

Hearing
the
Master's
Voice

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Introduction

I wear a lot of hats. I work in a Christian Academy. I teach there, and I have been the director for over 24 years. In that job I not only work with the students in the school, but I also work with their parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, and everybody else that comes in with problems. I do a lot of counseling every day. That comes with working with children, especially teens, especially as time goes on. Today's world gets rougher as time goes on. More people come in to talk than in the past, and when they do, it seems their problems are bigger. Parents talk about the fear of being able to make it in today's world. They talk about losing jobs, health problems, seeing children go down the wrong roads, and worrying about making the right decisions in their lives. The students, especially the older ones talk about worrying about making the right decisions for their future. They talk about the choices that they make every day, and how some haven't turned out so very good. I talk to some that I really worry about. They don't have a relationship with God. They don't have a clue of what's in God's Word. They aren't listening and obeying God's voice. Then I see the previous few who come in and I can tell by the peace in their lives that they are focused on obeying God. Their lives reflect it. It isn't that everything is going perfect. It isn't that they don't have any problems.

The Bible says that the rain falls on the just and the unjust. It won't be perfect even when you listen and obey God, but most people need to realize that if they do this it will be a lot better than it is.

When people come in to talk, I find myself led by the Lord to tell them over and over, if you would just listen to God's voice and obey Him, then these things that are going wrong in your life would be fixed. As time goes on, however, I have realized that most Christians have no idea of how to do this. I am convinced that many Christians don't understand that they can have a personal, real relationship with the Lord. They don't understand that they can get to know God, and that they can walk with Him. They don't understand the importance of yielding to God, and they don't understand what it means to be led by His voice. Because of this, their life is nothing but turmoil. The lives of their loved ones are filled with chaos. The devil is reigning in their lives, and his reign is cruel. They could overcome this all if they would only listen and obey. They just don't know how. So the devil is winning.

I am convinced that the importance of obedience is not taught in most churches. I am convinced as well, that most pastors and teachers in the church don't know about it themselves, which is even sadder. The blind is leading the blind in a lot of

churches. Flesh rules in most churches. Because of this so does back biting, division, and general chaos. There is a lack of vision, a lack of purpose. Church becomes just a social club with no real depth. If you are a pastor, evangelist, missionary, teacher, or a worker of any kind in your church, then if you are not listening, yielding, and submitting to the Spirit of God, then you will not have a fruitful work. God will not bless your work. If you don't feel that you are a pastor, evangelist, missionary, teacher, etc. then you aren't off the hook. You are still called to do a work for the Lord. We are all called. When Jesus said, go ye into all the world, he wasn't just talking about the ministers. He was talking to all of us. Our world starts where we are. We see people every day that we can minister to, who need a word from the Lord. We may be all of God some of the people around us may ever see. Those we love the most may be influenced by our actions in a greater way than we realize. We all need to hear the voice of the Lord and obey it. One day in heaven we will see the fruits of our labor.

Whether you are a pastor, evangelist, missionary, teacher, or whether you sit on the pews, a key to unlocking victory in your life is learning to listen to the voice of the Master. The key to unlocking victory in the lives of those you love is learning to hear the voice of the One who can lead you as you lead others. I am convinced that hearing and

obeying God is something that few Christians understand. In today's world, if we don't hear and obey, we won't be able to overcome the storms that lay ahead. Not only can we overcome, but we can lead others to victory as well. But only if we hear the voice of the Master. Obedience is the key to unlock a life of victory. Let's turn the lock.

Why should we hear the voice of the Master? Why should we listen and obey? In the next chapter, we'll talk more about why.

Chapter 1.

Why Listen

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

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

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

So how did it turn out for this person who asked me what I thought? When I shared with her how important it was to hear and obey God that made her stop and think. She realized that this was a part of her relationship with the Lord that she lacked. She thought prayer was just asking God for help. She had prayed and asked God for help. She had even prayed and asked God for healing. She had not stopped to listen. Prayer was a one sided relationship. She just talked. She never listened. She wasn't even sure how to hear the

voice of the Lord. Going through this circumstance changed her relationship with God, and it changed her life. She had been saved for most of her life. For the first time, she realized that she didn't have an obedient, listening relationship with the Lord. She realized that I couldn't tell her what God wanted her to do. She realized that no one else could tell her what God wanted her to do. She had to go to Him. We could only confirm what God wanted her to do. We could only reinforce the thought, but the guidance for that life saving decision had to come from God. She was never the same after that. When she got hold of this knowledge of having a listening, obedient relationship with God, it changed her life. She was more victorious. Her life stopped being so chaotic and it began to have the kind of order in it that only can come when we start obeying God. This influenced her whole family.

That is why I am writing this book. Maybe you too will realize the importance of having an obedient relationship with the Lord. Maybe this will happen before you have a circumstance like the one I mentioned. If that had been you, would you have been able to hear God's voice and make the right choice? Would you have been alive today? Have you gone through this kind of circumstance? What was the outcome?

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

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

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

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

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

We know the importance of obedience, but sometimes we don't know how to obey. We worry about doing the right things, but other than hearing God's Word, we don't know how to be able to tell the right things that we need to do when it comes

to everyday decisions. We want to be able to advise those we love (our spouses, our children, our friends) who come to us who are facing life-changing decisions, and we don't know how to advise them. We want to be able to have the strength to do what is right, but sometimes we aren't even sure what is right, so we are double minded and that makes us waver, that makes us weak. All these are times when we need to know how to hear the voice of the Lord. When we have that obedient relationship with the Lord, our walk with Him is strengthened. We are strengthened in our life with Him. It is my prayer that through reading this book you see that you are able to obey God. That knowing how to do this stops being such a mystery. You may have given up on the thought of walking in obedience because you tried it so many times, and you failed. You may have even given up on trying to do it before you got started.

Some people have the idea that this kind of obedience is just necessary for pastors, and preachers. After all they are the ones who have to guide people. Ordinary people in the pews aren't spiritual enough to make this kind of decisions. So when something life threatening happens, and they have to make a decision, they go to their pastor who they assume since he is a pastor, has all the answers from the Lord. Wow. If my life is hanging in the balance I want to be sure that the

one I go to is perfect. I want to know that He has all the answers, not just part of them, or not just his perception of them. I want to know that He is perfect in His answers. I don't want to take a man's opinion. You may not even really know your pastor. Even if you do, he definitely isn't perfect, even though you may have a high opinion of him. He is open to make mistakes. Why? Because he is human. Go to God for your answers. Get a relationship with the Lord. Do you know why so many pastors fail and fall? They have people in their congregation who go to them constantly instead of going to God. They have to carry the load of all that. They have to be God for those people in their congregation who refuse to get a relationship with God instead of with them. By the way, if you are a pastor, or worker in the church, don't let people do this to you. It not only destroys you, but it can destroy them. Guide people to find a relationship with God, so that you don't have to play God. Playing God is dangerous to both them and you. You don't have all the answers. Don't let them put you in the place where you feel like you have to. It can lift up our ego when people do this. Many pastors have fallen because they became God to their congregation instead of leading them to have a relationship with Him.

I could go on here with lots more testimonies of people who heard and obeyed God's voice and

how their lives were saved, or changed dramatically, or the lives of people around them were changed forever. I am not just talking about people in the Bible. I am talking about ordinary people that I have known. I am not talking about super spiritual, perfect people who never make mistakes. I am talking about ordinary people like you who dared to listen and obey. You can do this. Matter of fact, listening to the voice of God and obeying is a lot easier than not hearing it and trying to do it on your own. That is the impossible way.

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

His family members were convinced that God doesn't heal. So they all came together and convinced this man that he needed to have treatments. He heard all those voices and agreed. He didn't have a listening, obedient relationship with his Master. He paid a terrible price.

I know that the examples I used in this chapter are just examples of people who were facing health decisions. You may not be going through that. But are you going through facing a life changing decision that you have to make? Are you going through making every day life decisions and you aren't sure about the outcomes of these? Are you trying to guide someone who is making this sort of decision? Does it seem like your life is full of chaos and turmoil and you long for peace? Are you longing for the peace that can only come when we are walking in the will of God? Are you unsure in your relationship with the Lord? As you read this chapter, have you longed for a more obedient relationship with Him? Then keep reading. This book could change your life. Coming up next-Jesus is our shepherd. He is our protector and keeper. How can you get to know Him in a closer relationship? Here is more in the next chapter.

Chapter 2. *Knowing the Shepherd*

The main scripture for this chapter is found in John 10:1-15, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth

them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

One of the keys for entering into an obedient relationship with God, being able to hear and obey His voice, is trust. If you don't trust someone, you aren't going to yield to Him. The sheep trust their shepherd. They know his voice and know that they are safe with him. They know him. Sad to say, a lot of Christians haven't gotten to know the Lord enough to trust Him enough to yield to Him. They don't know their Shepherd. They know about Him, but you have to do more than know about Him, you have to get to know Him. These sheep in this scripture know their Master. They haven't just read about Him in the Bible. They haven't just heard about Him in church. They haven't just heard people preach or teach about Him. They haven't just heard the testimonies of others in church. They know Him. They know His voice. They hear it and follow it.

I grew up on a farm and I know a little about animals. They really get to know their master, and they follow him, especially if he comes with the food bucket, or a bale of hay. One of the most amazing examples of animals knowing their

master I saw when I was in Romania. I was there just after the revolution when they gained their freedom from communism. I had gone with a group who were helping start Christian schools. We also met for a week long seminary with over 100 public school teachers who wanted to learn how to put Christ in their classrooms. That was wonderful. We sure couldn't have done that in our local public schools. That was an eye opener. Up to that time, under communism, no one was allowed to own any land. You could have a few animals for your own use. The farms there were government owned farms that they worked on, and the government kept almost everything you harvested. So there were no fences. Every one supposedly owned everything together, but in truth the government owned it all. After communism fell very few people could afford fences, so the land was open without fences. We were working in a beautiful village that was built along the sides of a huge hill. On the top of the hill, they had built a church. There was a huge pond there for water, and around the pond was a grazing place that covered the whole top of this hill. In the mornings, some of the children of the village would start at the bottom of the hill and walk up the hill. As they went, they would gather together all the animals of the villagers: the cows, horses, donkeys, sheep, goats, even geese and ducks. They would all eventually stop at that grazing place at the top of the hill. By the time they got to

the top there were hundreds of animals. At the end of the day, the boys would start driving them down the hill. I was amazed at how those kids kept up with what belonged to whom. I asked one boy how they did that. He told me that they didn't have to know, the animals knew whom they belonged to and where they lived and as they would go through the village they would simply go home. Each would turn into the house where they belonged. That was amazing to me, and I think about that a lot as an illustration of what it means to know your master. When we know our Master, and we follow Him, we will know where home is. We will know His voice. We won't get confused as we wind down the little crooked streets for miles, but we will know which is our home. We won't wander; we will just go home. We will know whom we belong to. We will know our Master. To be able to hear the Master's voice, we have to know the Master.

Sheep are the same way. They aren't driven like the animals were in my illustration, but the shepherd leads them. Shepherds go in front of the sheep. Sheep are very timid. They are very vulnerable to attack from animals. They don't have hooves like horses, or donkeys. They can't kick like them. Even cattle can kick to protect themselves. Even a mean old goose has a better chance of getting away from danger than a fat, wooly sheep. They are helpless. If they don't stay

with their shepherd and follow him, then they can get in trouble fast. I read one book about sheep that said that when they are full of wool, if they happen to roll over on their side, they can't even get up. They are a lot like a turtle in that. They have to have their shepherd to roll them back up on their short little legs. They are helpless.

I think of all this and I think about why Jesus used sheep and shepherds to illustrate this understanding in this verse. Humans are supposed to be so self efficient. We are supposed to be in control, in dominion. We are smart. We don't need a leader. We have the ability to figure out where we need to go, and the ability to get there no matter what it takes. We don't need a shepherd. Or do we? Why did Jesus compare us to sheep? I have a picture in our office at school behind my desk. It is a picture of the Good Shepherd with His sheep. He is holding one of the lambs in His arms. He has His staff. The look on His face is tender as He looks at the lamb. You have probably seen this picture. It is a popular picture. I think I know why it is so well known, and a lot of people have it in churches. I don't know about you, but if I am going through a time when it feels like the world is falling down on my head, I can look at that picture and I can begin to feel the love of my Shepherd. I can feel that look of love that He has in the picture for that lamb. It begins to soak into my tired, weary soul. I know

that my Shepherd has me in His care. I am not so independent at those times, and I know I need a shepherd. I need His love. I need His guidance. I need His strength because mine is long gone. I need a Shepherd. We may think that we are so independent that we don't need anybody, but when the storms come, when the battles come, when the world is shaking, we want to run to our Shepherd. When we don't know which way to turn because it feels like we have lost our way, and the road is too rough to travel on our own, we need a Shepherd who will lead us into green pastures and beside still waters. We need that Shepherd who can cause us not to fear even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death. We all need a Shepherd. Sometimes we are too proud, too lifted up in ourselves, too full of our human being mess to admit that we need a Shepherd. That is when we are in the most danger, because that is when we are out there doing our own thing instead of following Him. That is when, after we make a mess out of things so badly that only God can fix it, we finally ask Him to guide us. That is when we say to ourselves, why didn't I go to Him before I got into such a mess. You know that is why I think that most Christians have no idea of how to listen and obey, because that is the only time they listen and obey. After they get things in such a mess by doing it on their own. Can you relate to this?

We have to come to the place in our lives where we admit that we need a Shepherd. We have to come to the place where we are willing to yield our will and follow His. We will talk more in chapters coming up about how important this is, and how to come to the place where we can do this. One of the keys to being about to do this is being able to trust the Shepherd. The sheep follow the shepherd because they trust him. We follow our Shepherd because we trust Him. We get to know Him. That is the key. Do you have a relationship with God that is real? Jesus said, “To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.” If when you read this book, you have realized that you don’t know the Lord, how can you find this relationship that is real? First, you have to realize that you need this, and that it is possible to find. Then you have to realize that it is available to you, that you can find this as much as anyone else who has it. You have to realize that it has nothing to do with you; how much you think that you deserve it. It has to do with the Shepherd who is willing to lead you. It has to do with His love for you, not with whether or not you deserve it, because none of us do. Then it has to do with how much you

want it. Then you have to simply ask and believe. Jesus said in Matthew 7:7-8, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” If you really want it, and you ask Him, won’t He open it to you? He died to have that relationship with you. He paid the price of giving His life, not because you deserved it, but because you didn’t. He died while you were in your sins, so that you could become forgiven. He did this so that you could walk with Him in a real relationship. He wants to fellowship with you. He wants to lead you to an abundant life. He wants to open that door. Just knock. You just have to trust the Shepherd.

Who else has died for you? Who else has paid that price in love? Yes, He died for the whole world. But if you had stood there alone, He would have died just for you. It is that personal. His love for you is that personal. He wants to get to know you. In this scripture in John 17: 20-23, we can see how much Jesus loves us. It starts out talking about these disciples, but then it goes on to everyone else who hears about Him through them, and that includes us. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may

be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” How much does God love you? Enough to sacrifice His only Son that He was one with from the foundation of the world. How much does Jesus love you? He loves you enough to die for you so that you could be one with His Father, and with Him. That is why He died-so that you could be one with them. That sounds like a relationship to me. That sounds like He died so that you can get to know Him and He can walk with you and be one with you. We miss out on so much. We call ourselves Christians and we don’t even know how to find a relationship with Jesus. We can get to know Him. He can become our best friend if we will just trust Him enough to let Him into our world for real. When we find that relationship with Him, and we trust Him, it is a whole lot easier to follow Him.

To follow someone you have to yield to him. You can’t go your way, and theirs at the same time. That will just make you double minded. The Bible says that if you are double minded don’t expect anything from God. You can’t be full of yourself and follow someone. Let’s put this in a military perspective just for an example. Lets say you are a

private in the army. You are in combat. Your commanding officer knows more about your situation than you do. What would happen if you refused to yield to his command? What would happen if you refused to follow him and go where he led? What if you started telling him where he should go, and you led others away from him? (By the way, pastors, teachers, and others who lead, if you aren't following your Master, how can you lead others?) Are you a follower? Are you willing to follow? Can you submit your will enough to follow the Lord? In chapters coming up we will talk more about the importance of being able to yield and helps in how to do this. We have to yield and obey to follow our Shepherd.

The key to this is learning to know His voice. I can remember when I was a young Christian it was hard for me to learn how to do this. I was fired up ready to do something for the Lord. I wanted to do something so bad that I did it whether or not He led me to do it. I was constantly getting into messes in my zeal to do something for the Lord. I wasn't listening for His voice and following Him, even though I was doing what I thought was good, it was just a mess. I almost gave up on trying to serve Him. That is when God began to teach me about following His voice. Up to that time, I hadn't learned about this at all. They didn't teach it in the church I went to. It was all new to me. When God teaches me, He often shows me

pictures. I can understand it that way. He showed me a picture of me being upstairs in my house. Someone that I had never seen before came downstairs. I didn't recognize their voice. I didn't know who they were. Then later on that person came in again. I still didn't recognize them, but they seemed familiar. Each time that they came in, I began to recognize them more until eventually I knew them right away. It is that way with recognizing the voice of the Shepherd.

We have a lot of voices in our head, heart, and spirit that try to influence the direction we take. The devil sits on our shoulder and whispers in our ear. He is the voice that is always negative, always trying to destroy and discourage us. He is always whispering about things to cause us to fear, and things to cause us to become depressed. His is the voice that says, go ahead and do it. It won't hurt. You know about his voice. We also have our own thoughts. Then we have the voices of people around us who try to influence our actions. Then we have God's voice. We have to learn how to sort it all out. I would hear a voice that I thought for sure was God's, but when I listened to it and obeyed it, it would be a mess. I would know that the enemy had tricked me. This happened less and less as I grew in my relationship with the Lord. That is why it is important to spend time fellowshiping with Him and listening to Him. The more time we spend with Him, the easier it

gets to distinguish His voice. If we never fellowship with Him, then when it is life or death important that we hear His voice and obey, we won't be able to do that. Jesus promises us that if we want to, and we are really His sheep, we will hear His voice. Sometimes it takes time to learn it when we are young Christians. Even now sometimes the enemy tricks me, but if I am yielded to the Lord, He sets me right before any damage is done. That is if I yield to His will and listen to Him.

The scripture is full of people who listened and obeyed the Lord. Some of the most obvious people are those who wrote the Bible. They didn't make all this up. No way. That couldn't happen. The Bible is too complex and in agreement. The most obvious proof of it being different is the hundreds of prophecies that were written hundreds or even thousands of years before they were fulfilled. God led those who wrote the different books what to write. That is why it is so powerful. If you are a pastor, or worker for the Lord, if you want to have powerful ministry, shut up talking from your own little agenda, and shut up talking about yourself, and let God talk through you. Listen to His voice and tell the people what He wants you to say. Empty out. Yield. Let God speak through you.

We have mentioned a lot about yielding. It is one of the main keys to being able to listen and obey God's voice. It deserves a whole chapter. Coming up. Yielding and obedience.

Chapter 3. *Yielding and Obedience*

Yielding and obedience is not popular teaching in churches today. More often the pulpit is full of messages about how Jesus will forgive you whatever you do, so feel free to do whatever you want. It is not human nature to want to yield and obey, so it isn't popular. But if you don't teach it and preach it, and more importantly if you don't do it, you may wind up in the same hell as those you preach to. I think that hell will be a terrible place for those preachers and teachers who haven't declared a full counsel, told the whole truth to their congregations. They will be in the same hell with those whom they deceived. What a terrible way to spend eternity—looking at the faces of those who sat on your pews in your church looking to you for answers. We need to learn, listen, obey, and declare the full counsel as God anoints us to speak.

I told someone the other day that what they needed is a big yield sign hanging from their head in front of their eyes. This young person is so determined to do whatever is the opposite of what someone tells him to do. His life is a mess and he is proud of it. He is headed for disaster. He won't yield and listen to anyone. He is definitely not going to find a blessed life, because he is making all the wrong mistakes, taking all the wrong turns,

because he won't listen to God or anyone else. I am reminded of a few horses that I have ridden in my life. They wouldn't let themselves be broken. They wouldn't yield. They wouldn't let go of their will. They were worthless to their master. If we don't learn to yield, then we are worthless to our Master.

We talked earlier about the scripture in Deuteronomy 11:26-27, "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day." Let's add verse 28, "And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day..." It is so important to obey God. We can either have a curse or a blessing on our life. We do this ourselves by obeying God, or rejecting His good advise. Obedience is so important.

I mentioned in the first chapter that I could tell lots of instances where others or myself were protected by their obedience. Our school works with the military. We have an adult diploma program as well as a program in grades K-12. If someone who has quit school wants to join the military, they refer them to us. We have done this for over 20 years, so we have worked with a lot of military bound students. I have a speech that I give them before they leave. I tell them that in basic training,

they will be conditioned to listen to the voice of their commanders no matter how stressful, or drastic the conditions are around them. The idea is that if they listen to their commander they will come out a lot better than they will if they panic and don't listen. They are conditioned to listen and obey in spite of all they are going through at the time. I tell them that they need to become conditioned in the same way as this to hearing the voice of the Great Commander. They need to become conditioned to hearing and obeying the voice of God so that no matter what attack the enemy is advancing, the natural or the spiritual enemy, they will obey. They will be safe. Many of these young people came back and told me stories about how God kept them safe. They were out of harms way just when the situation happened that could have killed them. They leaned forward just before bullets tore through the jeep they were riding. They moved to another part of the area just before things exploded near where they had been. They moved to a different area just before that area came under attack, and they were in the right place at the right time. They listened to their Commander's voice and He kept them safe. We may not be in a war where the enemy is Moslem troops coming against us, but the devil is a real enemy and his goal is to destroy those who are following Christ. We are in the Lord's army, and if we don't listen to our commander's voice, we can be destroyed. The bullets aren't physical but

spiritual, and they are just as deadly. Actually they are even more deadly. Physical bullets can take our physical life, but spiritual bullets can send us to hell for eternity.

There have been many times in my life when if I hadn't heard and obeyed, I wouldn't be writing this today. I mentioned earlier how the Lord has guided me in decisions about my health where if I had listened to doctors, I would have died. There are many more times God has led me, and my life was spared. I mentioned how I had visited Romania. I also went to Russia. This was at a time when there was a civil war going in Russia. A couple of the little countries who were still part of Russia were fighting for their independence. We weren't far from the part of Russia where this was happening. I remember troop trucks continuously rolling through the town where we were staying. We started in Romania and had to travel across country to Russia. The people I had been traveling with wanted to rent a van so they could see as they went. The Lord spoke to me and warned me against this. No one would listen to me when I told them. They weren't very spiritual minded at that time, and they weren't listening to the voice of the Lord, just to what they wanted to do. I prayed and something happened to hinder us traveling by van and we had to go by train instead. When we got to our destination in Russia, we heard how there had been terrorists

who had been shooting down people who were on the highway that we had traveled on. I was thankful that we hadn't taken the van. I was rejoicing even more when I got home. My grandmother was a prayer warrior. When I got home, she showed me a calendar with a date circled in red. She asked me what we were doing on that day because the Lord had told her to pray. He told her that my life was in danger. I checked my itinerary, the schedule of where we had been when, and that was the day we traveled across country. It pays to hear and obey the voice of the Shepherd.

We have to yield. It won't work any other way. We have to yield our will just to keep ourselves safe. We have to yield our will to be able to serve God. If we are full of self-importance, and we are proud and self-willed, we won't obey. Pride often will hinder us from being able to yield our will. God knows how to deliver us from pride. I think of Nebuchadnezzar. He was king of Babylon when Babylon came against the Jews and took many of the captive back to Babylon. You may remember some of them: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. You can read the part of his story that I am referring to in Daniel 4. Please read this. I am not quoting the whole chapter here, but just paraphrasing it. This passage started out with Nebuchadnezzar praising the Lord. Now this was a powerful king who controlled most of the known

world at that time. He was the ultimate authority where he lived and had several times declared that everyone in his country should worship him. He was not a believer in God to start with, that was until God got hold of him. In verse 37 of chapter 4 we read, “Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.” How did he go from wanting to be God to praising God? His story is found in this chapter. God made him like a beast in the field. He went out of his mind to the point that he was grazing in the fields with the oxen. For how long did this happen? Until his hairs were grown like eagle’s feathers and his nails like birds’ claws. At the end of the days God had appointed for this to happen, his reason returned, and his kingdom was restored to him. But he was a different man. Yes, God knows how to humble the proud. If your pride is keeping you from yielding to God’s will and submitting to Him, He knows how to humble you. Ask Nebuchadnezzar. Was he glad that he went through all this? Read his testimony for yourself.

I see so many people who never grow in their relationship with the Lord. The main reason is that they are so self-willed. They don’t want any one else’s will but their own. They can’t grow because God can’t work in them. They stop God’s hand. They constantly have turmoil in their lives

because they are going north when they should be south. They are always opposite of where they need to be. They are not under God's protection because they don't listen. They are miserable. They will not give up their way to change. Many, many, many Christians are like this. It is not human nature to yield. I think that is why the Bible talks about the broad way to destruction, and the narrow way to eternal life, and the few that will find it. Most people are not willing to give up their will. Problem with this is, after things are so rough for so long, they just give up on serving God all together. They may blame it on God, or they blame it on the Bible not working, or they blame it on everyone else in their church. Truth is, they need to blame it on themselves. Even worse than that, some people who can't obey start getting caught up in the doctrines that say it is OK not to. Or they compromise to the point that they are no longer walking in the truth.

Pastors, and workers in the church, it is so important for you to give up your pride and yield and follow God. Remember how I told you earlier that I have many hats that I wear. I work with our Christian school, and I also work with our college, *New Life Bible College and Seminary*. We have an international Bible College. I work with pastors around the world. I am so sick of dealing with pastors who are puffed up with spiritual pride that I could vomit. I know that God is tired of it.

One clue that I see that someone is puffed up is if they use the title Reverend. I hate to disillusion them, but the Bible says that there is only one who is Reverend, and His name is Jesus. We are all just followers. We can't be puffed up on the idea of being reverend, on the idea that we should be lifted up and honored because we are men of God. Talk to Paul in the New Testament about that one. He talked about the kinds of people who God can use the best in 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 to 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." I only see one reverend there in that section of scripture and His name is Jesus. Let's forget glorying in ourselves. I don't have anything to glory about. When God saved me, He picked me up out of the depths of the sin I had gotten myself into. I had destroyed my life and He was my only hope. He set me up on a rock, and He has held me there for all these years. I don't have much faith in myself. I know what I am capable of doing. I do have faith in His power to

keep me. I can't do what I do for Him by myself. I would just make a mess of it. If it isn't with His anointing, it is pointless anyway. If it isn't in His will, it is pointless any way. Don't get full of yourself. That does no one any good. Get full of Jesus. Get full of God's Word. Get full of the Holy Ghost. Go out and obey Him. Go where He leads in His power. You will shake the world. The only way to do this is to yield and obey. This can only come when we trust the One we are following.

Chapter 4.

The Importance of Faith and Trust

To be able to yield to someone you have to have faith and trust in that person. If sheep don't trust the shepherd, they won't yield and follow him, they will scatter from him. That is the same with God. We have to trust Him to be able to yield to Him. Sometimes we don't yield to God because we don't have faith in Him. Or we don't trust Him enough to give up our will to His. Faith means knowing that God can do it. Trust means knowing that God will do it for you. Faith means knowing that God is able to, trust means knowing that He will. We can't get anything without faith. Without faith, we can't even be saved. We can't overcome. We can't fight the devil. We can't even receive anything from God's Word without faith that it will work in our lives.

One key to unlock faith in our lives is found in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." If we read and study God's Word and obey it, our faith will be strengthened. There have been many times when the cares of this world and its twisted way of thinking nearly drowned me, but I would get out my Bible and in just a little while my thinking was right again, my faith was renewed. Too many times the only Word Christians take in is what comes from the pulpit or teacher's stand. They

don't study it for themselves. They don't read it and allow God's Spirit to open it to them. In I John 2:27 we read, "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." If we never seek God's Spirit, and we never let Him reveal His Word to us, then we may never come to the full knowledge of the truth. If we don't read His word, how do we know if those who are preaching to us, or teaching us are even telling the truth according to God's Word? The Bible says the truth will set us free. How do we know if we are getting the truth if we never open the Bible for ourselves?

Without God's Word, our faith cannot be built. God's Word unlocks our faith. Another thing that unlocks our faith is daring to believe. I know someone who for years has had a ministry of praying for people to be healed of cancer. They have faith in God because they have dared to step out in faith and pray for those with cancer to be healed. Many have been healed through their faith. When we dare to step out in faith, that increases our faith even more.

There are many enemies to faith. The biggest ones are doubt and unbelief. If we aren't careful we can get full of negative thinking. The world is full of

it. People around us may be full of negative thinking. They may be full of the world's thinking which is mostly anti-God. You can be holding onto faith in something, and along comes someone that is full of this world's thinking, and they can talk you right out of that miracle. Or the devil can send one of his spirits of unbelief and before long, you are talked out of obeying God, and you don't even know what has hit you. Hold onto God's hand. Walk with Him. Walk close to Him. Then when these things happen to attack your faith, He will reach out with His love and draw you to Himself. His Word will brush away those cobwebs of fear. The power of His Holy Ghost will fall on you and sweep away the enemy who is coming against you.

Here are some more scriptures about faith. In I John 5:4 we read, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 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." James 1:6-7 says, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."

Trust the Lord. We don't understand it all. We hardly understand any of it on our own, in our own minds, if the truth were known. Isaiah 55:8 and 9 says, "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." Let's face it. We don't have a clue what's going on most of the time. Oh, we think we do, we think we are in control. If we get the feeling that we are not in control, we freak out and fall apart. We like to think that we are in the know and we know all there is to know about an area where we are having a problem. But we are oh so short of God and His knowledge. We need to just give up, give in, and trust Him. We need to go from there and yield to Him, listen to His voice and obey Him. Sounds easy enough. But so often that is where most people fail in their relationship with the Lord.

Trust the Lord. Psalms 37:3 says, "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Verse 5 says, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He will bring it to pass. Psalms 118:8 gives us a key verse, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." This means you or those around you. God is the one we need to trust.

When we have faith and trust, then it is much easier to yield. When we yield, when we obey, then we can find out what it means to have the peace of God in our lives. The next chapter is titled Peace.

Chapter 5.

Peace

I can remember someone who had just gotten saved. She told me that she had a feeling. It was a new feeling she hadn't experienced. She was describing it to me. I couldn't figure out at first what that feeling was. Then I understood. It was peace. She had never felt peace before in her life and didn't know what it was. That was sad to me that someone had not experienced peace enough to know what it is. What is even sadder is, as time goes on, I see so many more people who are just like that. Many of them are Christians. Instead of going to God to find peace, they turn to drugs. Our country as a whole is addicted to some type of drugs. I don't mean illegal drugs, but pharmaceutical drugs. Instead of turning to God we turn to anti-depressants, nerve pills, all these things that have so many side affects that they mess us up more than help in the long run. If we don't have peace in our life, then something is wrong spiritually. There is not any kind of man-made drug that can fix that problem. Just God. We need to get real with our relationship with God if we lack peace. Faith and trust will bring us peace. We have to know God to have peace. The main key to having peace in our lives comes when we hear the voice of God and we obey.

Peace is so important. Without peace you can't live an abundant life that God wants us to live. Without peace, you can't live at all. I see so many people who have so many physical problems any more. I believe that they are suffering from a lack of peace. Fear is the opposite of peace. Stress is the opposite of peace. Anxiety is the opposite of peace. Depression is the opposite of peace. The outcome of all of these is physical illnesses. Luke 21:25-26 talks about some things that will take place before the Lord comes back, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Men's hearts are definitely failing them with fear. Young people have heart problems. They are under such stress. I don't believe that the full scope of what this verse is talking about has come to us yet. I believe that we are well on our way. We look at all that is happening. People's hearts are literally already failing them with fear. If you let fear and stress rule in your life, you will not only have heart problems, many other physical ailments, but you will also have many mental and emotional problems. Stress will eat you alive. It will kill you physically, emotionally, and mentally.

What is the answer to all this stress, worry, and fear that people are under today? We read in Luke 1:78-79 one of the reasons why Jesus came. He came to us “To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” Things do seem pretty dark. They seem like there is no hope. In Jesus, there is hope. There is peace. There is a light, and His name is Jesus. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the answer to all of our situations. When we put our eyes on Him instead of on the storms we cannot only endure the storms, we can walk on the water. When we walk with our hand in His, whom do we have to fear? What do we have to fear? When we walk so far away from Him that we don’t really know Him, that we are not listening to His voice and obeying His will, then we will have fear and stress and worry and all the rest of the mess that goes with it. When we trust in Him and listen and do, we can find His peace no matter what the world is going through. Like the verse says, He will guide us into the way of peace. The only way that He can guide us, is if we listen and follow Him.

Psalms 4:5-8 tells us, “Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy

countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.” This was written to those who were going through hard times. There were many there that said, “Who will shew us any good?” Have you ever felt that way? Where in the world will we find any good? Even in this bad time that they were going through when this verse was written, God put gladness in their heart, even more gladness than they had in the time of increase. And God enabled them to lay down in peace and sleep because they knew at the end of the day that they were safe in Him. Peace is so important. I know you have been through those times when you couldn’t sleep. Stress will steal your sleep. I have been up all night walking the floors. It was stupid. It didn’t do any good, but I did it anyway. Let me tell you about that time in my life.

Several years ago my husband started having physical problems. He would be walking and just collapse. We had no idea what was going on. He got to the place where it was really hard for him to work, and that was bad because his income was our main income. After going to several doctors and neurologists, he finally found a specialist who told him what was wrong. He had Parkinson disease. When his work found out what was wrong, they fired him. They didn’t work it out

where he could do light duty. They just simply fired him. That was a very stressful time. We had over \$1,500.00 of payments that we had to pay a month. We had little money coming in at that time. We almost lost everything we had. We had neurologist bills, and doctor bills, and those weren't cheap. It took nearly a year for my husband's disability to come through. That was a very stressful time.

Combined with the financial difficulties, and maybe a lot because of them, my husband's symptoms grew worse. He got to the place where he couldn't walk around the house. His goal was to walk around the house three times in a day. There was a lot of opportunity to stress, and not much peace at all at our house. I started having chest pains. No wonder. I felt like it was all on me to keep things together. My husband was dealing with his illness, and I had to take care of everything else. I am a take care of it kind of person, which really isn't a good thing. Things looked really bad. We were at each other's throats back at that time. I wondered if our marriage was going to stand through all that. Our world was falling apart.

Then God started getting through my stress. He had to change my mind set. His peace started reaching through my worry and fear. I knew better. I knew the Word of God. I knew that fear

was sin. I knew that doubt and worry were not the best. But in the middle of that storm, I had lost sight of all that. The mountain was taller than God, or so I thought. Then He started getting through to me. I knew that it would be OK. Nothing had changed in our circumstance. Nothing had gotten any better. I changed, and that was the beginning of the change that took place around us. I stopped running and put my hand in the hand of the Master. I calmed down enough to hear His voice and obey. When a little money would come in, I did with it what He led me to do. When doctor's bills came in, I did what He told me to do. Every day there were circumstances to take care of, but I was able to listen and do. I wasn't freaked out any more. I was walking with my Master in His peace. I was yielding to His voice instead of to the voice of fear and stress. I was listening and obeying Him.

What was the outcome of all this? During that time, we paid off over \$90,000.00 worth of bills. We came out of that situation debt free. My husband still isn't able to work, but he can do a lot more than just walk around the house. He isn't in pain. His symptoms are not anything like what they were. We have peace in our home now. Before, we were constantly fighting. That is what stress and worry will do. Now we have the peace of the Lord in our home. We did move, and when I did, as a symbol of faith, I hung up a picture that

simply shows praying hands and the word PEACE. I claimed peace in my home. Today we have peace. It had to start with me seeing Jesus through the storms. I had to get my eyes on Him. I had to see that He was bigger than my circumstances. Then I had to find His peace enough where I could listen and obey. Stress can cloud your mind where you can't make the right decisions and everything you do can only make the situations worse. I was doing that at first. When I calmed down enough to hear the Master's voice and everyday do what He led me to do, that turned everything around. We came out with the victory.

What would have happened if I hadn't listened to God? Isaiah 48:17-18 says, "Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." If I hadn't known God, if I hadn't listened and obeyed, I know without a doubt that we would have lost everything that we owned. Parkinson's is made worse by stress, so he would probably have been in a wheel chair by now. I wouldn't be working for the Lord. The devil had a trap set and his bait was fear and stress. God had other plans for us. Psalm 116:6-7 says, "The LORD

preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.” Psalms 29:11 says, “The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.”

One of the key things that I had to do is found in this verse, Isaiah 26:3, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” I had to keep my mind focused on the Lord, not on the circumstances. When Peter was walking on the water, he began to look at the storm, and he began to take thought. He started thinking that he couldn’t do this. People can’t walk on the water. In his mind, he stopped trusting Jesus. I had to see that God could get us through this time. I had to stop dwelling on all the situations and problems. I had to start dwelling on God and what He was doing. I had to keep my mind focused on the Lord, not on the storm. I had to stop taking thought. The battle was a lot in my mind in how I thought. I had to look at it through His perspective, not through my own perspective. I had to bury my head in God’s Word. That was important. I had to change my thinking to match God’s Word. I had to be surrounded by faith filled people who were there praying for us. I had to listen to His voice above the voices of everyone around me. He was the one with the plan. I had to

find His peace. Most of all I had to win the battle of the mind.

This verse tells us what to dwell on when we are going through these times of stress. If we dwell on the wrong things, it can steal our faith, and kill our souls, and even our body. Philippians 4:8, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” If you are going through a battle, think on those things. What is the end result of that? Look at verse 7, “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

John 14:27 says, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 16:33 says, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Job 22:21 says, “Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. Get to know God. Get a relationship that is up close and personal. Listen to His voice and obey Him. You will be at peace.

Chapter 6. *God's Word*

You can't have a book about hearing God's voice without including a chapter about God's Word. God's Word is the ultimate authority for finding God's will. We have talked about how God's Spirit will reveal God's Word to you, and how important it is to study it. We have talked about how faith is built by reading it. We have talked about the importance of obeying it. Let's talk more about God's Word.

Through the Word of God we find all about Him and how His way works. We can see example after example of people who either obeyed His will and they were blessed, or they disobeyed God's will, and they were cursed. We find out what is expected. People get so confused about this. There are denominations on every corner. Even people from the same church can't agree on the truth. How does this happen when there is only one Bible to start with? We can get so caught up in the flesh instead of the Spirit that we can read the Bible and each of us can come up with a different interpretation. The key is to read it and ask the Spirit of God to reveal it to you. The key is to let His Spirit, the author of the book, explain what it means. We can't do this thing in the flesh. We can't walk the walk, or talk the talk, or read the book if we aren't in the Spirit instead of the

flesh. If we don't have a real relationship with God, if we aren't letting His Spirit lead us, if we aren't letting His Spirit guide us, if we aren't listening to His voice, then we won't know the truth that is found in God's Word. We will just have a confused mess. That is what a lot of churches are teaching, just a confused mess. The people are bound in sin and have no victory in their lives because they don't have the truth. The Bible tells us that the truth will set us free. That doesn't mean a watered down, flesh filled version. That means the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

I believe that there is another reason why there are so many different denominations. There is a lot of spoiled flesh out there in most churches. There is a lot of compromise going on. We want to do what we want to do, and we don't want God or anybody else telling us what to do. We want our pastors, ministers, and teachers to tell us that it is OK to do our little sin that we are doing. We don't want anybody who will rock the boat, or we will threaten to leave. Most churches are under the control of the tithe payers instead of the Holy Ghost. There is no truth being taught. If you are a minister and you find yourself compromising on God's Word to please your congregation you are in serious trouble with God.

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.

As pastors, ministers, and teachers 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 also 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 that the law of truth needs to be in our mouth and iniquity not in our lips. We forget that our job is 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 money changer'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 it 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.

If you have through reading this chapter 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. If you are a pastor or teacher, minister or evangelist, you have an obligation to declare the full counsel of God's Word.

As a person on the pew, you have a responsibility to find a church that is teaching the whole truth, if you are in a church that is not and God leads you to go, then go. Get out of there. The Word of God is compared to being daily bread. If you don't get good sound meals, meat and milk, you will become so weak that you will die. The whole truth of the Word of God is like meat. It feeds and strengthens you so that you can stand through the storms of life. It lifts you up when you are down. It keeps your head straight, and your thinking right in a world that is so mixed up in the head. You won't make it if you aren't eating right. Just like a bad diet leads to bad health in the flesh, a bad spiritual diet leads to bad spiritual death. You can take a lot of chances with a lot of things, but don't take chances that will cause you to wind up in hell.

We need the whole truth. We need the Holy Ghost anointed truth. If you are in a church and the anointing of God is not moving, get out and get into one that has this. If God doesn't go to church, then I don't want to go there. If God's Spirit isn't moving, then there is a good chance that there is

compromise going on somewhere. There is a good chance that what you are hearing is not the full Word of God. How will you know if you don't read your Bible and let the Spirit of God reveal His Word to you?

If you are a pastor, and you don't have the Spirit of God anointing your church, then you need to be the first to go to the altar. I can hear a lot of you thinking now, this is something that isn't for today. It is more for today than it has ever been. People need it today more than ever. You need it today more than ever. Listen to God's voice. Seek His Spirit. Obey Him. Obey His Word. Let His Spirit anoint you. Let God's Spirit anoint your people. Create an atmosphere where His Spirit can move. He will bless, touch, anoint, heal, save, deliver, and move in the midst of the people. He has to be made welcome. Sin has to go. Compromise has to go. All the watered down versions of His truth have to go. I'm not just talking about the different versions of the Bible here. I am talking about how we twist the truth in whatever version. Let His Word reign. Let His truth come forth. It won't be easy. When you do this, the devil will surely be there to stop you. I would rather have a battle now than have a battle forever in eternity. I would rather make a stand for the truth now, then to spend eternity in hell with the people who sat under my teaching knowing that I deceived them.

If you think this is not for you, that it is just for the pastors, then read on. Do you have a family? Have you not been commissioned by the Lord to be the spiritual head of your household? Are you leading them in the truth, or are you allowing others whose ideas you don't totally agree with lead them? Are you leading them spiritually according to how the Lord is leading you? Do you have lost family who need the truth to be able to become delivered and set free? Are you presenting the whole truth to them as the Lord leads you? Do you have friends and workers around you who need the truth? It may be that the whole truth will not only save their souls, but also their lives? We need to declare the full counsel of the Word of God. We need to listen and obey.

There is one thing that we have to consider that is very important when we are talking about obeying the voice of God. We have the written scripture, God's Word that is written. We also have God's Word that is spoken to our hearts. We obey God's voice as He speaks to us. And we obey His Word, the written Word, the Bible. Both of these come from the same person. If you write a letter telling someone to do something, and then you tell them personally by speaking the directions to them to follow, both sets of directions come from you. You won't be writing something for someone to do, then telling him something different. That would be like a split personality. God is the same

way. If He leads you to do something that is the opposite of what you read in the Bible, then it isn't God whose voice you are hearing. God's Spirit speaking in your heart will always agree with the Word of God. Here is an example. There was a lady who came up to a pastor. She told him that the Lord had spoken to her that he was to leave his wife and marry her. What do you think about that? Was that God's voice? That was totally against His word. Let God's Word be the main authority that you go by to confirm whether or not the leading you have in your spirit is God.

So far in this book you have read a lot of scripture. You have heard a lot of advise. You have learned a lot. Now I have some more advise. You can have it all in your head, but if you don't apply it to your life, it won't do any good. Don't just listen -- do it. Just like God's Word, it doesn't do us any good to read it if we don't put it to practice in our lives. Don't just listen—do it.

Chapter 7.

Don't Just Listen—Do It

I pray that by now, you have some things that you see the need to do differently. I pray that you have learned some things that you need to change. You have listened to a lot. One thing that I see many people do, and if I am not careful, I can do that myself, is this. We hear, but we don't do. Sometimes we do God that way, too. How many times have you heard yourself say, I knew what to do, but I just didn't do it? It doesn't do us any good to hear it if we don't do something about it. I am reminded of the goofy guy in James 1:22-25. You know, the one who looked in the mirror and saw what a mess he was, and kept on going. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Don't deceive yourself. When you see something wrong, do something about it.

I believe that hell will be full of people who had good intentions. There will be some who knew

what to do, but just didn't get around to doing it. There will be some that needed to work on their relationship with the Lord, but never got around to it. Some who knew that they needed to give up certain sins in their life, but deceived themselves into thinking that they had plenty of time to get it fixed. They knew that they needed to obey God, but never got around to spending time to listen to His voice. Eventually they fell away until their relationship with the Lord was no more, and they moved so far from God that they became totally disobedient. It is the obedient that go to heaven. It is the obedient that are the sons of God. Hell will be full of people who like the guy in the paragraph before saw himself and the mess he was in, but went away and did nothing to change. God will convict us. He will lead us away from things that can cause us spiritual harm. He will lead us away from traps that the enemy sets for our soul. If we don't listen and obey, we will fall right into those traps. It won't do us any good to just hear. We have to do.

I can remember a girl that told me she felt led not to take a certain job. Times were hard and she gave in and took that job anyway. The first thing that happened was that they started requiring her to work on Sunday. She missed church. She also had to start missing church on the other services. Before long her spiritual strength was low. The people at her work were pulling her away from

God. She started walking all around the party scene because that was the crowd she was working with. Before long she was right in the middle of it. For several years she was hooked, and she paid a price for it more than she was ever willing to pay. Her life was a mess. Several years later, she finally got her life back where it had been before she took that job. I knew that she wished many times that she had never disobeyed God. It isn't worth it.

Disobeying God isn't worth it. You may not see the whole picture when God tells you to do, or not to do something. He does. He is looking at the big picture from an eternal perspective. He sees the past from the future, and the future looking from the past. God is not limited by time in His understanding. One way to explain this is that eternity sits in God. God is bigger than time itself. He sees it all at one glance. That is why He knows what is best. He will lead us beside still waters and into green pastures if we will just let Him.

I can remember a time God led someone not to buy a sporty red car. They did anyway because it was exactly what they wanted and after all, what could that hurt. This guy had never had much success with girls; he was really kind of shy. That car changed all that. They were drawn to that sporty little car like a magnet. He kind of got into the popular crowd where before that, he had just been in the church crowd. Before long, the church

crowd wasn't the one he wanted to be in any longer. I guess it was important after all to listen to the Lord.

We have had many examples before how listening and obeying had saved people's lives. It can also protect your soul. How many times have you wished that you had taken heed to what you needed to change? How many times have you wished that those around you had listened to your advice? The Bible has the best advice. The Word of God gives out the best advice ever. Take heed to it. Listen to it. But more importantly, do it. When God speaks in your heart, don't just listen to it, do it. When the Holy Ghost leads you to do something, don't just listen to it, do it. Yield. Yield. Yield.

There are some things that if you neglect to do them, they may hinder you in the natural. Like in the last chapter when I asked the questions, what would have been the end to our situation with my family when we went through our struggle if I hadn't listened and obeyed. I am so thankful that I did, because there have been times when I didn't. There are some things that if you neglect to do them, you will be hindered in the spiritual, and if you continue to neglect them, you could spiritually die. There are some things that if you fail to listen and obey, you could physically die. There may be some times that if you fail to listen and obey,

others around you could physically or spiritually die. This is so important to remember especially if you are a minister. But we are all called to be ministers. I have mentioned earlier that all of us are asked to obey God and minister to others.

I can remember a gentleman who told me about this happening to a friend of his. He had stopped at a gas station to fill up. While he was pumping gas, there was a man at the next pump. God spoke to his heart and told him to witness to that guy. He was busy, and it was cold. He was in a hurry. He thought it away. Sometimes if we aren't careful, we can do that. We can start thinking the voice of the Lord away. Maybe he thought, that can't be God, I don't even know that man. What if it isn't? Boy, won't I look stupid. For whatever reason, he didn't obey the Lord. He pulled away from the pump and had driven a little ways down the road when he passed an ambulance. He had a sinking feeling when he saw it what had happened. He turned around and went back the way he had come. Sure enough, he came to an accident. The man at the gas station had been killed instantly. The one he was supposed to witness to. It isn't a game that we play. We need to obey the Lord. Someone's soul may depend on it.

I can remember something that changed my life when I was a young Christian just starting out serving God. It helped me to learn the importance

of listening to God and obeying when He led me to witness to someone. I haven't been perfect with that. There have been some times when my flesh got the better of me. But it really helped me to know the importance of listening and obeying. I was helping clean the church I had gone to when I was smaller. I found a Bible that belonged to someone I hadn't seen in years. The Lord impressed me to take that Bible to him. It was just a simple thing, or so it seemed. When I went to that guy's door, I told him what had happened, and I told him that the Lord had sent me. He started crying. He had made up of his mind to kill himself that afternoon. He had thought no one cared and that God was far from him. He had given up and had decided to die because there was no hope. He had even gotten what he was going to use. When I came, I showed him that God was not as far away as he had thought. When I gave him that Bible that he had when he was a kid, he remembered the God of his youth. He remembered the God that he had once served. The end of the story, I saw him a few years back, about 20 some years after this happened. He is still serving God today. What if I had just listened and not obeyed?

I remember another time when God spoke to me to witness to someone. I would pass by this guy's house frequently. I would feel the Lord speaking to me that I needed to go, but I just excused it

away. For one thing, he was a really tough guy and was really set against God, or so I thought. That intimidated me. One day I went by and someone told me that he had a heart attack and was in intensive care in the hospital. I prayed like I had never prayed before that the Lord would deal with his heart. I knew that if he didn't make it, and went to hell I would have his blood on my hands because I didn't obey God. Ezekiel 3:17-21 tells us about this. I haven't written out the whole scripture. Please get out your Bible and read this. It is summed up in this section in verse 18, "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." I knew that this man's blood would be on my hands. I prayed hard he would make it.

As soon as he got out of the hospital, I was there at his house ready to witness. He started talking about the subject before I did. He told me that he had been in the military most of his life, and he had faced dangerous situations. He told me that he hadn't been afraid in a long time, but that when he was in the hospital facing death that way, he had gotten afraid. He had been more afraid than he

had ever been. He knew that he was dying without God. For the first time in his life, he began wanting to find peace with God. He had given his heart to the Lord there in the hospital. I was so very glad. I know what it is like not to obey God. It isn't a feeling I like to have. There are still times when I don't. Still times when I miss God's voice. There are still times when I let the static of this world interfere. I get busy, or too stressed or stretched out to listen. I think of this man when I do, and come back to the place where I need to be.

We never know the importance of obeying God in church services. We are Pentecostal, and I praise God for that. I haven't always been. I grew up in a Methodist church that didn't teach about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. In our church at New Life, we have church services where the Holy Ghost moves and people are delivered and healed. The power of God falls in services and the gifts of God move. God gives words of prophecy and that guides people. I remember a service in another Pentecostal church nearby. During the service someone spoke a word of prophecy to a young girl in the church. A saint of God obeyed the Lord and started to pray for her, laying hands on her. She also prayed for a friend of that young girl. A word of prophecy went out, and the Lord through another sister told her that the Lord would keep her safe. The people in the church in the natural knew that her dad and mom had broken up and

that her dad was unstable. They didn't in the natural know how bad it was. No one knew. But God knew, and He was working to protect her. Several days later she went to her dad's with her mom. He freaked out when he saw them coming. He shot her mom and her sister and killed them. She was standing by a friend from her church who had gone with her. The bullets went between them and through the one girl's skirt. What if the saint of God had not obeyed Him?

I remember a tent meeting service where Bishop Goad, the head and founder of our ministry, was led to give out a prophecy. He told the congregation that the Lord had showed him someone being covered up with a sheet. A man in the back of the tent ran forward weeping and fell at the altar. That day he had been in the emergency with a heart problem. The man over from his bed had died when they were there, and they had covered that man up with a sheet. God had started to deal with his heart that if he didn't give his spiritual heart to Him, he would be in that same place, dead without God. When Bishop Goad mentioned the sheet, he knew that God was talking to him. It was time. What if Bishop Goad had not obeyed God?

If you are a pastor, or minister, or teacher, and you are trying to do your job without listening and obeying God, you might as well forget it. As the

old saying goes, you are just spitting in the wind. The world is full of preachers spouting philosophies, and worldly ideas. What the world needs is preachers full of the anointing listening to God, and pouring out what He wants said in the power of the Holy Ghost. The world is sick of hypocrites sitting on the pews doing their own little ritualistic things. What it needs is people who are filled up with the Holy Ghost, laying hands on one another, prophesying and letting the Spirit of God move through them ministering to one another. That is what the church is supposed to be.

We see a picture of how a church is supposed to operate in I Corinthians chapter 12. We read about the various spiritual gifts that work in the church. We see a picture of what the body of Christ should be. Most churches have no idea of what that is like. I think that is because they aren't listening and obeying. They aren't filling up and pouring out. Also, if the man in the pulpit isn't listening and obeying, if he isn't letting the Holy Ghost move in services, then it won't move in the congregation. The last few examples that I gave in obedience, the girl in the service, and the man and the sheet, were supernatural occurrences in church services. We aren't willing to step out in faith and obey the Lord in the supernatural. You might say that is just for ministers or pastors. Read this chapter in I Corinthians chapter 12. It is for you.

You are part of the body of Christ. God gave us these gifts and they are supposed to operate in the church. The church, the body, not just the head. We will talk more about this in chapters ahead.

For these gifts to operate we have to have an understanding of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and we have to possess it. We also have to have knowledge of what it means to walk in the Spirit instead of our flesh. Both these gifts enable us to better listen and obey. Coming up are chapters about both of these.

Chapter 8. *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost*

For this chapter, I am putting here quotes from a book that I have written titled *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost*. You can find it online at my website, www.freechristianonlinebooks.com, or hard copies at www.amazon.com. This isn't a commercial here. It is a subject that is so important that I can't cover it all in this one chapter. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost will power you up where you can obey God. Sometimes we just lack boldness. The Spirit of God will give us the boldness we need to obey God. Without this experience, I don't believe that people can make it today with the victory that God intends them to have. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost will give you the power you need to overcome, and the power to change your world.

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is an experience that is a key experience to enable and empower the church today. If there has ever been a time when the church, the bride of Christ, needs to have power, victory, boldness, faith, and the quickening power of the Spirit, that time is now. All these things are brought about by the Baptism of the Spirit. Sad to say, a lot of churches teach that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost was an experience that only the Christians in the beginning days of the church could have. My question to those who believe that way is this. Why would God give

early Christians an experience to empower them, and take it away from us today? We could be called the last day church. Do we need that power today? Why would God deprive us of something that we need?

If you don't have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, you might be saying to yourself, "But I thought that we got the Holy Ghost when we got saved." That is true. When you get saved, you get a portion of God's Spirit. Jesus comes into your heart through the power of the Holy Ghost. God's Spirit enters into your heart. That is the beginning. Let's start by explaining just what the Baptism of the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit is all about. I call Him the Holy Ghost because that is what the Bible mostly calls Him. The Holy Ghost is a person. He is a part of the trinity of God. God is made up of three persons, three parts, much like an egg. An egg has a shell, the white, and the yolk. If you separate one egg, you have three parts, but there is still only one egg there. God the Father, Jesus His Son, and the Holy Ghost, are all three parts of God. You are a person. You have a spirit that will one day go back to God, and you have your flesh part. It is the part that people see. You may have a son. That son is a part of you, a part of your flesh. Your DNA, your blood, your genetics, and all the things that parents pass into their children is in your son. He is a part of you. This is much the same way as God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost are

connected together. That connection between them is so strong that they are one. They operate as one. One will never step out on His own, but they are all in total and complete agreement. That is something that we humans can't understand on our own. There is an old song that goes like this, "He's God in the Father, He's God in the Son, He's God in the Holy Ghost, He's God all three in one. I know God is God, and He won't ever change." Here is one example of the trinity and how they fit together. John 17:21 says, "That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Jesus is saying here that He and His Father were one. He was also saying that He was dying on the cross so that we could be one with both of them. That is a lot of love in that passage. I guess you could say that the stuff that holds God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost together is love. That is the same stuff that holds us together to make us one with God.

When you get saved, you are born of the Spirit of God. God's Spirit comes into your heart. Jesus comes into your heart through God's Spirit. So you are right if you say that God's Spirit comes into your heart when you are saved. But there is more. If you have been baptized or filled with the Spirit of God, then you know what I am saying. Baptized with the Spirit and filled with the Spirit are both terms that refer to the same experience.

There are three reasons why we can know that being baptized or filled with the Holy Ghost means more than just having salvation. I know because I have read the full counsel of God's Word and it is all through the scriptures. Also, I know because it has happened to me. The third reason I know that it is so is because millions of people down through time have experienced the same thing that I have experienced.

When you get saved, you get a portion of God's Spirit. When you receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, you get baptized, filled, empowered, filled up to the brim. Here is a little bit of what the Bible says about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. We will be studying scriptures throughout this book. This isn't something that I've made up to entertain you. It is found throughout the Word of God. It is valuable truth that may make a difference in your life between victory and defeat as a Christian. If you already have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, then this book will still be a blessing and a strength to you as you are reminded about what power, strength, comfort, and all that you can find because of it. Keep reading.

Here are some scriptures. There are more to come throughout the book. Luke 3:16 tells about the incidence where the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is first mentioned. John the Baptist is speaking here. "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed

baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” At Pentecost the Holy Ghost filled them, baptized them. This is found in Acts 2:4, “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 8:15 talks about a group of people who had been saved, they had received the Word of God, and they had been baptized in water already. Then something else happened. They received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. “Who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost.” Verse 17 says, “Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” (If this were talking about salvation, and receiving the Holy Ghost because they were saved, then why hadn’t they gotten it when they were saved? We’ll talk more about this later.) Acts 19:6, “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” This is talking about more than salvation.

If the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is such an empowering experience, why are there so many Christians who don’t know about it, and why haven’t we all received it? All too often people grow up being taught a certain thing. They don’t study the Bible out for themselves. Or if they do,

they use what they have been taught as a strainer, straining out the unfamiliar. They take what they have and rejoice in that, and refuse to see that they could have more. Traditions of the church sometimes can be shackles to bind people. They can become blinders that keep people from seeing the very things that can bring them victory.

God often shows me things in pictures. Not only because a picture is worth a thousand words, but also because I am so simple. Sometimes it takes a picture to explain things to me. He once showed me a picture of people crawling around on a floor. They were picking up crumbs. They were so excited about the crumbs that they found. They were comparing their crumbs, bragging to each other over what a big one they had found. They were rejoicing in those crumbs. They were even fighting over them, grabbing them up. Then the picture shifted up above their head. God showed me that just over their heads, out of their reach, was a banquet table spread for a king. All they had to do was to stand up and sit at the table and feast. But they wouldn't. They were too busy crawling around on the floor eating the crumbs. They didn't believe that there was anything better than those crumbs. So they wouldn't stand up and see the table. That was really sad to see that. Since that time though I have realized how many people do this every day.

God spreads out a spiritual feast for us, and we settle for the crumbs. That is why there are so many people who are falling away. They are weak. They are not strong enough to make it through these trying times that we are in. Their faith is based in their traditions, more than in the full counsel of the Word of God. They are eating crumbs and those aren't enough to strengthen them. They have strained out the good stuff and they are settling for baby food that keeps them weak. They refuse to stand up and get the food that they need for their strength. Satan convinces them that by holding to their traditions and the beliefs that they have, they are actually being loyal to God. However, those traditions and beliefs are stripping them of the victory they need to overcome. God has more for us if we are willing to pull up to the table. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is for us.

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost may not be familiar to you. I can understand. I was once the same way. I was in my 20's before I heard about it. I can say that when I heard about it, I was so hungry that I got it. You see, it was the experience that saved my life, and kept my soul from going to hell. I had been saved when I was a kid. I had gone to church all my life. When I was in my late teens and early 20's, I set out to see what all the world had to offer. Boy, did I find out. It didn't take long for me to totally wreck my life. I

destroyed my heart, my mind, my life so bad that soon there was no return, no way to fix any of it. I had no hope, or so I thought. I found my way back to God. It was still hard to turn my life around. I was bound by addiction, by the scars of my sin, and by the life style that I had become caught in. The devil had me so bound that I couldn't change anything on my own. There were no Pentecostal churches around my home back in those days. Through what I would call a miracle, one opened up. I believe that little church opened up for me. Why do I think that? Not long after I went, I learned about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and received it indirectly through a church service, that little church moved miles away. God sent that for me. It was the key that I needed to unlock me. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost knocked the devil off my porch and gave me the strength I needed to keep him off. If I wouldn't have received that when I did, I would have given up on serving God and I would probably be dead today. That is a bold statement to make, but it is very true.

I see people who are hungry for something more. They know that there is something more. They are dying because they can't find it. They are too bound in their traditions to pull up to the table. I hope that I can describe that feast that is up there on that table and make you so hungry that you pull yourself up, grab hold of God's hand to get the

strength to do so, and pull up the chair that God has set for you there.

My Grandmother was what I call a saint. She was a prayer warrior. I remember when she was in her 80's, my aunt and her started what I call a ministry, reaching out to shut-ins. They had several hundred people that they mailed a little Bible study to, and many of these, they hand delivered to people who were shut in. They visited these people, they would pray with them. They would encourage them. Not only did they visit with these people, they visited their children and grandchildren when they were asked to. That was only a little of what they did. Everyday they prayed for hundreds of people on their prayer list. Many of those people were preachers and workers for the Lord. When my grandmother got to the place where she could no longer get out, she still prayed. When I got the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, I didn't talk much about it to my grandmother. As time went on, I didn't share about it with her because I knew that she was such a wonderful Christian, I thought that she didn't need it. God kept dealing with my heart to share with her what God had done for me. I finally did. When I did, she started crying. She told me that she had searched for this all her life. She had known that there was more. She had read it in the scriptures. She had asked preachers for years and years to explain to her what it all meant. She was

so thirsty for it. None of them told her the truth. Sad to say, some of the preachers that she had prayed for every day were Pentecostal preachers. When they held revivals in the Baptist churches that my Grandmother attended, and visited, they preached Baptist doctrine. They didn't preach about the Baptism when they were in those churches. When she prayed to receive the Holy Ghost, I can remember the joy on her face. It lit up. I thank God that I shared with her.

You may be like my grandmother. You may be a fireball Christian. You may still have a feeling that there is something more that you hunger for. You may have read scriptures that showed you that there is something more than what you have, and you feel that in your heart. But you have had no one to show you the truth.

You may have tied a knot in the end and you may be hanging on to the knot ready to slip. Like I was, you need the power to overcome things that you sowed in sin. You want to live the way that God says to, but you don't have the strength to do so. Every time you take a few steps forward, you slide as many back. You are about to give up on serving God. Hold on. Reach out. Pull yourself up to God's table. He has a feast that will give you the strength that you need.

You may be new Christian who is just learning about this thing called Christianity. You want to become a bold Christian, but you just can't get out of the wimpy stage. Let God fill you with His Spirit. You will be bold enough to turn your world upside down.

You may be someone who is bound with worry and fear. Both of these are spirits that bind so many today. You may be holding on to hope, but the worry and fear of this world and this life is pushing you over the edge. You are bound with fear and so many other things that your life is a wreck and your whole family is suffering. You can be delivered. Let God's Spirit knock the devil off you, like it did me.

Whoever you are and whatever your needs are, don't be like those who were crawling under the table. God has a gift for you. God has a life-giving feast for you. Don't be too afraid to find out about this. Don't discredit it because it isn't the way you were taught. Ask Him about it. All you have to do to find out the truth is to seek for it and be open to hear Him tell you about it. He wants to lead you into all truth. The whole thing. Every bit of it. Luke 11:9-13 says, "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. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be

opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone: or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 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?" Talk to your Heavenly Father. He will lead you to the truth. You can trust Him. Read the Word of God. Be open to it.

Even though I had never heard of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, when I heard of it, I didn't reject it. I was hungry for it. I knew in my heart that it was the truth. I didn't reject it. I was in love with God, and wanted to serve Him with my whole heart. I needed all the help that I could get. I was like a little bird, holding open my mouth for anything that God had for me. Anything that God had, I wanted. That is how we need to be. We don't need to have strained food. We don't have to be satisfied with crumbs, just because that is what we've always eaten and what could be so bad with that. Time is running out. We need to be powerhouses for God. We need to be boldly declaring to our family, our friends and neighbors, and to those we love who do not know God that soon they will be facing terrible times such as they have never seen, if they don't accept Jesus and get ready for His coming again. We need to have enough victory in our lives that they can see

something that can hold them through these troubled times that we are facing. They need to see in you something that they want. If ever we needed to stand in the full counsel of the truth it is now. When you only stand in part of the truth, then you aren't standing firm. It is easy to get swept away by all the lies and untruths that the devil is spreading. We need to be walking in the full counsel of the Word of God in all the strength that brings.

If you don't have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, then you need to read my book titled *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost*. If you do have it, you need to read it to remind you of the power that you possess. It is time.

As you read in my excerpt from that book, the Baptism of the Holy Ghost will give you the power to overcome your flesh. It will help you to overcome those times when you shrink back from obeying God because you lack boldness. It will enable you to walk in the supernatural instead of in the natural. You will be able to obey God in a more powerful way. Seek God. Ask Him to reveal to you about the Baptism of the Spirit. Ask Him for this gift. If your church doesn't believe in it, don't ask your pastor to explain this. Go to someone who not only believes in it, but possesses it. Someone who doesn't have it can't tell you

about it. Seek out people and churches that do. Most of all seek God. Seek out His Word.

In order to obey God we have to get out of the natural into the supernatural. After all God is supernatural. The first step for doing this is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The next step is walking in the Spirit. This next chapter guides you into walking in the spirit.

Chapter 9. *Walking in the Spirit*

I am putting here an excerpt from my book, *Walking in the Spirit*. Again, this isn't just to be a commercial about my books. This is such an important subject that you need a whole book. I can't explain it all in one chapter. Please read this book. You can find it at my website at www.freechristianonlinebooks.com, and hard copies at www.amazon.com. We touched about how if we don't walk in the Spirit, we can't hear God's voice and obey Him. This chapter talks about how to walk in the Spirit and what that means.

The other day, I was thinking about this book, titled *Walking in the Spirit*, about what I should write, and how I should explain what it meant to walk in the Spirit. I came home from work. It had been a long day with the devil up in my face every minute. One of those days you struggle to get things done. All I could think of was that I wanted to fix a bite to eat and put my feet up. After all, the last time I'd had time to eat was about 8:30 that morning and it was about that time in the evening now. I didn't feel good besides all that. I was trying to catch some kind of something. I just wanted to put my feet up and drown myself in the old "boob tube". God started dealing with me, speaking to me in my heart about something I

needed to do instead. Oh, believe me, I wanted to stuff my fingers in my spiritual ears (that's flesh). But I have learned to respect God's leading because of the blessing that it brings, and because I love Him more than I love my own flesh, I listened to Him. (That's walking in the Spirit.) He told me instead of turning on the TV tonight that I needed to turn on the CD player with some good Gospel music. I obeyed Him. I thought to myself, what is so important about listening to music (that's walking in the flesh), but obeyed the Spirit (that's walking in the Spirit). Pretty soon I was caught up in the music and praising the Lord for how good He is. I soon forgot about the battles of the day and about how my body felt (that's walking in the Spirit). Victory started flowing in to my heart, body, and mind. God's Holy Ghost began to pray through me and bind up that sickness that was trying to come against me, (that is definitely walking in the spirit). The chills and aches of the fever that had been pestering me all day soon left. (By the way, I woke up the next morning feeling much better.) I got my blessing from the hand of God. Then He directed me into doing something that would bless and touch the hearts of others. That's God's way. When we center our thoughts on our own selves, and we receive a blessing, and that's the end of it, sometimes we only get half a victory. When we get victory and turn around and bless others as well, our victory is complete.

I got my mind off my problems of the day and on to Him. I got outside of myself and into Jesus and the Holy Ghost, and then into ministering to others, (that's walking in the Spirit). That's when this chapter of this book was written, and that's when God gave me the glimpse of what He wanted me to say throughout the book. I had my own idea of how it should be and I was stuck there. I had started the book nearly a month before this happened, but I was totally stuck. I had laid it to the side. I had almost given up on it, (that's walking in the flesh). But on this night, I had put myself in neutral because I felt so tired I had nothing of myself left. I let the Holy Ghost write through me. I released my flesh to God's Spirit, I submitted and yielded, (that's walking in the Spirit). Now I know without a shadow of a doubt that someone will read this chapter, and this book, and they will get an understanding of what it means to walk in the Spirit. I don't say this to brag about my own great power of persuasion, but I say it because I let the Holy Ghost, God's Spirit do the writing, and He does a great job. I believe that someone who has struggled for years to understand this vital key to living a victorious life in God will have their life changed by reading this book. Maybe that someone is you. You who picked this book up and read it and take it to your heart. And that too is walking in the Spirit.

Now let's replay my evening. What if I had let my flesh take over? What if I had turned on the old TV, hit the couch, put my feet up, and forgot all about everything because, "God, I just don't feel well." What about the victory I gained? What about the healing touch that came? What about this chapter, and the book that came from it? What about you who read this and receive something from it? What if you hadn't obeyed God and read it? What would we all have gotten without obeying God and walking in the Spirit? We would have gotten a big nothing. Every day we have to decide which we want to do, walk in the flesh or in the Spirit. If we never learn to yield to God's Spirit and walk in His Spirit, we will go on in our struggle, continue in our battle, and if our life never changes from this rut, and we never learn to walk in the Spirit, we will eventually be totally defeated, and the end will be that we lose our eternal souls. So tell me, is it important to walk in the Spirit?

I heard someone tell about a lady that had been caught in one of the Twin Towers Buildings during the 9/11 tragedy. She got up that morning and spent time praying. So she started her day walking in the Spirit instead of the flesh. She was what we call "prayed up". When the plane struck the building, she grabbed her things and started running. The other people in her room asked where she was going. She told them, "God told

me to run and to run in this direction.” They answered, “If He told you to do that, then we are behind you.” Over 30 people were saved that day because they followed a Spirit filled, Spirit led woman. What about those around you? Is the example of your life leading them to safety? Do you daily have victory, in spite of your battles? Do people see in your life a direction that they long to take? You can be that kind of person, you know. God’s Spirit is powerful enough to provide you with all you need. He has the peace, strength, love, joy, hope, victory, faith, and long-suffering, all you need. I guess another illustration that we can find in this true story is the destruction that following flesh can bring. We all know that not everyone was saved. Why? Even if they were Christians, were they prayed up and in the Spirit? Were they listening to His voice that day, or the voices of others? Were they hindered by bondages in their life so that they weren’t in an obedient relationship with Him on that day?

The Bible tells us that these are the things that walking in the flesh will bring into our lives:

1. Strife (“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions....” I Corinthians 3:3).
2. Not understanding or receiving the things of God (“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of

God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” I Corinthians 2:14).

3. Spiritual death (For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” Romans 7:5).
4. Much more.

To sum it all up, check out this section of scripture in Romans 8:5-17. Here are some of the highlights. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Therefore brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. I guess this is enough to make us all want to walk in the Spirit.

You may have many days when you come home from having a battle. You may have many times when God asks you to do way beyond what you feel like you are physically or mentally capable of

doing. You'll be called on to minister to folks around you, when you don't have any idea of what to say. You'll have traps of defeat and sickness that the enemy will lay to defeat you and to steal your joy, or even your eternal soul. You'll have times when the devil will sit on your shoulder and tell you that you aren't worthy. You can't walk in the Spirit. That is only for spiritual giants, not for squirts like you. You'll have days when the devil will try even to steal your salvation by making you feel, or think, that you aren't saved. That's when you can shake yourself, get your eyes off the devil, and off of yourself, and look at Jesus and God's Word. Stay close enough to Him so that you can see Him, and so that you can hear His voice. Let the Holy Ghost daily move in your heart and mind, not just in church on Sunday. Put a priority on moving when He says move. That is walking in the Spirit. Talk to your flesh. Let it know that it will not rule, and the junk that the devil pours into your flesh will not overcome your spirit. Say, "Flesh, I have Jesus inside of me, and He is in control today, and everyday. I have a better way of life than the one you give me and through the Spirit of God within me, I will overcome you." Submit to God, and yield to His Spirit. Let God's Spirit intercede through you, pray through you. Let God's Spirit in you rebuke the devil, and bind him so that he has to flee. All these things are examples of walking in the Spirit. I Corinthians 3:16 says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of

God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”
Let God’s Spirit rise up and be victorious in you.

When I first started out writing this book, the first time when I was trying on my own, I had an idea about giving people a guideline to go by on how to walk in the Spirit. You know- like a list of steps to follow. I prayed about how to do this and God set me straight on this. He told me that it was His business to direct His people, that He would lead them. I was just to point them in His direction. He would do the rest. To walk in the Spirit, you have to have a real and right relationship with God. You have to make yourself available, and He will do the rest. Get settled in your mind that this is what you want, and head in that direction. He will meet you more than halfway. You also have to settle it that God will do this for you. This is faith, and faith releases the promises of God. Don’t look at yourself and your weaknesses, but look at God and His promises.

Walking in the Spirit is a personal thing between you and God. It can’t be between you and someone else, and God. A lot of people try to do it that way, and they fail miserably, and then they usually make it hard on the people they are trying to follow. I’ve talked to so many people that tried on their own to be what they thought was spiritual. Many times their life was based on an idea they had gotten from other people who they thought

were living spiritual lives. They did their best in the flesh to live up to the spiritual expectations of people around them. They weren't able to do so. The devil easily defeated them, before they got started. What was the problem? It was all about themselves and other people. Where was God? Where was His Spirit? You cannot perform a ritual on the outside and be something for someone on the outside, and make all that be real at all. This thing has to come from the heart. It has to come from a real, everyday relationship with Jesus. He has to be **number 1** for real in your heart, or it won't work. He has to be your love, your guide, your hope, your peace and joy, and your focus. Then you won't be doing it for others, you'll be doing it for Him. It will be real then. You can't walk in the Spirit unless you want to do so enough to commit yourself to Jesus. If you don't know Him personally, you won't really want to walk in the Spirit in your heart.

Then is when we do it for everyone else. But when you get close enough to the foot of the cross to catch a glimpse of how wonderful His love is, it will be easy to turn lose of old number 1 and grab hold of Someone who will turn your life around. That is where walking in the Spirit starts. Are you ready? Run toward His love. He'll definitely catch you.

That is the end of the chapter from *Walking in the Spirit*. Again, it is a valuable book to read. Without walking in the Spirit, we can't really obey God. We won't have what it takes to obey; we won't even have what it takes to make it as a victorious Christian. We can barely limp into heaven, or we can get filled up with the Holy Ghost, get filled up with His power, and we can walk in the Spirit victoriously. It is our choice. How much do you want? Do you want to have power that it takes to obey God? If you do, the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is yours for the asking. It is a gift of God. Do you want to be able to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh so that you can obey God fully? You can do this. Where did I hear about it? You read it. It is in His Word. Take His Word for it and experience all He has for you.

I have touched on the thought of the quickening power of God's Spirit in this chapter, but I want to spend more time with that. The power of the Holy Ghost will deliver you. I was going through a time not long ago where the devil was slipping all kinds of bondages against me. He started with something that happened that got my head in a spin. Then from there he got my head in a spin. My heart got off centered. He bombarded me with attitudes that were dangerous to have. I couldn't see the root of the matter. I needed to get a break through. Now that is an old time Pentecostal

expression that you don't hear any more. You don't see many churches any more that even believe or understand what I am talking about here. When the enemy has you in a blitz, you need the Spirit of God to quicken you. You need the power of God to get through all the junk the devil has surrounded you with. You need God's Spirit to break through the clouds of despair, depression, sickness, rebellion, that the enemy is trying to drown you with. You need a break through. I needed a break through. Praise God, we had a special singing service at the church. The guest singer was also a pastor. It was the service of the hour so to speak. It wasn't crowded, but God ordained it. It was just what we needed. He came in the door, and the conditions were right for the Holy Ghost to move. He didn't even start singing. Matter of fact, the Holy Ghost was moving so much that he could hardly sing that whole service. He came through the congregation like a whirlwind praying for the people there. Like I said, it wasn't crowded, but the crowd there was receptive. The conditions were right for a break through service. He would pray for one as God led for just a few minutes until the Holy Ghost started ministering to them. Sometimes he would give a word from the Lord to them. Then he got the person next to them to continue to pray for them. Then if he felt in his spirit, if God witnessed in his spirit that they hadn't broken through, then he come back through. He moved literally like a

whirlwind through there. He would say that he felt someone get a breakthrough. They did. Just about everybody there that night walked out of there with a load off, a new perspective, new strength healing and deliverance. I walked out of that service free from that junk that had bound me. I got my break through. I was so relieved. I was like a new person the next day. The whole world looked brighter. We all felt the same way. It was God's time for a break through. You won't get that kind of thing to happen in a service full of flesh. You won't get a break through when the pastor or preacher is walking in the flesh and doing his ritual. You won't get it when half the people in the pew are unconsciously shaking their heads. You won't get it when you doubt that this thing is real. You will continue to go on in your bondage until eventually the devil destroys you. If God's Spirit isn't reigning in the midst, then the devil will. He will send sickness, bondages, and destruction on you and on your loved ones, and there will be nothing to stop Him. God's Word and His anointing is the only hope that we have to overcome him. Let God's Spirit reign in the church. Let Him move. Let God help you to make sure that the conditions are right for a break through in you and in your church. Let God's Word go forth in the whole truth so that God can anoint.

Let's talk more about how the church needs to be. The church needs to walk in the Spirit. First let's talk about how it used to be. We all talk about how it used to be in churches. Churches were places where God was worshipped, where He was praised, where His Word went out with His anointing. In these churches, 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 other 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 tempter 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 an 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, and 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, which 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 to 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 failure to serve Him with all our heart. 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, those 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.

This can only happen when we yield and let God's Spirit reign in our midst. This can only happen when we as a body of Christ walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh in our church services. This can only happen when the men or women of God in the pulpits listen and yield to the Holy Ghost, and they walk in the Spirit. This all can only happen when we get our priorities in line. Coming up next.

Chapter 10.

Priorities

I guess if this chapter could have a sub-title it would be, *Getting Your Want To In Line*. We have to focus. Matthew 6:22-24 says, “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” What does that mean?

When I think of this verse I think of a telescope. Now the purpose of a telescope is to make things bigger and to help you to see more, I understand that. But just for a crazy minute we want to focus on the little end of the telescope. I may be the only one that out of curiosity has looked through the big end, but it definitely gives you a different perspective than when you look through the little end. It restricts what you see. You are only seeing that little bit that shows up through that little end. You don't see everything going on, just that part. You are focused, but on a little part of the big picture. That is what I would call “single vision”. Sometimes we need to focus on the right priorities in your life. We need to turn our telescope around.

We need to let our eye be single, so that our whole body will be full of light.

Sometimes I will get too busy. I am naturally a busy person, always having something going on. If I am not careful, my eye will get whole instead of single. It will get out of focus. I lose focus of my priorities. Then I get bogged down. I have so much going on that I lose sight of the things that God has ordained and anointed me to do. The enemy will slip things in your life to get you to chasing your tail. You spend a lot of time traveling, but don't get anywhere. I think of the little wheels that the hamsters run on. They work so hard, and spend so much energy. They run themselves to death, but get nowhere. They work hard, but get nothing done that is substantial. I hear Bishop Goad say this a lot that if we aren't careful, the devil will cause us to spend our energy and time on an area that is not the apex will of God. We will get a little done, but if we are in the total will of God, we will move mountains. The devil will back up and let us do something that does a little good, keeping us focused on that in our lives, to keep us from doing what the will of God is. He will back up and it will seem that we are in the will of God because that thing is being blessed. If we aren't hearing the voice of the Master, we will keep on in that until the day when He comes, and we know when we stand before Him that we have not obeyed Him. We will know

that all our labor has been in vain. In I Corinthians 3:11-15 we read, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” What we do will only last if it is ordained and quickened by God’s Spirit. What we do will only be blessed when we are in the will of God, listening to His voice and doing what He commands us to do. What we do, if we aren’t focused on God’s will, will just be a mess. It won’t last. It will be pointless. It will be like the gerbil on the wheel.

This works the same in our everyday lives. People are so busy any more. I was talking to someone who hadn’t been in church for a while. I asked her where she had been, because we had been missing her. She looked at me with a funny look on her face. She asked me if it had really been that long since she had been in church. She had missed several weeks. She had gotten so busy with things that had tangled up her life that she hadn’t realized that she was missing church. I know her relationship with the Lord had suffered, because

not long after that, she stopped coming all together. Her priorities had gotten out of line. The devil had made sure that she had all kinds of things to keep her busy. He is a master at creating drama. He will cause all kinds of situations to keep you out of focus. He will make all kinds of things look enticing. He will paint up ordinary things to make them look like things you can't live without. How many people have gone to hell over hunting, fishing, golfing, boating, ball games, car racing? More than you would think. The enemy will get us focused on all kinds of things that seem so important. Then one day we will wake up far from where we were spiritually and wonder how we got so far down. It usually takes a tragedy or some huge catastrophe to wake us up out of our slumber. The devil is a master at getting our lives out of focus. We have to hold on to our priorities or he will steal our soul.

We all are called to be workers in the church. We are all called to obey the Lord and to minister. We need to come back to focusing on that in our lives and in our churches. When is the last time the Lord led you to pray for someone, and you found out later that they were in a crisis and desperately needed someone to pray for them. You didn't know, but God did. When is the last time that you obeyed God in a service and gave someone a word from the Lord, and they received their breakthrough? When was the last time that you were

led to someone's home, and when you let the Spirit of God move through you, they were blessed? When was the last time that you gave to someone who had a desperate need? They weren't saying anything about it, but God knew, and He led you to give. You knew that it met a great need. When was the last time that you obeyed God and you knew that your life was spared because you listened and obeyed? When was the last time that the Lord led you to go to someone in church and pray for them, and they were healed? When was the last time the Lord led you to go to someone's home and pray for them, and they were healed? When was the last time that you were led to talk to someone who was lost, and they gave their heart to the Lord? Now let's turn it all around when was the last time that someone did some of the things that I mentioned in the last chapter to you when you were in spiritual or physical need and someone ministered to you. When we look at it that way, we realize how important it is for the body of Christ to minister to one another. That is why we have so many compromised, burned out pastors in the pulpit because the church isn't doing what it is supposed to be. That is why the church is a laughing stock in the world because they have lost the power of God. They no longer are listening and obeying. It is no longer a priority to them to let the Spirit of God move in their services. They have lost their focus. They have lost the anointing of God in their lives because

they have lost their priorities. It is no longer a priority to have the victory in their lives, so how can they minister to others?

So we see that we need to change this, but how do we do so? How do we get the little end of the telescope turned around so that we regain our focus? Let's go back to Matthew 6:22 and look at the verse before it. Let's look at verses 19-21. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Then let's go down to verse 24, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Here is the key to getting our priorities in line. We have to decide who is master in our lives. We have to decide where the treasure of our heart lies. Are we laying up for ourselves treasure on earth focusing on fleshly things, or are we laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven by focusing on spiritual things? Where are your priorities?

I think of someone who used to be a powerhouse for the Lord. He was always busy about doing something. Somewhere a long the line, he started

getting off balance, off focus. He began to do some things that he spent a lot of effort and money doing and I couldn't see how that particular thing could lift up the Lord. It was OK, but I didn't have a witness in my spirit that it was God's will. I would talk to him, and he would begin to make excuses for doing them. Truth was he just wanted to do them. Those things didn't turn out very good. They drained him financially, spiritually, and physically. He began to be bitter because things weren't working out. Instead of seeking God's face, and getting back on track with his life, he began to get bitter with God. He is no longer serving God, and he is a broken man. Last time I heard about him, he had a lot of physical problems and isn't able to be out of bed except for a few hours a week. What happened to him? He started laying up for himself the wrong treasures. His priorities switched, and he lost his focus. When we do this we can pay dearly.

I have to stop here for just a minute to talk about keeping things in balance. Have you ever heard the saying that someone was too heavenly minded to be any earthly good? I knew someone who was so caught up in the spiritual things that they didn't take care of the physical things in their life. They were always in church somewhere. They were always going around praying for people. They were always giving a word of the Lord to someone. Their poor husband never got a meal

that he didn't cook. He took care of all the household duties. Her children were running wild without a mother's guidance. This wasn't God's will. There was no balance in her life. She was in the flesh, even though she was doing spiritual things. God has a balance. When God is in control of your life, there will be a balance. I have bees. They are fascinating. Everything in the hive is focused around the queen bee. Sometimes though there will be worker bees that start masquerading as a queen bee. They can't lay fertilized eggs to make little ones, but they start trying to lay. I had a hive that got that going, and it was hard to get it right. These pretend queens would kill the real queen that was put in with them. You could tell when this happens because the laying cells that the bees made were all haphazard. Bees keep things in perfect order. When you see total disaster in how they are building their nests, you know something is amiss. If God is the queen bee in your life, if He is leading you, then your life will be in order. If anything or anyone else, or your flesh, is leading what you do for the Lord, then your whole hive will be in disorder. Your home will be a disaster. Your life will be a total disaster. This ladies' life was a total disaster because God wasn't in control. God wasn't leading her. She was leading herself. Her priorities weren't in line even though in the natural she thought they were because she was supposedly doing so much for the Lord. The sad

thing was, all she was doing was pointless because it wasn't God's will. The ministering she was doing was out of order and not led by God so it was even deadly to those she was ministering to. How sad. So much effort, but so little done. We need to focus on the Lord, listen to His voice and yield to His Spirit, and get our priorities in line to be able to do anything for Him.

We have to get our priorities in line. We have to get our focus. We also have to get our want to's in line. Sometimes God has to change our want to's. This old flesh wants to sit in a chair when we get home. It wants to put it's feet up and sit drowning thoughts and cares of the day in the old TV. It wants a routine life where everything is so so, and there is no extra effort needed. It doesn't want to listen to God and obey Him. Obedience is the key. It takes effort. It isn't comfortable. Sometimes obedience leads us into situations that won't be comfortable. It will however lead us to heaven. Do you know those around you who are lost? Are you praying for them? If you really love them, pray and ask God to lead you. You won't be comfortable on your knees before Him, but you will be blessed when their lives are changed through your prayers. Do you have children whose lives are wrecks because they aren't obeying God? You may miss your TV spent in prayer instead, but you won't miss the heartache,

you will love the victory that comes in when you see their lives turn around.

Do you work with people who are so hardened in heart that you don't think you will ever reach them? Spend your break time praying for them. I know someone who did that, and there were eventually enough other workers who joined them that they had a prayer meeting going during lunch. Even some of the management joined them. It wasn't comfortable to start that. But when she did, God blessed it. Are you a young person who thinks that no one else cares about serving God? Listen to God and obey Him. Do what He leads you to do. Get out of your comfort zone. Set your priorities. God can change your world around.

I know someone who started ministering at the local Hardees to young people on Friday night. It was the hangout. Many young people were saved kneeling at those benches. God led and blessed, and they obeyed. Do you have someone in your church that is sick? Pray. Believe that the Lord will hear your prayers. Dare to set your priorities. Dare to reach up for a gift. Dare to take time to pray and see your world change. Dare to spend time listening and obeying. Dare to believe. Dare to focus on the possible instead of on the impossible.

Part of setting your priorities comes when your faith is built up. Don't have faith in what you can do. A lot of people never achieve anything for God because they never step out of the natural into the supernatural. They only focus on what they are, not on what God is. I remember when God told me to become the director of our Christian school I was overwhelmed. I get that way every now and again. I told the Lord that I couldn't do that. He told me in no uncertain terms that He was the God who made it all. How dare I tell Him that I couldn't do that which He had told me to do. He would enable me to do it. He would give me what I needed to obey Him. You know what. I did it. I am still doing it today. He will give you what you need to do it with. If He tells you to do it, you can. Focus on Him, instead of yourself. Step out in faith. Get your priorities in line to do what He has told you to do. Do it. Change your world.

Just a footnote here to this chapter. When you have your priorities in line and you are focused, you won't fall for sin. You won't get tangled up with things that you should leave alone. You won't walk all around the edge of falling into sin until you fall in and ruin your life. Your life will be focused on serving God. Like Matthew 6:22 says, our eyes can be evil. They can get focused on the wrong things that can destroy us. Keep your evil eye single. Your evil eye will be focused on God. It won't be focused on the wrong things.

And another thing. If you are sold out with all your heart serving God, you won't have time left over for sin. You won't even have the energy left to go there. Let God be the priority in your life. When He is your priority, then you will be focused on Him, and you will hear His voice. You will obey Him because He is number one. You won't have all the static between you that will keep you from tuning in to His voice. We'll talk more about static coming up in the next chapter.

Chapter 11. *Getting Out the Static*

Our ministry has three radio stations: two AM stations and WNLB, an Internet stations. When working with the AM stations, we would have people who would call to ask if there was something the matter with the radio station. They couldn't pick it up very good. We would figure out that they didn't have their radio fine-tuned onto the station so they were picking up a lot of static. That made it so that they couldn't hear the station very well. Until they fine-tuned the station, there was a lot of static. Sometimes there was interference from something around them that bled in and kept them from being able to hear the channel well. They had to figure out what the interference was and take care of what was causing it. Then they could pick up the station and hear it clearly.

Our spiritual life is much like this. We can't hear the voice of the Lord sometimes because we have too much static or we have too much interference on the channel. We need to get rid of the things that are causing the interference. We need to get rid of the static. What are some things that interfere with our hearing God's voice?

I think of sin first of all. I can remember when I was a kid I would do something that would get me

in trouble if my Mom or Dad found out about it. Oh, I would dread them finding out. Even though I might convince myself that they wouldn't, there was still this dread in my heart that they would. Before they found out about it (and they almost always did), my relationship with them wasn't the best. I had all this guilt and fear of exposure that came between us. I had my sin standing between us in our relationship. I was a master at turning it around and blaming that breach in our relationship on them. I would say to myself that if they weren't so strict I wouldn't have this problem. Or I might say that if they were like other kids' parents, I wouldn't have this problem. I'd say to myself whatever I could to ease my conscious. It wouldn't work though for very long, and the rub in my soul would just get worse. Then they would find out, and that rub would get really bad. But after I confessed up, received my punishment, then things would get back to normal. That breach in our relationship would heal, and I was so glad that they found out, that I confessed, and that I got my punishment and repented. (Usually that was how it was. I was so hard headed that I had to get my punishment and then repent. It should be the other way around, by the way.) Where am I going with this? Aren't we a lot like this with God? Isn't that how we deal with sin if we aren't careful?

We walk all around sin before we fall in. It's like walking around and around the edge of the Grand

Canyon. If you walk around the edge every day, you will eventually fall in. You may be convincing yourself that it is fine, but it isn't. Wake up. Get real. We look at it and think it isn't so bad. Sure this may happen to some people who get messed up with this, but it won't happen to me, we think. Wake up. Get real. You have an enemy who wants to destroy you. He wants to create this static so that you can't hear the voice of God, so that your relationship with Him is destroyed. Then He can have your soul. If it is sin, then there is a reason why God says stay away from it. Stay away from it. When we start toward sin, it is like sticking your head in a beehive. There is a lot of noise, and a lot of buzz. Our head gets all confused. The devil puts blinders on us so that we can't see the danger. Most of the time he has set a trap using bait that is just for us. He sets it up so that it is specifically designed to trap us.

The devil usually works for a long time in our lives to bring us to that point where we give in. He causes little things that begin to start that static that keeps us from hearing God's voice. When we can't hear God's voice, then we fall for the devil's traps and can't see them. That still small voice that guides us, that Holy Ghost that convicts our heart is the safe guard to keep us from starting around the edge of sin. The devil causes little attitudes that become static. He sets us up by causing circumstances to happen to make us have

attitudes. It may be we get hurt at something at church. He rubs that in and makes it a lot bigger than it really is. He causes us to dwell on something that might not even have been noticeable if he hadn't started messing with it. Then that thing gets so big that we start laying out of church. Our hurt gets bigger. Our static gets louder. If we would just listen, God could straighten us out, but the static is too loud. Then we fall out of church and away from God all together. That is how the enemy works. That is just one example. He is a master at using this sort of thing to get us messed up

The enemy will cause someone whom we haven't seen since our wild days before Jesus to start coming around. They may act like they want to change, but it is all just a trap. We start hanging around them. It may take a long time, but gradually we get pulled back into our old life style. If we had been more focused on God instead of other things, if we had been fine tuned, we would hear the voice of God saying to leave that alone. But we weren't, and we didn't, and we lost out on God.

The Bible tells us that the little foxes spoil the vines. It is the little sins that are the most damaging to our souls. He doesn't just use the big things. The little things are the ones he starts with. I think of cigarettes. People are so addicted to

those. That is nothing but the devil. If he can use a little 4-inch stick of weeds to control you, then he can control you in other areas of your life. If he can use that to put static in your head so that you can't hear the voice of the Lord so that there is something to separate you from God, then he will certainly use that. Why go there? You may argue that there is nothing wrong with it. You may argue that the Bible doesn't speak about it specifically. It doesn't matter. It is something controlling your life that isn't God. An addiction is controlling you. If you don't believe that you are addicted, then quit. Don't believe the lie that you aren't hooked, because you can quit any time. If you aren't addicted, then quit. It is the same thing with alcohol. Why mess around with things that addict and pull us away from God causing the static in our lives to separate us from Him. Keep your channel fine-tuned. Keep everything out of your life that can cause you to be destroyed spiritually. It isn't worth it. Don't walk around the edge of destruction.

I could go on and on here with examples. The devil does just that. He is a master. Our only hope is to stay focused on God. Stay fine tuned into His station. Listen to His voice. He will lead you away from harm. He will see the enemies' trap and warn you about it even before the enemy starts setting you up. He will guide you away from the edge deep into the recesses of His love.

He will keep the relationship between you, if you will let Him. Stay close to Him. His love will cover you. He will cover you with His wings.

There are other sources of static that can come into our lives. One is the voices of the people around us who are not Spirit-led. If we aren't careful we can tune into those voices more than we do God's. I have already talked about earlier in the book how it is important to walk in the Spirit. If we aren't walking in the Spirit, then the flesh leads us, and that can only cause disaster and confusion in our lives. We know this, but when we have problems it is often flesh led people whom we turn to for advise and help. Instead of asking God, we ask everybody on our pew what we should do. We seek advise from people whose lives are a disaster, and we wonder why when we do what they say, it is a disaster. Psalms 1:1 says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly..." If we want to be blessed, we have to make the right choices and decisions in our life. To do that, walk in God's counsel, and in the counsel of those we know are Spirit led.

I talked earlier in the book about how about how many people depend on their pastor for guidance. If they are faced with a decision, they run to the pastor before running to God. Seek God's voice. Seek His guidance. If you have confidence in your pastor as being a Spiritual, Spirit filled

leader, then confirm what you have heard from God by talking to him, but don't depend on him. Depending solely on him isn't good for you in your relationship with the Lord, and it is not good for your pastor.

Other sources of static that keeps us from fine tuning our hearing the Lord is letting anyone in your life be the Lord of your life. If we aren't careful, we can let others be bigger than the Lord. We get so wrapped up in them that we can't hear God's voice at all. I know someone who will tell you today about one of the worst mistakes she went through. She met a guy who swept her off her feet. It was a whirlwind courtship. She couldn't hear anything but him. You might say that her hormones stopped up her ears. I think too that the fear of being alone was a factor there as well. For whatever reason, she couldn't hear. She couldn't hear the voice of the Lord warning her not to trust this guy. She couldn't hear the voice of all her friends warning her that this wasn't the will of God for her life. She got married to him. I don't remember how many months she was married to him, but it wasn't long. When his true colors came out they weren't pretty. Thankfully the only things that she suffered were emotional scars, but he was so bad it could have been a lot worse. Our flesh can stop up our ears. Our emotions can stop up our ears. We will talk more

about that in the next chapter, how this can happen, and how to guard against this in our lives.

Seek the Lord. Is there static in your life? How can you fine tune so that you hear His voice? Do you have anything that you are doing that causes you to focus more on it instead of on Him? Is there anything that comes between you and Him because it is becoming more of a Lord to you than your Master who died for you? Is there sin or habits in your life that creates static to the place where you can't hear the voice of the Master? It takes time to focus on the Lord. Is there anything that is stealing your time so that you don't have any time left for the One who died for you? Ask Him. Fine tune.

Chapter 12.

How Emotions Can Stop Your Spiritual Ears

If God isn't the Lord of our emotions, then that creates all kinds of static. Emotional static is the hardest to overcome because the devil can be the one causing the emotions to start with. Like we saw in the last example in the chapter before this. The devil set her up. He knew what weakness to use right then in her life. He sent her a trap to destroy her because he knew that she was one day going to do something very important for the Lord. He sent her the trap, and he fanned her emotions to draw her into the trap. Let's talk more about emotions that the devil uses to destroy us and how we can overcome the traps he sets for us. We talked in an earlier chapter about walking in the Spirit instead of in the flesh. We are flesh. We won't ever be perfect. But if we learn how to yield to God's Spirit so that He can point out and get out those negative emotions, we can overcome our flesh.

We all know the dangers of negative emotions. We have all learned, often through pain, what giving in to these at the wrong time and place can cause. We may have experienced loss we could never, except by the grace of God, regain. Part of submitting our flesh is being able to step back from our emotions, identify those that are caused by our flesh or traps that satan has set for us, give

them to Jesus and let Him be the feelings that we need to have. Let's look at some of these negative emotions, why they come, and how to deal with them. (When I speak of negative emotions it's not in the sense as the world defines negative which is sadness, anger, etc. We will have these as part of being human and all aren't bad except for when they are to the degree of being destructive. When I say negative emotions, I mean negative as being emotions that satan has attached himself to with the purpose of bringing destruction to your life, your heart, your relationship with God and others, and your soul.)

Hate is one of the most destructive forces when it comes because of hurt. Hurt is often caused when we don't get what we want, or things don't turn out the way we think they should, or the people around us in their imperfection don't do or act in a way we think they should. We can even get hurt at God. This is one of the worst emotions that we can have. It is the hardest to face and the hardest to deal with. Hate can come out of this destructive disappointment--disappointment that leads to destruction if we don't get to the root of it, face the problem and let God heal us. As with any hurt we have to identify it and face the problem that it is bringing into our lives. We have to forgive those that have hurt us before God is able to set us free. We have to admit any "yuk" that we have in our hearts and be careful not to hold grudges. Perfect

people or a perfect world does not surround us, and we will be hurt. To hold grudges and unforgiveness against those that hurt us leads to a path of destruction for ourselves-not them. We can forgive the unforgivable only through letting God's Spirit work in our lives.

Another destructive emotion is sadness to the place that it becomes depression. Joy is important. Philippians 4:4 tells us to "rejoice in the Lord **always** and again I say rejoice." The Bible tells us that "the joy of the Lord is our strength". Notice that it says "of the Lord". I think this means two things. It means submitting ourselves so that His joy inside of us shines through regardless of how we feel or the circumstances around us. (If satan can steal our joy, he has our strength to fight and overcome.) Losing our joy and depression can also be caused when we feel that our life, our selves, our circumstances, people around us, are not what we feel like they should be. This causes us to feel defeated. Satan attaches himself to these feelings and adds a critical spirit that causes us to constantly find fault with ourselves and with others around us so that nothing looks even worth fighting for. He brings in negative thinking that causes us not to be able to see hope or anything good. He blinds us through all these from being able to see God's love for us, or the love of others around us, from seeing any good that is in our lives or those around us, and catches us in a web

of despair. Another thing that can bring depression is when you feel that there is no purpose in your life and you are not being fulfilled in who you are and what you do. Proverbs 29:18 says, "where there is no vision the people perish..." If you have no vision, nothing to look forward to in your life, nothing that you feel you are accomplishing, you will feel there is no use, and this will lead to depression. One way to guard against this is to seek God's face and let Him tell you your purpose. We are all created with a purpose. We have to listen to His voice and obey, and He will use us in a mighty way in spite of our weaknesses.

One of the joys of submitting your flesh with all these negative emotions is being able to submit to God and let Him show you the problem that is there. You can recognize it as an attack from satan and accept God's leading in overcoming it. If we have submitted ourselves to God, we know, too, that our own opinion of ourselves, the people around us, or our circumstances, matter little. It is God's opinion that matters, and we learn to hear what He has to say and see things in His viewpoint, and the outcome of that viewpoint is always victorious. We learn to let God have control of the things in our lives that are less than perfect and rejoice in Him. This brings joy into our lives to replace sadness and depression. Depression comes, too, when we try to make our

lives and our situations better on our own, and we fail. We often give up and think what is the use. We need to realize we can't make our life better, submit it to God and His control. Let go and let Him become Lord of our lives. Obey His leading and He will help us right what is wrong. That will bring victory, not our defeat.

Another bad emotion is nerves. All too frequently we say-that gets on my nerves, that makes me nervous. Saying your nerves are bothering you is just a modern way to say that we lack peace in our lives. We can get so caught up in this that we guzzle pills by the boatloads, see psychiatrists and eventually commit ourselves to an institution. Often it comes simply from a lack of understanding God's Word, failure to trust Him and His love for us and the love of those around us, and failure to obey Him and put Him as a number one priority in our lives so that there are no breaches in our trust. It also comes when we fail to yield to God. We need to get a right and prayed up relationship with God (a become nothing relationship-totally surrendered to Him) so that we know that He is in control. Then we can find His perfect peace. A guaranteed cure for the worst case of the nerves is getting wrapped up in God's love, His Word and the promises it brings, and letting the warm blanket of peace that this brings cover every part of your soul, letting it soothe the torment that satan brings into your mind

by worry and fear. His presence calmed the winds and the storm and when He said, "peace be still", the storm stopped. Read Mark 4:39. Read the whole story there. His presence can still the storms in your heart and mind if you will let Him.

Another cause for nervous tension comes when we run away from submitting ourselves totally to God or when we run from letting Him deal with things in our lives that are wrong. This can cause unbearable nervous tension that drives people to run headlong into destruction. Don't run from God.

Another negative emotion that prevails in today's world is a lack of self-control. This causes people to have no control over their lives, what they do, or their habits. They aren't able to control the circumstances around them and not be defeated by them because they cannot control themselves. They are constantly caught in traps of satan because he can easily entice them to the side by appealing to their appetites or lusts (this doesn't just mean lust that is sex, but any thing that can destroy from a lack of self control: food, TV, spending money, habits like smoking, anything that satan can dangle in front of you that you can't control yourself and not go after it.) Just as dangerous is our letting an easy chair control what we do for God, letting anything our flesh wants to do keep us from obeying Him in prayer, Bible study, visiting, calling on the sick, or obeying Him

in anything. How do we overcome this? We let God show us the weakness we have. We have to want to overcome this. We rely on His strength to do so. Submitting these things to God and giving Him control does not mean that we say, well I can't do anything about it so I will just let God take care of this problem. It means letting God have control and obeying Him in whatever He gives you to do that will help you overcome this weakness. It may mean fasting either a total fast or just depriving yourself of your favorite things. It may mean setting aside an afternoon to visit. It may mean cutting off the TV. It may mean letting God set your schedule. It does not mean giving up, but just beginning to fight. This time when you fight you know that the Spirit of God inside of you will win the battle over your weakness.

Another negative emotion is stress, which is just a modern day word for a combination of fear, doubt, worry, and a rat race life that is controlled by flesh, satan, and everyone and everything but God, His Spirit and His Word. To cure a rat race life, submit to God and let Him be in control of your life. Let God lead your daily plans and let Him replace the confusion in your life with His divine order. Pray this before you start your day. Lord, be the Lord of my day. Lead me to do your will for this day. Keep me from getting into the rat race. Show me what You want me to do today. After you pray this, don't let others or the world control what you

do. Especially don't let others control you by thinking you need do these things to look good or fit in, or to have your children look good and fit in. If you let this happen to them they will learn early the bondage this way of life can bring—running here and there in a rat race to please others.

Fear, doubt, and worry are listed in the sins that can cause us to be cast into hell. Revelations 21:8 tells us, "But the fearful, and unbelieving....shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone...." Worry is one of the sneakiest emotions of them all. Worry means simply going over and over in your mind the thoughts that are negative. Constantly thinking what if this or what if that or studying all the things that are bad or wrong in your life, circumstances, or the people around you. This brings doubt. Doubt brings fear. Fear can separate us from the love of God, which gives us stability in our lives. God is love and truth. II Timothy tells us, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and a sound mind." Knowing and trusting God's love drives fear away. When we don't see Him as loving us and taking care of us, because we are looking at circumstance, or because we are looking at others around us to be there, then we don't see Him at all. If we can't accept His love because we think He has let us down, and bottom line, truthfully, we don't trust Him and are hurt at Him, or we have let others hurt us to the place we can't

accept love, God's or anybody else's, then we don't have God at all. God is love. If we can't accept His love then we can't see Him. We have to admit this, commit it to Him, and let Him heal us. Fear and doubt can destroy a relationship with God completely, especially if that relationship is weak to start with. I have walked with God in a relationship most of my life. There were times when I walked away from it. There were times when I got messed up in sin and turned my back on God big time. But I have spent more years serving the Lord than I have running from Him. The rocky times, the battles, and the heartaches through the years, have all helped to build that relationship, not tear it down, just like hardships can cement a relationship between husband or wife or close friends. But just like any relationship, if we let fear and doubt creep in to cause us to doubt that relationship, if it isn't strong it can be torn down. To fight this in our relationship with God, as well as in any relationship, we have to keep the lines of communication open. When I don't understand something God has done, I ask Him. I don't question His goodness or His power, but I ask for understanding. In His love He lets me know, or if it is something beyond my understanding, or something that I don't need to know at that time, He gives the peace I need. Relationships are broken when we hold things in until we get a bad attitude and try to communicate with a bad attitude. That never works. God is a

person, and we need to treat Him with the same understanding we use with those that are dearest to our hearts. Communicate. Listen to His voice.

Relationships can also crumble when we doubt ourselves and what we bring into that relationship. Our relationship with God is the same. Satan attacks us, making us doubt ourselves. He points out all our imperfections and says God can't love you. You aren't perfect, look at your failures. That is just as dangerous as doubting God. Communicate. When you fail God, get forgiveness right then. Don't accept condemnation. His Word tells us not to. Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." If you have confessed your sin and turned away from it, if you have submitted your flesh to God and are walking in His Spirit then you have no condemnation. When you feel satan trying this, go to God and let Him love it away. Remember if God only loved perfect people He would be really lonely. It's not people who are perfect, but people that have submitted themselves to Him and who are striving for His perfection that He loves.

Other negative emotions are strife and dissension. The Bible says in Proverbs 6:19 in a list of things the Lord hates, "He that soweth discord among brethren." The world is so full of people in conflict

with one another. Jealousy, bitterness, hurt feelings all cause a flurry of people up in arms about something, against someone. The day of Pentecost fell because people were in one mind and accord. We can't even get our churches to get together in one mind and agree, let alone to be in accord and have peace with one another. We are in a time of people being filled with more of themselves, what they want, and how they think it should be more than filled with God's Spirit and His love. People are even taught that they should stand up for themselves and cause conflict if things aren't their way. People become so filled with causing strife that it is a way of life to them and their life becomes filled with conflict they reap back from others. Meekness, gentleness, goodness, and long suffering are a lost art and even scoffed at a weakness. It is not weak to stand in the truth of God's Word and live how it says for us to live. It takes a strength that has to come beyond any strength we humanly have. It has to come when we submit our will to God and control of our lives into His hands and we accept His leading. We can stand toe to toe with those around us, even with satan himself, and know that after the conflict we will win.

How do we fight against these emotions we've discussed? First we have to identify them. This takes submission. We have to look at ourselves as God sees us, not as we want to see ourselves. We

have to admit the "yuk" we have inside us. We have to do this every day until the day we become like Jesus, which will either be the day we die, or the day we see Him in the clouds. This hurts, it is not easy to let God reveal ourselves as we really are. To start, we have to get our eyes off of everyone else, and their problems and failures, and look at ourselves. The Bible talks about the man who looked at the speck in his neighbor's eye and criticized him for that when he had a whole beam in his own eyes. Until we are ready to look at ourselves and see ourselves, and admit our problems instead of looking at everyone else, we won't repent. Repent means not only being sorry, but sick and tired of the mess and ready to do whatever God says to do to change. Then we have to obey what He says. This shows Him that we really mean business. He may have us to ask forgiveness from someone (even if at the time we may not mean it). That act of obedience can break loose a forgiveness that comes from Him, which starts a chain of deliverance and healing from the hurt that was caused. During this process of deliverance and healing we have to be real. We cannot talk ourselves into thinking the problem is not there or not as bad as it is. Sometimes bad emotions come from a deeper problem that we have in our hearts. We have to face these deeper problems and deal with them to be able to fully get rid of the emotions that have become attached to them. We have to know that we cannot fix these

things ourselves, but we have to submit them to God and let Him work in us through His Spirit.

Overcoming bad emotions does not mean having self control and making ourselves not feel the things we shouldn't feel. Self-control just temporarily fixes the outward appearance, how we act outside. You can only try to make yourself be good for so long. We have to let God fix the root of the problem, and then what we are on the outside and the emotions we have will be fixed. For example, we can know that we shouldn't cause conflict and strife. We can make ourselves be good, but that will only last for a while until we let God fix what in our heart causes us to be that way. Then we will no longer do those things. Christians all too often try to correct outward things and fail to get to the heart root of the problem. That's why so many that put on an outward appearance of doing fall and give up in their relationship with Christ. They failed to deal with what was inside their hearts and fixed only the outside.

When we let all these emotions rule our lives, then it becomes static to keep us from hearing the voice of the Lord. Even when we hear His voice, all this prevents us from obeying. Here is one example of how this can work. We get hurt. This is to be expected. We live in a world controlled by people who are not controlled by God and are controlled by satan. These are sinners and Christians who

aren't submitted and letting God's Spirit control their lives. We are also surrounded by circumstances that we can't control. We are vulnerable and we will be hurt. It's what we do with this hurt that shapes us or destroys us. If we aren't careful we will allow the problem to stay and fail to fix it because we become bitter and hold grudges, or because we get wrapped up in self pity, or because we become afraid of being hurt again and wrap ourselves in a wall of defensiveness so that God can't reach us. If we do any of these things, God with all His power to heal and deliver, can't help us. We have to decide of our own will that we do not want these things in our lives and submit them to Him. God can only do the things in our lives that we submit to Him because He created us with a free will. He cannot go against that. (That is why it is important to constantly have an attitude of submission to Him and giving our problems and battles and the people around us to Him, not trying to control them ourselves. Our control stops God from being able to work not only in our lives but also in whatever we are trying to control.)

When we fail to let God heal our hearts this feeds out forming a cloud of bitterness, doubt, fear, anger, hate, strife, and all these negative emotions that we talked about. We then have guilt and self-condemnation to add to that cloud because we aren't doing and being what we know that we

should. This cloud distorts our view of our lives and those around us, which leads to mistrust, and fear. This cloud shapes how we act and how we treat others. We are so wrapped in it we don't see ourselves as we really act to others. This drives those around us away and we become isolated not only from God's love but also from those around us that love us and are reaching out to us. We often blame this on everyone else and see it as everyone else's problem, which causes us to fear being hurt even more. We become isolated. We know in our mind that God loves us, but we can only feel the love that can filter down through the cloud like the sun on a completely cloudy day. We try to fix the outward things. We try to be nice, we try not to do or be a way that we know by God's Word we shouldn't, but this only works for so long. By doing this we only cut off one of the cords connecting the cloud to us, but more of the same filters out. We feel like we are drowning and don't know why. We often feel like quitting because we try and try and it doesn't work, so why try any more.

If you are a minister, a pastor, or you work with people, you will be hurt. I know many people who let this hurt stop them even from serving God. Or they get so bitter in their hearts that God can't get through the bitterness to use them. Or they get so rebellious and self-willed that they are against God instead of for God and they actually become a

hindrance to the very house of God that they are supposed to build up. Or they begin to carry their feelings on the shoulders and they get spoiled and petty in their relationships with others. Pastor's wives, I want to talk to you a little bit here. Pastors' wives have it hard. When people in the congregation have a problem with the pastor, they often don't have the courage to do that. They take it out on the pastors' wives instead. They take it out on the pastor's kids too. Especially when the pastor isn't looking. I think that is one reason for the saying about how the pastors' kids are the meanest in town. That is why. Ministers and their wives, pastors and their wives, if you let your hurt stop you, then the devil will be sure that no matter where you go to take a church there will be someone there who will hurt you. The only way to overcome this is to overcome your hurt. Let it go and give it to God and learn how to let this become your strength. Then the devil will not be able to use this against you. One of the keys to being able to turn this around is to keep your motives pure. If you are doing what you do with the motive of doing it for the people that you are reaching out to, then you are setting yourself up for letting your hurt stop you. If you are doing what you do with the motive of doing it for the Lord, then the hurt won't stop you. Why are you doing what you do? Is it to help the people or to serve the Lord who died for you? Is it to please the people or is it to serve the One who suffered more than you will

ever be able to suffer, and He did this for you? Keep your eyes off the people and keep them on the Lord. Do it for Him.

We have to deal with the heart. We have to submit our will to God, admit our mess, and let Him show us the problem: what He will do, and what He wants us to do. Let Him break you so that you no longer want your will and your way and you want His. He will give you things to do to try you to see if you really mean business and want to be free. If you do, He will fix your heart. You can't do it on your own any more than you can heal a gash on the outside of your body. He will take you through a time of healing and delivering you from the outside clouds. It won't be easy. You will have to face the truth of your pain that you've hidden from, but God's love will hold you. Be yielded to His Holy Ghost. Pray in the Spirit. Let His Spirit and His Word heal and deliver you. Get prayed for as often as you can, but don't rely on that alone. Go to God frequently and let His Spirit bless you, even in your own house. God will deliver you. Let the quickening power of God help you to break through this static.

The positive alternatives to the negative emotions that we have discussed are found in the scriptures about the fruits of the spirit. If you read these you'll find that they are the direct opposites of all those things we mentioned. By that, you know

that if you have them, you will overcome the bad. How do we get these to operate in our lives? We know we can't do it on our own. We know that we can't make ourselves be this way. But God tells us we have to. How? The Bible talks about the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22. They are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Too often when we read these, we read it as a list of how we should act and a guide of things we shouldn't do. We see it as something we are supposed to make ourselves do. We try, but we can't and this leads to self-condemnation. Instead of the strength these passages are supposed to bring us, they wind up bringing defeat. We fail to notice the key Words--the fruits **of the Spirit**. These are the characteristics of God's Spirit. These are the traits of Jesus. We have inside of us God's Spirit. If we submit our flesh to Him and let Him be in control of our lives, then He will shine out. We will become like Him. Instead of a battle of trying to act a certain way, it is our becoming that way. God heals and delivers you from the inside things that caused the outside emotions. As we submit to His Spirit, the control you allow Him to have grows. As you read His Word, pray in His Spirit, fellowship with His people who are doing the same, you will become a reflection of Him. Let Him fill you up with His Spirit and have control. Stay away from people and things that would take away from His influence. Let Him show you what

and who to stay away from and obey Him. Don't let anything or anyone else control your life. Be filled with the fruits of His Spirit.

I have mentioned this before, but it is so important I want to cover it again. When we become hurt, it is easy to get defensive. We put up a wall to prevent ourselves from being hurt again. We get defensive in our actions and attitudes. This drives others away and isolates us from God's love and from His being able to fix those areas in our heart that we need help with. We act in a defensive way, often without realizing we are. This brings reactions from the people around us. We only see their reactions, not what we have done to cause them. Satan says, see there, you can't trust anybody. This causes you to further shut yourself away. Defensiveness is a sin. We have to realize that we are vulnerable, but that in our weakness God will be made stronger. We have to realize we will be hurt, but through faith in God we know that the hurt we have will be turned into a greater victory.

When we break a bone the bone eventually gets stronger at the break. Pain, adversity, problems, brings strength into our lives that nothing else can. Romans 5:3-5 tells us, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed;

because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts...." Even the worst tribulation, if handled right, can bring strength into our relationship with God. I have gone through terrible pain and later thanked God for what He built in my life through it. Romans 8:28 tells us that *all* things work together for the good of those that love the Lord. Everything, no matter how bad, can be used for our good if we trust God. Pain and heartache themselves can become beautiful things in the hands of God if we will let go of them and give them to God.

We can't talk about all that without mentioning the sin of rebellion. Often hurt is how rebellion gets started. We get hurt and that makes it hard for us to yield to God and to others. Instead of yielding our hurt, we hold onto it, and that makes this all worse. We read in I Samuel 15:23, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry..." That tells us like it is. If we aren't yielding and listening and obey, then that is rebellion. That is as the sin as witchcraft. When we don't yield to God and we are stubborn, then that is as bad as idolatry because God is not Lord of our lives. Wow. So when we get so hurt that we run from obeying the voice of God, then we are committing witchcraft and idolatry. When we let hurt control our lives then the devil wins, and the people who hurt us win. They are the ones in control of us. Let God be in control. Give it up.

Give it all to Jesus. When rebellion controls you, you will be doing the opposite of what the Master tells you to do. You will be going west when He says go east. You will be keeping on with the things that can only destroy you and your ears will be stopped from hearing His voice says STOP. There is no way to win when a rebellious spirit takes hold of you. The devil will send one of his devils to put a spirit of rebellion against you. The devil can't possess you, but he can oppress you by sending a spirit out against you to influence your emotions. As long as you hold in that hurt, he can use this against you. Let it go. Let God have control. Realizing what is going on is half the battle. Wanting it gone is the other half. Submitting to God and letting His Holy Ghost deliver you is the outcome.

Rebellion can be literally a spirit from hell that prevents you from listening and obeying. I know about that because I had the same thing. I was rebellious even when I was a kid. When I first got saved, that thing tried to control my life still. Now I believe, and scripture bears out, that demonic spirits can't possess you when you are saved. When the Holy Ghost moves in, they have to move out. But the scripture also bears out that they can influence you after you are saved. You can come under their oppression. Another way to explain that is this; whatever you yield yourself to will control you. I had yielded so long to that

rebellious spirit that I still yielded to it after I got saved. I didn't mean to, but I didn't understand how I could get set free from that. Because of that I couldn't yield to the Lord. It was hard for me to obey. That is why I know how important it is to do this. I couldn't work for the Lord very well because I couldn't yield.

I had yielded so long to that rebellious spirit that it still controlled my life. Someone would tell me not to do something, and I would do it not even realizing why. It was an automatic reaction. I couldn't obey those over me in the Lord, let alone God. God had to deliver me so that I could yield. The enemy can bind us to the place that we can't really see God's love and the power of His Word. One example might be a past life of sin. If you have had a life filled with sin before the Lord saved you, then the devil will bring condemnation against you. You might feel like you are not worthy of God's promises. This will bind you from being able to receive God's Word. This will cause us not to be able to trust Him. When we don't trust, it is hard to obey. If you have been involved in things in your past, before Jesus came into your heart, then you need to let God deliver you from your past. To do this, you need to completely and totally let your past go. You cannot hold onto even one little seemingly insignificant corner of your past. If you don't let it go, the devil will eventually use that one corner

against you to destroy you. When Jesus comes into your heart you become a new creation. II Corinthians 5:17 tells us, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." Old things are passed away. You need to totally turn loose of what is behind you before you can really grab with both hands onto what is ahead of you. This means all the people and activities associated with your past. If there is something in your past that you miss, then you have not totally given it up. If you don't get delivered, the devil will constantly bring this up before you. Until you do, then you will never totally get delivered from the spirits that bound you in your past.

A key to help you to be delivered from spirits that have bound you in your past is that you have to forgive those that hurt you in your past. I mean that you have to totally and completely forgive and that can only come through the Spirit of God who is in you. God's Spirit can help you to forgive when you can't do it on your own. If you don't forgive, then these spirits can come back to bind you. To continue to walk in that newness that God has given you, you must totally and completely turn loose of the old. One example is this. I had been saved for a while. But I couldn't get total deliverance from some of the devils that had bound me as a sinner. I asked God what was going on. He showed me that I had a bitter spirit. I

had bitterness against some people who had hurt me during this time. These spirits that were controlling those people were able to come against me. I had a hole in my armor and wasn't protected against these because of my bitterness. I was vulnerable to attack from them. With God's help I forgave these people, and God restored me. If we don't forgive, then we have a high risk of actually becoming like those that we are holding bitterness against. Press on ahead. That is where the mark for our high calling is. Philippians 3:14 tells us, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

We also can become attacked from the devil when we fail to get out the root of a problem in our life. For example, we might have a battle with fear. Or we might have a battle with depression, or rebellion. This all hinders us from obeying God. We can pray and it seems it gets better, but then it comes back. This is because we haven't gotten the root out. I have a little strawberry patch in my yard. It has been taken over by weeds. I can't pull up the weeds because the roots of the strawberries have gotten all entangled with the roots of the weeds. When I try to pull up the weeds I pull up the strawberries. The only way that I can keep the weeds out is to have my husband weed eat those weeds. That only works for a short time. It isn't long before there they are again. He does this all summer long. Sometimes this is how we fight the

devil in certain areas of our life. We deal with the outer symptoms, but we never get down to the root of the cause. For example, we fight a rebellious spirit, and continually bind it, but it keeps coming back because of the root. Sometimes the root for rebellion comes because we have been really hurt by someone that we submitted to in our past. This hurt was so bad that we built up a wall unconsciously that keeps us from submitting to anyone, God or anyone else. That is why we rebel. We have to allow God to get the root out. You may have some of these things hindering you from listening, stopping you from yielding to God's voice. Let God deliver you.

We can let a lot of things hinder us from listening and obeying the voice of the Master. One of the biggest things that can hinder us is our own self-esteem. Or I guess I should say our lack of self-esteem. Let's talk about that in the next chapter coming up.

Chapter 13.

Letting Ourselves Stop Us

Many of the preachers who God calls will never preach. Many of the missionaries who God has anointed will never minister. Many of the teachers God has set forth will never stand in front of a class. Many of the singers who are called to sing will never stand in front of an audience and sing. Many of the greatest witnesses that could ever go out and witness for the Lord will never start by knocking on the first door. Why? Because they have let themselves stop them. How many people do you know who ran from a calling because they were afraid that they couldn't do what the Lord was calling them to do? Maybe you are one of those people? Maybe you have been called to preach, to teach, to sing, but you are too afraid that you would just mess up. Maybe you have seen too many people who messed up and you say to yourself that if they couldn't do it right, then how can you. My answer to that is don't let people who have failed God stop you from trying. Allow it to be the fuel to fuel you on to doing it right. If there are others who are doing it wrong, then doesn't make the need for someone to do it right even greater?

I mentioned earlier in the book about how when God told me to become the director of our Christian school I told him that I couldn't. His

answer to me was, and I quote because I can still 24 years later remember His exact words, “I am the God who made the heavens and the earth. How dare you tell me that you can’t do what I told you to do. I will give you what you need to do it.” Have you ever thought of it that way? We get the focus on us instead of on God. If God tells you to do something, He will give you what you need to be able to do it. Just listen to His voice, and obey. You will be able to. We are in the 24th year of our school. Through those years I have had to do a lot of stuff that I can’t on my own do. I have had to face battles that I couldn’t face. Every day there are challenges that I face. I don’t have what it takes to do my job. The smartest thing I did was to realize that I can’t, and to let God use me. I yield. I listen. I know what I am capable of. Ask those around me. I have earned the nickname the Absent Minded Professor. I have to take care of hundreds of details in a day’s time, but I can’t remember what happened yesterday. I have just learned to be a good listener. I get it done and it is done fine. Not because I am anything, but because I have learned to be nothing, and I have learned to listen, yield and obey.

God doesn’t call the strong but He calls the weak so that they won’t glory in themselves but in God. Ephesians 2:10 tells us, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we

should walk in them.” We are His workmanship, not our own workmanship. He has ordained works for us to do. Not just the preachers, not just the pastors, not just the singers, but He has ordained works for all of us to do. He has created us for those good works. We won’t be happy, and we won’t be at peace until we learn this. We won’t be at peace until we do God’s will. I don’t mean all of us are to preach or sing, or teach, but there are many gifts that God gives us. Every day we have opportunities to serve Him if we let Him use us. Does God just use the strong and the perfect? One of my favorite verses is one of the last red letter quotes in the Bible. I love it because it is a direct quote from the Lord, and it is after He died. Paul is quoting what the Lord told Him about his weaknesses. It is found in II Corinthians 12:9-10, “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. 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.” We don’t have to glory in our strengths. So we don’t have to let our weakness stop us. Glory in your weakness. That is where you will find your strength to obey the Lord. When you are weak, you are the strongest.

One example is my writing. My memory is my

weakness. I can write a 20-chapter book. It takes me weeks or even sometimes months to write a book. I use hundreds of verses and examples. I very seldom repeat myself in the book as far as the scriptures and examples that I use. There aren't many people even with good memories who can do that. How can I? I know that I can't do it. I know that my memory is my weakness. So I don't try to do it on my own. There have been times when I let that weakness stop me from writing. I hesitated to write because I doubted my ability. That is the best thing that ever happened to me, realizing that I couldn't. That makes me to trust the Lord. I listen. I do. God enables me. It is as easy as that. I can't write this on my own. I am just a good listener. I let Him lead me. My weakness became my greatest strength. We make things so hard. We make them so hard that we never start them. It isn't hard. Just listen. Do. Trust God for the results.

Many times it is easy to answer God with an "I can't. I'm not big enough, strong enough in God, wise enough, perfect enough, holy enough, righteous enough, smart enough, or educated enough to obey You, God." We forget that when God asks us to do something, no matter how small or great, He does so knowing that we can do it, either because we already have the abilities we need, or because He is getting ready to give them to us. God knows us better than we do ourselves.

He knows our innermost weaknesses and strengths. He will not require us to do something we would only fail at. Why would He do that? As a teacher, I would never give one of the Kindergartners Algebra tests and fail them because they couldn't do it. God is wiser than we are. He would never require you to do something you can't do. He will push you to your limits to cause you to grow. He will add talents and gifts so that you can do far more than you would naturally. He will give you the ability to do what He asks. But He would never, never ask you to do something you can't do, just to see you fail.

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

you try with all your might. He already knew the outcome before He asked you. He will answer a multitude of excuses with just a few words. He will simply say, "I am with Thee." Here are stories of several people in the Bible that had all kinds of excuses. But God said that they could. They did. These are also the stories of what they accomplished when they did.

Jeremiah is the first such person we'll look at. We don't know exactly how old he was when the Word of the Lord came to Him, but Jeremiah 1:4-5 tells us, "Then the Word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." God told him how well He knew him. God said, "Even before you were formed in your mother's womb I knew all about you." When you are asked to do something by God, how well does He know you and your weaknesses and abilities? Even before He formed you, He knew you. Jeremiah thought of his greatest weakness (at least in his opinion). He answered God in verse 6, "Behold I cannot speak: for I am but a child." God answered Him in verse 7, "Say not I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I send thee and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." It didn't matter about his weaknesses, he was just to go where God sent him and speak what God gave him to speak. Then in

verse 9 God added the finishing touch. “Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, behold I have put my Words in thy mouth.” What happened to Jeremiah’s excuse? What happened to his weakness? When we listen to God and obey Him, we can do things that are far greater than anything we can even imagine. We can do great things. We may not even understand the impact they will have on those around us. We just follow the Leader, the One whose very thoughts are so far above ours that we can’t comprehend them. 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.” He makes a way where there seemeth none. If we walk in the paths He makes for us, do what He says, speak what He puts in our mouths, it will astonish us what we can accomplish in Him. Where are our excuses? Where are our weaknesses?

How about Jeremiah? What did God use him to accomplish, just by getting him to follow what He said to do? Verse 10 tells us, “I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.” God used Jeremiah to change the course of whole nations. Verse 18 and 19 says, “For behold, I have made

thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land, and they shall fight against thee; but they shalt not prevail against thee; for I am with thee saith the Lord to deliver thee.” In the course of one conversation with a child, God changed the history of nations. He spoke and gave Jeremiah His Word, which had the power to make happen what was spoken. Then He touched Jeremiah’s lips and gave him the words that he would need. He spoke the victory Jeremiah would have, that his enemies would not prevail against him. Throughout Jeremiah’s life he would have many enemies, but not one prevailed against him. This child, because of God’s plan and His Word, became a miracle man. What can you do for God when He asks you? Can you stand before Him and tell Him that you can’t do what He has asked?

Now consider the story of Joshua. The first time we read of Joshua, he is a young man among many. He was chosen in Numbers 13:17 to go with 11 others to spy out the land of Canaan. You probably know the story. The children of Israel were at the edge of the long awaited for Canaan. Moses sent 12 spies to “...see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad;

and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds” (Verses 18 and 19). It was such a wonderfully rich place that they found one grape cluster so big that it took 2 people to carry it on a staff. (Verse 27). But when they returned, doubt crept in, negatism stole in, flesh came in, and gave its opinion. “And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land and the cities are walled, and very great....” (verse 27 and 28). Flesh is an enemy to God. No matter how hard we try we cannot please God in the flesh. We cannot see the truth in the flesh. We cannot help someone or help God’s cause in the flesh. We have to get into the Spirit. In other words we have to forget ourselves and hook up to God’s Spirit. We have to think His thoughts, feel His feelings (the fruits of the Spirit), become submersed in Him so that what comes out is Spirit instead of flesh. When flesh begins to rule, chaos can happen in a few minutes. Caleb had the right idea when in verse 30 he stilled the people and said, “Let us go up at once and possess it for we are well able to overcome it.” These words were from the Spirit of God. These words were the spoken Word of God Who was speaking through him. Just like the powerful Words spoken to Jeremiah, they had life in them. The Word of God has power. If we listen to the Word of God, let it sink into our

brains and hearts, it can transform not only us but also the circumstances around us. It can give us power to win, to overcome whatever situations we face. But not everybody in a crowd will see it that way. Not everybody in your church will see it that way. Have you ever noticed that if you believe the report of the Lord and obeying Him, you will not be in a big crowd that agrees with you? That doesn't mean you are wrong. Joshua and Caleb were outnumbered 2 to 11, but they had the truth. In verse 31, flesh rose its ugly head again. "But the men that went up with him said. We be not able to go up against the people for they are stronger than we." Flesh will always bring out your weaknesses, and make God's strength appear less. What will flesh create? Only sorrow, only defeat. Chapter 14 verse 1 says, "And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried, and the people wept that night."

To get the full picture of what has happened, let's look at what these people had been through up to this time. They had wandered through this desert for a long time, looking for this moment, longing for it. Each dusty, rocky mile they trudged was for the sole purpose of coming to this land. It was the reason for their existence. They had made it. They were finally there. Their dream had come true. They were waiting to take the land God had promised them. As far as the land went, it was all they had dreamed that it would be. They only had

to wait on the report of these 12 spies to walk in to their promise. Now there were 2 reports that were faithful to God and His Word, there were 2 that believed and declared what God could do. The people could have listened to these two and the course of their lives for 40 more years would have been changed. But Chapter 14:2 tells us “And all the whole congregation said unto them, “Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God we would have died in the wilderness.” They wanted to elect captains to lead them to return to Egypt. Flesh always leads you to go back, not ahead into the promises God has for you. In verse 7-9 Joshua and Caleb spoke “And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, the land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not.” They spoke the Word of God to the people. “But all the congregation bade stone them with stones” (verse 10). Now we know when you listen to what God tells you to do and you do it, when you hear what He says to say and you say it, you will be in a minority and you will definitely have the attention of the majority. They may not want to hear it; they may even come against you because you tell

it, but that is not an excuse to keep silent and not warn them. In the scripture, God tells us that we are like watchmen. He sets us as leaders to establish what should be done. If those we tell do not hear, and do not act on what we tell them, it is not our fault. When we obey Him whole heartedly, it is His business to deal with the results. If we fail to tell them, then we are held accountable. Someone pointed out in a sermon that really touched my heart, that the harvest is God's. In the parable of the talents, Matthew 25, the man with the one talent in verse 24 said about his master, "...I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown and gathering where thou has not strawed." The Lord uses us as the servants that labor. We sow and we straw, but it is the Lord of the harvest that is responsible for the gathering and reaping. He doesn't sow, but he gathers where he has not sown. We are the sowers. When we obey God, the harvest is His. He is responsible for that. We can put it in His hands, whether they hear or not, that is not ours. If they don't hear, even if they come to stone us, we like Stephen, will see God. In verse 10 in this chapter, "...the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel." God rose up and stood for the few who had stood for Him. What was the outcome? Numbers 14:32 and 33 tells us that forty more years of wandering was pronounced on

all of them. Only two would live to inherit the promises of God—Joshua and Caleb.

Don't look at the circumstances and think that you can't. Don't look at your weaknesses and fail to ever try. If God says you can do it, and He tells you to do it, get ready to do it, and just do it. Don't look at the fact that you may be the only one that hears God and wants to obey. Don't think no one will hear what you have to say. If God says do it and you know this beyond any shadow of any doubt, do it, no matter if the entire world around you says you can't. If God gives you a Word, let His Word cause you to win. Get a vision from God. His Word says if we fail to have a vision, something to do, something to keep going for, something to believe in, something to drive us and press us on, then we will perish. What is the difference in Jeremiah, Joshua, Caleb, and you? Only you can decide whether you will say yes to God, or like the other ten spies on the edge of the promised land, "No, God, I can't."

Sometimes, if we aren't careful, we can over think. We can let our mind talk us out of listening and obeying. We can let our mind talk us out of believing. God can tell us something to do. We will start thinking about it, and talk ourselves right out of obeying. Our minds can be our worst enemy. Our minds are part of our flesh. That part of us is an enemy to God. Our flesh, like we

talked about in an earlier chapter, is the opposite of the Spirit of God. Our mind is the battleground of all that. If we think we can't, then we won't. If we think it won't work, then we won't. If we think that someone else won't, then we won't do our part. If we think that God won't, then we won't.

What we think is often what we get. We limit God so often by what we think. We limit ourselves from obeying God by what we think. How can we change this? One way is to listen to God's voice instead of to our own head. We also need to spend a lot of time reading the Bible. The Bible will help to fix our thinking. When we read of how others obeyed, and the outcome, it gives us the faith to obey. When we read of how God moved mountains, parted seas, made crooked places straight, then we know what God can do for us. Take your eyes off you and put them on the One who made it all. Read His Word. Be encouraged in the Word.

When you hear a voice driving at you that you can't do it, that if you try, it won't work out, then realize that voice is more often than not the devil. He will drive thoughts at you to knock you back from obeying the Lord. He will tell you there is no need to try, and give you a feeling of hopelessness when you start. Learn how to recognize his voice. Learn how to recognize those

feelings when you have them. How? Ask the Lord if it is Him talking to you that way. Ask the Lord if it is His voice. If it isn't, then don't accept it as just defeated thoughts you are having. Realize who is bringing those thoughts against you and bind him. Stand against him. Take authority over him. When I see him at work trying to defeat me from doing something, then that just further confirms to me what the Lord wants me to do.

If ever there has been a time when we need to listen to the voice of the Lord and obey that time is now. We need to listen not only for own selves, but for those we love. Coming up next.

Chapter 14.

Listening For Those You Love

We know by looking around us that the Lord is coming soon. We see all the problems going on in the world, and if we get our eyes on that and off the Lord we will let those destroy us. Men's hearts are failing them with fear. Depression and fear rules even the lives of Christians. This won't get any better until that day when we see the Lord split the eastern skies. If there has ever been a time when we need to hear and obey the voice of the Lord, it is now. If we don't, we won't make it. Not only will our physical lives come to ruin, but also so will our spiritual lives. Also, the lives of those we love can be destroyed if we fail to hear the voice of the Lord.

I can remember when the economy started turning for the worse, I heard a man give the testimony of how the Lord had blessed his orange groves. The Lord had told him to spray his oranges down one night because there was going to be a heavy frost. It wasn't even in season for frost. The weather reports didn't call for it. He listened and obeyed God's voice more than the other voices around him. His neighbors talked about him and called him crazy. Kind of reminds you of a guy named Noah that they did the same to. Guess what. It frosted a killing frost that night. They said that you could drive for miles around that man's

groves, and everything was black. You came to his groves and it was like an oasis of green in a desert. God knew. This man's crops were saved due to his listening to the Lord and obeying. Talk about a business prospering after that. His was the only oranges around.

I remember a man who told me that the Lord had led him to start a new business in the middle of the worst economic time. He told him the details of how to do it. Everyone around him warned him that it wasn't the best time to do this, and they told him that his ideas were crazy. They said it wouldn't work to do what he was going to do. He listened to the voice of the Lord. When the economy down turned, the demand for what he was doing increased. The type of business he had was made more valuable because of the economic situation we were in. God knew. This man is now on his way to becoming wealthy because he listened and obeyed.

I know someone who through illness was not able to work. He went through a time when he nearly lost everything that he owned. Only by listening to the voice of the Lord and obeying him was he able not only to survive but also to flourish in the middle of that hardship. What was the end outcome of this? He is now totally debt free.

I know someone who was without a job. He had to make the right decisions at the right time to be able to continue to support his family. He was able to do so through the time until he had the right job. He found the right job because he listened and the Lord told him when to go, where to go, and who to talk to at that work place. He is still working there today, and it is the right job for him.

To be a parent in today's world, you have to listen and obey the Lord. I remember listening to a teenager tell their parent that they couldn't get by with anything because the parent would listen to the Lord and the Lord would tell on them. Not only will He tell on them when they are into something that can destroy them, He will guide you into what you need to do about it. If you aren't yielding and listening to the Lord, you can't be a parent. There is so much out there to trap your children. Not just the teens, but at any age. I remember hearing about a 6th grader who was passing out drugs in a middle school. His grandfather was a dealer and was using him to pass out the drugs to the middle school children. True story. It isn't just drugs, and sex, and all that kind of things that we have to worry about, but we have to worry about the devil who sets all kinds of traps for their souls. Do you ever wonder about where in the world they picked up that stinking attitude? They would come home and all the sudden be a totally different person with an out of

control bad attitude. They had gotten caught up in a bad spirit at school hanging around someone else with a bad spirit. If you don't listen to God and obey Him, walk in the spirit, and bind that devil, he will come in and destroy your whole family. We have to listen and obey to protect those we love.

I know someone whose marriage is going through a rough time. I know that the outcome will be good because they are listening to the voice of the Lord and He is guiding them. I could go on and on. The only way that we will make it in today's world is by listening to the voice of the Lord. That is the only way that we will have any peace in our lives. That is the only way that we will be able to overcome. That is the only way that our families will make it. If we don't just listen for ourselves, then we need more than ever to listen for those we love. By our example, we will lead them. If our example is failure, then we will lead them to failure. If our example is victory, then we will lead them to victory.

Yes, the world is going crazy with fear because of the things that are happening. Yes, even nature seems like it is falling apart. Yes, the economy is falling apart and if things don't get better, our country is falling apart. Yes, there are lots of things to fear. Yes, there are so many people who are suffering with all kinds of physical ailments.

Yes, we see the end times nearing and that scares people to death. But I want to say that if you have your eyes on Jesus, He just keeps getting better and better. If you have your hand in God's hand, His hand just gets bigger as the problems grow. If you are trusting in Him, He will keep you through the storms. If you listen to His voice, and obey, He will see you through it all.

We won't be able to go through this alone. The wonderful news is that we won't have to do it alone. Not if we listen. Not if we yield and do it His way. Even though the world seems like it is falling apart, we can still have victory. We can still walk in the light. One time the Lord showed me a light. It was daylight and you couldn't tell that the light was even on. Then it began to get dark. At dusk, the light shown a little brighter, but you still couldn't see it very much. Then as it got darker, the light began to show up brighter. It wasn't that the light was getting any lighter itself, but as it got darker, its light showed up better. Then as the darkness was as dark as dark could be, that light was glowing with a brightness that consumed the dark. As it gets darker, the Lord will shine brighter. As times gets harder and we are forced to seek His face to be able to survive, He will shine brighter. The church throughout the Bible not only survived through the hard times, but it also thrived through the hard times. We not only can survive but we can thrive with victory in the

Lord, if He is our light. If we listen and obey our Master we will overcome with victory. Not only can we do so, but also so can our children, our families and those we love. Obey for those you love.

Chapter 15.

Serving the Lord in the Last Days

More and more people are getting the feeling and the attitude of what is the use. They are taking the attitude that nobody is listening or caring about doing right. They sink back into the church pews comfortably and they wait for the Lord to come back. They have stopped trying to reach out to those around them who don't know the Lord. Or if they do see the world outside their window, most churches and most people are fighting so to survive that they don't have the energy or the strength to do more than just hold on. I believe that as time goes on that churches will give up and shut their doors because they think that the struggle to be able to keep going is too great. That is the devil's plan. Nothing could be more wrong than to quit trying at this time. We know that the Lord is coming back. Don't underestimate the importance that a victory filled life and a church that is on fire can have on the world. Don't underestimate your effectiveness as a child of God. Don't underestimate what you are able to do for the Lord. Don't underestimate the importance of hearing and obeying especially in these last days.

Jesus told a parable in Luke 19 about a nobleman and his servants. If you would please, read that story. It has a lot of truths in it that will help you.

This nobleman gave his servants some money to take care of and he told them to manage his affairs while he went away to another country. He told them that while he was gone they were to “occupy until I come.” That meant that they were to take care of his business until he came back. When he came back he called them in to check to see if they had been good stewards of his business and of his money while he was gone. He called them in to see how much money they had gained in trading and other things while he was gone. The first one told him that he had doubled the money the nobleman had given him making him a good profit. The next one said that he had gained it back plus a half of it. The third one told the nobleman that he had kept his money in a napkin and hadn’t done anything with it because he was afraid that if he tried to do something he would lose it. The nobleman answered him in verses 22-25, “And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.”

In the parable, the nobleman told the stewards to occupy until he came. He was angry with the one who did not do that. I get this feeling from a lot of people. People are tired of fighting for what is right. They are tired of making a stand. They are starting to give in. They are weary. They are starting to compromise and follow after things that aren't right. They are thinking what is the use. The Lord is coming back. Things are getting so bad that what we do isn't going to change a thing. Why do we need to keep telling people they need to get saved? Nobody is listening. They forget about Noah. If you remember the story of Noah, nobody listened. But because he obeyed God he and his family were not destroyed. If Noah had given up because no one listened, the ones to pay for that would have been he and his family. He preached on, even though no one listened. He kept building even though every one made fun of him. On the day that it started to rain, he and his family were safe in the ark.

I don't care if it feels like nobody is listening and nobody else is doing right, that is no excuse for you to quit caring. It is no excuse for you to give in and act like the rest of the world. It is no excuse for you to stop trying. If you stop, what will eventually happen to you and your family? Keep on standing up for God.

The Bible talks about the watchman in Ezekiel 33. The watchman's purpose was to stand on the wall of the city and watch for the enemy. Then he was to warn the town when the enemy approached. The Word of the Lord came to Ezekiel and told him that if the watchmen sees the enemy coming and he warns the people, but they don't listen, then he is guilt free and the problem and sin is with the people. If he doesn't warn them and they get destroyed then the guilt is on his head as well. Also, it says that if he warns them and they get to safety, then the watchmen is blessed and so are the people. So whether the people listen or not the watchman's job is still to warn them. That is our job as Christians. It is not our responsibility to make the people do what they should, that is their job. It is our job to make a stand and warn them.

Jesus is the one who told the story of the nobleman and the stewards. That steward hid what he was given because he was afraid. Because of this the nobleman in the story got angry. How do you think that Jesus feels when we hide behind our church doors, and settle into compromise because we are afraid to make a stand? How do you think that Jesus feels when we hide our gifts and talents because we're afraid it is not going to change anything so why do it? How do you think that He feels when we cop out on doing what we know to do is right because everyone else is doing wrong? How do you think that He feels when we don't

read His Word and we don't let His Spirit deal with our hearts because it is just too hard to make a commitment these days? How do you think that He feels? Well to give you a hint, He is the one who told the parable.

Occupy until He comes. God has given you gifts and talents. Use them for God. One of the saddest things that I've seen is kids who are in church who have beautiful voices to sing. They don't know any gospel song though because all they know is the words to rock music. God gave you that talent. Use it for Him. I haven't yet known anybody that got their life changed and their hope back because they listened to a rock song. God's music can change people's lives. Use your talent for God. Love the people who are around you enough to want to help them

If you have been given any talent, God gave it to you. Use it for Him. Listen to His voice. Go where He says. Do what He says to do. Let Him use you. There is a world full of hurting people dying without hope and you have the life rope that can pull them out. Don't let the devil convince you that there is no use. I am so glad that the people who have thrown me life ropes in my life didn't take the attitude that there was no use to do that, because I was hopeless. They looked past the mess I was in and let God use them. You can make a difference.

You may think that you are too young to make a difference. I know about an 8 year old who turned his whole country around. His country had fallen into doing some pretty evil stuff. The whole country suffered because of it. This 8 year old started serving God and turned the hearts of his countries' people back to God. This changed his whole country. His name was King Josiah. His story is found in II Kings 22 and 23. Sure he was king and that gave him a little more power. But don't underestimate what you can do. At least you can change the lives of your families and friends and those that you love.

You may think that you are too old to make a difference. My grandmother was powerful prayer warrior. She was until she passed away at 96 years old. Dare to be a light. Dare to wake up and get up out of your comfortable chair. If you sleep too long, you may have your eyes shut when the Lord comes. If you shut your eyes and pretend everything is OK, that still won't change the circumstances. If you remember the parable of the virgins at the bridal feast, Jesus is coming for those who are awake spiritually and those who are working, watching, and waiting for His coming.

Now when I first realized how soon the Lord is coming back, I started thinking about all the people around me that I love and what they are

going to face. I went through these things. The first was a feeling that how could a loving God do that to people that I loved. Then back-to-back with that feeling was the thought that maybe this rapture thing can't be true. That is a comfortable thought, but I know that the truth isn't always comfortable. So I got out my Bible and I restudied it. I listened to sound preachers who have studied. And most important I asked God and had Him show me what was going to happen. Now these are three very important steps to discover the truth, and it is important to know the truth. When all three of them line up then you can know that you have found the truth.

Then when I came to know the truth that the Lord is coming back soon, I started freaking out. I went overboard trying to cram the truth down people's throats. I did a lot of spinning around unnecessarily because I was freaking out. I did more damage than good. God spoke to my heart and told me that I needed to calm down and do one thing at a time. The first step was to hear His voice the next was to do what He said do. We just take one step at a time, one day at a time. We do the thing that the Lord says to do then He will tell you what to do next. That is how we occupy until He comes.

After the last couple of chapter, we see how important it is to listen and obey. We have learned

throughout the book reasons why this is vital to our lives. Yet so many will go on after they read this book and nothing will change. Why? Keep reading.

Chapter 16.

Excuses

Number One Reason

Why Many Won't Hear and Do

When we know that something is so important to do as hear and obey the Master's voice, then we need to guard against anything that can get us detoured. One of the greatest hindrances that stop people are their excuses. This is one of the main reasons I believe that many won't hear and do. I hear excuses every day. When we start making excuses for our behavior, or lack of it, then we just get onto a hamster's wheel and we go round and round, never getting anywhere. Here's an example. I know someone who is smoking, and has done so for many years. We talked about earlier how that can hinder us. He will never get out of that habit unless he changes. I know many, many people who have quit because the Lord delivered them. Why is this person so stuck in this? He knows how much money he wastes. He knows he is killing himself slowly. He knows that he is hindered in his relationship with the Lord. He knows that he is hindered in hearing God's voice and obeying. He hates it so bad that he does all he can to help others to quit. God could deliver him, but he still does it. Why? He is a master at making excuses. He lacks victory in his whole life because he finds an excuse for everything he does. His excuse for the whole thing is that he doesn't

read in the Bible where this is wrong. His excuse for the physical problems that come from smoking is that this won't happen to him. His excuse for the money problems is that he has enough money, why not waste it. It is his. On and on he goes on that hamster wheel. Excuses stop us from dealing with our sin. Even though God convicts him of it, he brushes it all off with excuses. If he doesn't admit his problem, that it is a problem, he will never be delivered of it. As long as he makes excuses, he will never face it and give it to God. He will never ask God to deliver him so he will die in this sin.

We can do this with so many things in our lives. There will be a lot of people in hell who justified themselves until they stopped serving God all together. We can get so caught up in this that we are blinded until we can't see anything we are doing. It may start in one area, and go to other areas until we no longer hear the voice of the Master and obey. This is called self-justification and it is deadly.

One of the greatest things that will cause people to read this book and not do something about what they have read are the excuses that they will make. Sadder still, one of the greatest things that will cause people to read the Bible and not do what it says, are the excuses that they will make. One of the greatest things that will cause people to hear

God's voice and not obey are the excuses that they will make. We read in Luke 14:15-24 about excuses. Please read it as I am not going to write it out here. We read in this passage about a group of people who were invited to a supper. One made the excuse that he had bought a piece of ground, one that he had bought some oxen, and another said he had gotten married. The master of the house told his servant to go out and invite others, to go out and beat the highways and hedges and invite others to come. He more or less told his servant to forget those who had all the excuses. Why is this so important? The person telling this story is Jesus. The supper he was talking about was the marriage supper of the Lamb. His supper. In verse 24 he says, "For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." Every excuse we make that hinders us from hearing and obeying him will lead us toward missing out on the greatest invitation that we will ever receive.

Don't make excuses when God speaks to your heart. He is telling you to do something because it is important for you to do it. He knows better than you what you need to do. If you don't obey Him, there will be repercussions. There will be problems that come up because you didn't listen, yield, and obey. You will pay. Those you love will pay. Why? If you don't listen when you are warned, then you bring on yourself the problems

that God warns you against. The biggest reason why you shouldn't make excuses is that if you continually do this, then one day you won't even hear His voice. This person that I mentioned in the first part of the chapter is an example. I used to hear him talk about how God spoke to him. I never do any more. I don't think that God is speaking to him at all. Why? Why should He speak to him, he never listens. If he continues on with this, it will only get worse. What is the outcome of our making excuses? Read Romans 1:20-32.

There are churches who are growing today, because they are masters at guiding people to make excuses. They teach that it is OK to sin because the Lord loves us like we are. They teach that we don't want to discriminate against someone in a lifestyle that is contrary to God's Word. We need to love everyone regardless of what they do, because it is OK for them to be the way that they are. They teach that there is no absolute wrong or right because what might be wrong for you might be OK for me to do. This is the last day's church. It will be the foundation for the world church that will come against God's true church in the last days. These will be the ones who will deliver God's people up to death and they will justify themselves as they do it because they will see it as being God's will for them to do so. How dangerous is it to start making excuses?

We can sum this chapter up by the last part of Romans 1:20, “So that they are without excuse.” God sent His Son to die for us. He has made a way for His Spirit to dwell in our hearts to help us and guide us to be able to overcome. He has given His Word to guide us. Jesus, Himself, sits at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us, praying for us. (Romans 8:34, “...It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”) We have been given all the tools we need. It is all done. As Romans 1:20 says, “We are without excuse.”

One of the excuses that we use if we aren't careful, one of the hindrances that we have is that we are afraid of the devil. We know that if we step out in victory he will start hindering us. That stops us from advancing because we know he will advance too. Then he wins altogether. Read on to find out how we can take authority over him in our lives so that we can obey God.

Chapter 17.

When You Start the Devil May Too

We know that we have to listen to God's voice and obey in order for us to be able to have the victory in today's world. We know that we have to listen and obey God not only for ourselves, but also for those we love. We have an enemy who is out to destroy anything that loves the Lord. If we begin to walk in the victory that God intends for us to walk in, we will get the devil's notice. That is why it is important to know how to overcome him, and how to take authority over him. I have put here a part of a book that I have written titled, *Taking Your Authority as a Child Of God*.

One of the best illustrations that I can give to explain what it means to take authority comes from my years of being a teacher/principal in both the public and private schools. One of the lessons that I had to learn early in my teaching years was how to take authority. I learned it in a small public school that actually had grades K-12 in one building. All teachers were required to take turns doing hall duty after school, monitoring the halls while the buses were loading. I was new at teaching, and I was totally new at having to deal with teenagers. I was new to them, and I was an elementary school teacher, which made things harder. It was beneath them to listen to me. I was nervous at having to tell them what to do, and I

was a soft-spoken, mild mannered person. Often that doesn't mix with teaching older students. I had not learned to take authority. I barely had learned how to take authority in my classroom, but my hall duty time was a nightmare. Nobody listened. I was too unsure to take the authority that was mine as a teacher.

Some of the teachers who had been there for years had no problem with their authority. They knew their place. They knew their rank and they knew how to pull it. Most importantly the kids knew, too. When they walked into the hall, the place would grow quiet. If there was something going on that wasn't supposed to, it stopped when they showed up. These older teachers walked in their authority. They were sure in that authority. Later on as I grew in understanding my place and how to take the authority that was mine, when I walked in I had the same affect. It took some time. It also took a little help from God.

One day I noticed a remarkable change in the respect that the older students had for me. I started asking around to find out what the change was. Now this was back in the days before teachers got too educated to use corporal punishment. We were allowed to paddle. I had paddled several of my second grade students. They were an unusual group. It was a group that had been handpicked out of that class with the most discipline problems.

When I asked about the change in attitude of the older students, one of the students told me that it was because they had heard about how I had taken authority over my own class and it had made an impression. (Before you get off on corporal punishment, bear me out and hear about my message in taking authority.) This was the jump in authority that I needed. When I saw that I could take authority, it became easier. When the teenagers saw that I had started taking authority, they listened when I told them what to do. It wasn't long before my presence had the same affect on these kids that the older teachers had.

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

Now when I started teaching one of the main problems that I had as a newcomer to the school was that I didn't actually know what all the kids were supposed to be doing, and what they were not allowed to do. I didn't know their restrictions. It didn't help that they knew their restrictions, and they knew that I didn't. They were some of the best little con artists. They could talk me right into my giving them permission to do what they knew they weren't supposed to do. They could get by with doing things in front of me to break the rules, because they knew I didn't know the rules. As children of God, we face this same thing with the devil. We often don't know his limits. God has put strict limits on what he can and cannot get by with. For example, if you read the story of Job, you will find out in chapter 1 that for the devil to try Job, he had to get permission from God. Read the whole first chapter. Then reread Job 1:10-12. In this section of scripture the devil tells God that because of His protection, he can't touch Job. The devil knows the limitations that God has put on his work. The problem is that often we do not. The Bible is filled with teaching about our position as children of God and our spiritual authority in that position. That is why it is so important to know the Word of God. We run everywhere to find all the answers, but never to the one true source. We spend time doing everything else, but never have time to read the scriptures like we know we

should. (By the way, watching TV will not insure our soul's salvation, rather it steals from our spiritual strength. If you think you don't have time, start recording how much time you spend in front of the TV.) Through God's Word we will find out the rules and just what the devil can do.

Besides knowing what the rules are, to be able to take authority, you have to learn who you are and what rights and privileges you have as a child of God. This doesn't mean that these rights and privileges are based on who you are in the flesh. Many times we get this confused. We think that because we aren't perfect, or super-spiritual, or giant Christians, we don't have any rights as children of God. Now if we are not committed and submitted to God we lose many of our rights. For example, the Bible tells us that if we are double-minded, we won't receive anything from God (James 1:8). It tells us that if we are not obedient to God then we lose our authority over the devil. It tells us that if we submit to God, then we can resist the devil and he has to flee (James 4:7). Therefore we know that if we are not submitted then we cannot resist him and have him flee. There are certain conditions of heart and life that we have to have to be able to take the authority that God has given us, and to take our position as children of God. But many people are walking so far in condemnation of the flesh, that they can't see that their rights as children of God

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

Now the true test of my hall duty came one day when one of the teenagers had gotten hold of some bad drugs. He meant to do harm to teachers and students alike. I was able to take authority over him. He left the premises. That is how it is with the devil. He will come with the soul purpose of doing harm to you and those you love, and those you serve God with. When you know the rules and you know who you are, you can take authority, and the devil has to leave the premises. It is my prayer that through these pages, you learn that you can put him to flight.

Now before I go on in this book further, I want to take time to talk about casting out devils. This is our right as children of God to cast out devils. When people hear this they think of only one

thing. They think of casting demons out of demon filled people. This is a genuine and very real ministry. I have seen this in our own ministry. There are people who come to the Lord as new Christians after a life filled with the occult and drugs, and they are possessed. I have seen these people delivered through the power of God. I want to say carefully though that this is not all there is to taking spiritual authority. Every day I have to take authority over the powers of hell who are trying to gain control of my life or the ministry that God has given me, especially in the ministry of working with young people. Especially if you are in some sort of ministry, you should know what I am talking about. We are in a spiritual battle and we had better learn how to take spiritual authority to be able to win this battle. The weapons that we have are not carnal. We had better learn what they are and how to use them. If we never learn these things it will be easier for the devil to steal our day-to-day victory, and if we never learn them, he can eventually steal our soul. If we are in a ministry, that battle is compounded by the fact that not only will the devil come against us personally, but he will also come against the ministry that the Lord has given us. He means to keep us from doing that which God intends for us to do.

If you think that you are not in a spiritual warfare and you think that you don't really need all this,

then you really need to beware. There is an old saying, “If the devil isn’t fighting you, then he may already have you.” The devil won’t fight you if you are living a compromised life. He will blind you into thinking that there really is no warfare in your life. Look out. All of us are in this spiritual warfare, if we are children of God. Ephesians 6:12 tells us, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” I pray that through these chapters you learn to identify the battle, and you learn how victorious you are. Ephesians 1:18-23, “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.” Amen Amen Amen Amen.

Chapter 18.
Closing
Now It Is Up To You

I want to close this book with this thought. You have a lot to think about after reading this book. I have tried not to put in it something that was not in agreement with God's Word. I have tried to fill it with God's Word. You have digested it. Some of you will get fired up in victory, and you will go out and take back your life, your families, your church, your work places, your ministry, in victory for the Lord. You will go out in a fresh anointing determined to serve God, listen to His voice and obey Him. Some of you will put half your heart into it, and you will get half done. But at least you will have more than you had when you started. Then some of you will be like the man who looked at himself in the mirror and went away with nothing changed. I guess the only thing left for me to say is Now It Is Up To You. You have been given tools to help you to gain a victory filled life. You have been given tools to help you to powerfully serve God. If a builder goes out to the building site with all the tools that he will ever need, the best and the most powerful ones on the market, and he never takes up those tools in his hands and uses them, he will never build that building. It is time to put these things to work in your lives. Not only for you but also for those you love. I pray that you rise up in the victory that

God has for you and turn your world upside down.
Get filled up with His anointing. Go forth in His
power, in His name, and in obedience to Him.
Amen.

