulpit, the one who was ordained for that message would clear his throat, get the mind of God and open up like a vessel to pour out what it was that God wanted to tell the people. God's Word was anointed. When it poured forth it kept the promise that God made that it would not go forth void. When it poured out with God's anointing, just from hearing the Word souls were convicted, they repented of their sin, and they gave their hearts to the Lord. The altars were full of people who joyously and with much crying gave their hearts and lives to the One Who had purchased them with His own shed blood. But it wasn't just the sinners that were brought to repentance. Praise God, it was also the saints, the Christians who gathered there. When the temptations of the week, and the temptor behind it all, got to them so that they could barely stand, it was there at church that they repented just for starting in the direction that would lead them to sin. God's Spirit would convict them, and draw them back into His peace and His love. You see, when God's Spirit doesn't convict us, and we don't repent, that is when we cannot find the peace that forgiveness brings. When God's Spirit convicts us, and we repent, that is when we find the power to overcome. God's Word was a light, a lamp to their feet. When it went out in uncompromised truth, it shone bright enough not only to light their path, but also bright enough that they could carry it and light their world around them.

When the Christians found peace and life in the walls of the church, they brought that to their homes. Entire families served God together. Grandparents, parents, and their children gathered together in those walls. The little ones grew up under the feet of the parents as they shouted in the victory of the Spirit of God in their midst. Those little ones raised up their children to do the same, and they did the same for their own. The older generation passed on the truth of the Word of God to their children, and it went from there to their grandchildren, and great grandchildren. You see the truth of the Word of God doesn't change. It stays the

same, just as God has done from the foundation of the world. There is no new truth for the younger generation. Just the same truth that gave their great-great-great grandparents the victory as did for that generations great-great-great grandparents. God's Word was preached from the pulpit, God's Word was studied in the home. The children grew up learning God's Word, and because of that they could teach it to their own children. If those children strayed from that Word later on in their life, then they had to run past the Word that had been poured into them, past the Holy Ghost that they knew from those services and from watching their parents live by His guidance, past the blood of Jesus and it's power to keep us that they had learned about as a child, past the fellowship of saints that were praying daily for their soul. It was very hard to go to very far from the Lord with all that pulling them in the right direction.

In their homes, the Lord was the center of their life and who they were. They were not compromising so with the world that the world couldn't tell that they were a church. The world knew that they were different in their habits, their choices, their day-to-day walk. The world knew that they were different because they were not following where it was going. They didn't put value on the things that the world valued. They didn't compromise like the world to be able to do the things that the world did. They didn't long to be accepted by the world, but they longed to find favor with God, and knew that if they found favor with those around them who weren't walking with God, then they would lose His favor. They were in the world but the world knew that they were not of this world. They were a light that shone bright in the darkness, not just a hazy, dingy glow, but a bright light that led the way.

When the people were sick in body, they gathered and laid hands on one another and prayed. God's Word was honored. The Holy Ghost came and filled the house, the earthly building, and the vessels of clay, bringing healing. Broken vessels were restored and made whole by the same one who touched and healed those when He was on earth. Cancer lost its hold. Heart disease lost its power. Diabetes was cast out. The blind saw and the lame walked, and the deaf heard the Word of God preached. The dead were even raised in their midst. There was victory in the house of God over sickness. There was victory in the house of God over sicknesses of the heart. Anxiety and fear didn't rule. Broken hearts were mended and healed just as the broken bodies were healed. Broken lives were mended and brought back together.

The children of God gathered every service in anticipation of the miracles that the Lord would work in their midst. Sometimes His power would be so thick in their midst that it would appear like a haze. When His power came, only those who refused to let Him touch them left unchanged. Healing came, deliverance came. Those who had been chained to habits that destroyed them like alcohol, drugs,

sexual sins, cigarettes, and spirits of depression, fear, anxiety, rebellion, and all other bondages, were set free in joyous deliverance. God's people walked in freedom. His Word showed them their sin, His Spirit convicted them, when they repented, the power of His Holy Ghost would deliver them.

And, oh, the Baptism of the Holy Ghost would fill them. God's Spirit would fill them to the brim, chasing out the flesh that held them bound, chasing out the world that tried to filter out His victory. The Holy Ghost would begin to pray from inside their spirit in His language, in His tongues. That prayer would break the yoke of the enemy who was trying to bind their church, their flesh, their homes, their families, their finances, their health, and their work. Even when they didn't realize the enemy was coming against them, the Holy Ghost would begin interceding, praying in His own tongue, and binding the devil with a power that no other prayer can have. Intercession would break out for those who were lost, or those who were straying away. The Holy Ghost would begin to intercede. This prayer would echo around the congregation. They knew that the bondage was broken, that the hindrance was moved, even before they got home to hear the news. They knew what it was like to walk in the victory during the week that was broken loose in the walls of that church. They carried that authority and the same Holy Ghost with them as they went home, binding the devil and loosing the victory of God in the lives of those around them.

They learned to walk in the victory of walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh. They learned how to submit their flesh to the Spirit of God within them, and they learned how to walk in the victory that brought. The flesh that is enmity against God wasn't the center of the church, or of their daily lives. They learned to submit their flesh to the Spirit of God so that they were able to obey Him and walk in victory in both the big and the small things in their lives.

They had not lost their savor; they were salt to those around them. Their victory was a light to those who were lost. There was no hazy, gray area. It was either the saved who walked in victory or it was the lost who had none. They had not deceived themselves to think that a halfway walk with God was all that you need. They had not deceived themselves to think that sin in a certain measure was fine. They had not deceived themselves to think that church with the Spirit of God and His anointing and the full declaration of His Word were not needed. They had not deceived themselves into thinking that it was wrong to make people uncomfortable because of their sin, while they watched uncaringly as they destroyed themselves with that sin. They had not deceived themselves into thinking that the middle of the road was a fine place for them to walk. They were a lighthouse to those around them. They shone, and people came for miles to find out what was going on. When those people came searching, they found, and their lives were changed. So were the lives of those around them who saw the change.

This is a picture of the way the church was. It is also a picture of how it should be. I'm not talking here of a church within a particular four walls. I am not talking of a church that is within the boundaries of a given denomination, but I am talking of the church that is the church that Jesus purchased with His own blood. I am talking of the scriptural vision for the church today. I am talking about what we have lost, that we need to find. We talk about how we know that the rapture is nearing. Even sinners talk about how the end of the world is drawing near. But we continue on as a church, as the bride of Christ as a whole, in a seem-right, compromised state. We have forgotten what it is like to walk in the victory of the Lord. We have long lost our burden for the lost. We no longer recognize the power of the Holy Ghost. The scripture says that we are stay away from those who deny the power of God. We have become those who deny the power of God. We need to seek the Lord on our faces and repent for our compromise, for our sin, for our complacency. We need to go back to what we remember so that it isn't just a memory, but a reality in our lives. The trumpet soon will sound. Those who have compromised and refused to repent, those who deny the power of God, whose who are disobedient, will not rise to meet its call. Only God's Holy Ghost can make us ready. It is the "washing machine" and the "iron" that will get out those spots, blemishes, and wrinkles that the scripture says we will have to get out to be able to go when the Lord calls. Church, lets get right, get ready, and let's go home. Let God's Holy Ghost fill you to the brim. Let His gifts operate in your life and in your ministry. Open up your doors to His Spirit. Obey Him and yield to Him. He will do a mighty work in your midst.

Time for Reflection. Do you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost complete with the gift of speaking in tongues? Do you use the gift of tongues in your personal prayer life? Do you use it in church services as the Lord leads? Does God anoint your ministry? Are the gifts of the Spirit in operation in your services, in your congregation? Do you preach and teach about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and about the gifts of the Spirit? Is the anointing of God welcomed in your services? When you read about how the church used to be, could you say, that is how our services are today?

Something to think about: how can you as a minister open the door for those in your congregation to be more receptive of the works of the Holy Ghost in their midst? If your church looks back at the "good old days", how the church as a whole used to be, and longs for them, how can you lead them in bringing the good old days back?

We are the servants of God. To set a table for those we minister to, and to set a table in the presence of the Lord, we need to be mindful of serving Him. Coming up next. *The Table of the Shewbread.*

Chapter 6

The Table of the Shewbread

We read about the table of the shewbread first in Exodus 25:30. Here in this passage we find many details concerning the tabernacle and the priest's duties in the tabernacle. In Hebrews 9 we read about how this was all representative of Christ. We read how Jesus did away with these things that were just symbols for His presence and His coming. I have read that the shewbread represented the 12 tribes of Israel as there were often 12 loaves of the shewbread. The shewbread was holy and only certain people, the priests and certain members of the tribes could eat it. In the middle of this passage of scripture about the shewbread in Exodus 25 we read hundreds of details that God gave the priests to follow, and gave those who were in charge of constructing the temple. I am sure that they didn't understand all the reasons why they were asked to do these things. I don't see that every detail was explained in detail, but they were just told to do these things. I am not going to concentrate really on the shewbread and its significance in this chapter. I am going to concentrate on the importance of taking care of the details when serving God.

Bishop Goad is a detail person. Every one who knows him remarks on the attention that he pays to details. I have heard him say a hundred times in the nearly 30 years that I have been with his ministry how important it is in serving God that we take care of the details. I have seen so many times that the hand of the enemy was pushed back because of Bishop Goad taking care of details. I have seen many times how when finances were a struggle, the battle was won because of his taking care of details. I believe that a lot of ministries and churches fall because the "priests", (the pastors, or those over the ministries) fail to take care of the details of the service of God's house.

I have heard all too often about times when someone in a church who was the bookkeeper walked away with thousands of dollars. I have heard of times when the pastor failed to keep up with the finances of the church or ministry, trusting someone to do that, and that person they trusted failed to keep up with the details. All of the sudden the pastor or ministry overseer discovered that the church was bankrupt with no hope of recovery. Let's move away from finances to other areas. I have heard of churches where strife would develop that would literally split a church into, half the people leaving, and the rest foundering not able to continue. The pastor had no clue anything was happening until the split came about. If he had taken care of details, he would have possibly been able to prevent this from happening.

I have heard Bishop Goad say many times that God was a God of details. When we read this section of scripture Exodus 24-31 we have no doubt about that.

When we read about the reason for many of these details in Hebrews 9, we begin to see a revelation of the purpose for these details. If you want to please God, you have to learn to take care of the details. If you want to have a victorious ministry, you have to learn to take care of the details. All too often it is easy to want to turn these over to others. But it is the priest's duty to take care of the details. It is the pastor's duty, the overseer's duty to take care of the details.

Think about times in your ministry and in the ministries of others when failure to take care of the details ended up in catastrophe.

There is a circumstance that prevents all this from working out. There is a situation that makes it really hard for the pastors to take care of the details. Today more than ever before, because of the economic situation as a whole in a lot of countries, including the US, many churches find it hard to pay a pastor. Because of this, many pastors have to work jobs, plus take care of the church details, plus take care of a family. They are too tired to do any of it well. This is nevertheless a fact of life. If we aren't careful, this steals away from the victory of the church as a whole. Which also steals away from the finances. When the pastor lacks victory, the teaching from the pulpit and the move of God in the midst of the people will lack victory, and that will hinder the congregation from finding victory. When they lack victory, they are not walking in the Spirit, but in the flesh. They will not be shown how to stand against the enemy, the devil, who comes to rob them of their finances. Instead of walking in the spirit, they will be walking in the flesh, and a spoiled flesh costs a lot more to maintain than a Holy Ghost submitted flesh. All this in turn robs the house of God and keeps the pastor from being able to receive his due recompense. How do you make it all work?

There are pastors and those over ministries who make this work, but it isn't God's perfect plan. God's plan is that a workman is worthy of his hire. That is scripture. Sometimes it isn't possible to make that work out. Sometimes, though, it is a matter of faith. Most of the people in our ministry are volunteers. We don't work anywhere else for our pay, but for many years, the Lord has taken care of us, not only our needs but also the desires of our heart. I made a statement the other day that I would not go back to being paid a salary, because the blessings of the Lord are so much richer that I have more than what I had when I made a salary. I have what I need, and that is the key. I have found that I need a lot less than I used to. When I was paid a salary, I was in debt ten times more than I am now. I used credit cards for everything. If I saw it, I wanted it, I got it, and I paid 5 times the price for it after I charged it. That isn't God's way for our personal finances. Praise the Lord, I am almost totally debt free: no house payment except for a minimal rent, no vehicle payments, no credit card payments, (I finally learned about that mess). God takes care of needs and the desires of our heart that He gives us. That is so much better than the desires of my heart. I will think about

wanting something, and it will be there in a short while. We have a little picture that sits on a table just inside our front door that says, “Working for the Lord may not pay much, but the benefits are out of this world.” I am here to tell you that the benefits have been and will be greater than any salary would ever be. The economy doesn’t affect how God meets our needs because God isn’t limited by the economy. The stand that Bishop Goad makes for the Lord and for righteousness isn’t affected by how much money the church brings in, how big the congregation is, or who in the congregation is with him. He does what God leads him to do, and God takes care of Him. That works. He isn’t bound by what family is controlling the church, (and all of you know what I mean there); he is bound by what saith the Lord. He is waiting on the Lord’s table in obedience of what the Lord tells him to do as the leader, and he is taking care of the details according to how God leads. That has worked for many, many years.

I have known many pastors, though who left a job, and things went from bad to worse. I think that it was because they didn’t obey God in the details of that. They didn’t do it at the right time and place. They didn’t submit their wants. They didn’t obey God in their spending. They lacked the faith to be able to depend on God. So when they left their jobs, they were strained to make it work, and that strain went over into their serving God. Their congregation paid for this in more ways than one. They became bitter about their serving God and eventually quit. All this has to be done right and in God’s time. God has to help you to be ready to take this step. Another thing here is that if a pastor makes this decision, the only way this will work is if his wife, and their family, all make this same commitment. Sometimes when a pastor’s family hasn’t made the same commitment he has, that is a door wide open for the enemy to climb in.

How do you take care of the details? There are so many. It is humanly impossible. What is the answer to that? I thank God that for many years I have been doing a job that is humanly impossible to take care of all the details. I won’t get into all that I do, but take my word for it, there are a lot of details. I am also glad that I have a weakness that makes it impossible for me to remember all the details. I can do like Paul here and glory in my weaknesses. In II Corinthians 12:6 we read an amazing statement. Paul was bemoaning a weakness that he had. Jesus answered him, “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.” He goes on to say in verse 7, “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” He didn’t brag about how reverend he was. He didn’t brag about how righteous he was. He didn’t brag about how smart he was and how he could take care of everything. He bragged about how big God was. He bragged about how God’s strength was there for him, how God enabled and empowered him in spite

of his weaknesses. He knew he couldn't do what he had to do. He knew he couldn't endure what he had to go through, but he knew that didn't matter. God would see him through. God would enable him.

I remember this when I start to take this thing on my own shoulders. I can't carry it. I can't take care of the details. But every morning I start my day by praying and asking God what I need to take care of for the day. I listen to His voice throughout the day. I am careful to do this, because I have had to suffer through those times when I didn't listen. So have the people that I try to reach. Without Him, I will only make a mess. With Him, I can make a difference.

Let God help you to take care of the details. Be mindful of how important they are. Be mindful that you are the priest, the one He has put in charge of taking care of the shewbread, and all the details in His house. That means the physical, monetary, and spiritual details of His house. Let Him lead and guide you. It starts by you knowing that this is your duty. It starts by you realizing that you can do this through Him. It starts by you purposing in your heart this is something that you need to fix. God never asks us to do something that is impossible to do. It might seem that it is. But if we keep on, we will soon find that He will give us all we need to get the job done right.

There are some other tables that if we set at it, we will not get all the details of the work of the Lord done. There are some tables that gather a lot of God's people, not only the pastors, and workers, but also those in the congregation. Once they sit there, they barely move out of their chair. It is usually the same chair that they will sit in and woe be to those who try to get them to move to a different chair. These tables are the table of rituals, the table of complacency, and the table of just plain laziness. The table of rituals is one of the most deadly. You know that table. Those who sit at it are often heard to say, "Well, that isn't how they did it when the last pastor was here." Or, "That wasn't how they did it when my grandmother was a girl." Or, "I think that everyone likes having a conformity in the service. This thing of trying to do what the Spirit is leading us to do is nerve wracking." Or, "We don't want a lot of emotion in the service. That isn't what people need." Or, "We don't want to use the altar. That kind of thing isn't done in this church." I am sure you know the sound that comes from this table of rituals. I can remember our ministering team going to a church that was totally bound. The people were beginning to want to be free in their services where the Spirit of God would move. The Lord kept showing Bishop Goad a table that was set at the back of the congregation. He didn't know anything in the natural, but God knew about it. He told the people to get that table out of there, and they did. He threw a prayer cloth that sailed through the air and slammed the back of the church (it was definitely not a thing prayer cloths usually did). When it hit the back of the church, the power of God fell on that place and they people feasted. The people

shouted and danced. God delivered, and set free, and broke a bondage that had been in that church for years. Why was the table so important? It represented a ritual. There was a family that had ruled that church and dominated it for years. Now we both know that a family run church won't have a move of God. Why? Because it isn't God's will for a certain family to run a church. Read the Bible. If you can find scripture for that, let me know. This family had controlled and through their control had established ritual after ritual that bound the church. The family had long since died and gone on, but their rituals still bound the church. When they moved the table they had donated out, they were saying that they didn't want this any more. They were opening up themselves for deliverance, and God came on the scene. Bishop Goad didn't know what the table represented, but God did, and the people did, and it was done.

God doesn't want us bound in rituals. So many churches are. I hate to go into a church and see the raising of hands for prayer. Let's just get into the Holy Ghost and let the Holy Ghost intercede. Let's just let the power of God fall so that they needs are met. Let's get the rituals out and the Holy Ghost in so that the power of God fills the house. We won't need a little ritual to fill the time then. Rituals will bind a church and destroy it. I am not just talking here about the bondages of rituals that a family or a group of people, or even the pastor has started in a church, but I am also talking about the rituals that a denomination sets up. Most denominations are filled with teachings that bind us away from the truth of God's Word. They carry with them certain things that they demand a congregation do that have nothing to do with what God's will is for the service. If you are caught up in rituals, you won't even be mindful of God's will for that service. If you want to have a supernatural move of God, get out of the denomination protocol, get out of the rituals of the church, and let God move. How many churches have you watched that were destroyed because they didn't get out of the rituals. If you are bound in rituals then know that the details of the house of the Lord won't get taken care of. You won't even know what those details are. You will just be busy about your ritual.

Another table that we mentioned is the table of complacency. This table will definitely stop you from taking care of the details of God's house. That is the table where we sit and say, "It is OK. Everything is all right the way it is. We don't need to change anything. Let's not get too excited about our religion. We don't want to take it too seriously. We don't want to get overboard with things." That is usually a comfortable chair. When they settle into that chair, those people don't want to move. They don't want to get active in serving God. They don't want to rock the boat. They certainly don't want to get out and walk on the water. They will never accomplish anything for the Lord. They don't have a relationship with God at all usually, because God won't allow you to stay complacent. It is a dangerous chair, because those who sit in it usually fall asleep before they even

realize they are in danger. It is a little like sitting in a car with the motor running that isn't moving. You just feel a little sleepy, and then it is all over with. Not only are you spiritually dead, but those around you are as well. Get away from the table of complacency.

The last table that we'll mention in this chapter is another one that will stop you from taking care of the details of the house of God. It is the table of just pure laziness. It is easy to pull up a comfortable chair to this table and just go to sleep. You won't take care of the details, because you don't feel like it. It is too much like work. I remember a young pastor who when asked why he chose to be a pastor answered, "I want a job where I will only have to work on Sunday. I don't want to have to do a lot, and being a pastor is where I can have people look up to me. I can have fellowship. I can eat lots, and I can always have a meal. I can do nothing and only work on Sundays. That is the job for me." Boy, did he miss it. But sad to say, some people become pastors because of that reasoning. He definitely found himself sitting at the lazy table. The devil will make that table luring to you. He will say, "This is too much like work. This isn't worth all this work. You can't keep on doing all you do because it will get you down. Nobody appreciates it any way. Nobody would even notice if you didn't visit the sick this week. Why do you do what you do?" When you hear that voice, be aware of his tricks. He is setting a place for you at the table of laziness. How do you avoid it? Walk in the Spirit and put your flesh in subjection. If you aren't doing that, you aren't setting a healthy table for others. If you aren't, then you won't be able to keep up the pace. Know with Paul that God will give you the strength to do what He requires you to do. You just have to move on past the part that you can do in the natural. And whatever you do, don't sit down and stay there.

Time for reflection. What are some of the details in your ministry or church that need to be taken care of that you may have been slack on being mindful of? Is this a priority in your ministry? Do you start your day asking God His plan for your day, asking Him to share with you the details you need to be mindful of for that day? What will be end result if you fail to take care of these details?

Knowing that God is interested in taking care of the details is an important step in being able to obey Him. He will move mountains if you are obedient to Him. His Word is full of promises for how He will keep and use us when we put a priority in serving Him. Coming up next, *The Table of God's Promises*

Chapter 7. *The Table of God's Promises*

I remember a time in the ministry when it seemed the devil was throwing anything at us he could. We had a fight on every hand. God prevailed. His Spirit moved, and the devil was pushed back. Things started to get much better. But I was still fighting. I couldn't rest in the faith that things were OK. I couldn't get peace in my spirit. I couldn't rest in what God was doing, because I was still tied up in the battle. Have you ever had these times? God showed me something that helped me to understand what was going on with me. He showed me a table that was spread with a feast. He showed me trying to eat what was set at the table, but I couldn't because instead of using eating utensils, I had these strange looking implements that you couldn't use to eat with. When God showed me these things, I had no idea what they were. Some time later I saw pictures of them. I understood then what God had been trying to show me. The implements that he showed me trying to eat with were medieval weapons of war. Instead of feasting on God's blessings that He was providing us with, I was still fighting. I hadn't stopped fighting long enough to reap what I had been fighting for. Some people never stop fighting. The devil will fight their ministry, or church, and they will start fighting him, and every body else. Sometimes they will even fight their congregation. I remember one pastor who every time he preached would nearly attack his congregation. He would come against them about every detail he could think of. He really drove them into having a rebellious spirit, not only against him, but against God as well. What was his problem? He had been really hurt. Instead of forgiving and moving on, he carried this hurt as a huge price that he wouldn't give up. He took it out on all the wrong people. He was never really successful as a pastor. That is one example of what I am talking about. We can have the promises of God, but if we don't stop and have faith enough to feast at the table, we can't have them. If we don't lay down our warfare, we can't feast at the table.

Number one, we have to know what God promises us. The only way we can know that is to know God's Word. There are two parts to faith. We have to know what the Bible says that God will do for us. The other part of faith is that we have to know that He will do all that for us. Then we also need to teach those under us to do the same. We don't need to let them depend on us for their faith. I see pastors do this. They want people to depend on them, and make them feel special, so they fail to teach the people that they can go to God the same way that they can. They can believe with the same faith they have. When a congregation depends on the faith of the pastor that can lead to one of two things. Either the congregation will weaken to the point that their faith is destroyed, or the pastor will be pulled down.

Let's talk about some of the promises of God. You will notice that many of these promises have a condition of obedience. For example, the Word of God promises

that we can have a long life. The condition-if we obey our parents. It promises in Joshua that we can be successful if we keep His commandments. The condition-we have to keep His commandments. There are many promises with obedience required. We won't get the promise if we don't obey. Be mindful of these. Don't just read them, but do them. Come on in, and pull up a chair. God's Word is full of promises. Let's feast.

Here are some of the promises. The Word is full of many more. I am only writing a few. Probably many of these verses you have outlined and marked in your Bibles. Many will be favorites. Let's remember them. I haven't written these out as I have other scriptures in this book. The main reason is because I really want you to get your Bibles and discuss these. Here they are:

James 1:12
Galatians 6:9
I King 8:56
Psalm 34:19
Isaiah 43:2
John 14:1-2
Romans 8:28
II Corinthians 12:9
I Peter 4:12-13
Revelations 21:4
Psalms 37:3
Mark 9:23
John 1:12
John 6:35
John 12:46
John 14:12
Romans 1:16
Isaiah 66:2
Psalms 34:18
Isaiah 25:4
Deuteronomy 4:29
Proverbs 8:17

Luke 11:9
Luke 10:19
I Corinthians 10:13
James 4:7
Revelations 3:21
Daniel 12:3
Mark 9:41
I Corinthians 15:58
James 1:25
Acts 16:31
Luke 6:38
Isaiah 58:7-8
Psalm 41:1-2
Nahum 1:7
Proverbs 27:14
Philippians 4:13
Psalm 23
Romans 8:38-39
Isaiah 54:17
Proverbs 1:33
Psalms 1:3

*These are only a few of the promises. Get out your favorite ones. Think about the times when God wrote these in your heart. **I have left room in your textbook for you to write in the ones that aren't listed. Let this list be an encouragement to you in years to come.*** There are two kinds of Word that God gives us. One is the Logos Word, which is the written Word. The other is the Word that God has given you. The Word that He has anointed for you. Those times like when He spoke to Peter and he was able to walk on the water. Those times when you knew you heard His promises and it was what held you together when that was all you had. Those times when your storm was raging, and He reached out His hand and bid you to get out of the boat, and you knew that it was all going to be all right. Those times when we need to be sure that we keep our eyes on Jesus, not on the waves and the storm. Keep your eyes on the promises of His Word, not on what the economic situation of our country is, not on what the doctor says, not on what the banker says, not on what the devil whispers in your ear, not on what all the people with their negative reports say, but on what thus saith the Lord.

Too few people realize the promises of God because they don't stand on them. They take the easy route, not the one that requires maximum faith. God doesn't bless that. He honors faith. We have talked about in an earlier chapter how to increase your faith. We need to be sure that our faith is in God, not in those around us, or in some crutch that we have. We can't trust those things. Just like David declared when he was facing the giant and they tried to put the king's armor on him, "I cannot go with these for I have not proved them." He knew that the Lord could work. He had seen that before and trusted that. He hadn't tried men's armor. He went with what he knew. Trust in the Lord.

I am not talking about a prosperity message. I very, very rarely watch any TV evangelists any more because almost all of it makes me sick. If you can get through one message without the evangelist saying, "If you want to be blessed in your finances, give me \$1,000.00." Now I know that God sometimes leads this way. Not long ago a pastor friend had a fundraiser to help raise funds for our radio stations. He had several Gospel groups come in and took up a love offering. He told us before the service that the Lord had showed him that we would raise a certain amount. I looked around at the crowd, and shook my head, I am ashamed to say, more than a little doubtful. We raised that amount nearly to the cent. He was on the money. But most of the pastors don't know God's voice and His will enough to be on the money. They only know how to milk a crowd. Many of them brag about it later, how much money they took the congregation for. Be wise to this. They have actually started a whole teaching that is what I call prosperity teaching. One I heard was bragging about his jet that the Lord had given him, and telling other pastors that their faith wasn't as strong as his, berating them because they didn't have a jet. Then I ordered some tapes from him, and he cheated me out of about \$10.00 and refused to make it right. Now we all know how he got his

jet. It had little to do with God and little to do with faith. Let's get real about prosperity preaching. How many of these promises required us to obey, to commit, to submit, to yield to God's leading? How many of them required sacrifice? How many preach that you have to leave sin alone, that you have to repent from your sin, and turn away from it? I will go on with this more in a later chapter. I just wanted to mention here that this doctrine is not the same as God's promises. *This doctrine is so prevalent today. Think about it and the dangers. How is this creeping in to churches where you are?*

We can't leave this chapter about God's promises without spending time with discussing the power of praise. Praise unlocks the promises of God. When we go to the Lord with our minds filled with fear and our eyes seeing only the battle, that doesn't unlock His presence in the situation. It doesn't unlock the promises of God. It doesn't unlock His Holy Ghost that comes on the scene and beats the enemy at his own game. Praise will do all that. Praise the Lord. When it feels like you are going down for the last time, praise the Lord. When it feels like there is no hope, ignore that feeling and praise the Lord. Take the Lord at His Word. Praise Him no matter what you feel like. God will honor the sacrifice of praise. God will inhabit His praise. When you praise Him, and the Holy Ghost comes on the scene, the battle is won.

Time for Reflection. For reflection on this chapter, just bask in God's Promises. Bask in those times that God came through for you. Praise the Lord. Encourage yourself in the Lord and build up your faith. Rejoice in the Lord.

Chapter 8. *The Table of God's Blessings*

We all remember the story of the little boy with the 5 loaves and 2 fishes found in Matthew 14:14-21. This was one of the greatest tables that Jesus ever served. It started with a great multitude of people who had heard about Jesus and who were following him on foot out of the cities. These people were so caught up in hearing Jesus that they had left following him, and had taken no thought about their food. Wow. What a difference today. Today we can't get out of the Sunday service without thinking about the fellowship meal coming up, or the Sunday buffet. This crowd hadn't even noticed they were hungry. They were being fed manna from heaven. Jesus took compassion on them and healed their sick. At evening, the disciples came to him and told him that he needed to send these people away so that they could go home and eat. Jesus said, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." It didn't stop him when all they found was the little boy's five loaves, and two fishes. He blessed it and broke it and used it to feed 5,000 hungry people. They even had leftovers.

Let's take a closer look at the hero in this story. He probably hadn't been noticed much before this event. I want to ask you a few questions? What if when the disciples had gone through the crowd that little boy would have looked in his bag and said, "I don't have enough. What good is this?" Or what if he had said, "I am really hungry. I want to save this for myself"? I have thought about this. I am sure that this little boy wasn't the only one in 5,000 people who had food. The disciples searched, determined to find enough food. But that was all they could find. Doesn't that seem kind of suspicious to you? How many of the others had food but kept silent. I am sure that after it was over, they wished for the rest of their lives that they had obeyed the Lord and had given. They couldn't do it over then. There was one little boy who knew that what he had wasn't enough, but he gave it anyway. He knew he was just as hungry as the food hoarders around him, but he gave anyway. Because of that he got to see Jesus do a miracle, and he feasted at *The Table of God's Blessings*.

How many times have you thought to yourselves that what you had wasn't enough, and that almost hindered you from stepping out in obedience? What was the result of that obedience? Was it not one of the greatest blessings you have seen? How many times have you known that the Lord was asking you to give, but you honestly knew that if you did, you would not have enough to go around for yourselves or for your family? But when you gave, the Lord blessed it and multiplied it back. How many times have you been required to give of yourself until you lacked the physical, mental, and spiritual strength to go on? You gave anyway in obedience to the Lord, and the results of your labor were supernatural.

Take time here to reflect on the times when you, like this little boy, sat at The Table of God's Blessings.

If you are to ask this little boy when you get to heaven about this moment in history, I wonder if the first thing he mentions would be that brief moment when he looked at the pitiful amount of food in his bag, and at that crowd. He probably had no idea there was that many people there that day, but he sure knew that there was a bunch. I wonder what thought ran in his head before he gave up his sack of food. He didn't stop there. I am sure that as soon as he saw his food, he looked up and saw Jesus. It doesn't say, but I wonder if Jesus saw him at that same time. It is possible. Something happened to make him stand out in the crowd. He was maybe one of the smallest there, and possibly he had the smallest dinner. We don't know about any body else, because they didn't obey (see how important obedience is). Two thousand years later, though, we know about him. We may not know his name, which isn't so important. We don't know any of the details of his life. But we do know Jesus used him to work a miracle. That miracle encourages hearts even today.

Who is it that God calls? We have mentioned this scripture some in an earlier chapter. I have a Thompson Chain reference Bible that I use as a study Bible. This guy did a really good job setting up a reference Bible. In the topical index there is section called God's Tool Chest. There is only one scripture reference in this section. It is I Corinthians 1:27-31, "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 nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Why do so many people fail to have a supernatural ministry today full of the workings of God's Spirit? Because there are so few people who are not caught up in glorying in themselves. Because there are so few people who won't step out of the boat to walk on the water. Because there are so few who will run the risk of walking by faith. Because there are so few who will obey God, like the little boy. His child like faith saw a need and gave. God sets the table of blessings for everyone-for all of those who minister truth in His Word and obey Him. We mentioned before about a table where people crawled around on the floor picking up crumbs when there was a feast on the table over their heads. They wouldn't reach up to see it, and had no idea it was there. The supernatural blessings of God are much the same way. Can you see the table from where you are?

I remember a time when I sat at a table of blessing and it totally changed the direction of my life. I can even say that if I hadn't sat at this table, I wouldn't be doing what I do today. Nearly 30 years ago, I attended a tent meeting that was held in my local town. I saw something there that I hadn't experienced, and I was so hungry for it. It was a move of God's anointing. As the revival went on, I began hearing God tell me that I needed to give up everything I had, leave my job, and travel with these people whom I had just met. I liked them. What I knew of them so far was that they were sincere, it seemed. They were serving God for real. The presence of God there was showing me that. But it was hard for me to give up everything. I didn't have much, but it was mine. I also thought about myself. I wasn't so great. I had come back to the Lord for a few years, but I still had a lot of baggage that I carried around from my days of sin. I had received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, but I still had a lot of rough edges. I hadn't been taught about the spiritual realm and how to overcome. I wanted to serve God with all my heart, but I had a huge confidence problem. I wasn't worthy of anything. Or so I was convinced. After all, what did I have to give? One thing I did know, though, was that when I was about 13 years old, a preacher friend of my grandparents prophesied to me that I would one day work full time in a ministry. I just didn't have any idea when that would be, and I didn't have any idea that I would be able to be of value. That was before that tent came to town.

When I went to the first meeting, I showed up in my blue jeans, my railroader's hat, and I was barefoot. I told you I had a lot of rough edges. Bishop Goad heard that I could sing and that I wrote songs. He invited me to come up and sing. I went. As that revival went on, as I said before, I began to hear the Lord tell me to travel with that ministry. I had been really bad hurt not long before this, if you will remember the story of the church experience gone bad. I had played the piano for a church and it had turned out to be a really bad experience. This church had a false doctrine. The Lord had warned me to get out of the church, and after some time, I obeyed him. I stood up and told the people why I was leaving, which took a lot of guts for a new Christian. They really turned on me and told me that because I had forsaken their doctrine that I was blaspheming the Holy Ghost, and I could not be forgiven for that. That had stuck in my spirit. I knew better, but I was new at all this, and it stuck in my spirit. I began to feel that this was true. The devil was using my insecurities to make all this seem real. I had begun to be resigned to the idea that I might not ever be able to go to heaven, but I had decided that I would serve the Lord with all my heart any way. What else did I have, I asked myself? When Brother Goad asked me to the platform to sing, and when their ministering team began to treat me like I was special, that bondage began to break. Still it was hard to do what the Lord asked me to do. At least until the night that the spaghetti grew. Until that night when I first sat at *The Table of God's Blessings*.

It started when we fixed the tent crew spaghetti. We ate before church that night. It had served about 14 people who traveled with the ministry, young people and old. That night Bishop Goad preached about how the churches in that area needed to unite together and serve together. There were so much division, and no one reached across denominational lines to serve God. (That is even more true today. I believe that the denominations are the devil's way to divide the body of Christ. If there was ever a time that we need to unite across denominational lines it is now. We don't have time to mess around. We are one body even if we don't want to admit it. Jesus is the head, the Spirit is the leader, and God is the Father. If we don't reach across the lines, then how will we be happy in heaven, because, take God's Word for it, there won't be denominations in heaven. If you can't leave your organization or denomination behind, then God isn't your Father, your denomination is.)

Bishop Goad mentioned that what that town needed was fellowshiping together. He mentioned that he had seen a pot of spaghetti on the camper stove when he was getting ready for service. He invited everyone under the tent to stay for a meal after service. He didn't mention that he hadn't looked in the pot to see that all there was left wasn't enough for us even. Definitely not enough for the 40 some people who stayed to fellowship. They had taken his sermon to heart. Believe me, this meal changed a lot of people's lives, not just mine. We prayed that those people would decide to leave, but they didn't. We puffed up that spaghetti as much as we could, but there was not much there. We just started dipping it out on plates using a teacup. We would dip out a cupful, and that spaghetti just grew right back to the place in the pot where it was when we took out the cupful. We served everybody there that night; some even had seconds. We took home that night as much spaghetti as we had left over before everybody ate that night.

How did that change my life? I knew that if God's presence was with these people, and if God was doing miracles in their midst, that I could surely trust them enough to do what He was telling me to do. I have never regretted doing this. God has enabled me to be able to fulfill all the desires of my heart. God took what we gave, and after He blessed it and multiplied it, then it was enough. God took what of my life I gave Him, and when He had blessed it and multiplied it, it was enough. Give God what you have. Give God your all. It may not seem like very much, but when He is done with it, it will be more than enough.

I can remember when we were talking about starting our Christian School program, which was the first step in our school and college program, they talked about making me the director. I had a little talk with God in which I told him that I couldn't do that. I wasn't qualified. I wasn't able to do it. I didn't know what I was doing. I said some words that I later regretted. I said, "God I can't". Do you know what He answered me? He told me, "I made the heavens and the earth with

just my Word. How dare you stand there and tell me that you can't do something that I have told you to do." That definitely made an impression on me. I have thought more than once about telling Him that I couldn't do something since then, but I haven't. I may have thought it for a brief moment, but I didn't mean it. I knew better. If God has told you to do something, it doesn't matter what you think about it. It doesn't matter about your limited resources. You aren't looking past your flesh to his limitless supply. It doesn't matter what people say, if He says go ahead, you'd better move on it. It doesn't matter what the economy says, God owns it all. It doesn't matter what your denominational headquarters says, God is Lord. All too often headquarters gets to be our God. (More and more pastors and ministers are seeing that they need to come out of their denominations, and serve God instead. If you are seeing this, obey God.) Let God be God and sit down at the table of His blessings. It takes courage to sit there. It takes commitment. It definitely takes staying away from sin and compromise. It takes walking in the Spirit and being led by the Spirit. You can sit at the table of compromise, or the table of blessing. That is your choice. All too often, ministers who fail to sit at the table of blessing begin to compromise just so their ministry can continue financially. Then they begin to compromise even more. They lose favor with God. It is your choice where you sit.

To sum up this chapter, I am putting the words of a song. This song talks about how when you give God all you have, even though it may seem like nothing, God will bless it and use it. It is titled, *What Are These Among So Many*.

Chorus

What are these among so many?
How will this do any good?
All I have is so little.
I would help more if I could.
What I have I will give you.
I'll do what I can do.
Take and bless it Jesus.
By faith I give it to you.

Verse 1

Five loaves and two fishes
Are all that I have.
Not enough to feed 5,000.
I'll just keep it to myself.
It's not enough among so many.
If I give I'll go hungry.
But when I yielded to the Master,
It was more than enough.

Verse 2

What can I give you Jesus?
I've nothing to give.
I really have so little,
I'll just keep it to myself.
But when my eyes were opened,
His handiwork to see.
When I yielded to the Master
He made a miracle of me.

Time for Reflection. Think about the times when God moved on your behalf and you saw a miracle. Think about times when you prayed and the Lord worked a miracle through you. Do you see the supernatural at work in your life and ministry? Why or why not? Think about those times when you felt the smallest, that you didn't have the things that you needed to get the job done, but you obeyed the Lord and the Lord used you in a mighty way? When you think about this, don't do it in a prideful boasting way, but lifting up the Lord. When we really know that we are nothing, and have nothing to give, and we know how God has lifted us up and used us in spite of our weaknesses, then we know that we have nothing to brag about. Brag on what God has done.

Chapter 9. *The Money-changers Table*

Just after the Lord came into the city of Jerusalem riding on the foal of an ass, hearing the cries of “Hosanna to the Son of David”, he went into the temple. There were a lot of things going on there that had nothing to do with God. There were the people who sold the animals for the sacrifices, and the moneychangers. They were cheating those who came to the temple. Jesus in His anger ran them out. Yes, He got angry. Matter of fact, He got angry more than once. We think that we aren’t supposed to get angry at unrighteousness, and the way that people do. If you believe that, what about this? Jesus got angry enough to drive them out. I believe that we are losing our freedoms because the church has failed to stand up for what is right. We didn’t get angry when they began to take prayer out of schools. We didn’t get angry when they told us to take the 10 commandments down out of our public places. We were taught that it was wrong to get angry. What a deception. No wonder the devil came in and slipped that one in on us. It is good to get angry. If we don’t, we will lose all our freedom.

Jesus just ran them out. Can you imagine? I think that He ran a large crowd out of there. I know that these people didn’t want to leave. They didn’t want to lose their business or money, but they didn’t argue. They just left. You can’t tell me He wasn’t angry. In Matthew 21:13, He told them words that echo down through time, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.”

I wonder what Jesus would do if he came to many of our churches. I get so tired of seeing yard sales set up in the churchyards, hot dog sales for the churches going on at Wal-Mart. One church even has a huge tent where they sell fireworks for the whole week of July 4th at Wal-Mart. How much witnessing are these groups doing? I don’t see any. They are just concerned with making money. That makes all this even sadder. Let’s get real and get right, church. No wonder the world shakes its head at most Christian and passes them on by. What kind of light are we being?

Our ministering team was at a service and the Holy Ghost just wasn’t moving. It was a Pentecostal church that had once had the anointing. Way before we even had begun the closing part of the service, the smell of something cooking was coming up through the floor. You could tell that very, very few of those present were more interested in a touch from the Lord than the hotdogs cooking in the basement. The pastor was in a hurry to get the service over so that everyone could eat, and said so. He invited everyone to stay and told them how much the hot dogs would be selling for. During the meal, he made the statement that he was known as the pastor who loved to have church dinners, and he was proud of that. We

were glad to leave. That same church has a weekly yard sale in its yard. If they would concentrate on letting the Word of God be preached and the move of God flow in its midst, they would have enough victory to pay their bills. If that pastor could become known as one who preached the Word of God with the anointing of God, that church would make it. As it is, it is foundering and almost drowning financially.

We have talked about in earlier chapters how it is easy to compromise to hold on to our purse strings. We give up on preaching the truth because we want to keep people in our congregation. I am reminded of Bishop Goad telling about a pastor whose church he went to minister in. That pastor met him at the door and said, “What ever you do, don’t preach against adultery. One of my best tithes payers is having an affair. We don’t want to lose his tithes.” Well, you know what the Holy Ghost did. The Holy Ghost won’t leave sin uncovered so that someone will give their money. He doesn’t need their money. Neither do you. You just think that you do in your own carnal thinking. The Holy Ghost moved, the sin was revealed. The pastor got out of the way, and the church had Holy Ghost revival. What is it that you want? Do you want the blessing of the Lord or do you want what carnal people can give you who are holding on to their sin? Which one is the one you can depend on to get you through it all? Do you want to sit at the moneychangers’ table or at the table of the Lord’s blessings that we have spoken about in the last couple of chapters? Here is a thought. If that pastor doesn’t make it right, if he continues to deceive his people, do you think that when the Lord comes he will go with Him? Or will he be left behind, every day watching those people whom he deceived suffer unimaginable things knowing that he could have prevented that if he had just stood up for the truth?

We read in Malachi about a polluted and contemptible table. Malachi 1:6 says, “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father where is mine honor and if I be a master, where is my fear? Saith the Lord of hosts unto you. O priests that despise my name. And ye say Wherein have we despised thy name. Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. Malachi 1:12 says, “But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, the table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.” Malachi 2:5-9 says, “My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priests’ lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people,

according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.” On in Malachi 2:17 we read, “Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?” Wow. This was true in Malachi’s time, but it also is so very true of so many preachers today.

We start out serving God in sincerity and honesty desiring to be filled with His Spirit and His Word. Then the congregation begins to try to get us to compromise to please them and keep the peace. Then the economy falls apart and we need to see that the bills are paid, not only the church bills, but our own personal bills. Then we begin to forget our purpose as watchmen in the house of God. Then we begin to forget that our main purpose is to serve a table that has sound meat for those who eat, so that they don’t fall by the wayside. We forget the law of truth needs to be in our mouth and iniquity not in our lips. We forget that our job is to, through the preaching of God’s Word, and the anointing of the Holy Ghost, to turn many away from iniquity. We begin to depart out of the way, and then we cause others to stumble at the law of God. Then because we are compromising, then we begin to sin ourselves. If we don’t stand for the truth and allow God’s Spirit to work in the midst of the church then we will fall ourselves.

I was speaking with a lady the other day who needed to confess some things. I was a person who was a bystander, someone that she felt confidence in not to judge her because I didn’t even really know her or her circumstances. She began to pour out her heart. She had been having an affair with the pastor of her church for some time. He had seduced her. He was paying for some things for her, I guess so that she would keep in the relationship. Sad to say, I knew the money probably came from his salary as pastor. He was married. Evidently his wife knew how he was, but turned a blind eye. This lady came clean and repented. God did a work in her life. The pastor is still up to his tricks. He has another lady now in the congregation. When did he come to the place where he decided that this was the lifestyle that he wanted? I believe it was when he compromised on the Lord and started setting a polluted, contemptible table. That was when the Spirit of God left his church. Beware of the polluted contemptible table. Beware of the moneychanger’s table. Both of these will not only destroy the lives and souls of those who sit there, but they will both destroy your own.

We can hear these words echo down through time, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.” Do you have the favor of the Lord in His house? Do you serve a table where the meat is sound, or do you serve a contemptible table? Are you living in sin on the side thinking that you can get by with that, patting yourself on the back because you are deceiving those around you? You really aren’t, you know. God sees it all. David

thought that nobody would ever know about Bathsheba. He had planned it all carefully. He was just fooling himself. When Nathan the prophet came in and told David, “Thou art the man”, David knew that God knew. God knows. You can’t get away with sin. It will get yelled from the highest towers of the city. That is what God does with it. Today we read about David’s sin. We also read about what he did with it. He didn’t keep it covered up. He didn’t lie about and make excuses about it. He confessed it and repented. He allowed God to deliver him from it. He got the victory over it, and kept on serving God. If you are letting sin destroy you because of the compromise you have let yourself get sucked into, there is a way out. You can get the victory over this. You just have to want to. God can and will deliver you and set your feet upon His high places.

Time for Reflection: If through reading this chapter you have realized that you are sitting at the moneychanger’s table, or you have realized that you are sitting a contemptible table of compromise for those who feast at your table, don’t just sit there. Don’t just stay there. You don’t have to. Get up. Shake yourself. Go to God. Let Him cleanse and deliver you. He will restore you. Look at those who have fallen, and God has restored them to the ministry and their ministry is more powerful than it was before. Look at David. God didn’t just discard him. He lifted him up and used him even more. The choice is yours.

Chapter 10.

The Devil's Table-The Table of Deceit

Let's do a little research project. Find a concordance, one that has all the words in the Bible listed. Just the little ones in the back of the Bibles won't work nearly as well. (By the way, one of my favorite concordances is the Strong's Concordance. I have the book version that I love, but also from time to time I will use the online version. It is free. Just search for it by typing in Strong's Online Concordance and you can find the URL. You can also buy it to install on your computer.) *Look up and read all the scriptures that use the word TRUTH. This exercise will cause you even more to realize the importance of the truth.*

Throughout the scripture the Word of God is referred to as being the Truth. Jesus is also referred to as being the Truth. Knowing the truth is the foundation to both having a relationship with God that is real, and having victory through the Word of God. If we don't know the truth, we lack both of these. That is why the main tool that the devil uses to destroy us is deception. I John 2:4 tells us that the devil is a liar and the father of it. He specializes in drawing people away from the truth. The truth is a like an umbrella of protection. When we get out away from the truth, we move out away from God's protection. God is true. To know Him we have to know the truth. Jeremiah 9:5-6 says, "And they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the Lord." The key phrase here is that they don't know the Lord because they refuse to know him. They have chosen sin instead. Also, there are those who are deceived because they have never been exposed to the truth.

Never before has there been such a time when people are falling away from the truth. We read in II Thessalonians 2:3, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first...." This falling away from the truth will get a lot worse as time goes on. I hear of preachers who are preaching that the blood of Jesus is not necessary for salvation, that the Lord is not coming back in the rapture, that there is no need for people to actively be saved because everyone will be saved in the whole world, that there is no need for repentance as we are automatically forgiven for all our sins even if we don't repent and turn from them. All these are basic Bible truths. Preachers are even missing the basic Bible truths. I hear some preachers preaching these false things who have been good preachers for decades. Why is this happening? They are falling away from the truth. We need to be sure that we aren't deceived. If we are deceived, then all our labor will be in vain.

While I was writing this chapter, my husband came in to tell me that a team of Jehovah Witness visitors had come to the door. The timing of that was amazing since I was writing about people being deceived at that minute. We are especially wary about Jehovah Witnesses. One of his friends, when we were dating, did a lot to encourage him to take me out and encouraged him later to propose to me. He was really shy and needed encouragement. This girl at the time went to church where he did. Later, though, she got into the Jehovah Witness church. Jim would try to talk to her. She didn't want to hear. She died from cancer some time ago. The saddest thing is that before she got deceived, she had gone to a church that believed in healing. But when she joined the Jehovah Witness church she denounced her belief in divine healing. So we aren't fond of the Jehovah Witness church because we have seen first hand how the deception works.

There are so many deceptions today. Matthew 24:23-27 tells us an important end time prophecy. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." There are a lot of groups who say that they know Jesus, that they have the truth, which is the only truth, the only way to get to Him. The outcome of their deceptions are spiritual death. Matthew 24:4 says, "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you." How do we keep from being deceived?

We have talked about earlier how when we choose sin over our relationship with God, then we are choosing to be deceived. Another reason why people are deceived is because they are not in a relationship with the Lord. They don't truly know Him. They are not allowing God's Spirit to lead them. I remember when I was young Christian I was in a church that didn't believe in the truth. I mentioned this in an earlier chapter. I haven't told you yet though how God kept me from being deceived by this. I had been playing the piano for the services, and they had given me a key so that I could practice on Saturdays. God had been dealing with me about leaving that church because it had a dangerous deception involved with it. The doctrine was what we call a "Jesus Only" doctrine. They taught that when Jesus came to earth, all of God was in Him. They said that when Jesus was on earth, heaven was empty. When Jesus was on earth and praying, He was really just talking to himself. I was young in the Lord and didn't realize the depth of what they were teaching. When people say that God leaves heaven and comes to earth then goes back, it isn't God they are denying. They are actually denying Jesus. Jesus is still in heaven today, sitting at the right hand of the Father. This wasn't the only deception that they had. God warned me, sent others to warn me.

The people were so nice, and I couldn't see the harm in it all. That is one reason why a lot of people are deceived. They look at the congregation, not at the doctrine being preached. We used to live beside the Jehovah Witness church in our town. I had to speak to them about some business things involving the sale of our property, so I went on Sunday after church while the people were still there. I caught myself thinking, these people are so nice and welcoming. What a warm place to go to church. Well, you already know about how we felt about the church. I had to shake myself. That spirit of deception was so strong in their midst that even as hard set as I was against this doctrine and deception, I was momentarily considering it. That shook me up. That is how the spirits of deception work against us. What if I hadn't been prayed up? What if I hadn't been studying and knew the lies in their doctrine? What if I hadn't had a relationship with the Lord, and hadn't been filled with the Holy Ghost so that I was listening to that still small voice in my spirit? Would I have given in?

Back to my story about the church God had told me to leave. I was hard headed and wouldn't listen so God showed me in a way I couldn't argue that I needed to leave. That day that I went to practice the piano for the service was the turning point for me. I unlocked the door and it opened just enough for me to get my head in, but the rest of me wouldn't fit. It was if there was a supernatural being there holding that door from opening more than it was opening. I stuck my head through the crack and looked, expecting there to be a chair or something propped against it, but there was nothing there. God held the door from opening any further. I couldn't get in. Well, that woke me up. I left that church. I only went back one more time to tell them that I was leaving because of the deception that was in the church. I told them what had happened, how God had told me to move on. I don't know if anyone heard, but they were told. That was my part. God had delivered me.

We have talked about the Jehovah Witnesses. It is fairly easy to realize that they are a cult. But do you know that there are churches on every corner who are more dangerous than cults. Why? Because they almost have the truth. If you have seen the works of a watch with gears you will understand this saying. The cogs of a gear fit together to make that watch work, all the gears working together. If one little cog of a gear gets off, then the whole thing won't run. If we get one cog off in the truth that we preach, then the whole thing is a deception. It won't be as noticeable so the devil can trap us into it easier. These kinds of deception are worse than cults. One example is the prosperity preaching that we talked about in the last chapter. It is God's Word that we live in health and prosper even as our soul prospers. But when there is no mention of commitment, keeping ourselves from sin, making a priority of serving God, obedience, and all that is taught is about having things, then something is wrong with the message. It is a cog off from the truth. We have to be aware of those small deceptions.

If there is anything in you to want the truth, God will keep you from being deceived even if it means that He holds the door keeping you away from what is deceiving you. Mark 13:22 says, “For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.” I love those words—if possible. If it were possible, we would be deceived.

How do we keep from being deceived? Know that if we have a relationship with God that is real, an obedient relationship, then this keeps us from being deceived. (I stress this an obedient relationship. What if I had not listened when God prompted my spirit about the Jehovah Witness church? What if I had kept going to the other church even after God held the door? Would He have been able to keep me from being deceived?) If we are running away from sin, instead of to it, and we are running to the truth instead of away from it. If we are being filled with the Holy Ghost and putting our deception loving flesh under subjection. If we seek God’s face and His Word more than we seek the face of those around us. If we submit and yield to God, then we will not be deceived. God is able to keep us.

I am reminded of someone who goes to a church that is pretty far from where he lives. I asked him why he traveled so far, and he told me that it was because he couldn’t find any churches around his area that believe the way he did. Now to understand you have to realize that this guy was traveling around 150 miles to go to church. That was odd to me. I asked him what his beliefs were, and he hesitated to the point where I thought that he wasn’t even going to tell me what he believed. Then he did, I could see why he hesitated. One of the things that he said was that they believed that Jesus had already come back. He had come back in all of us. That we were all of Jesus that we will ever see. When we look in the mirror we see Jesus coming back in the flesh. Well, that isn’t the kind of rapture that I read about. After I tried to talk to this guy I could see that I wasn’t getting anywhere. The reason was that he wanted to think that he had some sort of truth that no one else had. He wanted to go to a church where not everybody believed the elite way they believed. He wanted to go to a church where they had to travel that far, because it was different and exceptional to the norm.

The truth isn’t always exceptional. Jesus said in Matthew 11:25, “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” This thing is simple for the simple. I thank God for that because I am simple. When we set up ourselves as being so wise and prudent, so far above the normal people, so holy that we are no earthly good, then we are in danger of being deceived. Our pride will cause us to be deceived.

There are more people than ever being deceived today. The doctrine that we can sin and do whatever, and still go to heaven, even if we never repent and come out of that sin, is a strong lie from hell. That is one of the big deceivers. We have spoken often about how sin will trap us into being deceived. Another reason why I think that so many today are being deceived is because they don't know the Word of God. They don't take time to spend in a relationship with the Lord. They aren't obeying Him. They aren't listening to Him. They aren't reading the Word of God. They are totally dependant on others to teach them. When they hear deception, they don't have a foundation of the Word to keep them from being deceived. As Paul said in I Corinthians 3:1, we become babes in Christ eating the milk of the Word instead of feasting on the meat that will sustain us. Because of that we aren't able to sort out deceptions when they come. If all the truth we hear is what is spoken to us by a minister, or what we read from a book that someone has written, then we will be easily deceived. I think that Christians fall for this because they doubt themselves. They believe that they aren't spiritual enough to feed themselves. They are convinced that they have to have someone else to feed them. We need to grow up, get the spoon in hand, pull up to the table, and find out for ourselves how wonderful the feast of God's Word can be. As pastors and teachers, we need to encourage those we minister to be able to do the same.

If there are some in our midst who are being deceived, how do we stop this? Read this section of scripture in I Thessalonians, 2:3-13. How can you be sure that the truth is what you serve at the tables that you sit for those you minister to? How can you be sure that they are receiving the truth? How can you stop those who are being deceived? The answers for all these questions are found in this passage.

Time for Reflection: Are you feasting at the table of the truth, or are you edging toward the devil's table of deception? Are you encouraging those you minister to so that they are feasting at the table of God's Word?

Think about the importance of the walking in the truth. I am not talking here about denominational differences, but the Word of God. Think about how others are being deceived, and these deceptions. How can you help those in your congregation not to be deceived?

What is the next table coming up? We have two tables together. We will be sitting at *A Table in the Presence of Your Enemies, and a Table in the Wilderness*. These are both tables of blessings ready for you.

Chapter 11.

A Table in the Presence of Mine Enemies *A Table in the Wilderness*

I am going to talk about two tables in this chapter, a *Table in the Presence of Mine Enemies*, and a *Table in the Wilderness*. We know that we have an enemy. Sometimes he is hard to see because he is invisible. He is not physical, but spiritual. Often we miss what he is doing because we are walking in the flesh and not in the spirit. When we fail to identify the enemy that is when he wins. We have a battle, not because we are failing to serve God, but because we are serving Him. We have an enemy because we are God's children trying to work for Him. If you don't have a battle, the enemy already has you. Sometimes we will begin to feel condemned when we have a battle. We begin to feel that if our faith were great enough, we wouldn't have a battle. Don't get down when you have a battle. Look at it this way. To have a battle means that you have gotten the devil's attention. You must be doing something right.

The enemy comes against us in many ways. If we can't identify him, then he wins. We fail to identify him when we fail to walk in the spirit, when we fail to take time to hear the voice of God, and when we fail to obey what he tells us to do. It is so easy to take things at face value, to only see what is on the surface. Let me give you an example. We go through times periodically when it seems that every piece of equipment that can malfunction, malfunctions. When everything that can go wrong, goes wrong. It is easy during those times just to deal with trying to fix what we need to fix, and move on. God begins to show us that this isn't a natural thing. The enemy is at work stealing our finances. We bind the devil. We take authority over him. This can only be done by praying in the Holy Ghost. Ephesians 6:18 tell us a key to spiritual warfare, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit..." The Holy Ghost speaking in tongues through us can break the stronghold of the enemy. Let Him pray through you. That is a key to spiritual warfare. Know your authority and stand against him. I have written a book, *Your Authority As a Child of God*. It is a good book about spiritual warfare. Another example of a time when the devil has come against us is a time when it seemed that all of us were getting some sort of weird sicknesses. They weren't all the same, so it wasn't catching. We just had strange physical problems start to develop. We began to compare notes, and it was easy to see the devil was the root of the problem. We declared healing in our midst, and bound that liar. We had to take authority and his plan was brought to nothing.

We read in Ephesians 6:10-18 how to fight. We read what our weapons are. Read this passage. We won't get into each piece of armor, but go over this. In II Corinthians 10:4 we read, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." We can't fight the devil

in the flesh. There are sometimes things that we have to do in the flesh to break the strongholds of satan. Obedience is a key to breaking some of the strongholds of satan. But our weapons are not carnal. We have to be sure that we aren't fighting this fight in the flesh. That won't get the job done.

Many times the battle will seem like it is just too hard to keep fighting. Many times I have felt like giving up. One of the things that would keep me from doing this is that I have seen so many times when people would give up, then I would see that if they would have held on just a while longer, they would have seen the victory in their situation. I would think to myself, if I give up now, I could be giving up just before it turns out OK. I would keep going on for that reason. Also, I would remember that the devil was fighting me for a reason. He must know something I didn't. If he was fighting me, then what I was doing must be important. That would encourage me to go on. Also, I would think, what if I quit on serving God? What else would I do and where would I go? Like the disciples asked Jesus, when he turned to them and asked, "Will you go away also?" This was after many people had turned away from following Him. The disciples asked, "Where else would we go?" Where else could we go? Why give up? You might be giving up just before the victory comes.

There are two ways to give up. One is to quit; the other is to keep going half-heartedly. Both are quitting. When we get into a seem-right way, a lukewarm way, a state of compromise that is just the same as giving up. Matter of fact, that is more dangerous to us, and to others around us than giving up. When you find yourself failing to push on 100%, spend time with the Lord. He can renew your spirit and your mind. He can renew your strength and give you just what you need to go on.

Yes, the battle is sometimes hard, but the victory is sweet. I love to read the Psalms. There are so many that talk about the battle, and they always include praising God for the victory. Psalms 23 is one of those. I love this part—verse 5, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies...." Picture David at war with one of his many enemies. He had many battles. He was constantly fighting. Many of the battles not only threatened his own life, but the lives of those in his country. Picture the enemy lined up on the hills around him, ready to attack. Now picture this, God setting a table of blessings for him. David just sat down and feasted right there in the power and presence of the Lord, in His blessings, right in the presence of his enemies. What power did his enemies have over him? None. He was not concerned with his enemies, but he was delighting in the table that the Lord had set for him. He had a victory right in the presence of his enemies without even fighting.

I am reminded of Jehoshaphat in II Chronicles 20:1-30. Read his story. He didn't win the battle because he was mighty. He didn't win because he was spiritual. He didn't win because he was always right. He won because he obeyed the Lord. He won because he praised the Lord. When it seems like the enemy is pressing around on every side, lift up your hands and praise the Lord. Psalms 22:3 says, "But thou are holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." God will inhabit our praise. If you want God to come on the scene and move for you, don't wail and moan and tell Him all that is going on wrong. He know all this already. Don't be full of fear. Just lift up your hands and begin to praise Him. Praise Him because He is who He is. Praise Him because He has seen you through all the other battles, and you trust Him to move for you in this one. Praise Him, and His presence will fill the house.

There is another table that we will mention in this chapter. It is the *Table in the Wilderness*. There are many wildernesses that we go through. I am reminded of the wilderness Jesus went through when he was tempted of the devil. We have our temptation wildernesses as well. We go through wildernesses when our own stupid flesh takes us far from God's presence, and the victory of His Word. We go through wildernesses when the pressures of our life, and the battles make it seem like we cannot win. We go through those wildernesses when like Moses, we see the burning bush and it changes the direction of our whole life. We may go through wildernesses like Elijah whose only request at this time of his life was that the Lord take away his life, only to rise up and go on to have some of the greatest victories of his life. We may go through a wilderness like Jeremiah who mourned over the spiritual conditions at his time, but he went ahead and was used by the Lord to bring about change. We may go through a wilderness like Paul when he went to Arabia and sought the Lord about his calling and the truth that God revealed to him. We often don't find God in the good times, or in the easy times, but it is in our trials that we find our answers, our greatest victories, our burning bushes that change our lives. Praise God for the wilderness. It is there often where God restores our souls. It is there that God sets a table for us.

In Psalms 78:19 David speaks about how Israel in the wilderness had begun to speak against God. They said, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" God had done just that. He had fed them manna from heaven, quail from the sky, water from a rock, a way was made where there seemed no way, the enemy was stopped, they were led, all this was done for them. Still they doubted and complained. God can furnish a table for you in the wilderness. A wonderful table where He can draw you aside to Himself in victory.

Time for Reflection: Think about some of the tables that God has set for you in the presence of your enemies. Think about the *Tables in the Wilderness* that you have sat at. Think about how God used them to bring you to a deeper walk with

Him, or how He used them to change the direction of your life. Think about some of these times. Build other's faith in the Lord. Also, help others to see that the battles that they are going through may be the same ones that others have gone through and overcome. Sometimes the enemy makes us to feel isolated, especially as ministers. We need to see that we aren't. That others have walked where we are walking, and they have walked into victory. So can we.

Chapter 12.

The Table of the Called

This table is a different table from most. Some of the tables that we have talked about were tables for “whosoever will”. This one is different because it is only by invitation. This is a table for those who have been called to serve the Lord in the ministry. In one respect we are all called as children of God. God calls us by His Spirit. As children of God, we are all called according to a purpose. We are all called unto grace. We are all called to be saints. But God calls and appoints ministers, teachers, evangelists, and workers in His kingdom. This doesn’t mean that we are to puff ourselves up because we are called. It means that we are to assume this awesome responsibility that the Lord has for us. *This chapter is written a little differently. I want the focus in this chapter to be not what I have written about the scriptures, but the scriptures themselves. As you read the scriptures think about them. Let what God has to speak to you through His Word be the focus here. I have added a few comments just to be in on your reflections.*

Here are some scriptures that talk about being called. In II Corinthians 3:6 we read, “Who (God) also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” This is a reminder that when God calls us, he will enable us through His Spirit to do what He called us to do. We don’t have to do this thing on our own. God will give us what we need to get the job done. If we rely on our flesh, we will fail. If we walk in the Holy Ghost, obeying God, in His anointing, using the gifts that He gives us, God will use us in a mighty way. It is also a reminder that the Word of God without the anointing can actually kill. We have talked about the children’s home that left out the Spirit of God and pounded the children with the Word, how that led then to have a rebellious attitude. We have to mix the Word with the anointing.

In II Corinthians 4:1-2 we read, “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not: but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” We must faint not at His calling. We have to give the people the truth of the Word of God, not handling it deceitfully. We have talked about the importance of giving the people the truth. We are charged with that as ministers.

Again, these are scriptures that mention being called. In II Corinthians 5:18-19 we read, “And all things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and

hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation.” We have been given the ministry of reconciling people with God. That means getting them together, settling the difference that was between them, renewing them in their relationship with Him. Just a look beyond this, one day everything in creation and all those who serve God will be reconciled back to God. What a day.

We read in Ephesians 3:8-12, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; To the intent that now unto the principalities, and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him.” What a powerful verse. We are sometimes the least of all saints, but grace is given to us so that we can preach. Wow. We don’t have to do this on our own. We do it through the grace of God. Why do we preach? Why do we have this eternal purpose which he purposed in our lives? So that all can see the unsearchable riches of Christ. There are several sermons in this scripture.

This section of scripture is so lengthy that I will just put the reference instead of the whole scripture, Colossians 1:23-29. Read the whole selection, but I am putting here the closing verse, verse 29, “Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.” Those times when you feel like you aren’t getting anything done, that you aren’t seeing the fruits of your labor, keep striving. You may not see all that is being done. This thing is His work. He will be working in the lives of people, in the congregation, in the circumstance, and you may not ever see it. His working works in you mightily as well. When you feel like you can’t go on, realize that He is working in you and through you. You can’t do it on your own. But He can do it through you.

I love this one, Timothy 1:11-12, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.” Go on and read through verse 17. Jesus has enabled you. Be faithful.

In II Timothy 1:9-14, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believe, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed

unto Him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” This thing is not our doing. We are called not according to our works, but according to His purpose. We can not find peace as a minister by doing what we want, or by doing what our congregation wants, or by doing what our denomination headquarters want, but by finding God’s purpose, yielding to Him and obeying Him. We will find peace when we find His day-to-day purpose, His will, and we walk in it.

This verse I am putting last because I wanted to write more about it. In Romans 8:28 we read, “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.” This is a favorite verse for many. I know that here it is talking about all the people that God calls, all the saints. We can tell from the verses that come before and after it. However, I want to concentrate on this one part of this verse, “to them who are the called according to His purpose.” We are all called according to HIS purpose. You have a purpose and a plan. God has called you to accomplish certain things in His kingdom. When I think of this, I think of the command headquarters of a country that is in war. The commanders often are shown in movies having a huge map. On it is marked the different territories that are covered strategically with some type of troops whether land or sea. They see the “big picture”. They know that the country is covered from all possible attacks of the enemy. They know that even if the enemy is working in their country, they have outposts strategically placed throughout. Whether the war is won or lost is often determined by the effectiveness of this command post. The different outposts who are in contact with the command post don’t see the same picture that the command post does. They may not be in contact with one another specifically throughout the whole country. They don’t see the big picture. They are only dealing with the war in their specific area, handling what the enemy is doing in their area that they are given. If they don’t win in their area, it will affect what goes on in the whole country. They are obeying orders from the command post, the purposes of their leaders. That is all they may see of the whole picture. In these command posts (at least on the movies) it always shows that they have technology which enables them to see all the details of what is going on from an almost unearthly perspective. They can even see all the soldiers of their troops and all the soldiers of the enemies’ troops. They also have intelligence that they gather so that they can anticipate the moves of the enemy. They coordinate all their troops based on all this knowledge.

Do you see where I am going here? You are called according to a specific purpose. When you obey God, you will fulfill that purpose that He calls you to. That is a specific purpose. We all as ministers of the Gospel have a specific purpose, a certain outpost that we are to protect against the enemy. I have heard

this said a lot through the years. Someone would be talking about someone else who was ministering, and they would make the statement that this person would be able to reach people that no one else would reach. Or that this person would be able to reach out to the people in this area that no one else would be able to reach out in. I believe that this is true. God has placed people strategically in the spiritual realm in different areas (physical areas-towns, etc., and spiritual areas) meeting the needs of those people, or that area. He sees the whole picture. He is the command post headquarters. He knows everything. He is able to position us strategically against the enemy. He is able to position us strategically so that we reach out to the whole world. What we do in our area affects the entire battle, not only in our area, but in the whole world. That is a bold statement, but it is true. For example, when we took over the college, we could only see the battle that we were going through at the time. It was a difficult time. We obeyed God dealing with the day-to-day struggles and tasks He had us do. He was working out a plan. He did a work that enabled us to reach around the world. You are reading this book in an extension college because at the time we obeyed Him and held our post against the enemy. At that time we had no idea this would happen. Now we have over 40 colleges in over 17 different countries. We couldn't even see this was going to happen, we just obeyed day to day the Commander who saw the big picture.

This is just the small picture of how this works. If it wasn't for the pastors holding the spiritual areas who are strategically placed around the world in the spiritual realm, I believe that we would lose the war. What am I saying? We fight a spiritual war. The prayers, praise, and obedience of the saints push back the powers of satan in the spiritual realm. Have you ever thought about how important that is? That is why after the rapture takes place the powers of darkness will overshadow the world. There will be no more troops out in the field. For example, we live in a town where 80% of the people profess to be Christians. When it came up to be voted on whether or not the town could have liquor by the drink, it was voted in by 40% of the people. Do the math. The Christians failed God. The churches in the area failed God. They failed to encourage their people to make a stand. The enemy won. This was passed only a year or so ago, and we can already see the affects of this. That is one small example. When the troops fail to keep their position, the enemy wins. When each place loses, the whole body of Christ loses. This is a physical example, something physical that is seen from a spiritual battle that was lost.

There are many times when what we do physically affects the spiritual battle around us. We are encompassed about with a spiritual battle that is going on in the heavenly places around us. We don't see it, but God does. When we listen and obey His instructions, our actions, attitudes, prayers, praises, and obedience affect what is going on in the heavenly places as well. One example of this is our radio

stations. God has shown several people that over our area where our ministry headquarters is located, there is a spiritual cloud. It comes because so many people in our area have given in to the deception that it is OK to sin and live however you want to because God will forgive you. The devil through this deception controls many of the churches. The anointing of the Holy Ghost can't be where He is not welcome. When people choose sin over the anointing of God, which will convict them of their sins, they put the Holy Ghost out the door. What does this do strategically to the area? The churches are so important in the spiritual realm of things. When a church is a powerhouse of praise and prayer and obedience, it kicks the devil in the head. I have heard Bishop Goad say after a power packed service that you could just imagine the devil's demons laying out in the yard knocked out cold. That is just an illustration, but you get the idea. When churches fail to let the Spirit of God move in their midst, then they fail to affect their area in the spiritual realm. The devil wins in that area. Then a cloud of oppression settles over the area. When our ministry first moved to this area, God led Bishop Goad to purchase the area's radio station. God told him to bombard the airways with the truth and the power of the anointing on anointed songs and messages. We can tell a difference in the area since we started this. We run the station from 6:00 am to 12:00 midnight. That is a lot of Gospel, a lot of praise, and lot of anointed messages from the area preachers who join with us that is going out. It is making a different.

God has you where you are for a reason and a purpose. You may not have a radio station, but if your church is power packed with the anointing, you are going out into the airways. You are affecting your area in the spiritual realm. If your church or ministry wasn't there in your area to maintain your post, the rest of the body would feel the void. You may think that you aren't very important, that you aren't very affective. You have no idea. The Command Leader is looking at things from a very different prospective. He has you strategically placed where you are. He has called you for a purpose. When you obey Him, you are meeting that purpose. If you weren't maintaining your post, the rest of the body of Christ would be affected. We are all linked together through the command post. We might not see how important we are, but that really doesn't affect the fact that we are very important indeed.

Throughout this chapter we have read about what it means to be called. We are called to a specific purpose, something that the Lord has chosen for us to do.

I want to close this chapter with this song *You've Got To Shine*.

Chorus

You've got to shine, shine on.
The cliffs there are rugged, light their way safe to the harbor.
Keep shining on, shine one.
Keep standing tall, you've got to hold on. Shine on.

Verse 1

The storms rage high on every side, wind and waves beat you down.
Still stand up tall with truth in your sight, let the world see your light.
Your joy will come in the morning, storms pass in the night.
Keep standing tall till Jesus comes, then He'll be the light.

Verse 2

Now God needed a lighthouse there, that's why He told you where to stand.
If you stand alone, no matter, keep your light shining on.
If one ship comes this way passing in the night,
Guide them safe to the harbor. Keep shining that light.

Time for Reflection: Ask God to show you if you are obeying your calling. Ask Him to show you if you are as a leader affective in the overall spiritual battle in your area.

Think about how it is important for you to stand where you are standing. Think about others whom you know are in God's will, and how it is important for them to be there. Encourage those. Tell that person what they are doing for the Lord in the position that they hold is important. Tell them how they are impacting people that maybe no one else could reach. Include everyone. Don't let there be any big I's and little You's. All are equally important as all are called. If someone is new in the Lord, share with them an aspect of their ministry that they might not yet have seen. Encourage them as they grow in the Lord.

Chapter 13. *Come and Dine*

This is the closing chapter. We have talked about a lot of tables in this book. Probably more than what you have thought about. I guess when you first started reading it, it sounded kind of boring, a book about tables. It wasn't so boring after all. There were some tables we needed to avoid, but many of them were welcoming. The key to being able to enjoy a table is this. We have to come and dine. One of the last meals that the Lord ate with His disciples was actually one of the most famous. Why? Because it was one the Lord prepared for them Himself, and He prepared it for them after His resurrection. We read about it in John 21. The disciples had been fishing all night, and had caught nothing. When the morning came, Jesus stood on the shore, but they didn't know who it was. After all, they knew He had died. He asked them if they had any meat, and when they answered him no, he told them to cast their net on the other side of the boat. They got so many fish they could hardly draw the net in. They had 153 fish in that net, but that net didn't break. Then He told them to come and dine. He then spoke to Peter three times telling him to "feed my sheep". And finished saying, "Follow thou me". They had to come and dine. They had to get filled with the meat that He had provided through a miracle. They had to bring in the net that was filled. They had to feed His sheep. They had to follow Him. If you want a key to a successful ministry, that is it. Put short and simple. The key words that I want you to remember from this is, "Come and Dine".

Come and dine. Sometimes when you have time, cross-reference the times that Jesus used the word, "Come". It will amaze you. One of the last times come is used as an invitation is in Revelations 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." We have many invitations. We just have to accept them and come. Can you imagine a huge food bar? I have been to some that filled a whole corner of a restaurant. You could wander around there all day, and not eat all they had to offer. Can you imagine someone coming to the restaurant, and going to the food bar to scope it out, you know how many people do, just to see what's on it before they get their plate. Then they go get their plate and start around the food bar. They walk by every selection, and pile their plate full. Then they go back to the table but they don't sit down. They don't pick up their fork. They don't put a bite of food in their mouth. They don't eat a thing. They look at all the people at the table with them, and around the restaurant, who are enjoying their meal, but they don't eat a bite. They look like they have a good time, but they go away hungry. Come and dine. Don't be like the person at the food bar. Fill your plate full with all God's goodness. Pull up a chair at the table. It was set there for you. Feast on His goodness. Come and dine.

I want to go now to the final table that the Lord will prepare for us-- The Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We read about this in Revelation 19:7-9, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God." Now I am going to be a little bold here and suggest that I don't believe that the marriage supper of the Lamb is going to be a real meal at a real table. I know that artists have made beautiful, heart touching depictions of a table set for all the saints. However, when I read this, I believe that it is so much more than an actual meal at a table. Let's read again in verse 7, "For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." I believe that this is a symbolic meal. It is symbolizing that the bride of Christ has come. She is arrayed in her fine linen, the righteousness of the saints. She is made pure and white. Blessed are they that are called to that supper. This is the time when the bride of Christ will be united with Jesus her Savior who washed her clean in His precious blood. I believe that the table the Lord will set at this feast is so much greater than a table full of food. I believe that this is the time when we will become one with our Lord and will step back and reveal to us all that this means. He will show us those wonders that He has in store for us. That is so much more than a belly full of food. I believe that we will have meals in heaven, but this particular supper is so much more than a physical table.

Just before we got married, my husband came to my mom's house where I was staying at the time, to pick me up to take me to the church. I packed his car full of the remaining things that I hadn't already moved to our home. He said later that was when he realized that I was coming home with him to our home, and I was really his bride. That I was going to spend the rest of my life together, one with him. (Just a little humor here. We got married in a snowstorm, and we were snowed in at his mother and dad's for three days for our honeymoon.) But when I put all my stuff in his car and got in with him, and later when he took me to our home, that was the beginning of our life together. When we get to heaven, we will have a greater celebration than that. We will be standing there in clothes of righteousness that He purchased for us by His shed blood. We will be home with all our belongings there that He has made ready for us. We won't have to pack our few belongings in His car, like I did in my husband's car, but He will step back and reveal all the riches that He has been storing up for us. We will be home. We will be one with Him. That moment is the marriage supper of the Lamb. Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

We have more to look forward to than we can even imagine. I believe that there isn't a lot written about heaven in the Bible because our human words can't capture it and our human minds can't perceive it all. For an up lift, research and reread the scriptures that talk about heaven, and what we have in store as the saints of God. It will be the best that God has to give us. What can't imagine it, we can't conceive it's greatness and wonder, and we can't put it in words to tell it. I knew a man who died for several minutes on the operating table. He went to heaven and lived to tell about it. At least he tried to tell about it. When his wife asked him about what he saw, he tried to put it in words, but he wasn't able to. There were no words for it. One day we will be at that Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Whether or not it will involve an actual table and meal, I don't know, but I do know it will be far more than that. It will be when Jesus becomes one with His bride. When He welcomes us home. Later in Revelations 21 there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Verse 3 says, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Go on and read the rest of chapter 21 and 22 for a greater blessing.

How do we get to go there? Being made ready as the bride we talked about earlier in the chapter, with that garment clean and white, the righteousness of the saints, made spotless by the blood of Jesus. Verse 14 says, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Obedience is a key, doing His commandments. Most of all we do what it says in verse 17. We have to come.

We have a lot to look forward to. We can't get so carried away with looking at all the problems in today's world, all the problems with the economy and weather weirdness and all that is coming with this end of time season that we are facing. We have to keep our eyes on the prize that is waiting us by and by. We have a lot to look forward to. Don't look down. Don't look all around. Just keep looking up and beyond. That will see you through.

Come and Dine. Come and dine at all of God's tables. Most of all don't miss that final Marriage Supper where we will become one with Him and inherit all His wonderful blessing. Come and Dine.

Closing

As a final closing, I hope that you have enjoyed this book and these classes. I pray that you will through its pages realize the many tables that the Lord has set for you. I pray that through this knowledge that you have pulled up a chair to some that you have never set at before. I also pray that you have learned of those tables that you need to avoid, and if you are setting at one of those, that you have overturned your chair in your hurry to get up and move on. Most of all, I pray that one day I see you at that greatest supper of all, and together we feast on the presence of the Lord and His eternal blessings that He has for us all. Remember, there are no great saints, and no little saints. We are all little in His presence. He welcomes us all equally. If you feel that you don't deserve the tables He has for you, you won't sit down. Realize that through His blood, and through His Word, and His Spirit, He has made you able to sit down. It is His great pleasure that He feast there with you. He has made you welcome. Come and dine.