Finding Victory In Difficult Times

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Introduction

God put it on my heart to write this book after I read Gladys Aylward's account of something that she experienced. Gladys was a missionary in China during the war between China and Japan, and then later when the communists came into China and took it over. God used her mightily. One of the things that she did was to minister to university students in the local university. Many students were saved because of her preaching and the work that she did among them. She told this story of something that happened when the communist party took power.

Over 500 students were given a questionnaire. It had many questions on it, some that didn't even make sense. But one question asked if they were for the communist party. If they answered yes, it meant they would find the good jobs and be favored. If they answered no, the consequences would be terrible. The Christians knew that the communist party was against God and to mark the

questionnaire to say that they were in favor with the communists they were saying that they were against God. So 200 of the 500 students marked on the questionnaire that they were against the community party.

The 300 students who said that they were in favor were told to harass the students who said no. After a month they were again given the questionnaire There were more than 200 now who said they were not in favor. Then the 300 students were told to do anything to stop the Christians. They were beaten and treated very cruelly. Not one of them changed their minds.

Then the communists had a public meeting in the square. The students who had put that they were against the party on their questionnaires were marched in closely guarded by soldiers. They called their names one by one. The first to be called was a 17 year old girl who had just recently been converted. They asked her who she supported now. She answered with these words.

“Three months ago I thought that Jesus was real and I thought the Bible was true. Now after three months of your hatred I know that Jesus Christ is real and I know that the Bible is true.” The official turned white with rage and yelled to the soldiers. The girl was pulled into the center of the square and shoved to her knees. The soldiers took a sword and cut her head off.

One by one each one of the over 200 students were asked the same question. Even though they knew that they would face death not one of them changed their mind. All of them died that day.

When I read this story, it was a picture of the kind of victory that God can give His people. When you follow Jesus, He will enable you to be strong in the face of persecution. He will enable you to stand up for Him even in the face of certain death. He will lift you up to the place where like Stephen you will see the face of Jesus. Stephen was the first martyr. We read his story starting in Acts 6:8. Stephen was falsely accused.

In other words there were some people who told lies accusing him of doing things that were punishable by death. How did he react to this? Verse 15 says, “And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.”

He preached a sermon to them and at the closing of the sermon he said, “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.”

This caused the people there to get very angry. Often when you tell the truth it will make people angry. There is a scripture that explains why we must go ahead and tell them the truth that is found in Ezekiel 3:17-22.

“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.

Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.”

We are accountable to tell the truth and warn others. If we really love those around us, we will tell them the truth. Stephen told the truth and this is what happened.

“When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him.” They stoned him to death.

*When you read this story you may think to yourself why did God allow that to happen? You may think what good could come out of that? To find the answer to this let’s read on a little bit more in this story. “...*and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying,

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

You have to know that the victory that Stephen showed in the face of death influenced Saul. His victory preached a greater sermon than his words spoke. Saul began to see Jesus through Stephen's victory.

Let's look and see who Saul was that was mentioned in this scripture. He was a man who persecuted the Christians. He rounded them up and delivered them up to be killed. He actually thought that when he did this he was working for God. He did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God and he thought that these people believed in false teaching that was taking people away from the truth. He thought that until Jesus spoke to him.

He was traveling on the road to take Christians to be killed and Jesus spoke to him from heaven.

A bright light shone on Him so bright that it blinded him. He had no doubt in his mind that Jesus was real and that he called him to work for Him. This meeting changed his whole life.

When you meet Jesus for real, it will change you and it will change the whole direction of your life. That is the first step to find victory in difficult times-meeting Jesus for real. And that is what happened to Saul.

God changed Saul's name to Paul. Paul became a preacher and a church starter. He reached out to Jews, but his main focus was to the Gentiles which was everybody else that wasn't a Jew. In other words, if you aren't a Jew, then you are a Gentile. Up to that time, only the Jews and their proselytes could accept salvation. Now the door was opened to us all.

Another thing that Paul did was that under God's anointing (with His Spirit) he wrote most of the New Testament. He wrote 13 or 14 of the 27 books.

Countless people through the ages have been strengthened and they have found victory through his words. So did Stephen’s death count for something?

Let’s go back to the square where those over 200 students gave their lives for Christ. Each one of them faced death with great victory. Nobody ran. Nobody shook and wept with fear. We know that they didn’t because if they had been afraid then they would have just changed their mind. God gave them the strength to win.

God gave them the victory. He enabled them to stand. And all those who heard about this knew that there is a God and they knew how those students found that unshakable victory. When they heard about what happened there, they knew that God was real and they knew that they needed Him in their own lives to be able to walk with victory in those troubled times.

What about Gladys Aylward? She stayed to watch and she prayed for all of those students that faced death that day.

Many of them she had led to the Lord. Did seeing many of those converts that she had led to the Lord die such a horrible death that day cause her to run away and hide? Did it cause her to lose her faith? Did she run away in fear (and she had cause to do so because the communists hated the work that she did)? She did none of these things because she had a relationship with the one who gives us victory.

We read in 1 Corinthians 15:57, “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” For over 20 more years after that happened she continued to preach and tell about God’s love and the victory that we can find in Him. She continued preaching until the day that she died. I have heard some of her messages that have been posted on YouTube and the victory she preaches about is as real now as it was then.

So what am I saying here? When you think of the students in the square that day who stood facing their death with victory, when

you think of Gladys Aylward's victory, when you think of Stephen who stood strong in the face of death even asking forgiveness for those who were stoning him, when you think of Saul who later became Paul who Stephen pointed toward God, then you think of the victory that God can give you when you walk with Him.

And what about Paul? Did He go through things? Did he experience battles? We read in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 things that he experienced while he was working for God. "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen in perils in the city, In perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea in perils among false brethren;

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”

Yes, he went through some things. But he had this to say about the things that he went through. 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 says, “And he (God) 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.”

In other words, he said that he had found victory in all of the things that he went through because he found God’s strength that made him strong when he was weak. He learned how to rely on God’s strength instead of relying on his own. He learned about the victory that he could find in God and through His Spirit. That victory lasted through all of his difficult times and that same victory can carry you through yours.

When we read the books that Paul wrote in the Bible, he gives us keys to how to find victory in difficult times. We are going to talk about a lot of these scriptures coming up. We will talk about how we can find victory even when the times are so dark. We will talk about how knowing Jesus and His power will give us victory. We will talk about the victory that we can find in the Word of God. We'll talk about how light is way more powerful than darkness and if we fill up with God's Spirit and His Word, that light will drown out the darkness around us. We will talk about many keys that will unlock the victory in our lives and in our families and in our whole world.

So what about you? Are the things that you are facing now greater than these people who went through these things I have mentioned? I know that you probably thought the dark time that you are going through was so terrible you couldn't get through it. After reading the dark times that these people faced, is that so? Step back and answer honestly. Can you find victory in your difficult times?

After hearing how these people came through their dark time with the victory, do you have hope that God can bring you through your dark time with the victory? God is the same for you as He was for them. Yes, you can find victory even in this time. Keep reading. We'll talk a lot about how to find victory in difficult times. Through these pages I know that you will find your own victory. AMEN.

Chapter 1.
Finding the Source of Victory

I want to start by defining victory. What does the word victory mean? Webster's dictionary defines it as being "the overcoming of an enemy or antagonist or the achievement of mastery or success in a struggle or endeavor against odds or difficulties". Antagonist means "one that opposes another". Antagonists can be people or they can be anything that comes against us or opposes us. Our problems can be our antagonists. The world's situations can be our antagonists. Everything that tries to bind us up and bring us down is our antagonist.

This is saying that victory means overcoming everything that is coming against us, anything that opposes us, anything that becomes an enemy against us to bring us down. The word victory means that we can achieve success in a struggle against all odds. In other words when there is no way that we can come out on top, victory means that we did.

We did so even when there was no way that we could do that.

So what is the starting place for how the people we talked about earlier found the huge victory that they found? What is the starting place for how you can find victory over the situations that you face? The best place to start is finding out the source of the victory that all of these people found.

You can't overcome the things you face on your own. You aren't the source of your victory. You can't win in life in these difficult times on your own. You can't change your situation most times. You don't have the mental, emotional, or spiritual strength needed to push through to find victory. If you are trying to do this on your own, how is that working for you?

Maybe in times past we were able to do this on our own, but not now. Not in today's world. So who and what is the source of your victory?

You have probably figured out by now that you can't rely on yourself. Who can you rely on?

You already know the answer to that question. God is the source of the victory that can be found in today's world. You might as well face it. Without Him, you aren't going to win. So how do you know that God can bring you victory?

If you want to get to know someone who lived ages ago, the best source that you can go to is their autobiography, the story of their lives that they themselves have written. So the best source to get to know God, to find out if He is trustworthy, to find out if He can really bring you the victory that you need to find is to read His autobiography.

What I am saying is that God wrote a book about Himself so that we could see Him and what He is like. I am not saying that He took up a pen and wrote it with His own hands. But he used other people's hands to write it. His Spirit led them to write.

His Spirit told them what to write. Let's talk about all of this for a minute. The Bible is where we have to go to find out about the source of our victory. (Matter of fact, the Bible is one of the sources of our victory.) So let's talk for a minute about how we know that the Bible is God's Word.

I am putting a section here from my book that is titled, *The Power of God's Word*. (You can download this book on my website www.freechristianonlinebooks.com).

Here are some general truths about the Bible that prove that it is God's Word. In just a minute we will go to the source to find out. We will go to God's Word directly. The Bible was written over a 1,500 year span for over 40 generations by over 40 authors from every walk of life. It was written in many different places, and at many different times. It was written on three continents, Asia, Africa, and Europe. It was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Its subject matter includes thousands of subjects. Subjects that now can't be agreed on when discussed. Yet there is an agreement between the writers that is miraculous.

It could only exist because God's Spirit inspired them in what to write. They agree as if one author had written what they wrote. There is a continuity that runs throughout the book.

Think of this for just a minute. How many times have you met with a group of Christians, or a group of ministers, or even just with family or friends, and a discussion of God's Word broke out into an argument because you couldn't agree on an interpretation of a part of the scriptures. When you look at the facts that we mentioned about the different writers, how could they all agree?

Remember, most of them wrote their part without having all the rest of the scriptures as a whole. Even if they had it all, how would they have all agreed? That isn't human nature. The only way they could have agreed would have been that the source of information wasn't human. It was divine. This is proof that the Bible was inspired by the Spirit of God. God's Holy Ghost led these writers to write what they did, each adding their part to the whole, each adding to the whole, many not even knowing that one day, there would be the Bible as we know it today.

II Timothy 3:16 tells us, All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. For a blessing, go to a concordance and count how many times a writer of a part of the Bible made the statement that the Word of the Lord came to them. (A good online concordance that I love using is found at this site, www.kingjamesbibleonline.org. Another great concordance is Strong's Concordance. It is a hard copy book, which works great for study. It actually has every word found in the Bible. I think that it is available online as well, but not sure.) I searched using "word came to". When I did this, I counted 100 times that this phrase was used in the context of the word coming to someone who had written a part of the Bible, and I was only halfway through the search when I had 100. I stopped out of desperation of there being more than I could count.

Now I am not talking about just the words "word came to", but I am talking about specifically that phrase used in regards to writers whose words became part of the Bible. These people didn't just write their part of the scriptures by coming up with it in their own fleshly mind.

There is no way that could have happened. The Spirit of God moved on them, or in them, and they wrote what the Spirit directed.

Another fact that proves the Bible is the Word of God is this. No other book has been attacked like the Bible, yet through time it has stood every test and still stands as the Word of God today. Countless generations of people have tried to prove it wrong. Many of these people have started out to claim that the Bible was wrong, and only succeeded in proving it to be right, and later accepting it as God's Word. These are only a few of the reasons why we know that the Bible is God's Word.

The number one place to go to prove that God's Word is true is by looking in God's Word. There are historic proofs as well. There are many proofs, historical and Biblical, that prove that God Himself inspired the writers of the Bible. One example that proves God inspired the Bible is the prophecies found in the scripture. There are hundreds of prophecies in the Bible. These were things that were written detailing events that happened hundreds of years later. How else could these have come to pass?

How could they have come to past just as they were spoken if they weren't given by inspiration of the Spirit of God? There are historical proofs that prove that the prophecies in the Bible were written before the prophecies were fulfilled.

There is no other book that has prophecies that are proven countless times over like the Bible. There are many prophecies, but the most remarkable example is over 300 prophecies about Jesus. There are historical proofs from sources outside the Bible to prove Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled these prophecies. There is also historical proof from Jewish writings, the Jewish Talmud, that Jesus lived and fulfilled the prophecies regarding Him.

Here are only a few of the prophecies found in the Bible concerning Jesus. Many years before Jesus was born, it was written in the Bible that He would be born in Bethlehem, that He would be born in a manger, that Shepherds would visit Him at His birth, that wise men would come to see Him bringing Him gifts. There are bunches of other prophecies that gave details of what He would do while on the earth. There were many prophecies that talked about His death.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 talks about several of the prophecies. The prophet Isaiah wrote this around 700 BC. Please read this section of scripture. In it we see that Jesus would be beaten beyond recognition. That He would be beaten with a whip. In Psalm 22:14-19 David wrote around 1000 B.C. that they would pierce Jesus' hands and His feet. It was written that they would divide His garments among them, and gamble for them at the foot of the cross. I am sure that the Roman soldiers who gambled for Jesus' robe that day had not read the scriptures. They weren't doing this to obey the scriptures. All of these prophecies prove that God told the people who wrote the Bible what to write.

There are countless other prophecies that are recorded in the scriptures. Some of them prophesied the rise and fall of whole civilizations and countries. Always they happened to the detail of what God's prophets had written in the scriptures. There are many events that are happening today that have been prophesied in the Bible. I have seen more Bible prophecies being fulfilled in the last couple of years, than I have seen my whole life.

Just a note here. I was studying prophecies in Daniel concerning Persia. I had out my encyclopedia and was looking at Persian history. I had the Bible on one side, and the encyclopedia on the other. I was amazed at how events that happened long after they were written about matched the scriptures that foretold them. God set in motion things that have happened throughout history even to today by the Words that He spoke.

The greatest proof that the Bible is God's Word is Jesus' death and resurrection. It is the greatest proof of the Bible as being God's inspired Word. What other religion claims to have a risen Savior? If the Buddhists could get by with claiming that Buddha rose from the dead, they would. Why haven't they? Because he didn't.

It was proven in history by many, many eyewitness accounts that Jesus rose from the dead. If that wouldn't have been so, then we couldn't claim it today. You couldn't just go around saying that somebody came back from the dead and have everybody believe it the way they believed that Jesus came back.

Where do we find the account of this miracle? In the inspired Word of God.

These are only just a few of the reasons why we know the Bible is God's inspired Word. We can read in the Bible about mountains on the ocean floor. We can read about springs that bubble from the ocean floor. We can read about how the earth is round, how on this side of the earth when it is day, on the other side it is night, how the stars sing, how our bodies are made from dust, the general composition of constellations, and countless other such things.

These were things that at the time that they were written (some of these were written over 4,000 years ago) there was no way that anyone could know these things. Many of these things weren't discovered until modern times. The only way they could be known at the time when the Bible was written was if God inspired the people who wrote it. The only way they could know these things was if God told them.

So, how does knowing all of this help you to find out about the source of your victory? Knowing these things points out two things. It points out that God is real and that He is all powerful. How else could these things about the Bible be true if He wasn't all powerful and an awesome God who is well able to take care of you? It also points out another source of our victory. The Bible is another source of our victory. We will talk more about that in a chapter coming up.

When you think about these things, you know that God is able to make a way for you where there doesn't seem to be a way. He is able to give you victory in every situation. He is able to keep you. But there are two parts to faith. One is that you know that God is able to do mighty things for you. The other is knowing that God will do it for you. We will talk more about that in a chapter coming up ahead as well.

To sum this up, God is able to give you victory in your life.

He is able to bring you out of every situation that you face. He is able to help you to be able to overcome every thing that comes against you. Coming in the next chapter we'll talk about how the Bible gives us victory.

Chapter 2
The Inspired Word of God
How It Can Help You Find Victory

I want to start out by making a profound statement. The only way that the Bible can help you is if you read it. The only way that it can bring you victory is if you do what it says to do. The Bible is like a road map giving you directions to how to get to a certain place. If you want to get to a place where you can be a winner in your life and in your situations, if you want to get to the place where you can be on the pile instead of under the pile, the Bible will be your map to help you get there. If there is a certain place that you want to arrive at, the Bible is your map that will tell you how to get there.

Now the only way that a map can help you is if you believe that it can get you where you are going. If you don't believe that it is accurate, then you won't even get it out. It won't do you a bit of good if it just sits on your book shelf. You've got to get it out and read it. The Bible is the same.

The Bible is a powerful source of victory, but if you don't believe that it will help you and if you don't get it out and read it, and if you don't do what it says for you to do, you won't find that victory that it can bring to your life.

When you read the Bible you read about thousands and thousands and thousands of people that God brought victory to their lives. He brought victory to them often when there was no way that they were going to make it through the situations that they found themselves in. But they came through it with victory because He did a miracle for them, or He enabled them to overcome, or He lifted them out of the situation and set them on the top of the mountain when they were in a deep valley.

When you read these true stories, you will know that He can do the same for you. When you read about how the Israelites were trapped between the Red Sea and the huge Egyptian army who was going to slaughter them all but God saved them.

When you read how God divided the water in the sea and they walked across on dry land, you know what God is able to do to give you victory over the situations in your own life.

When you read how Daniel was thrown into the den of lions because he obeyed God and the lions' mouths were shut, then you will know that God will shut the mouths of the lions in your life whether those lions be financial problems, family problems, health issues or whatever they are. You can come out with the victory.

When you read about when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace, you will read how they came out of it with not one hair on their head singed. When those who threw them into the furnace looked down at them there were 4 men in the furnace and the fourth was like unto the Son of God. When you read this, then you know that Jesus will walk with you through the fires of life and He will bring you out to find victory.

He will do for you the same that He did for them.

When you read about how David was away at war and came home to find his hometown burned down and all of their goods stolen as well as their women and children. The Bible says that he encouraged himself in the Lord and God told him to go after them and he would recover everything. Even though he was greatly outnumbered he was able to find the victory over the enemy and he took back everything that was stolen.

We too have an enemy. Maybe he is stealing things from you. God can help you find the victory and He will enable you to go after the enemy (the devil) and recover everything that he stole from you.

Like I mentioned earlier, there are thousands of such stories that when you read them your heart will be encouraged and you will know that God is your source of victory. Then like David you will rise up above it all.

But to get to this place you have to read about these people. Get out your Bible. It is one of the sources of your victory. Let's read some verses about your victory that God can give you.

We read in 1 Corinthians 15:57, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 2:14 says, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place."

God always causes us to win. He will bring you out on top. 1 Chronicles 29:11 tells us, "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all." He is well able to bring you the victory. He is well able to cause you to be able to overcome all that you face.

Philippians 4:13 tells us, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” God will strengthen you ro be able to overcome all that you have to go through. 1 John 4:4 tells us, “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” God is greater than anything in the world that we have to go through.

Hebrews 13:6 tells us, “So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” John 16:33 tells us, “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.”

1 John 5:4 tells us, “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” We can overcome. We can be victorious through whatever that we have to go through. God will bring us out on top.

So let’s talk a minute about those over 200 students who were in the town square at the beginning of this book. What about Stephen when he was stoned to death? What about Paul when he had to go through all of those things that he had to go through?

I am not saying that when you walk with God everything from that point on will be perfect. That would be a lie. For one thing we live in such an imperfect world. For another thing, when you serve God, you have an enemy. The devil becomes your enemy because he hates God and everything that God loves. You also are in a messed up world with messed up people and all of that will influence your life.

We will go through things. But we can know that God will give us the victory over everything that we face. Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” I have seen this scripture work in the lives of many around me.

I have watched the most terrible things that God's people go through to turn out for their good. Not only will God bring you out on top, but He will cause everything you go through, even the worst things you go through, to turn out for your good. With that kind of thing going on, how can you lose?

Romans 8:35-39 tells us this. Paul is writing this. When you read it, remember all of the things that he went through. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

He was saying here that in all of the things that we have to go through we are more than conquerors through the One who loves us. We are more than winners. The Bible says that even death has no hold over us. We are winners even over death because all that death does is brings us to eternal life in heaven with the one who caused us to triumph over it all. You can take God at His Word. You can know what God says He will do, He will do. You can find victory in your life.

I want to add a note here. People through time have stopped finding victory in God's Word. They have done so because they allowed the devil to distort, to change the truth of the Word of God. They chose to believe a lie instead of the truth. John 8:32 says, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

If we choose to believe a lie instead of the truth we will be bound up in defeat and we will not find victory. Jesus says in John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life:

no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." If we choose to distort the truth and believe a lie, we won't even know Jesus because He is the truth. So why would people choose to change the truth and believe a lie?

We can find this answer in John 3:19-21, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

People choose to believe a lie because they don't want to do the right things. They changed God's Word and that makes them think that they can get by with whatever they want to do. But that isn't true. They don't get by with it. If you don't see that you sin and you don't receive conviction (God showing you that you are doing wrong), then you don't repent.

If you don't repent and ask God to forgive you, then you will never be forgiven. If you aren't forgiven then you will die and spend eternity in hell. Don't think that you can change the truth and get by with your sin. Don't think that you can find victory in your life if you choose to live this way.

Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Sin can only bring you death. I was involved in a lot of stuff before I came to the Lord for real. I made excuses for everything that I was doing. I called it fun. But slowly and steadily I was destroying my body, my mind, my mental health. I was destroying all of me. I would have died if I hadn't come to the Lord and He set me free. If I hadn't come to the Lord I would have died and I would have spent eternity in hell. That is not a place where you want to go.

You aren't stuck in the defeat that you are in. You aren't stuck in the sin you are trapped in. God can set you free if you come to Him. How do I know? He did it for me and He can do it for you.

Chapter 3
Will God Do This For You

How do you know that God will move for you? An answer to that question is found in this scripture that most of you know by heart. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

That is how much God loved the world. He loved us enough to send His Son to die so that we can have eternal life. He did that for all of us but you have to also know that He did this personally just for you. God is a personal God. He sees us all and He did what He did for us all, but also He is a one on one God. He sees us all, but He knows us each as individuals.

He loves us each as individuals. What an amazing God He is. He knows all of the details about you. He knows your strengths. He knows your weaknesses. He knows what you need.

He not only knows the physical things that you need, but He also knows the spiritual things that you need. He knows the heart things that you need to be able to keep going. Things like strength, peace, love, hope, joy, guidance, understanding, and most of all He knows what you need to be able to find victory in your life.

All of this starts with salvation. Salvation is the first step. Salvation means that you believe in the gift that God gave to you and you accept that gift. That gift is His Son, Jesus, who died so that you can walk with God and find eternal life.

Salvation comes when you repent and change the direction that you are going in. It means that you ask Him to come into your heart. It means that you yield yourself to Him and you let Him become Lord in your life. You make a commitment to follow Him and keep His Word. Then when you do, you become a child of God.

How more precious can you be? God takes you in as His own son.

We read in 1 John 3:2, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” When we accept the gift of salvation, we become His child.

We read in 1 John 2:28, “And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.” Abide means to live. When we live in Him. then we can have confidence when He comes again.

That is the beginning of a wonderful new world and a wonderful new life, and a wonderful new you. When Jesus comes into your heart, there will be a change. You will no longer be alone because He is inside of you. You won’t have to do it on your own because He is inside of you. You will have His help. You will have His strength and His peace, hope, and joy. He will walk with you and He will even carry you when you can no longer walk.

He will guide you. He will lead you. He will light your path. All of this comes when you accept Jesus as your Savior.

Then He will reveal His awesome love to you. He will reveal this through His Word. He will reveal it through the presence of His Spirit. He will reveal it in the things that He does for you. He will reveal it in those times when you fellowship with Him.

You can hear His voice when He speaks to you inside of your heart. He will guide you. You will see His wonderful love when you fail Him. Then you will understand that His grace is so precious. His grace will pick you up off of the bottom and wipe you off and stand you upright able to go on again.

You can find a relationship with God. That is the number one key to unlock victory in your life. You can get to know Him and walk and talk with Him. Just like in any relationship, to get to know Him you have to spend time with Him. You will learn that He longs to spend time with you.

When you get to know Him, then you know that you can trust Him. Matthew 8:26, “And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.” When you know Him and you walk with Him you will watch Him calm the storms in your life. You will learn that you do not have to be afraid.

Psalm 18:2 says, “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.” God will protect you. He will deliver you. He will set you free. He will be your strength.

You can trust in Him. He will be your salvation. He will save you. Psalms 57:1 says, David wrote this Psalm when he was running for his life from King Saul who was trying to kill him. “Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.”

This was a song that David wrote when He was fleeing from Saul. Saul at that time was the King of Israel. He turned against David and spent most of his life trying to kill him. David trusted in God until those calamities were over.

What was the outcome of all of this? David was made king of Israel. When you read the book of Psalms, most of these were songs that David wrote. You can read how God kept him and protected him. Here is another verse about that. Psalms 52:8 says, “But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.” This is an amazing statement. God is so great that we can trust in Him to keep us forever. Forever we can trust Him.

There are thousands of such verses in the Bible that talk about how we can trust God. Matter of fact, the whole Bible is a picture of how we can trust God. It is a picture of His love for you. It is a picture of His awesome power and of the care that He has for His people.

One such picture is found in John 10:7-15. “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.

We read this in John 10:11-15. “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life 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.” Jesus Himself said that He is our good shepherd. Let’s put this in a more powerful way. Say this with me. Jesus is **my** good shepherd. Say it again. Jesus is **my** good shepherd. Say it one more time. Jesus is **my** good shepherd.

So what is this saying. We are like sheep and God sent His Son to lead us, to be our Shepherd. Not just any Shepherd, but Jesus Himself said that He is a GOOD Shepherd.

Now how does a Shepherd get his sheep to go where he wants them to go? He doesn't drive them like cattle herders do, but he goes before them and leads them. He doesn't want them to go unless he has been there himself and he knows it is a safe direction to go in. Jesus goes before us and leads us. He leads us out of harm's way and He leads us into good places where we can be shielded and fed.

Psalm 23 is a picture of the things we can find when we follow our good Shepherd. This is one of those songs that David wrote. He wrote a lot about following the shepherd because when you read the story of David that is found in 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Chronicles you will learn that he grew up being a shepherd. If you want a blessing, read the story about David. He is mentioned more than any other person in the Bible other than Jesus.

He wrote this wonderful song. “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want._He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters._He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake._Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over._Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

When we follow our good Shepherd, we will be led in pastures green. Our needs will be met. He won’t lead us into deserts, but He leads us where we can find plenty of water and food, and we can find rest and peace. And there, He will restore our souls. Restore is defined as being, “To revive. to bring back to a former condition or vigor, revive, recreate.” He will revive us. He will even make us new.

That is what happens when we follow our good Shepherd. He will lead us in right paths, in righteous paths. Righteous is defined as being, “Acting in accord with divine or moral law: free from guilt or sin.” If we follow our good Shepherd, we will be in the right place at the right time to stay out of trouble.

If I could sum up in one word what causes most people to be destroyed, I would have to say “sin”. When we go against God’s law, the end result will be destruction of our mind, heart, and even our soul. When we go against God’s law, our life will be filled with things that will only get us down and mess us up even though we may pretend that we are doing fine. Following our good Shepherd will lead us into good paths. We can’t do that on our own, but God will help us to do so. Jesus is on the inside of us, working on the outside to bring a change in us. He will help you to change,

Then in Psalm 23 we read that even if we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil.

Why will we fear no evil? Because He is with us. I guess the scariest place to be is in the shadow of death. But even there we do not have to be afraid if we are following our good Shepherd. We live in a time when fear is taking over people's minds and hearts. Fear is literally driving people crazy. It is causing alcoholism and drug addiction to be at an all time high as people try to deal with what is going on in the world.

I have learned through my life, that if I follow my good Shepherd, then I do not have to be afraid. His peace will rule in my life. Why? When we follow the good Shepherd, we can even feast and relax in the presence of our enemies. When we follow the good Shepherd, we can say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."

I just want to add here that I am not saying that when you follow Jesus, you will not have any battles. I am not saying that you won't have to go through things. I think you know that is not so.

You know that isn’t so especially in the crazy world we are in. What I am saying is that you will walk with someone who is able to keep you through the storm. Who will be able to take you through the valleys. Who is able to guide you to the best places. We have a saying that we aren’t in a valley, we are just changing mountain tops. That is how it is when you follow the good Shepherd.

And what about the times when you have to go through the rough places, the difficult times? He will be there to lift you up, to give you strength, to carry you if you need it. He will help you to be able to overcome, to find victory no matter what you face. He will help you to find victory in difficult times.

I have often thought about this. God knew when He created man that Adam and Eve would sin, and He knew that He would have to send His only son to die for us so that we could be saved, and so that we could walk with Him forever through eternity. Yet He still created man. I have studied out why He created man.

He created man to fellowship with Him and walk and talk with Him. He wants to spend time with you. He wants to show you wonderful things. Jeremiah 33:3 says, “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” Psalm 16:11 says, “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

When we walk with Him, when we fellowship with Him we will find joy. The closer that we get to God, the better we get to know Him, the more we will trust Him, and it will be easier to follow Him.

So how do you get to know God? How do you build a relationship with Him? It is just like any relationship. If you want to get to know someone, then you let them know that you want to get to know them. Then you spend time communicating with them and getting to know them. You love to be with them so being with them becomes a priority to you. That is how you find a relationship with God. When you draw closer to God, He will draw closer to you.

You have to remember too, that this is not a one way street. This thing works both ways. God wants to draw closer to you. He wants to find a relationship with you. Jeremiah 29:13 gives you a promise. “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

To be able to follow someone, we also have to give up our way. Face it, part of human nature is to be stubborn and hard headed about getting our own way. But if we are hard headed about getting our own way, there is no way that we can follow our good Shepherd. You have to yield to be able to follow.

You have to yield up your will to follow His will and walk in His way. That is hard to do. It isn’t easy to yield. One of the things that helps you to yield is getting a glimpse of God’s love and getting a glimpse of the love of the Shepherd, the one who gave His life to be able to walk with you. The more you fall in love with God, the easier it will be to yield enough to follow.

Another thing that will help you to be able to yield and follow God is knowing how much you need to do this. Take it from me. Most things I have learned, I have learned the hard way. I have spent a lot of my life being hard headed and stubborn and rebellious. Because of that, I have paid a great price.

What do I mean? I spent a lot of my life doing the opposite of what God lead me to do, going the opposite direction from where my good Shepherd was leading me. Finally after years of being in the wrong place at the wrong time and paying the price for that, I learned to yield. I learned to follow. Life has gone so much better for me since I have learned that.

So what about you? Are you following your good Shepherd? Are you letting Him lead you? Do you have a relationship with Him? Are you getting to know your Savior who died for you? Do you trust Him? Do you know that you know that you know that you know that when you walk with Him, He will lead you into good things? Are you yielding to Him?

Can He lead you? If you are not doing these things, then isn't it time for a change? He is waiting to lead you. He has a plan for your life. He will lead you into good things. That is the number one key for being able to find victory in troubled times. So now, answer the question that I put at the beginning of this chapter. Will God do this for you? Can you trust Him to keep His word for you?

So what about the people we talked about at the beginning of the book-the college students, Steven, and Paul? Doesn't sound like they had it all going their way. What about all of the times that we go through battles? What was the key thing that you noticed about those people? Their story ended in victory. God led them through to victory. In every one of those cases we talked about, they found victory.

It isn't as much about the journey as it is about how the journey ends. It isn't about the lack of battles, but it is how we overcome them. It is about how our Shepherd leads us to victory. It is about the power of God's love to keep us,

It is about how can bring us through whatever we face. And that, child of God, is how you can find victory even in the most difficult times.

Chapter 4
The Power of God’s Love

I have mentioned God’s love several times, but it is such an important key to being able to find victory in difficult times that I want to do a whole chapter about it. You see, you can’t find victory unless you trust God and you trust His Word. Until you get a glimpse of God’s love for you, you can’t trust Him. I pray that in this chapter you see the awesomeness of His love. And that this glimpse will enable you to trust Him even more.

You may look at yourself and see yourself as being so unlovable. But God doesn’t see you that way because His love is so amazing. God’s love reaches beyond everything that you have ever done in the past and it loves you into becoming a new creation in Christ. He loves you even in your weaknesses and even makes your weakness to become your greatest strength. He doesn’t condemn you for your weaknesses but He uses them to

make you great. That is one example of the power of God's love.

There are two sides of understanding God's love. One is a group of people who say, "God loves me so that I can do anything I want to because He will forgive me." If you don't mind me saying so, the group of people who say that are really spitting on God's love. They cheapen it and take away its value. They take away the power of the cross.

God's love is so awesome that it demands a commitment from us. It is so powerful and life changing that by its very nature it brings about a change in us. When you find a genuine relationship with Jesus, the one who sacrificed His life for you, then you will come out from the sin that you are doing and you will dedicate your life to Him. Why? Because He gave it all to love you.

Then there are the people on the opposite side of the spectrum. They are the ones that say that you have to live a holy, set

aside life on your own because God's love demands it from you.

They say that you have to be perfect even as God is perfect. You have to keep God's law to the letter and you are expected to do this without fail. If you fail, then they say that you cannot receive God's love. In summary they say that God's love is something that you have to earn. This way of looking at God's love is just setting you up for failure. Why? Because the Bible says that there is none that are perfect, nobody except Jesus.

Face it, we are going to fail. But we talked about how the first group deals with their failure. They excuse it away. They continue on in doing it. This group we are talking about now says that when you fail, you have lost God's love because it is based on what you do. They present the understanding that you have to earn it. (By the way, Matthew 5:48 says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." There is a problem with this understanding.

The problem with this is we read in an earlier verse that nobody is perfect so what is this verse saying. When we go to the original Greek, we see that this word “perfect” means whole and complete. In other words, we are to serve our Lord with a whole and complete heart like the heart that He has for us.)

Both of these groups are wrong. To be able to understand God’s wonderful love for you, you have to understand this. It is not based on who you are and what you do, but it is based on His nature. We read in 1 John 4:16, “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

God is love and His love is a pearl of great price. His love is an absolute perfect love. It is an example of everything love should be. It is an eternal love. It is a consuming love. The more that you get to know God’s love, the more it demands you to yield to it and as you do, that will change you and the focus of your whole life.

It will change your life and your world. That is the power of God's love. Let's read more about God's love.

God loves you as a son. 1 John 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not". He calls us His sons. This sums up why Jesus hung on the cross for you. Yes, for you. He hung there so that you could find God's love. So that you could become a son of God.

Let's read some more about God's love. Jeremiah 31:3, "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." God has an everlasting love. It is not based on who you are but it is based on who He is. Yet because of its very nature it brings about a change in you. Galatians 2:20 tells us about the change that comes and why it comes. It tells you how you can change in the Lord.

”I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” His love is so great that it causes you to yield, it causes you to be crucified with Christ. And you can change and live a new life in the flesh because of the faith that you find in His love.

So how can finding God’s love help you to live in victory in difficult times. One reason is this. When you know God’s love you can trust Him. How could all of those people that I mentioned in the first chapter find victory in those horrible circumstances that they lived through. They had found a relationship with God that is real and they trusted Him to enable them to be able to go through it all. They knew that He would enable them to walk through it all with victory. They had found His love.

Well, you may be thinking to yourself that if God loved them, then why did He allow them to go through what they faced?

They lived in difficult times, just like the times that we are going through. Sometimes the times require us to go through difficult things. But we can trust in God to bring us through them with victory and that He will even turn them out for good no matter how bad they seem. Why can we trust Him? Because we know His love. We know that His love is not based on always causing things to be perfect Face it. It won't be so. But His love will always cause us so triumph.

Another reason is that they trusted God to turn it all out for good. They knew that they lived in uncertain and terrible times and that they would have to go through things. But they also knew that God would cause them to be able to overcome and that no matter the circumstance they were in, it would all turn out for good. Romans 8:28 promises something. We have mentioned this verse earlier in the book, but it is so important that I want to repeat it here. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to

his purpose.” When you know God’s love you can trust Him to work everything that you have to go through out for your good. With that going on, how can we help but find victory in every situation, even in the worst situations. I have faced things that really tried my faith in God. They were so hard that when I was going through them I felt like my whole self was being torn in two. But after God brought me through to the victory that He promises, I was able to thank God because what I gained through that time was well worth what I had been through.

We read in 1 Peter 1:7-9, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” When you love and trust God, then you know that when your faith is tried, it will

grow. It will shine. 1 Peter 1: -11, “To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:
That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:
Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.” You can rejoice when you go through trials and battles. Those are the times that cause our faith to grow. If we never went through battles, we would be weak, spineless, and spoiled Christians not able to stand when the going gets rough. We would not be able to be a light to those that are around us. When those around you see you come

through the battle with the victory, then they know that God is real and they know that He can keep them through their battle.

I want to close this chapter with a prayer that Paul prayed for the saints at the church in Ephesus. It is found in Ephesians 3:17-21. The church at Ephesus was born in the fire so to speak. It was born during the Roman persecution and it was born in the times when the Jews were persecuting the church because they felt like Christianity was false. Remember, it was the Jewish leaders who had Jesus hung on the cross, and the persecution got worse from that point.

Paul prayed this prayer for the church at Ephesus. “So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith: and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

In his prayer, we can see the power of God’s love.They rose up above persecution and overcame. They became the light of the Lord. We read about their victory today and know that because they found victory in the face of persecution that we can find victory through our difficult times. Why? Because like them, we have found the awesome power of the love of God. What helped us to find it? Their example, their trust in God, their relationship with Him, their hope that they found.

How do we know they had these things? Because we read about their lives in God’s Word. For countless generations through countless years their testimony has led countless people to be able to find victory through their example of faith. You have found victory as well as you read.

If they would never have gone through their difficult time, then their story would not have been written and they would have touched no one.

I want to add a note here. We read in 1 Timothy 4:8, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” We have to truly love His appearing to be able to eternally walk in His love.

We mentioned before that when you get to know His love for real, His love is so awesome that it demands that you give everything to Him. It demands commitment. Only those people who have found His love to this point will be able to spend eternity with Him.

Also, we cannot be double minded. We can’t have part of our heart following God and part of us following other things that are against God. You can’t give your heart to the Lord and dance with the devil.

It doesn’t work that way. James 1:6-8 says, “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. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

Matthew 7:21-23 tells about something that Jesus said. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

What is this saying? To enter into His love for eternity you have to do the will of the Father. Many will talk about all of the wonderful things that they have done for the Lord but they won’t walk in a relationship with their Lord.

They aren’t yielding to His love. They don’t know Him for real. When they get there, they will hear the Lord say, “I never knew you: depart from me.” Why would you want to miss out on such a great and wonderful love? He died to love you. Run to Him.

Chapter 5
The Power of Light

I want to talk a little bit in this chapter about the power of light. If you go into a totally dark room and you light a candle what happens? Even if the candle gives off a small light, the darkness in part of that room will give way to the light. Light always wins over darkness. Now what happens if you go into a dark room carrying a light that lights the room up with a brilliantly bright light. What happens to the darkness? You can no longer find it. Light is more powerful than darkness.

Jesus is the light of the world. John 1:1-14 talks about that light. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the

darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

What is this scripture saying? Who was the Word that was with God in the beginning? You can tell that this is talking about a person. Who was this great light that shone in the darkness?

Who was this light that the darkness couldn't put out? Who was God's only begotten son? Jesus. Jesus is that light.

You may as well know that the devil sent every bit of his demons against Jesus to stop Him. You can also know that he used all of his evil old power to stop him. I am sure that when Jesus hung on that cross the devil thought that he had won. But then came Sunday morning and an empty tomb. Jesus was a light that the darkest, darkest, darkest, darkness could not put out.

This scripture tells us a little about that light. It says that there are many who will not want to see this light. They will keep their eyes shut so that they won't see. But to those that receive him, to those that believe in His name they will see that light and it will change their lives. And as many that receive Him they will be given power to become the sons of God. Jesus is that light and when you let that light shine in your life it will chase away the darkness. He is truth and that truth is part of that light that shines from Him.

In my own life. Jesus' light has chased away the darkness many times.

I grew up in church, but I didn't find a relationship with God that was real. I went away to college at Radford University and I learned a lot of things in the world that destroyed my life. It didn't take long for me to do that. I was an alcoholic and a drug abuser. I learned a lot in a very short time about the darkness that you can become a part of, about the darkness that you can let into your life.

The darkness took away any light that I had in my mind and in my heart and in my life. One day I woke up and looked at the hopelessness that was in my life. I tried to take my life. I tried to drive a car off of a hair pin curve on a cliff over the river. I prayed, "God if you are real, you are my only hope. If you are not real then I have no hope and I want to die." I was going over 80 miles around that curve. My tires didn't even squall. I wasn't even on the road. Evidently God was real because I am writing this book over 45 years later. Why am I still here? Because of Jesus.

Because of His light, God’s light, shined in my heart and my mind and in my life. When it did, it chased away the darkness. I can tell you first hand about the power of light.

I just want to add a little note here. Even though the light of God was there in my life, things didn’t go all smooth at first. For one thing I had to learn about the power of the light of God. I had grown up in church, but I didn’t really learn a lot.

That is sad, but I am afraid that is how it is in a lot of churches. I didn’t learn about the power of God’s light. I didn’t learn about the power of God’s Word. I didn't learn about the power of knowing the truth and how the truth can set you free. I didn’t even know the truth.

I also had an all out war going on. The devil was determined to stop me. (I just want to add here that this has been true for most of my life, but I have learned about God’s keeping power. I am still here and still doing what God had planned for me to do in my life.)

But all of this was new to me. I didn't understand all these things that I know now and that made my battle even harder.

If you are going through this, if you are going through being set free from the darkness and the darkness is trying to hold you down, then remember my testimony. Just keep walking with the light. Just keep walking in the light. The darkness will lose its hold over you. It may take a little time.

Keep reading God's Word. Keep spending time with your Savior. He is your light and His light will cause you to overcome the darkness of your past. Keep letting God's Spirit fall on you. You will come out of this thing on top and in the light. How do I know? Because the light is more powerful than darkness.

Micah 7:8 says, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me." No matter how dark that darkness is, God will be the light in that darkness.

He will be the light that is leading you out of it into the light of day. There is no night so dark that dawn won't put it out. Just hold on and wait for the dawn. It will come. Guaranteed.

Psalm 18:28 says, "For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness." James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." God is the Father of light. He made light. When you read in Genesis in the creation story you will see that God made light even before He made the sun. There was light before the sun. God is the father of light.

There is no shadow in God. God is totally light. There will be no variableness with God. There will be no changing with God. God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He will never change. He is constant. In this crazy world where things seem to change every day, it is good to know that we can count on God. We can count on the power of His light.

Isaiah 60:1 says, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.” You can rise and shine even when it seems like darkness is all around you. You can rise and shine even though you are in the middle of the battle. You can rise and shine even when it seems like the darkness is winning all over the world.

Rise and shine because the light is come and the glory (the Spirit) of the Lord is risen upon you and His light will put out the darkness and give you victory in troubled times.

I want to talk a little bit about the truth and how the truth can light up your darkness. This scripture talks about a conversation between Jesus and Thomas, one of his disciples. It is found in John 14:6, “Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Jesus is the way. He is life. He is truth. When you find Him, you will have all of this in your life.

Jesus is the truth. John 8:32 says, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Verse 36 says, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” We may go through trials and battles and situations, but they can’t destroy us. They can’t lock us up in defeat. The truth of God’s Word has the power to set us free. Our relationship with the LIGHT will set us free. And when we are set free, we are free indeed.

I have learned through my mistakes how we can actually allow the darkness to rule in our lives. We can do things that will cause the darkness to win over the light. Here are some things that we can do:

1. We can doubt that the light is able to chase away the darkness. That doubt comes in 2 parts. We may doubt that God is able to light up the darkness. We can doubt that He is able to keep us. Or we can know that He is able to, but we can doubt that He will do that for us. One of the things that the enemy does is to make us feel so unworthy that we don’t think God’s Word works for us. We know it will.

We know it will work but we become convinced in our mind that it won’t work for us. We know that God’s light will put out the darkness, but we don't think that it will work for us because we are so unworthy. That is not God’s voice. That is not the voice of the one who sent His son to die for you so that you could be forgiven. That is the voice of the devil. That is the voice of darkness. Don’t listen to that voice.

There is a difference between condemnation and conviction. Conviction is when God makes us aware of things that we are doing wrong. He convicts us and then we repent which means we are so sorry for what we have done that we are determined not to do it again. When we repent and ask Him for forgiveness, then He forgives us and forgets that sin.

Condemnation is when the devil brings up every thing that we have done wrong for the last 40 years. He beats us up with this. He can steal your victory and your soul if you allow him to do this and if you listen to him. He is bringing up darkness.

That darkness can steal your light if you let him. But when we allow God's light and His love to shine in our life, then we know that we know that we know both these things. We know that God is able to chase away the darkness and we know that He will do it for us.

2. The darkness can win in our lives if we focus on the darkness instead of on the light. If we allow negative thinking to control our thoughts, if we focus on defeat instead of victory, if we focus on the problem instead of the Problem-solver, if we focus on everything wrong instead of everything with God that is right and light, we will allow the darkness to win. If we concentrate on darkness, then it will win.

One of the ways that we can focus on the darkness instead of the light is if we focus on things that cause the darkness to rule in our lives. One is sin. If we are openly sinning, then darkness will rule in our life.

If our focus is on worldly things, then those things will get us down. This is one example of what I am talking about.

If we constantly have our nose in YouTube watching a bunch of mess, then we are allowing darkness to rule over us. If we listen to music that is not Gospel music but it is the world's music, then we allow darkness to rule over us. Music is the window to the soul. If you listen to music that is the devil's music instead of God's then the devil gets hold of your spirit and darkness rules.

What you let control your heart and mind will determine whether the light or the darkness rules. You have to guard against doing anything that will allow the darkness to be more powerful in your life than the light. How will you know what things will do that? Ask God daily to show you.

3. Darkness can rule in our life if we fail to spend time taking in the light of God's Word, and if we fail to spend time with the Lord. If we fail to take in the light of God's Word, darkness can rule. If we fail to let God's Spirit fall on us, and if we fail to pray, all of these things can take away the light and replace it with darkness. That will lead to letting defeat in our life.

In other words, if we fail to take in the light, then the darkness will gradually take over the light.

4. If you love the things of darkness and you would rather have them in your life more than you love the things of God, then the darkness will rule in your life.

5. Know that you have an enemy out there who wants to steal your light away. We have to be aware of this. Be aware of the tactics that he uses to defeat us. God will show you what the devil is up to, and He will show you what to do about it, how to stand against him and take authority over him.

Sometimes we will be too busy to stop and listen to what God is showing us. When you feel that God is showing you these things, then stop and listen and do something about it. Bind the devil. Put your foot on His head and refuse to give place to him. Refuse to let him take even an inch. You have been given authority over him. You have right to tell him to take off.

We will talk about this in a chapter coming up. Take the authority God has given you.

So we have God's light, and the truth, and those will light up the darkness. So should we worry or be afraid? Should we be anxious and have panic attacks when we go through things? Should we feel defeated? Should we give in to thoughts of negative thinking or should we rise up in the victory that the light and the truth give us? When you think about the overcoming power of God's light, then you have to know that you are on the winning side. We are not losers but we are mighty through God.

I want to close with this scripture found in Ephesians 1:17-23. This was Paul's prayer that he prayed for the church at Ephesus, and it is my prayer for you. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 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 us-ward 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 fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

We are on the winning side, child of God. We are definitely on the winning side. Know this down deep in your heart and mind. Even when it doesn’t seem like you are on the winning side, wait for the light to overcome the darkness. It will happen. God’s dawn, His light, will come.

Chapter 6
The Power of Faith

Faith is simply believing and trusting. We talked earlier that there are two parts to faith. One is knowing that God can do anything. The other part is knowing that He will do it for you. That is trust. Faith doesn't look at the mountain, but faith looks for the way that God has made to climb it.

Faith doesn't look at the problem, but it looks to the problem solver. Faith doesn't look at everything that is going wrong, but it looks for those things to turn out right in God's hands. Faith doesn't look at the world's report about everything that is going on wrong, but it looks at the promises of the Word of God and holds on to those.

Faith doesn't look at the night but it holds on to the promise that joy will come in the morning. Faith is knowing that you can count on God's Word and that it is absolutely true.

Faith has the power to help you to overcome. Faith is knowing that God will keep His Word.

One of the best definitions of faith that I have heard is this on which is an acronym (based on the letters of the word). Faith means **F**orsaking **A**ll **I** **T**rust **H**im. Faith means that you don't look to anything or anybody else but you look to God and you trust Him.

It means that you do not look to the situation or the circumstances, but you trust God. It means that you know that you know that you know that He will see you through whatever you are facing, and you know that it will all turn out for your good. It means that you can absolutely trust Him.

Here are some scriptures about faith:

Hebrews 11:1 gives a wonderful explanation of faith. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were

framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

In other words faith is believing and trusting in the things that are not seen until those things that are not seen are seen. We don’t see God. When we face situations that are hard to go through, we have to believe and trust in Him until the things that we are believing Him to do are done. We have to believe until the unseen thing is seen.

Here are some more scriptures about faith.

John 6:28-29, “Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” Faith enables you to work the works of God. Not only that but faith is the work of God.

Hebrews 11:6, “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."

Our faith pleases God. When we step out in faith, trusting Him, that pleases God. If we don't have faith, then we cannot please Him. Faith is believing that He is and that He will reward those who diligently seek him. "Diligently" means showing steady and earnest care and effort.

When we are determined to seek God we will find Him. Jeremiah 29:13 says, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." We have to believe that He will be there for us as we seek Him with all of our heart.

The Bible tells us that there many benefits of having faith. Here are some of those. Ephesians 2:8 tells us, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." We are saved through faith. We have to believe in God and believe that he will save us to be able to receive salvation.

This verse talks about how to find victory through our faith. We read in 1 John 5:4 “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Our faith enables us to have the kind of victory that enables us to overcome everything that is going on in the world.

Ephesians 6:16 tells us, “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” Faith puts out the fiery darts of the devil who will try to destroy you. Faith stops him from being able to destroy you.

Romans 5:1-2, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ”Justified” means the change in a person's condition moving from a state of sin to a state of righteousness. We can move from a life of sin to a life of righteousness (being upright before God) through faith.

By faith we can find peace with God and we have access to grace through our faith. Then we can rejoice in hope of the glory of God. John 12:46 tells us, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” When we believe, we don’t have to walk in darkness. Even though it seems like everything around us is dark, we can walk in the light of God. John 3:15 says, “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” If we believe in God we will have eternal life.

Let’s talk a little about the second part of faith. We mentioned before that faith has 2 parts. One is that we believe that God is and that we believe that He can do everything. The other is that we believe that He will do it for us. We have talked about this before but I want to mention this again and again until you get it.

I know a lot of people who know that God is real. They know that God can do everything. But they have no faith at all that He will work for them. They think they don’t deserve anything from God.

That is so sad. Often it is people whom the devil has bound up and they feel so bad about themselves that they don’t see that God loves them and that He will keep His Word for them. They don’t trust God to move for them.

The definition of trust is the assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something. When those people don’t think that God will move for them, they miss the point of trust. Trust is relying on God’s character, on His ability and His strength, on His truth. It isn't relying on you yourself, but it is relying on God's character and His ability. God will move for you and take care of that situation because He is who He is and if you are His child, He will take care of you.

Here are some more verses that talk about trust. Psalm 37:3 tells us, “Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.” This scripture brings out a powerful point. If we trust and do good, we will dwell in the land and be fed.

Psalm 37:5 says, “Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.” If we commit our way to the Lord and trust Him, he will bring it to pass.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Often we can’t rely on our own understanding to know what to do and which direction to take in our lives. If we trust the Lord and allow Him to lead us He will direct our paths.

Isaiah 26:4 tells us, “Trust ye in the LORD forever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength” When we trust God He will be our strength forever. What an amazing promise. Psalm 32:10 tells us, “Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.”

Proverbs 29:25 says, “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.”

Fear will cause us to be trapped, but when we put our trust in God we will be safe. Isaiah 26:3 says, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” When we trust in the Lord and keep our mind on Him we can have perfect peace.

After reading this I know that you understand how important it is to have faith. The disciples went to Jesus one day and asked Him to increase their faith. They walked with Him and saw the miracles that He did but in Luke 17:5 we read that they went through a time when they had to ask Him to increase their faith. So how do we increase our faith? How do you get more faith?

John 20:31 says, “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” Romans 10:14. 15. and 17 tells us, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a

preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!….So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

There is nothing that will increase your faith like reading God’s Word. When you read about how God stood in the fiery furnace with those three Hebrew boys, you know that He will stand with you when it feels like you are in the fiery furnace. When you read about how David stood against the giant and won, then you will know that He will help you to be victorious over the giants in your life.

When you read about how God provided for Elijah when God sent ravens to feed Him, you know that God will provide for you. When you read about how Jesus healed the sick, you know that He will heal you. When you read about the promises in God’s Word you know that you can claim those promises and stand on them. The word of God will increase your faith. The key to unlocking that is reading it.

You have to read it and take it into your heart and mind, and do what it says.

When you first begin to follow God, sometimes your faith is weaker because you haven't experienced the miracles that He will do for you. You haven't yet seen Him work in your life. You haven't walked with Him to see how He will direct your paths and bring you out into a place of green pastures.

As you grow in your relationship with God, as you see Him working, doing great things on your behalf, your faith will grow. So when you start out, you may as well know that the enemy will try to destroy you before your faith can be built up. But when he comes against you he will actually be doing you a favor. As God helps you to overcome this battle, your faith will be strengthened.

Everything that the devil will do against you to try to stop you will only strengthen you and strengthen your faith as you watch how your God moves for you. You will learn that you can trust Him.

The greater the battle, the greater the situation that He helps you to overcome, the greater your faith will grow.

The Bible also talks about hindrances to your faith, things that will cause your faith not to work. We read one thing in James 1:6-8, “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. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” If you are double minded, if you can’t make up your mind where you stand in God, then you will be unstable and your faith won’t work.

Also, if you are not obeying God, then your faith won’t work. We talked a little bit about that. Another thing that will hinder your faith is if you have a negative attitude. I know people who literally talk themselves out of believing. They are the kind of people who see the glass as half empty instead of half full. They can’t find anything positive to talk about.

They can’t even find anything positive to think about. Their heart and mind is full of doom and gloom. That sort of thinking will steal your faith and your victory.

In Philippians 4:8 the Bible talks about the things that we should think about. “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.”

When you think on those things, you will build your faith. Another thing that will steal your faith is worry or what I call “toilet thinking”. That happens when your mind starts going round and round and round dwelling on your problems and your fears and worries until it just sucks you down the drain leaving you in total defeat.

How can you keep that from happening? Instead of focusing on the problem and the worry, when you feel that happening, turn it into praise.

Praise the Lord for how He is taking care of the situation. Instead of being sucked down, you will be lifted up. Guaranteed.

I want to add a note here. To be able to find faith and to keep the victory you have to participate. It requires you to do something. If you do nothing then you will just sink down into defeat.

Coming up in the next chapter you will read true accounts of the power that faith brings to your life. This will build your faith and lift you up.

Chapter 7
True Stories of the Power of Faith

When I think about stories in the Bible that demonstrate the power of faith, I think of Abraham. We read what God told Him to do in Genesis 12:1-2, “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

God told Abraham to pack up all of his belongings and leave his home. He told him to go to Canaan. Now Abraham was a wealthy man. He had a lot of people with him including his family and his servants. He had herds with them. This wasn’t an easy thing to do but by faith he obeyed God.

How did God bless his faith? He kept the promise that he made Abraham.

When he got to the place where God led him, God reminded him of the promise He made. How do we know that God kept His promise? The nation of Israel stands today in the very place where God led him. The whole world has come against Israel at different times through history and especially now. But Israel still stands unmoved. Why? Because of the promise that God made Abraham.

Can you trust God? Can you take Him at His Word? Will He keep the promises that He has made you? And what about the part of the promise that He made Abraham that all of the families of the world would be blessed from his seed, from his lineage, from his family? This promise came about too. All of the families that have lived all of the way through time were blessed from Abraham's seed. That is a powerful statement to make. I know that it is true because now, over 4,000 years after God made that promise, my family was changed because of Abraham's seed and your family was changed. How?

Jesus was born from Abraham’s seed, from his blood line.

Another person that I think of when I think of faith is Caleb. Caleb was with the children of Israel when God delivered them out of Egypt. Bible scholars believe that there were over 1,000,000 people that came out of Egypt with Moses. Of that 1,000,000 people, only 2 were able to go into the promised land.

This account is a powerful illustration of the difference between doubt and unbelief and faith. Why weren’t the rest of the 1,000,000 people able to go into the promised land? The people went through all they went through traveling through the desert. They had watched the Red Sea part so that they could walk across on dry land. Then they watched the waters come back in place and drown the Egyptian army. They had been guided through the desert at night by a huge column of fire and during the day by a cloud that protected them from the desert heat. They had seen many miracles. But then they got to the Promised Land.

When they got there they rebelled and refused to go in. Why? Because there were giants in the land and huge walled cities. They looked at the problem instead of at their Problem Solver and fear took them over.

Only 2 men, Joshua and Caleb, encouraged them to go in because God had promised them that land. No one would hear. For 45 years they wandered in the desert until all of those who refused to go in were dead. Then they again stood at the edge of their Promised Land. This time they didn't hesitate. The new generation didn't' falter in their faith. This time they went in and conquered the land.

And what about Caleb? We read what happened to him in his own words starting in Joshua 14:6, "Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.

And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old (85 years old).

As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said."

He went on to take the land that God had promised him. What made him strong enough to do this?

Why could a man of 85 be as strong as he was 45 years ago? Because of his faith.

I want to add a thought here. Caleb could have become angry and bitter. He could have become angry with God. After all, his blessing was delayed for 45 years because of the faithlessness of those that were around him. If he had become that way, then he would have died with them in the desert and he would never have made it to his promised land.

When I think about the power of faith and the power of prayer I think of the account of King Hezekiah and Judah. The King of Assyria, Sennacherib, came against Judah which was a part of Israel but at this time had separated from it. We read about this account in 2 Chronicles 32.

Sennacharib came into Judah and encamped against the fenced cities. Now Sennacharib wasn't an ordinary King. He was one of the mightiest kings who ever lived. He would destroy whole countries by taking the people captive and moving them from their homes.

He had over 200,000 soldiers with him and they surrounded Jerusalem. Hezekiah told the people to be strong and courageous and not to be afraid. He told them that there was more with them than what was with Sennacherib because with him was the arm of flesh, but with them was the Lord their God. God would help them and fight their battle. He encouraged the people's faith. When your faith is strong then you can know that God will stand with you.

Sennacherib was known for destroying countries who did not submit to Assyrian rule. His father before him had done the same thing. Sennacherib alone was responsible for taking over 470,000 people from their homes. He did this in many countries. In verse 13 he told the people of Judah. "Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of other lands? Were gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand. Who was there among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed that could

deliver his people out of mine hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of mine hand?”

He told the people not to believe the words of Hezekiah. He told them that God could not help them. The Assyrian army surrounded Jerusalem and they yelled out things that mocked God and mocked them. Sennacherib wrote letters mocking God and sent them out. Still the people’s faith remained strong.

Isn’t this what the devil does to us when we face life’s battles? He will do everything he can to destroy our faith. He will make it look like God is not standing for you. He will make it look like there is nothing that God can do to fight for you. When that happens, don’t let him destroy your faith. Hold on to the Word of God. Hold on to knowing what God has done for you before. Don’t let go of the promises He has made you.

How did this account end. King Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed. I am sure that they weren’t the only ones who prayed.

What was the outcome of their faith and their prayers. We read this in 2 Kings 19:32-38. “Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand (185,000): and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia.” He returned to Assyria in shame and defeat and his own sons killed him.

They murdered him when he was in the temple of his god worshiping him. When you keep your faith in God and you trust in Him, God will fight for you.

Another person that I think of when I think of faith is Job. In one day his sons and daughters were all killed, he lost all of his herds, he lost everything that he owned. His friends left him and he tells that even the children despised him.

Even though he went through all of that, He still trusted in God. We read this in his own words in Job 19:25-16, “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” What did his unshakable faith award him? He was given twice as much as he had before. Job 42:12-17 tells us, “So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning….After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.” God blessed him and brought him victory.

To find out more people whose faith kept them read Hebrews 11. This chapter has been called the Hall of Faith. These are powerful stories about the greatness of God. Read that chapter. If you don't read it, it won't increase your faith. If you do read it, it will.

One of the keys to faith is that we have to willingly allow Jesus to be in our lives. When we do, we will see miracles happening because of His presence. We read this account in John 6:16-20. "And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went."

In this account, Jesus had not gotten into the ship with them. It got dark. A storm came up and the sea rose. Then they looked and saw Jesus walking on the sea coming to them. He told them, “It is I; be not afraid.” Then this scripture said that they willingly received Him into the ship. What was the result of that? Immediately the ship was at their destination. How do we get where we are wanting to go? We have to willingly receive Jesus into our lives. If we reject Him and refuse to allow Him to become an active part of our lives, then we will never reach our destination.

I want to add here some testimonies from my book titled My Stories-True Accounts of the Greatness of God. These are more stories about faith that aren’t found in the scriptures but they are modern day happenings. Another thing that increases your faith is reading or hearing testimonies of how God has worked in the lives of others. *I want to include in this chapter some clips from my book My Stories-True Testimonies of the Power of God. Here is a true story that will increase your faith especially*

if you are believing God for healing. Here is another amazing story of a miracle that happened in a church service. This mother told me about it and showed me a picture of the miracle that God had done for her son. Her baby was born a water head baby. His skull had not formed at the top of his head and in the front. They told her that as he grew his brain would just grow out on top and in the front and he would be really grotesque looking. He had spina bifida. He was paralyzed from the waist down.

Doctors told her that he was the worst baby that they had seen. They told her that he would never live long enough to go to school and if he did, he wouldn't be able to learn anything. He would be mentally retarded. They told her that it would be the best thing for them to give him a shot and put him to sleep. She refused to accept that and she began to pray for her son.

During a church service when the power of God was moving, the baby's grandmother laid hands on him and prayed in tongues. They went to the doctor and what he saw made him say, "This is impossible. This is impossible." He kept saying

it over and over. The baby's skull had grown back. He went to school and graduated.

At the time when I am writing this he is 45 years old. His mom showed me his picture and he was a really good looking young man. She told me that he was really smart. He has memorized all of the presidents, the history of the time when they were in the presidency. He can tell you all of their wives. She said that if she wants to know anything she just asks him. God had other plans for this young man. This is a testament of our God who is a miracle working God. It is also a testimony of a mother's love and faith as she refused to do anything but believe God and what He could do for her son.

Here is a true story that will encourage you faith if you are fighting fear. This will enforce your faith that God will take care of you. When I think about how God has protected us through the years one of the most amazing times he protected us was a time during our tent crusade days. We were on our way back from taking the tent down. We only had a few people with us, not a whole team. The tent truck, a box truck, was in front with Brother Goad and his wife. Then there was a large passenger van that

Suzanne, their daughter, was driving with about 8 people in it. I was in a mini van with Brother Frank and his wife Shirley. These vehicles were all moving along at the same speed one right behind the other.

Everything was going fine until a guy fell asleep at the wheel of a tractor trailer. He was going about 80 when he hit the van that was in front of us. Now keep in mind that we were all right behind each other. He hit the van in front of us in the back and then went down the side of the vehicle. He did not hit our van. If he would have hit our mini van, we would not have lived through it. This was a huge tractor trailer. How did it hit them and not us? We have no idea how that happened. It was like we became like air and the tractor trailer went right through us.

The tractor trailer hit the passenger van that was in front of us. It hit it in the back, then peeled the side of it back much like opening a can of sardines. It hit the van with so much force that the front seats were twisted back like a recliner and then they bent around. The people in the front seats didn't have their seat belts on. The ones in the next seat back went over the seats

and landed on those in the front seats and kept them from going through the windshield.

Then the tractor trailer went on to hit the tent truck with such force that the bolts holding the box of the truck to the frame broke. The box part separated from the frame and was sitting over on the guard rail. Brother Goad's wife was in the cab. In her pocket book in a little pouch were her pills. The pill bottle broke. That was how hard the tractor trailer hit them.

When the rescue squad there heard the call, they sent in a helicopter to fly the survivors, if there were any. They were expecting to find a lot of seriously injured people and expected to find some dead. Imagine their surprise when they pulled up and we are all standing there beside the vehicle with only minor injuries. God had protected us through it all.

The rescue squad took us by their building to wait on a ride. We lost count of the rescue squad workers who came by to see us. They would come in and say, "Are these the people who walked out of that wreck?" We were happy to tell them about the One that had kept us and

protected us. The paper in that town even printed an article about the miracle on the highway and they included pictures of the vehicles. No one doubted that it had been a miracle.

God protected and shielded all of us that day, but the biggest miracle that he did was turning us to air so that the tractor trailer passed through us. None of us that were in the mini van know what happened, but that doesn't matter. We know that it did. It is a miracle we often talk about when we get together. God protected us all that day.

I want to add another true story. Joanne Ramsey is a faith teacher. We play her broadcasts on our radio stations. She told about this account. Norvell Hayes is a faith teacher. He teaches people about faith and healing and then prays for them. That way their faith to receive healing isn’t built on him, but it is built on God and His Word.

There was a woman and her son who had attended his meetings. Her new born son was severely mentally challenged.

He also couldn’t walk. He was a lot older but had the mentality of about a 2 year old. She heard Norvell’s lessons about faith and took them to heart. Every day she would push her son across the floor and she would tell him, “In the name of Jesus you will walk. God, I believe your Word.”

She did this every day for 2 years. She did not accept defeat. She did not give up on knowing that God would keep His Word. During that time, she also prayed that God would give her son a special gift to be used for the glory of God.

One night, she woke up to the sound of piano playing. Her son had walked to where their piano was and he was playing “like Mozart”. Sometimes we have to hold on to the promises God has given us and not let go of them until we see them come about. We have to refuse to be denied.

Another thing that will build your faith is remembering how God has moved for you. It is a good idea to keep a prayer journal where you write down things that you are

praying for and you write down how God answered those prayers. When you go through a battle, get it out and remember what God has done for you.

Psalm 103:2 tells us, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” Don’t forget the things that God has done for you. Remember them. Go over them especially when you are facing a battle. It will build you faith.

I want to remind you of something. It isn’t the easy times that will build your faith. It is those times when your back is against the wall and you will surely be destroyed if God doesn’t move for you and suddenly, miraculously He delivers you. It is those times that will grow your faith.

As you walk with the Lord and you watch Him move, and you have stories to tell of your own about how God moved for you your faith will grow. The greater the battle the greater your faith will grow. So will your relationship with God. You will learn to trust Him. You will learn what He can do.

Faith will hold you through the storms of life. Faith will enable you to stand up strong even when the whole world is shaking. Faith will give you victory even when it seems there is no victory to be found. Faith will help you to see God's light in the darkest night. Faith will enable you to shine like a light and when those around you see you shining, they will know that your faith kept you through it all. Then they will find that light for themselves. AMEN.

Chapter 8
The Power of Joy

Joy is another promise that we have. God's joy is not dependent on our circumstances. The Bible says in Nehemiah 8:10 "…for the joy of the LORD is your strength." Have you ever noticed that when you lose your joy maybe because you are so overwhelmed with what is going on or maybe because you have let depression steal your joy, then you lose your strength.

If you have ever lost your joy for whatever reason, then you know that you don't have the strength to get up and go. You don't even have the desire to keep on going. We have a promise of God's joy and it isn't dependent on what is going on around you. God's joy is way more than just a feeling. Let me explain what I mean by that.

As a testimony of this I want to share with you what happened when I went with my aunt to the doctor when she received the diagnosis of lymph cancer.

We came out of the doctor's office and we were sitting in the car when an overwhelming spirit of joy came on us. We were filled with joy and with hope. I remember saying, "I don't think that this is how we are supposed to feel." I was so wrong. Even in the face of the worst news you can rejoice.

That moment changed my life. From that time until the day that she died my aunt never let go of that hope and joy. She went through her sickness and died with such a great victory that she was a light to all who knew her. That is what the joy of the Lord can do in your life.

Romans 15:13, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." One of the blessings that came out of the fire that changed my life was this. When my aunt lay dying, for days all she could do was swallow water dripped out of the end of straw. She had no strength left, but she praised the Lord for each sip of water.

When all she had was strength to move her little hand that was just skin and bones and wave it in praise, that was what she did. She did it until she went into the sleep when she died.

I learned something that changed my life forever. We serve a mighty big and wonderful God. We don't have to be afraid of anything the devil or this world has. When we as children of God can lay in the chains of cancer, dying, and still find the victory in God to praise Him, and still find joy even when facing death, what in this world do we have to fear. What can defeat us other than we ourselves.

We can also have supernatural peace and hope even in the middle of the worst times. Just like supernatural joy, supernatural peace and hope are not based on our circumstances but they are based in the knowledge that we can trust God to see us through. It is based on the knowledge of God's Word and His promises. It is based on the knowledge of the promises that He has made us.

We have the things that we have at His table of blessings. John 14:27 “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 “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.” Psalms 42:11 “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”

Psalms 119:114 “Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.” We don’t have to give up hope, peace, and joy just because there is a lot of turmoil and heartache in this world. Through God and His Word and the power of His Spirit, we can hold on to hope, peace, and joy and we can walk with Him rejoicing through it all through faith in Him.

So you can see that finding joy is a key to finding victory over difficult times. To understand joy and its power, we have to realize where it comes from. Joy isn't just a feeling that we get when things are going good. You realized from my aunt's story that joy isn't based on things going good. It is based on faith and trust in God. It is based on knowing God's Word and the promises of His Word.

It is based on believing that God has it in His control. It is based on knowing that no matter what happens it will work out for your good. How did my aunt's story turn out for good? It changed my life and gave me a victorious faith. I have included this story in many, many of my books. Who knows how many people have had their faith grow because of her story. I use my books in our extension colleges. We have about 40 extension colleges in many countries. Just this year we had over 600 graduates in our colleges. Plus they have been read many times by students in our school and by others.

It is hard to tell how many people's lives were changed by God using my aunt's story.

Here is a key to be able to find joy in difficult times. The Bible talks about the joy of the Lord. When you talk about something **of** someone, it is talking about something belonging to some one. Something that is a characteristic of someone. This scripture gives us an idea of another way to find joy. It is also how to find peace, love, hope and much more even when it seems like the world is falling apart and it is falling right on your head.

This scripture is found in Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit **of** the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

What am I saying here? This verse talks about the fruit **of** the Spirit. The characteristics of the Spirit of God. It is talking about **His** nature.

You have the Spirit of God in you if you are a child of God. The Spirit of God has all of these characteristics including joy. If you want to find joy in difficult times, then you have to remember that you have the Holy Spirit inside you and joy is part of His nature.

When you start worrying and freaking out with fear, then stop for a minute. Yield your nature to God's Spirit and find joy instead of fear. When you start to become depressed because of a situation that you are facing, then stop for a minute. Yield to the Spirit of God who is in you. If you are finding that you are caught up in anything that can only lead to defeat, then stop and yield to the Spirit of God. You will learn to become a winner.

You will learn to become victorious in difficult times. Or you can just stay stuck in your old flesh and give in to the fear, depression, and defeat and you will be a loser. You choose. Just remember, the joy of the Lord is your strength. Focus on Him instead of focusing on the problem.

Focus on the problem solver. Instead of focusing on defeat, focus on the One that will bring you to a guaranteed victory. Instead of focusing on the problems in the world, focus on the One who said in John 16:33, “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.” When you do that, you can have cheer. You can be joyful. And that is your strength.

I want to close with a song that the Lord gave me during the time when I stayed with my aunt. The title of it is *I’ve Got Joy*.

Chorus
I’ve got joy, joy like a river, like a river in my soul.
I’ve got joy, joy like a river, Holy Ghost river full of joy.

Verse 1
You may ask me why I’m smiling, why that old devil can’t get me down.

When circumstances seem so awful, I still won’t wear a frown.
Cause there’s a river of life flowing, flowing deep within my soul.
Bringing me the joy of Jesus, Holy Ghost river overflow.

Verse 2
I feel laughter in my spirit, I feel a praise in my soul.
Cause I know I’m bound for victory, Jesus is in control.
I don’t care what is around me, circumstances are not my Lord.
I am flowing in that river, Holy Ghost river full of joy.

You can find that Holy Ghost river, God’s Spirit inside of you, and when you do, you will find His joy, His peace, His hope, His victory.

Chapter 9
The Power of Prayer

One morning I was in a doctor's office. While I waited, I helped a doctor with a difficult situation. I encouraged a minister who was on the other side of the earth. I helped to protect, strengthen and encourage President Trump. I am telling you the absolute truth. How did I manage to do all of this just sitting in the doctor's office? I prayed.

I have been guilty of telling people at a time of crisis that all I could do is pray. Wow. When we say that we have no idea of the power of prayer and the power that it has to change the circumstance, to lift the storms, to bring victory in the battle, to bring light in the darkness. Prayer is one of the most dynamic and powerful things that we can do. Especially when you combine prayer with faith.

Let's find out what the Word of God has to say about our prayers. Psalm 91:15, "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I

will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him." Isaiah 65:24 says, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Matthew 7:7 says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Zechariah 13:9 says, "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God." All of these scriptures talk about the power that we can find when we call on the Lord.

I want to talk about another dimension of prayer here. Prayer is a conversation with the Lord where we speak and we listen. Prayer is a 2-way communication. For example, I have had many times when I was praying for God to take care of a situation, and He told me how to bring victory in the situation.

I obeyed Him and the situation was taken care of. I have been praying about things halfway because part of me was convinced that it really couldn't happen. He told me something to encourage my faith and my prayer broke through.

There have been times when I was praying in error, but He showed me how to pray and my prayer was effective. Prayer is a 2-way street. I want to introduce another side of prayer that you might not have thought about. Prayer is a continued relationship with the Lord of Lord and King of Kings. It is a relationship with the God of all. It is a conversation that you have with Him in the ongoing relationship that you have.

I like to start my prayers by praising the Lord. Praise unlocks the presence of God. It unlocks His anointing. It gets God's attention. Psalms 22:3 says, "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." Psalms 89:15-17 says, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy

countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted."

This scripture is talking about those who have learned the joyful sound of praising the Lord. Psalms 34:1-5 says, "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed."

When we praise the Lord, when our soul makes her boast in the Lord and you exalt His name, when you seek the Lord, He will hear you and deliver and you will not be ashamed. When you praise the Lord in the face of the enemy, God sees your faith.

He sees your trust in Him and it moves Him. Praise is powerful.

There is another dimension of prayer that I want to talk about. Sometimes when we pray, we pray little short prayers for each situation or person that we are praying for. The older Christians had a saying that ”they have prayed through”. When I pray, I pray until I feel a breakthrough. I pray until I feel that bondage breaking, or that situation correcting, or that enemy being bound, or that healing comes.. God will let you feel when you have prayed through to the victory.

Prayer is also a lot more than just words. It is allowing the power of God to move when you pray. It is part your words, but mostly it is God’s anointing moving in the situation and you can feel that break through.

Sometimes I have prayed for days before the breakthrough came. I won’t say that I prayed continuously for days, but God would keep bringing up a prayer need.

He would keep bringing it into my spirit for days, and then I would pray and feel that breakthrough and I knew that this prayer was answered.

Another dimension of prayer that I want to talk about is that prayer isn't always answered right away. When that happens, keep on praying. Don't give up. Don't stop praying.

One example of this is my Dad. I remember praying for my Dad to go to church when I was so small that I could sit on his lap. I remember sitting on his lap and asking him to come to church. He wasn't saved. There were a lot of times when my family and I almost gave up on praying for him. We would almost give up, then something would happen that would encourage our faith, or something would happen that let us know how important it was to keep praying.

I was in my early 30's when my Dad came to the Lord. He was completely and gloriously saved and was a changed man.

He died just a few years after that. I am so glad that we didn't give up. I have known people to pray many years and when the answer to their prayer came, it was amazing what God did. Sometimes those things that you have to hold on to, when they come, they are well worth the wait.

Another example is the true story I told you about the woman who believed for healing and a gift for her son. She did not give up for 2 years and her prayer was answered. Why did God take that long to answer her? I think that it was because He knew that she would not give up. It is hard to say how many times the story of her faith has been told and how many people's faith was encouraged by hearing it and how many received a powerful lesson from her story. I know that I gained much from her story. How about yours?

I want to talk about something that is important to remember when you pray. Luke 11:5-8 tells a parable that Jesus taught about prayer. "And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend,

and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.”

In other words, this lady came to this man’s door at midnight. She kept on beating on his door and yelling up at him until he answered her and gave her what she wanted. Sometimes we can't take no for an answer. We have to keep on knocking and keep on believing. We keep praying and we keep praying and we keep praying putting our request before God. He will hear us and answer our prayer.

God always answers your prayers. Sometimes the answer is that the thing comes about that you have prayed for.

Sometimes the answer is no, that isn’t the best thing that needs to be done. I have had times when I thought for certain that I knew exactly what needed to be done. I thought that I couldn't go on if my prayer wasn’t answered in the way that I had prayed. It wasn’t answered. On down the road, I knew why it wasn’t answered. It would have been a terrible thing if my prayer had been answered in the way that I prayed it. I was thankful that God didn’t answer that prayer.

There is another way that God answers our prayers. One way is yes, one way is no, another way is yes, but wait until it is time. I have seen many times that God has a perfect plan. In His plan, He orchestrates events together. It is like a puzzle. When you start putting pieces of a puzzle together, you can’t put random pieces in that aren’t connected. As you begin to connect the pieces together you can see the next piece that needs to be put in.

God’s handiwork is much the same way. He puts the pieces in fitting each one in.

Fitting each piece together in His plan at the perfect time. I have been impatient to see an event take place. I have prayed and thought now is the time that this needs to happen. Then later, when it happened, I could see that this happened in God's perfect timing. Sometimes God answers our prayers by saying yes. Sometimes He answers them by saying no. Sometimes He answers them by saying wait for my perfect time.

Sometimes we think that we know exactly what we need, and we tell God just exactly what He needs to do. I have been so guilty of that. I didn't yield to the Lord when I prayed and I didn't pray in His Spirit. Instead I was full of myself, full of my flesh when I prayed. That is not how to pray prayers that are powerful, life-changing, circumstance-changing prayers.

Matter of fact, the most powerful prayers are when the Spirit of God prays through you in His own language. It means that the Spirit of God Himself prays in His language using your voice.

Speaking in tongues is something that you receive when you receive the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. If you don't have this gift, please seek God for it. Ask Him about it.

I have put many lessons on YouTube about this powerful gift from God. You can find my YouTube channel by going to YouTube and searching for Sandy Haga. I have a playlist titled The Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is a gift that is for you and it will change your life. It will especially change your prayer life.

I have also written a book about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and it is found on my website. The URL for that is www.freechristianonlinebooks.com.You can download it and read it for free. The book is titled *The Story of Acts and The Baptism of the Holy Ghost*.

We'll talk briefly about that gift in a chapter coming up. Those are the most powerful prayers that you can pray.

The ones you pray when God Himself prays through you. When God binds up the devil, he is bound. When God prays, He prays the perfect prayer. There are many times when I am so overwhelmed by the situation that I just don’t know how to pray. Then I yield to the Holy Ghost and He prays through me. I know that the perfect prayer is being prayed and I know that prayer will be heard. AMEN. Again I want to say if you don’t have this gift, you need it to be able to find victory in troubled times. I will do a whole chapter on this gift coming up in this book.

I want to talk about some of the most powerful prayers in the Bible. I can just see Moses standing before the people at the Red Sea. They were telling him that they wished that they had not come out of Egypt because they would rather be there than facing death at the hands of Pharaoh's army.

They were trapped between the sea and the army. Moses told them to fear not, and stand still and see the God’s salvation.

God answered his prayer and his faith and the sea opened up. They walked across on dry land. Then the sea closed on the Egyptian soldiers after Israel was safe on the other side.

I think of the prayer of Hannah. Her story is found in 1 Samuel 1. She went to the temple to pray for a son as she had no children. God heard her prayer. She took her son when he was small to the temple to grow up there and serve the Lord. Her son's name was Samuel. The very one that the book of Samuel in the Bible is named after. It tells his story. He became a mighty prophet of God.

I think of the prayer that Elijah prayed when he challenged the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. You'll find his story starting in 1 Kings 18. Please read it. I have only put here a brief summary. Israel had stopped serving God. They had started worshiping an idol called Baal which was bad enough but to follow that false God they had to sacrifice their own children to Baal. Elijah called a meeting with the prophets of Baal. There were 450 of them.

Elijah stood boldly before them all. He stood alone, but God stood with him. He prayed “let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.” He had confidence in God because he walked with God and he knew God. He knew that he had obeyed God.

An altar was built. The God that would send fire down from heaven would be the God that Israel served. The prophets of Baal called on their God first. For nearly a whole day, they called on their God and no fire came. Then it was Elijah’s turn. God heard his prayer and fire fell from heaven. The fire was so hot that it burned up the sacrifice, and the rocks of the altar. It lapped up the barrels of water that he had poured on the altar. It even burned up the dirt leaving a hole in the earth.

They knew who was God in Israel because of Elijah’s prayer. I will talk more about Elijah in a chapter coming up.

When I think of powerful prayers I think of how the disciples were in the Upper Room praying. This story is told starting in Acts 2. Please read this. Jesus had been crucified. They were hiding in a room shaking with fear that they would be crucified as well and that was a great possibility. But God had a plan. They prayed and that started a chain of events. God's Spirit fell. Over 3,000 souls were added to the church in one day. The world began to turn upside down.

Another powerful prayer was prayed by the saints who were praying for Peter. Peter had been captured and put in prison. The saints there prayed for his release. The next day he was supposed to go before Herod for trial.

That night an angel unlocked his chains and unlocked the prison cell, and led him out of prison. His story is found starting at Acts 12:5. This scripture says that the saints there were earnestly praying for him. Their prayers were answered. After the angel led him out, he went to the place where they were gathered praying for him.

They were amazed when they saw him standing there. They knew God had heard their prayers.

Another powerful prayer I think of was John's prayer. He had been captured for preaching the Gospel and they had put him in prison on an island. He was caught up in the Spirit on the Lord's day and had the vision that became the book of Revelation.

These are only a very, very few of the powerful prayers that are spoken about in the Bible. Prayer unlocks victory. It opens doors no man can open. It makes crooked places straight. It looses angels to come and set you free. It causes things to happen that turn the world upside down.

It binds up the devil and looses the Spirit of God to move. It sets in motion events that can change everything around you. It gives you power to rise up in victory. It breaks down walls. It unlocks prisoners who have been bound for years. It brings strength. It brings healing. It brings victory.

It changes the circumstances in the lives of those we pray for. I love seeing how God answers prayers. It is awesome. I know that you may feel like the situation that you are facing is too great or the need that you have is too great for God to answer. When you look at these people's situations and you look at their needs, you have to realize that nothing is impossible for God when you pray. How do you find victory in difficult times? Pray and believe and receive.

I have added a little short book at the end of this book that is titled Prayer.

Chapter 10
The Key of Obedience

I call obedience a key because your obedience can unlock so many things in your life. When you yield and submit to God and obey Him, it will determine the kind of person you are, what happens to you, how your life turns out, whether you are blessed or cursed, how much victory you have in your life, whether God's promises in His Word will work for you, how long you live, and so much more.

Let me give you some illustrations of how this happens. I'll use myself as an example. I was a very rebellious individual. Somebody would tell me what to do, and I would do the opposite and not even know why. A rebellious spirit controlled my life. I came to be a part of New Life Church and Ministries through the tent meetings that the ministry had at that time. I traveled with the ministering team and played the piano and sang. I also tutored Bishop Goad's children. They traveled with them and they were home schooled. I had one problem-my rebellious attitude.

When you have a rebellious spirit you can't flow with other people. You can't fit in and work with them and be a part. You can't be in the right place at the right time to get the job done. Another thing that happens is that you are doing the opposite of what God wants done.

Bishop Goad tried to work with me in every way that he could but it came to the place where he told me that I needed to leave until I could get things worked out. That woke me up and I got real. I knew that God had placed me in the ministry with that team. I knew that unless I changed, I would miss out on what God wanted for me in my future. You might say that I prayed through.

I got on my face before God and I got real. I yielded my hard headed stubbornness to God and He began a work in me to change me. I was determined this time to let Him. I yielded my whole self and my life to Him. That was the beginning of my change.

Now I won't say that I was no longer stubborn and rebellious. That isn't it.

If I am not careful, I still can fall into that, but when I do I know what to do about it. I confess it to the Lord and ask Him to help me and He does. But it no longer controls my life. Because I have been that way in my life, I am so careful to obey the Lord. I know what it felt like to nearly lose everything that God had for me.

God has so many promises and blessings for us. But many of them won't work without our obedience. When we are stubborn and hard headed and refuse to yield to God's Spirit, we operate in a flesh realm instead of a Spirit realm. When we do that, we can even miss out on a relationship with God.

We miss out on the miracles and blessings that He has for us because we aren't in the right place at the right to receive our blessing. We run headlong into danger much like a rebellious child that won't listen to their parents. God can't use us because we aren't yielded to His Spirit. We are too busy doing our own thing to do His thing. That is why I say obedience is a key to unlock a lot of things in our life.

Our obedience even protects our lives. Before I became yielded to the Spirit of God where He could lead me, I was always getting into dangerous situations. Now, because I am yielded to Him and allow Him to lead me, He leads me around those things.

One illustration that points out the importance of obedience is something that happened to me. I had washed my car and I had washed my floor mats. I left them out in my yard to dry. I started to get in my vehicle to go somewhere. God told me to get my floor mats in. I thought to myself, why would God tell me to get my floor mats in. I got into my car.

The feeling really got strong that I needed to get my floor mats in. I got out of my car and was standing there with my floor mats in my hand when there was a loud bang that even shook the ground. I lived on a very narrow street. There was a sharp curve in front of my neighbor’s house. It was so sharp and narrow that only one vehicle could go around the curve at a time.

A man had come down that street and he was speeding. He had missed that curve and crashed into a tree in my neighbor's yard. If I hadn't paused, he would have hit me head on. He hit the tree so hard that it knocked the motor back on him. I would not have walked out of that accident if I had lived at all. He would have hit me head on. So how important is it to obey the Lord? Very important indeed.

Obedience is the key to unlock victory in troubled times. I have had so many times when the Lord blessed me financially, when people would give me things, when circumstances worked out to be a blessing. In all of those things, they would not have happened had I not been in the right place at the right time to receive the blessing.

There have been many, many times in my life when I obeyed God and gave money in offerings, and He blessed it back many times over and above what I gave.

I remember one time that God told me to go to the Family Dollar Store at a certain time. I got there at that time.

There was a lady there that had gone to some of our services. Standing in the Family Dollar Store, she gave me a sizable donation for our ministry. I was ever so glad that I obeyed.

It is important to obey the Lord to be able to be used by Him. I remember a time when I was cleaning the church and found a Bible that belonged to a friend of mine. He hadn't been to that church since he was little and he was grown. He had written his name in the Bible, and it was written in a child's handwriting.

The Lord led me to take it to him. I knocked on his door. When he opened it, he started crying. He had purposed in his heart to kill himself that day. He already had gotten what he was going to use to do it. When I told him the story of what had happened, he knew that God had sent me.

The Lord used me to talk him out of it. He got saved that day and until he died not long ago, he served the Lord. We have to obey the Lord to be in the right place at the right time to be used by Him.

When we yield and listen and obey we can bring light to those who sit in darkness. We can bring them God's light. When we walk with Jesus, the light, and we yield to Him, we can find an anointing that unlocks prisoners and sets captives free.

When I think of people who did great things through their obedience to the Lord even in great trials, I think of William Tyndale. He lived in the 1400's. He was one of the first people to translate the Bible from Hebrew and Greek to English.

This was at a time when the Catholic church ruled. At that time, it even had power over Kings. They did not want people to be able to read the Bible and find out the truth. They presented the idea that only priests were holy enough to pray and seek God. You couldn't do that for yourself. You had to pay the priests to pray for you. They had to pray for you to be forgiven because you couldn't do that either. They required payment for that as well. Now you get an idea of how they got to be so rich and powerful.

They did not want people to read the Bible and tried to stop it from being translated into English.

At that time, William Tyndale began translating the Bible into English. The leaders in the Catholic church burned down his home to try to destroy his manuscript. They continually did this sort of thing until he had to hide. He was running for his life. Matter of fact, he was killed. He was strangled to death when tied to a stake, and his body was burned.

Even though he went through all that he went through, he was obedient to the Lord. Why was this so important? His work was the basis for the King James Bible. He prayed a prayer when he was dying “Lord open the King of England’s eyes. Around 75 years after his death King James sanctioned the Bible to be translated and William Tyndale’s translation was the basis for the translation. Look how many people through time have benefited from his obedience. What if he had given in? What if he had failed to obey God? What if he had failed to complete the job?

The greatest example of the power of obedience is Jesus. He was obedient when He yielded and submitted to come to the earth and live. He was obedient when He died on the cross. Where would we be if He had not obeyed?

There are many others that obeyed in the Bible. Through the obedience of Noah, the whole human race survived. His story is found in Genesis 6. Ruth's obedience saved the whole Jewish race at that time. You can find her story in the book of Ruth. Joseph and Mary, Jesus' parents, obeyed God and they kept the baby Jesus from getting killed. We read about this in Matthew 2.

Lets talk about more reasons why we need to obey God. Another reason why we need to yield and obey is that we have to obey the Lord to open up the promises in the Word of God. Many of them are conditional to our obedience. In other words, our obedience unlocks them.

Here are some of those promises that obedience unlocks. Joshua 1:8 tells us,

“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.” If you want success, then you have to meditate on the Word of God and do what is written.

Matthew 7:21 says, “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.” If we want to go to heaven we have to do God’s will.

I love this promise found in Exodus 29:5, “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.” Deuteronomy 5:29 says, “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!”

Your obedience will bless your life, but it can also bless your children’s lives forever. Wow, what a promise.

We read in 1 Kings 2:14, “And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.” Obedience will lengthen your life. James 2:25 tells us, “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” If you want to walk in liberty and be blessed then this is conditional upon your obedience.

These are just a few of these verses that talk about promises that are conditional to our obedience. If you want to find victory in difficult times, then you have to have the Word of God operating in your life. Obedience unlocks it.

All of these things determine how you can find victory in difficult times. Matter of fact, obedience determines how you can find victory in any time.

To be able to allow God’s Spirit to lead you and to work in your life, you have to be yielded. If you aren’t obedient, then you aren’t yielded. To find a relationship with God (or with anyone) you have to yield. To find God’s love you have to yield to Him.

Yielding to God and obeying Him changes your nature. When you yield to God’s love, it will change your entire life. When you yield and obey Him, the direction of your life will change. You will then be able to be in the right place at the right time for Him to bless you and use you.

I want to close this part of this chapter with this scripture with Matthew 27:24. This is a parable, a teaching lesson, that Jesus told. “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his

house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

If you obey the Lord and you keep His Word, then your house will stand even when the storms come and the difficult times are all around you. But if you don’t do this, your house will fall.

Chapter 11
Key to Unlock Obedience

I want to talk about something that will help you to be able to be obedient to the Lord. If we aren't careful we can be like spoiled brats who want our way. We want to be in control and we freak out if we can't be. That is human nature.

Walking with God is just the opposite. We have to yield and give Him control of our lives if we want to be obedient. Walking in the Spirit is the opposite of getting our own way. It is a valuable thing to do. It will enable you to find victory.

You could think of it like this. Picture the Spirit of God being like a river flowing. You can either get into the river and swim against the currents or you can flow with the current and let it carry you. If you swim against the current, then you won't go where the river carries you, and you will just get worn out. You really won't get anywhere.

If you flow with the current, you will flow right where the river leads you.

You will find strength as you let the river carry you along. Walking in the Spirit is like that.

The Spirit of God is in you. When you yield to the Spirit of God, He is causing you to go where He wants you to go. He leads you daily. He will lead you at work and at home. He will lead you as you go about your daily routine. He will lead you as you go to the store. As He leads you, He will use you to be a light to those around you. This is not only how to find victory in troubled times but it also enables you to bring that victory to others.

The Bible talks about us having two parts after the Spirit of God comes in us when we accept salvation. We have the flesh part of us which is us minus God. When the Spirit of God comes into us, we have Him inside of us. That is why we become a new creation when we are saved. We can learn to yield to the Spirit of God inside of us and we let Him have the wheel so to speak. He does the driving and we ride along.

That will change your life in such a tremendous way. It will enable you to find victory in troubled times.

Here are some of my stories about walking in the Spirit. Just the other day, we had someone come in to the office. I felt led to give them a book about how to be saved. She told me that she and her husband had prayed that very morning about giving their hearts to the Lord. When I gave her that book and told her that the Lord had led me to do that, she knew that the Lord had heard her prayer and it gave her hope. She broke down and started crying.

On the opposite side of things, if you don't yield to God's Spirit and flow with Him, you can mess up people's lives. Doing things your own way can be disastrous when you are helping others.

Here is another time when God used me to witness to someone. One day I was standing in line in the grocery store. God led me to witness to the man who was in line in front of me.

One thing led to the other and I didn’t get that done. I tried to catch him as he walked through the parking lot, but he was a lot faster than me and I lost sight of him. When I got to my car, he was parked right next to my car. I obeyed the Lord and spoke to him. God anointed and used my words and he thanked me because he said that he really needed to hear what I said.

When I got into my car, it dawned on me what had happened and I just sat there amazed. God knew that I would falter at obeying Him in the line. So He had this man park next to my car. What an amazing God we serve.

Another benefit of yielding and flowing with the Spirit of God is that your flesh is submitted to God. When it is, you won’t have as many regrets. The devil knows just how to push your buttons. I had something happen just the other day that illustrates this. As ministers and workers in the kingdom even as a child of God, we have an influence on those around us and we can make or break them easily.

The devil wants to stop this influence. So he will push your buttons to get you aggravated and bent out of shape. Then when you react to this and explode on them, then they will not see God in you at all, but they will see the one who pushed your buttons.

You can’t take moments like that back. That is what happened the other day. The devil had pushed my buttons and I was reacting to a situation and was ready to send out an email to all of the extension colleges in my anger at what one person had done. God stopped me and I yielded to Him. He showed me that I had misunderstood what had happened. If I hadn’t yielded to Him, I would have had a huge regret.

Another advantage of flowing in the Spirit and yielding to God is that you can avoid the traps that the devil readily sets for you. I have had instances when I would step around a trap that the enemy had set for me not even knowing that it was there because I was yielded to the Lord.

The devil will set traps for you. These may be traps where he is using someone to create a situation in your life where he will be able to destroy your testimony or your influence. It may be traps to get you to compromise so that you become double minded and in doing so you become a stench in God's nostrils. It may be a trap where you are tempted to sin. Walking in the Spirit can help you avoid all kinds of accidents whether they are on the highway or spiritual wrecks that the enemy brings against you.

God taught me to yield and to flow in His Spirit by having me to submit and flow with my husband. That is so important. In my mind, my husband didn't have the walk that I had with the Lord. He wasn't obeying God like I was. He wasn't as spiritual as I was. When you start getting that way, putting people down because they aren't as spiritual as you are, that is a clue that you are getting stinking thinking and you are in the flesh, and you are not in the Holy Ghost. Spiritual pride comes when you let your flesh control.

I want to especially give a caution to women ministers. Now I am definitely not against women ministers because I am one. But I understand the issues that we have to face as women ministers. It is crucial that you submit to your husbands (even if you think they aren't as spiritual as you). If you don't have a husband, then it is crucial that you submit to someone in your church or ministry. If you don't, then you will not be able to fully submit to God and yield to Him and flow with Him in His Spirit. If that doesn't happen, then you will be just like the scriptures say "a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." You will just be noise. I know how all of this works because I have been there.

Love is the key to bring you into submission. I love God more than I love myself. I am willing to submit to Him because I love Him and I am willing to submit to Him because of His love for me. As I mentioned before, my love for my husband and his love for me brought me to the place where I could yield. This was something God had to put in me.

I had been hurt a lot. I had a tender heart and got it trampled on frequently. It was hard for me to yield to people because I was afraid of getting hurt. God's love for me started that process of healing. Then I was able to submit and yield because I knew His wonderful love and I knew beyond any shadow of doubt that I could trust Him.

I eventually learned to yield to Him and flow with Him. God is very patient and very kind concerning our weaknesses. I am so thankful that He is because most of my life I have been weak. If you admit it, you are too. That is part of being a human.

Part of what made me want to submit and yield to God and walk in His Spirit was being able to see myself as I am without God. I loved Him and I wanted to serve Him better. I loved those around me and I wanted to bring God to them. I wanted to be and do so much better than I could be and do and I knew that I could only do that with God's help. That is when He taught me for real about walking in the Spirit.

Another thing that made it possible for me to be able to yield to God and flow with Him was trust. When you trust Him completely, it is easier to yield. Through the years I have doubted down in my heart and I would panic and I would do my own thing whether it was wrong or right.

I was in the current flowing with His Spirit but fear would make me thrash around trying to swim on my own and I mentioned before when that happens, you go against the current. That only gets you in the wrong place at the wrong time in both the natural and the spiritual and it just wears you out.

I have watched God move in my life and in our ministry. I learned to trust God and it became easier to yield. The more glimpses that I got of His awesome love for me (and for us all) have made it easier to trust Him and yield. Especially in those times when I can’t see Him work, I have learned to yield to Him. I have learned to lean on Him and not rely so much on others or on myself.

(Remember FAITH is Forsaking All I Trust Him). You can't yield and flow with Him if you are constantly leaning on others.

The more valleys that you go through and the more mountains that He helps you climb, the more storms you go through together, the more battles that you win with Him the more you will trust Him. The more you will flow with Him instead of going your own way. You will trust Him completely and you will yield to Him.

I can tell you that the process of learning how to walk in the Spirit for me has been a long one. I think it is because of a couple of reasons. One is that I was so stubborn and rebellious and full of myself. Another reason is that a lot of God's gifts and the experiences He has for you have different depths. They have different levels that you experience. Walking in the Spirit has been that way for me.

Years ago I wrote a book *Walking in the Spirit.* I thought I had that experience all worked out in my life.

Nearly 20 years later, I am still learning about this. I have experienced a deeper walk with the Lord, a closer relationship with Him and I have learned so much more than what I experienced all of those years ago. I have learned a new depth of what it means to yield to Him. Don't ever think that you have arrived.

Don't ever get the attitude that you have received all that there is to receive and you know all that there is to know about God and His Word. God is so huge and His Word is so huge that we will be learning more about Him for the rest of our lives. Keep this in mind when you think about that statement-- the rest of our lives will be for eternity. We will be learning new things about God and we will be learning them forever.

By far, one of the greatest blessings of flowing in the Spirit is at the end of the day you can say "Thank you Lord for my life, for what I accomplished today through you".

When I was writing this chapter, I thought to myself wow- what a masterpiece this book is turning out to be because Lord it is your work and I've just flowed with you. Lord what a masterpiece you have made of my life because it is your work and I have just flowed with you.

Chapter 12
About Walking in the Spirit

The Bible talks about walking in the spirit in many places, but the main place we read about it is in Romans 8. We want to start at verse 5. Keep in mind that we are finding out how to have victory in troubled times. “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”.

It doesn’t take me long to spot those that are walking in the flesh as opposed to those who walk in the Spirit. I can listen to them 5 minutes and know. I can tell by the things that they are minding, by the things that they are focusing on. I can tell by the things that they allow to consume their life. If they are constantly on their phone (and I don’t mean to talk), if they are constantly caught up in the drama around them, I know that they aren’t in the Spirit.

If they are really caught up in the televised news keeping up with every little thing, if

they are so negative that they can't see anything good, if they are filled with doom and gloom and you can see that they have lost their hope I know they are walking in the flesh. If they are so stressed out that they bite your head off when you speak to them, if when they talk you get so tensed up because they are tensed up and you feel yourself losing your victory when you are around them, then it is easy to see that they are walking in the flesh and minding the things of the flesh.

If you are caught up in everything but God so much so that you never have time for the things of God then you are walking in the flesh. The things that you mind or focus on the most are not God's things.

If you get a feeling that God's Spirit is there when they talk, they are not walking in the flesh. If they talk about their prayer time and how God is answering their prayers, so can know that they are walking in the spirit. If they talk about their relationship with God, and if they talk about how God is leading them and

providing for them you can know they are walking in the spirit.

If they talk about the scripture they read that morning and what God showed them through it and if you get a sense of peace and hope when you hear them talk they are letting God lead them. If your faith is encouraged by listening to them and if you know that they have found victory and you realize that you can do the same, then it is easy to see that they are walking in the Spirit and minding the things of the Spirit. Just from these illustrations, do you get a feeling about what it means to walk in the flesh or the Spirit. Which are you doing?.

So if you mind the things of the flesh, you won't have victory, and if you mind the things of the Spirit, you will have victory. It is easy to see that. Verse 6 takes it one step further. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." I am reminded of a parable that Jesus told found in Mark 4 starting in

verse 3-20. It is a good idea to read this section of scripture.
It is important because it will really help you. But I only want to concentrate on a couple of verses. In verse 7 we read about seeds that fell among thorns and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. What is the seed? When Jesus explained this parable, He told them that the seed was God's Word.

We have talked about how God's Word is powerful. It brings about salvation. It is able to change you and change the impact that you have on those around you. It can change the world. (By the way it won't change you if you don't read it and hear it and act on it). That is the fruit that it can yield.

But this talks about the plant that came up, but it tried to grow in the thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it out and it didn't have any fruit. In verse 19 Jesus gave the explanation for why this happened. "And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the

word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

If you walk in the flesh, then you allow all the things of the world, all the evil of the world, all the darkness in the world, all of the death in this world to choke out the Word of God, and the Spirit of God, and all the things of God right out of you, and if you don't correct this, you will die.

I don't just mean that you will die physically (which if you don't correct this you will be living a life style where you will die young) but you will also die spiritually. What does this mean? It means that you will die and go to hell because you have allowed God's things to be choked out of you. Its not just me saying this but the Bible said it. "For to be carnally minded is death."

Let's go on to verse 7. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither

indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”
What is this saying? If your mind is filled with worldly thinking, and you only think about junk instead of good Godly things, then your mind is actually at enmity against God.

The meaning of enmity is intense hostility. I know lots of people that are this way. They are really caught up in the flesh instead of the Spirit. God will show me that I need to do something and they really disagree with me and they come against that idea. Why? Because they are thinking about it with their natural mind instead of asking God to show them what to do.

When by faith I am holding on to something I am asking God to do (like healing for an example), then they do everything they can to knock my faith down. They want to watch videos and things that God convicts me of watching and when I won’t watch with them, they tell me I shouldn’t act so holy. They are at

enmity with God and because of that they are at enmity with me.
They don’t realize it. They aren’t trying to do that. But they are walking in the flesh and that is what comes from that.

There is another way to look at this. If you are walking in the flesh, then you won’t be listening to God and obeying Him. You won’t have faith to believe in what God can do for you. You will be watching all the bad stuff, and people are like glue, what they listen to and see sticks to them. You won’t have victory in your heart and mind because you are doing those things. You won’t be letting God convict you so your life will be full of stuff that will just get you down and pull you away from Him.

There is another thing that comes from walking in the flesh. You lack good common sense. I see a lot of people make decisions and choices and I think to myself how in the world could they even think that would turn out good. They make decisions based on what they want at that moment. It may be a decision that causes

their finances to be in jeopardy, or a decision that they make about their health. Maybe they do things that put their health in jeopardy because they do this without considering the effects it would have on their health. I have watched people make so many wrong decisions that their life is ruined and I have often watched them shorten their lives all because they are walking in the flesh, doing whatever they feel like or think is best. The sad thing about it is they reap the consequences of their decisions plus everyone they love is affected.

Lets turn that around. I see people who pray before they make a decision and they ask God to lead them. Also, they are making decisions and choices based on what God's Word says is best. They have a relationship with God and this relationship is reflected in the victory that they have in their lives.

They are praying about their lives and praying for those around them. Because they are walking in the Spirit their finances

are blessed. They may have struggles, but God helps them through the hard times. They are trusting Him, so stress and fear aren't ruling in their lives. They are healthier because of that and because they are making the right choices concerning their health. That is what it means to walk in the Spirit.

Now I want to be clear about something. I am sure that by now you realize this. Not every Christian is walking in the Spirit. Sad to say I think that many of them are not. No wonder people aren't lining up to go to church. No wonder they aren't waiting in line to be saved. We do the world and those around us a great injustice when we fail to walk in the Spirit.

So when you have read this, how about you? When people see you, are you pointing them to the Savior because of the victory that they see in your life? What do you need to do about it? Are there some things that you need to change.

Am I saying that if you walk in the Spirit, then everything will be perfect? No I am not saying that at all. We all know that. We live in a very imperfect world. There are a lot of things going on wrong with this world. That is just a sign of it being the end times. But when we go through rough times, then we know that He will help us to go through them with victory. He will help us fight the battle. He will be in our boat when the storms rage high. And when the storms come, we have our house built on the rock and our house will stand. Why? Because we are walking in the Spirit. We are walking with Him.

Chapter 12
How to Take the Authority That God Has Given You

How to Push the Devil Around Instead of Him Pushing You Around

You might as well face it, you have an enemy that is out to stop you. The devil hates God and everything that God loves. That is why he comes against you. A lot of times, we can go through difficult times because we don't understand this.

We go through difficult times sometimes because we don't know how to take authority over the devil. We don't even know that is something that we can do.

Here are some things that gives us authority. We find it in the name of Jesus. Mark 16:17 says, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues."

We take authority by the blood of Jesus which covers us. Revelation 12:11a, "And

they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb….”

That is why it is important to always confess your sins and receive forgiveness so that your sins are under the blood. If that isn’t so, then you are vulnerable to the devil’s power.

We have mentioned earlier about the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and how speaking in tongues is a part of that gift. I have had many times when the Holy Ghost would begin praying through me and I would know that He was binding the devil and taking authority over him by how He was praying. I knew that when I was done with that prayer that the devil was bound. When the Holy Ghost prays to bind the devil, you can know that He gets the job done.

Here are some scriptures that talk about the authority that the church has over satan. Luke 10:17-20 says, “And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us

through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

There are several things we can read here. One is the power that we can find in the name of Jesus. Another is that the devil was subject to God's workers. Another is that we can tread over all of the power of the enemy and nothing shall hurt us. Another important thing that we find in this scripture is that most of all we need to rejoice because our names are written in heaven.

Acts 26:16-18 tells the story of Paul when Jesus spoke to him at his conversion on the road to Damascus. Jesus said, "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to

make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Through Christ we can turn people from the power of Satan unto God.

James 4:7 gives us a key to how all of this works. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." When we submit to God, then we can resist the devil and he will flee from us.

Ephesians 6:10-17 talks about the armor that we have been given that enables us to stand against satan. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand

against the wiles of the devil. 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.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Isaiah 14:12-19 says this. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne

above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, *Is* this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.”

To understand what this passage is talking about you have to know that the devil started out as being one of the chief angels who was in charge of music. He got

an idea that he wanted to be over everything.
He led some of the angels in a rebellion against God. That didn't turn out well for him. He is a loser and he will stay a loser. His end will be to be bound in a pit (in hell) forever. And when he is there, we will just narrowly glance over at him and say is that the one that caused so much trouble. He will be "as a carcase trodden under feet.".

Revelation 20:1-3 tells us more about how satan will be bound. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

When you read these scriptures, realize that you don’t have to be afraid of the devil. Take authority over him.
Stand against him. Know that you don’t have to give in to him. God has given you the victory over him.

I want to close this chapter by doing a little side note about deliverance. Deliverance is being set free from something that is causing you not to be able to find victory in your life. Our worst enemy is usually ourselves. We can stop ourselves from finding victory in difficult times.

For example, when I was stuck in rebellion I couldn’t find victory at any time especially in difficult times. I have seen people bound in depression and they couldn’t find victory. I have seen people bound in fear and anxiety. If you are bound in these things, your faith is bound. You can’t believe in God’s promises.

I have seen people bound in a compromised life style, a double minded life style where they did not live according to God’s Word. They really could not see

that the devil had them bound in this way of thinking. The Bible tells us that if we are double minded, obeying God and living for Him one minute but the next minute living like the world, then we don’t need to think that we can get anything from the Lord. We can’t find victory when we live that way.

I have seen people bound in a load of condemnation that left them thinking that they were so unworthy of God’s love and His promises that they couldn’t receive anything from God.

All of these things are bondages that the devil puts around our heart and mind. Now the devil can’t come inside of us and possess us because if you have been saved, you have God’s Spirit inside of you. The devil can’t come in and rule there because His Spirit is there. But the devil can put thoughts in our minds and feelings in our hearts that can bind us up from being totally set free.

When we are bound we can’t find victory. Deliverance means to be set free from

whatever is holding you down and holding you back from being able to have victory. One example is rebellion in my own life.

To be set free from something, you have to first realize that you are bound. I know people who for years, for most of their lives, they have been bound by wrong thinking and wrong feelings but they wouldn't be set free. The won't be set free because they won't see that they are bound. You can't be set free if you don't recognize that the devil is the one binding you up in these things and you realize that God can set you free.

You can't be set free if you settle for your bondage. I know people who go through such torment (like I did) but they think to themselves that is just how it is, and that is just how they are and they have to put up with it. That is so dangerous.

The longer you stay bound in something it is harder to be set free. Refuse to keep things in your life that bind you. Allow God's Spirit to set you free. His Word also has power to set you free. John 8:36 says,

“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” As a reminder, you can bind the devil in the name of Jesus. You bind him by reminding him that he can’t get through the blood of Jesus and by praying that the blood of Jesus covers the person or the situation. You remind him of God’s Word that establishes these boundaries that he can’t cross. You allow the Spirit of God to rise up in you and bind him. When you do these things, you have to believe that they work. How do you know? Because God’s Word says so.

I want to close this chapter with a prayer that Paul prayed found in Romans 16:20, “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”

We have been given power over satan. We can take authority over him when he messes with our lives. We can take authority over him when he messes with the people we love or when he messes with our churches or our ministries.

We don’t have to put up with him. We can rise up over him when he starts with us and we can put him where he belongs. Under our feet. That is a big major step in how to find victory during difficult time.

Chapter 13

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost

I want to take a minute or two here to talk about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is a powerful key to enable you to find victory in troubled times. Matter of fact, it is one of the most powerful keys that I have talked about in this book. Now hold on a minute. You may be someone who does not understand what that is all about. You may have even been taught that it isn’t real. You may have even been taught that it is a doctrine to fear. It is not something to be scared of. It is just simply God.

I understand where you are if these things are true for you. I did not even hear about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost until I was in my 20’s. I knew a little about it, but the little I knew was dangerous. If we only

know enough about something to cause us to fear it, then the little we know is dangerous. But you see, I was saved when I was a young girl. In my older teenage days, I rebelled against God and got tangled up in drugs and alcohol.
By the time I was in my early 20's, I had totally destroyed my life. When I rededicated my heart and life to God, He was my only hope. I needed help and fast. I needed power to withstand my past. I needed the power to stand against the enemy who was trying to destroy me. I needed all I could get.

When I heard about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost I definitely didn't run away from it. I was hungry to receive anything that I could, and I opened up my arms and ran toward it. If you haven't received the power of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, remember that it is for you. I pray that through these pages you run to it just like I did.

I have put here a chapter from my book, **Walking in the Spirit**. It is titled “The Baptism of the Holy Ghost”. By the way, it is a good book if I do say so myself. It is help in learning more about walking in the Spirit. “Trying to walk in the Spirit without having the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is like trying to race a 2006 sports car with a model T engine. You just won’t have the power to win the race. I grew up not hearing about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

I grew up in an area that had been blinded and bound to think that this gift of the Spirit was not real. I was taught that when you were saved, you got all of God’s Spirit that there was. I was taught that after salvation, you had it all. I grew up not knowing a thing at all about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Through a miracle, God brought me into contact with a church that believed in the Baptism of the Spirit. After I received it for myself, no one could tell me that it wasn’t real.

It was the key that brought me victory over a life that had been bound by sin, drugs, and alcohol. The devil had worked overtime in much of my life to destroy me because he knew that I would one day serve God. Maybe you are going through the same thing. It seems like every time you try to get up, you're knocked down. You know in your heart that you should walk up-right before God, but every time you take one step forward it seems you get knocked three steps back.

You may be about to give up in defeat, which is exactly what the devil wants you to do. It may be that he sees that up ahead, you will bust his little kingdom wide open in some area. You may be sitting there thinking that it is hopeless, that there is no use to keep trying because you won't make it.

The devil has you where he wants you. You think it is because you are worthless. It may be because you are getting ready to rise up and be what God has chosen for you to be. It is your choice. If you give up

now, you will never know. Maybe the key for you to overcome is the same as it was for me-the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

When I first learned about it, I got it. I grabbed hold and didn't let go. There was none of that intellectual twisting around that a lot of people do.
I knew that this was the key for a victorious life and I turned it. Even though I had grown up hearing that it was not right, when it came time for me to accept it, I knew I needed it. That settled that. Don't read about this and talk yourself out of thinking that it is real, and that it is for you. God said it is, so let that be the end of that.

Now over 40 years later, I can say that no wonder the devil tried to keep me blinded. I have been working full time for God for over 40 years, and will continue to do so. Not in my own power, but in the power of God's Spirit.

I had to be hungry enough to submit myself to allow God to do things His way. I

had to take Him and His Word at face value. I had to receive the gift that He had for me. I have never regretted it.

God will allow His Spirit to control only the things that we allow Him to control. When we say, God, I have decided to do it your way, please come and fill me up.
Then we are ready for the Baptism of God's Spirit. He fills us up all the way with His Spirit. That is what the Baptism of God's Spirit is all about.

Here is what God has to say about it in His Word. We first read about it in Acts Chapter 2. Here we read that the disciples were all gathered in one mind and accord. In verse 4 it tells us, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

What was the outcome of this? Those few who were hiding in fear after the crucifixion became bold enough and so full of God's Spirit that they turned the world upside down. Without the Baptism, they

would not have endured to start the church, and keep the Gospel that was committed to us today. Verse 41 tells of the outcome of that day, “Then they that gladly received His word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

This didn’t stop here. We read about this throughout Acts. In Chapter 8, verses 14-17, these men received the gifts of the Holy Ghost. In Chapter 10, verses 44-48, the Holy Ghost is again on the scene filling the Gentiles.

In Acts 19: 1-6, these men also received the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they had believed. These men were already saved, but they had something in addition to salvation that they were about to receive. They said, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” In verse 6 the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.

I think of myself when I read their answer to Paul, “We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost.” I hadn’t heard, but God found me anyway.

How do you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost? I was blessed to find a church that believed this way. The congregation laid hands on me and prayed for me in the same way that Paul laid hands on the men in Acts 19:6.

But I still didn’t receive it that night that they prayed. Several nights later, when I was by myself, the Holy Ghost fell on me and I was filled. I prayed in tongues for the first time that night. You can receive it through the prayers of others, or you can receive it through your own prayers.

It is a gift of God that He has given us to empower us against the battle of satan. It is a gift that gives us boldness in our witness like it did those on that first day. It is for you. It is a gift that makes us able to be used by the Lord in a more powerful way.

I have heard many people argue against the Baptism of the Holy Ghost being real. They argue that it is not for us today. When I hear this, I know several things about those people. I know that they are ignorant of God's Word. In Acts 2:38-39 we read this.
"Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." I would say that means us too.

I know that God wants the best for His children. He wants us to overcome and be victorious. I also know that we live in the last days, which has to be one of the hardest times to live on the earth. Why would God give a gift to help the early disciples, tell us about it, and then deny us the right to have it or make it so that it is not available to us who need it the most? That is not the God I know.

I think that one of the things that hinders people in receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is that it comes along with the gift of speaking in tongues. For many, that is a stumbling block. This is because the devil wants to scare people away from our being able to pray in in tongues.
What it means when we pray in tongues is that the Spirit of God prays through us in His own language. He is praying directly through us using our vocal chords. We may not understand what He is saying, though sometimes He will allow us or others to interpret. Whether or not we understand, the devil knows when we start praying that something is being done to bind him and to loose the power of God on the scene.

No wonder he works overtime to confuse people about this powerful gift. Have you ever wanted so badly to pray for someone but didn't know how to pray? All you could do was to say a general half way prayer, when you know you needed to do more.

The Holy Ghost knows exactly how to pray in God's perfect will. When He prays through you that is a powerful prayer that will get the job done. Also, when we pray in the Holy Ghost, it strengthens our inner man, Who is the Spirit of God in us. (Jude 20, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." When we are filled and consumed with the Spirit of God and we allow Him to pray in us, we are submitted to His Spirit in a way that nothing else can do. We strengthen His Spirit in us. We submit our flesh and our flesh man takes second place in our life. With all that going on our flesh doesn't stand a chance. God's Spirit rises strong in us and we take on His likeness.

Now you may interrupt me here to say, what about the people who receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and wind up turning their back on God, or they sin in a big way and take on a life of sin instead of a life with God?

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost doesn't make you perfect. You still have your flesh man. If you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost is still not allowed to control your life, then flesh will. That is why it is important to allow the Holy Ghost to move in you. Pray in the Holy Ghost daily. Don't hinder the Spirit of God when He starts to move in you or through you, whether it be in church or at home. Allow God's Spirit to control. Then He will be there when you need Him.

One of the greatest stories I have ever heard about the power in the prayer of the Holy Ghost is this. The Holy Ghost moved on a man and began interceding through him. The man had no idea why, but he obeyed and yielded. God spoke to him to take note at what time this had happened. The next day he heard about a close friend who had been stabbed. That had happened at exactly the time that the man had prayed. The other man's life had been miraculously spared.

Another time I heard about a man on a plane who had interceded through the Holy Ghost. After they landed, they were told of a mechanical failure that had nearly caused them to crash, but miraculously the failure had corrected itself. The man who had prayed had no idea, but God knew. Thousands of times I have heard stories about how the Holy Ghost had interceded by speaking in tongues.
The situation was corrected, the life was saved, the soul was saved, the person was delivered, or whatever need there was, it was met.

There is no prayer that is more powerful than the prayer of the Holy Ghost Himself. If you do not have the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, ask God for this. Seek it. The Bible says that when we seek God, or His gifts, we will find them. Who says so? Jesus. Luke 11:9, “And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

Read this section of scripture through verse 13. In verse 13 we read, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”

If you haven’t received the Baptism, ask for it. It is a gift, and God would love for you to have it. It will definitely unlock victory in difficult times.

Chapter 14
Choose This Day Who You will Serve

I mentioned earlier in the book about Elijah and prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. I want to talk more about that in this chapter. Just as a recap, Elijah was on Mt. Carmel. He had called Israel to come for a “prayer meeting”.

He also called 450 prophets of Baal who was the false god that Israel had started serving. He told them that the God who could send fire down from heaven was the God that they needed to serve. They built an altar and put a sacrifice on it.

The prophets of Baal took their time first. They prayed to their god. They even cut themselves. But there was no fire that came. That was until Elijah took his turn. Fire fell from heaven and burned up the sacrifice, burned up the rocks the altar was made from leaving a hole in the ground. Then Elijah told them to choose who they will serve. Often we cannot find victory in our lives because we don't choose who we will serve. Every day we have to choose. Every day we have to decide who we are going to serve.

What do I mean by that? Every day we have to choose to have victory. We have to choose to believe God and trust Him. If we don't choose that, we won't find victory. We have to choose to walk in God's Word and remember it and have it in our minds.

We have to choose to obey God. If we don't choose to do so we won't find victory for that day. We have to choose to take authority over the devil and bind Him up. If we don't, we won't find victory for that

day. We have to choose every day who we will serve.

We have to choose whether we will serve God or ourselves, faith or doubt, obedience or disobedience, life or death, God or the devil, defeat or victory. You have to choose. Not choosing and not doing anything about these things will only bring you to defeat. Every day you have to choose whether victory or defeat.

So think about this for a minute. What will you get on those days when you don't take the time to make that choice? What will be the outcome of that? How do you avoid that? Take time to start your day by praying and fellowshipping with God and reading your Bible. You might say, "I don't have time for that." It is easier to make time than you think. Get up earlier. It is that simple. If you don't take time, then you won't find victory in any kind of time but especially in difficult times. You have to choose.

You also have to choose each time that you face a situation. When a situation comes up that can cause you to have defeat, do something about it. If you don’t, then you won’t have victory. Ask God what to do about the situation and obey Him.

Apply God’s Word to the situation. See what the Bible has to say about it. Obey God's Word. Allow God’s Spirit to come up in your heart and mind. Allow God’s light to shine. Allow Jesus to be the light. When you do this, you will find victory.

Or you can do the opposite. You can jump into doing something, anything, about the situation and you will as the old saying goes jump from the frying pan into the fire. You can allow fear and doubt to rule your mind and heart and act according to that. How can that turn out well for you?

You can be controlled by your flesh instead of allowing God’s Spirit to control you. You can walk in darkness instead of light. You have to choose. Choose whether you walk in victory or whether you walk in defeat.

When you choose victory, when you choose God's Word, when you choose faith, when you choose obedience, when you choose trust, when you choose to follow Jesus and walk in his light, then like Elijah you will find that God hears your prayers and He answers them.

You will find that victory will come from heaven like the fire that fell that day. You will find that victory burns up every defeat, every chain that binds you, every situation that can bring you defeat, every sickness that comes against you, and every doubt.

God will come against every enemy that comes against you, every bit of the darkness that tries to come into your heart and mind, all of it will be burned up by God's Word and His Spirit and His presence in your life. AMEN. Choose you who you will serve.

You also have to choose whether you will serve God or the world. If you walk with those who don't have victory and you choose to live like them, then you will not have victory. You have to choose whether

you will serve God or whether you will serve your spoiled self. To find victory, you have to deny yourself and obey God. You can't get your way and walk in God's way. It doesn't work that way.

You have to choose whether or not you will be totally sold out to following God because if you are double minded, if you compromise, then you may as well know that you won't find victory. Choose each and every day who you will serve. Make it an active choice-a choice that you act on.

What about you? Are you going to choose to build your house on the solid rock foundation of God's word. Are you going to actively choose where your house is going to be built? Or are you just going to let your house be a jumble and a mess with a sand foundation? When the storms come will your house stand? Will your life stand?

You have to choose what you are going to allow to be bigger in your life, victory or defeat. This illustrates what I mean by this. We have extension colleges in many

countries. Some of the countries are plagued with economic ruin, and violence Because of this, defeat rules. We have colleges in some of those countries.

We have colleges that allow the condition that they are in to rule their life and cause them to have defeat. They can't see past the situation in their country and it pulls them down. Matter of fact, the situation in their country often causes colleges to close who once had a powerful ministry. We have colleges in the same countries in the same situation. They are overcoming.

They have the victory. They are rising up over the situation and they are making a difference bringing those around them to find victory.

What is the difference? They have allowed God to be Lord instead of their situation. They have allowed His light to shine. They have trusted in their Savior and He is delivering them. They have risen up above the situations reaching up to the one who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and He is

moving for them setting them free and lifting them up.

They are allowing the Spirit of God to move and He is filling them, bringing them victory. They are obeying Him and their obedience is unlocking blessings in the middle of poverty. They are not looking with fleshly eyes at their situation, but they are looking through spiritual eyes seeing the victory that God is giving them.

They are lighthouses spreading victory around to all who will hear and see. They have chosen who they will serve and God honors them. Choose who you will serve. Choose this day whether you will live in victory or defeat. Refuse to accept defeat. It is your choice to make.

Chapter 15
Songs of Victory

I want to do a chapter about the songs of victory that are found in the Bible. I want to give you the circumstances of the victory that God gave them.

The first song of victory I want to share with you is the song the Israelites sang when the sea parted. We talked before about how they were being chased by the

Egyptian army that was determined to catch and to kill them.

Now keep in mind there were about 600,000 men plus the women and children. They weren't traveling very fast. The Egyptian army with their chariots and fast horses were sure to catch up with them soon. Then they came to the coast of the Red Sea.

They were pinned in between the sea and the Egyptian army. The Bible says that they were sore afraid. But Moses knew something that they didn't. Moses saw something they didn't see. His eyes were on the Lord.

He told them in Exodus 14:13-14, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

When God fights for you, you don't have to be afraid. You can know that He will deliver you. You can know that even

though it looks like there is no hope, there is always hope in God. Even though it looks like you will surely be destroyed, when you keep you eyes on the Lord, you will find victory.

We know how this account ended. The sea parted and the Israelite walked across on dry land. But things didn't turn out that well for the Egyptian army. They all drowned when the sea returned. Even as God spoke through Moses when he declared, "...for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever". They did not even have to fight. God gave them victory that day. How did this end?

It ended with the Israelites singing this song of victory found in Exodus 15:1-13. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I

will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, *and* the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful *in* praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation."

God fought for them and they walked out of that battle victorious. When you obey God and trust Him, you can do the same. When you follow God, you will walk in victory and you can sing a song of victory.

We read this song repeated in the Bible in Revelation 15:2-4, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb,

saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."

What a song that will be. What a day that will be when we hear that song of victory sung. Child of God you are definitely on the winning side. Talk about a do over. One day God will recreate everything. He will surely take care of you.

Here is another song of victory. It is found in 2 Samuel 22:1-20. Its author is David. We mentioned him earlier but I want to do a little recap.

He had gone through a long season when he ran for his life. He went from one bad situation into another. King Saul was determined to kill him. One of the main goals in his life was to destroy David. We aren't sure how long this happened, but we are given the impression that this went

on for several years. David had to leave his home and his family and he hid out in the wilderness often dwelling in caves. He had more enemies besides Saul.

But one day his Deliverer came. In one day he went from being a victim to being King of Israel. His song of victory is recorded in 2 Samuel 22. I have only put here verses 1-20, “And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul. And he said, The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in him will I trust *he is* my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid; The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me; In my distress I called upon

the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry *did enter* into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth.

There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind. And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies. Through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled. The LORD thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice. And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them. And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of his

nostrils. He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters; He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me.”

Child of God, you are as precious to your heavenly Father. You are just as precious to God as David was. He will do the same to deliver you. Just remember, it will be in the perfect time. When you think He is delayed, He will be right on time. You are in His hands. He will deliver you because He delights in you.

Closing

So what do you think? Can you find victory in the middle of your battle? Can you find victory in this struggle that seems like it has grabbed you and is determined to pull you down? Are these things that

you are going through mightier than your God? Are these things mightier than the Word of God? After reading this book, you know the answer to these questions in your heart.

God is victorious and He can and will cause you to triumph if you walk with Him and believe in Him. That victory is yours according to the nature of God, according to His love, according to His Word. There is no battle, or sickness, or trouble, or circumstance that is so great that you can't find victory over it.

Romans 8:37-39 tells us, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We are more than conquerors. We are more than winners through Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:14, "Now thanks be unto

God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.”

We can be victorious through Christ and when others see the victory that we have found in Him, the knowledge of Him will go out to every place.

When people see the victory that God gives you, they will take note that God is real. The victory that others see in your life will lead them to find God for themselves. When you are able to rise up above the situations that you are facing, they will know that God can move for them as well. When they see God do miracles for you, then that encourages them to believe that God is real and that He will do the same for them.

You are more than a conqueror through Christ. You are a winner. You are not defeated. Take God’s Word for it.

Consider this. There will come a day when God will make a new heaven and a new earth. He will totally redo it all. Revelation 21:1-7, “And I saw a new heaven and a

new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

We have all of these ahead for us. We have great and wonderful things coming ahead for us. Things that God guarantees. Promises that He guarantees. Is anything too hard for Him?

There is another thing that we can take from reading this passage. We look at the things that are going on in the world around us and it can make you give up hope. Until you remember that this isn't the end of things. It won't end in defeat but it will end in victory.

We will live forever in this new heaven and new earth where there will be no more death, sorrow or crying, or pain. Why? Because the Lord is true and faithful and His promises are true and faithful. We will inherit all things and He will be our God and we will be his Son.

Eternity is a long, long, long time. When we get there, we won't even remember the battles and the struggles that we had down here. We'll just praise for eternity our God who gave us the victory over them all. AMEN.

This is a short book about prayer.

PRAYER

Introduction

I mentioned this in a previous section of this book. I was talking about something that happened to me not long ago. I was waiting in a doctor’s office. They had taken

me back to the exam room. I had a pretty long wait time. During that time, I did some very extraordinary things. I helped protect, strengthen and encourage President Trump. I helped a doctor with a difficult case that I heard him talk about. I encouraged a minister in Ghana who was going through a hard time.

This is the absolute truth. How did I do all of these things when I never left the exam room? I did those through praying and knowing that God heard my prayers.

Prayer is such an important part of a Christian's life. It should be a focus of our lives but often it is not. I think that is because we don't realize the power that we can find through prayer. We don't realize the huge impact prayer has on things.
How much of an impact it has on our own lives, on the lives of those we love, on our church, and on the world around us.

I was a lot that way until I discovered the power of prayer for myself. I was one that

often took my prayer requests to others who I felt like could pray better than me. When they prayed for me, their faith was encouraged, but mine was not. When they saw their prayers answered, their faith was made stronger, but mine was not. Through the prayers they prayed, they were encouraged in their relationship with the Lord, but mine was not. They reaped all of the benefits of their prayers, but all I saw was that prayer was answered.

There was something that came up that changed my life. It was a sudden disaster. Someone was dying. It was in the middle of the night, and I couldn't find anyone to pray. I had to pray for them on my own. God heard my prayer. That changed my life. I no longer used the prayers of others as a crutch. The more I watched God answer my prayers, the more I prayed.
The more I prayed the more my faith grew.

Sometimes others just need someone to encourage their faith by joining with them in prayer. Sometimes they just need someone to stand with them in prayer just

to know they aren't alone. Now I find that it is a joy to pray for others.

The purpose of my writing this book is to encourage others to find a powerful prayer life for themselves. Nothing will change your life more than that will. Nothing will change your loved ones lives more. Nothing will change your world more.

I used to tell others who were going through a difficult time, "All I can do is pray." What an understatement. Now I say, "I will pray." I know that is the greatest thing that I can possibly do. I pray that you will be encouraged in your prayer life by reading this book so that you realize this for yourself.

There are many benefits that come from a steady prayer life.
We will talk about those. We will also talk about scriptures that will encourage your faith and strengthen your prayer life. Also, we will talk about testimonies that will strengthen your faith. God has given us many tools that build our prayer life. We

will talk about many of these things that will strengthen your prayer life. Most of all you will be encouraged in your spirit and I believe this little book will strengthen you in your walk with God.

First I want to talk about what the Word of God says about prayer.

GOD'S WORD ABOUT PRAYER

I want to share with you scriptures about prayer. Nothing will build your faith more than the Word of God. Here is an interesting fact. Prayer is first mentioned

in Genesis 4:26. “And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.” (As a note: I have covered some of these scriptures before in other parts of this book, but I will repeat them so that you remember them.)

God tells us to pray. We read in I Chronicles 16:11, “Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually.“ God says to pray continually. In I Thessalonians 5:17 we read, “Pray without ceasing.” How can we pray without ceasing?

I think that one definition of prayer is that it is a walking with and talking to relationship with God. That relationship is a continual thing. We will talk about this more in a chapter coming up. Matthew 7:7 tells us “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” That is one simple definition of prayer. Ask and it will be given, seek and ye shall find. Knock and that door that you are knocking on will be

opened to you and you will find what you are searching for.

John 16:24 says, “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” We have a heavenly Father who wants our joy to be full. He wants to answer our prayers. We have but to ask.

God promises that He will not only hear our prayers, but He will answer our prayers. Psalms 91:15 says, “He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him.”

God promises in His Word that He will hear and answer. We can count on His Word. We can count on His promises. John 3:33 says, “He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.”
God is not a liar. Numbers 29:13 says, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not

make it good?” We can count on the promises that He makes in His Word. I am talking here about both the promises that are written in His Word and the promises that He speaks to our hearts.

I want to talk here about something that is very important. We have touched on this earlier. There are three ways that God answers our prayers.. He may say yes. He may say no. He may say wait until it is time for it. There have been many, many, many times when God did not answer my prayer. I couldn’t understand why He didn’t. I would doubt God and I would doubt myself because He didn’t answer.

You see I thought I knew what I needed to have that would fix this situation. But I didn’t. Later on I realized I was very glad that He hadn’t answered my prayer in the way I had prayed it.
Isaiah 55:8-9 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." Sometimes we think we know how God should do things, but we don't know. We can trust Him to have our best interest at heart. He will do what is best for us. Even if that means saying no.

Another way He answers is to say wait. Wait for the perfect time. Timing is everything. The very best plan will fail if it isn't at the right time. The best idea will turn out to be the worst idea if it isn't at the right time.

God knows the best time for everything to happen. He is like a conductor conducting a huge symphony. Every part of the orchestra is perfectly in time. When that happens, the music coming from that orchestra is beautiful. But if the timing of one instrument isn't timed with the others, then the music will be terrible.
Let God orchestrate your life. It will be in perfect timing. Even if the answer is wait.

Isaiah 65:24 says, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer;

and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.” God is so close to us, so much a part of us that before we ask He will answer.

God knows you and He knows what you need. He will answer your prayer even before you ask. How cool is that. Zechariah 13:9 says, “And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.”

It is important to remember that we aren’t exempt from the fire. We will go through the fire. We will go through those times when it seems like our world is falling apart. When you go through the fire, remember this. God will bring you through. He will bring you through the fire, and when you go through the fire, you will be refined as gold. Your faith will be strengthened. Your relationship with God will grow stronger.

The reason why I can write a book about prayer and faith that strengthens you and encourages your faith is because I have been through the fire. It isn't the easy times that make us, but it is the difficult times. The times when we are hanging on to every Word God says just to be able to get through.

If we never went through a battle or a struggle, we would just be spoiled children. God won't do that to us. Just remember this. When you go through the fire, He is there and He will bring you out of it. And when you call on His name, He will hear you.

Here are more verses about prayer. Job 34:28 says, "So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted."
God is compassionate. We see this throughout the scriptures. He is tender hearted to those who are in need and to those who are afflicted. Afflicted means those who are in pain or suffering or in

distress. When we are in distress, God is tender toward us and He will meet our needs.

Psalm 34:7 says, “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” God will even send angels to protect us and deliver us. Will He answer your prayers? Micah 7:7 says, “Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.” We can have the same confidence that God will hear and answer our prayers that Micah had when He made this statement. God will hear your prayers.

The Bible tells us that the prayers of the saints are very precious to God. They are very, very precious. Revelation 5:8 tells us how precious. God saves all of the prayers of all of the saints. They are that precious. “And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.”

I want to add something to this chapter. If we aren't careful, prayer can become all about us asking God for things. If we aren't careful, prayer can be all about asking God for things just for ourselves. We can become like spoiled children. The thing He hears most of all from us is God give me, God I need this, God I have to have this. When we do this, we miss out on the greatest blessings that can come from prayer.

We can make a huge difference in the lives of those around us and in many other things because of the power of prayer. We can change our world through the power of prayer. But there is another aspect of prayer that you might not have thought about. Prayer is not just you telling God everything you want Him to do, but it also involves you listening to Him.
We have mentioned that one definition of prayer is a relationship with God where you speak and He hears you, but it is also when He speaks to you and you listen. That is one definition of a relationship,

listening and hearing. When you walk and talk with Him every day, then you can know that He hears your prayers.

WHY DOES GOD HEAR OUR PRAYERS

In this chapter I want to talk this. Why does God hear our prayers? Can we trust that God hears our prayers? What is our

part that we can do to insure our prayers are heard? If you have been saved, if you have accepted Christ in your heart and you have dedicated your life to Him, then you are a child of God. Here are scriptures about us being the children of God.

We read in 1 John 3:1-2 about our being the sons of God. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

Romans 8:14-23 tells us, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” John 1:12 tells us, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” We are God’s children. Psalms 103:13 says, “Like as a father pitieth His children so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.” Some

translations say that He has compassion on his children. God is quick to hear His children because of His love, His compassion to us. You are precious to the Lord, Child of God. He will hear your prayers.

I touched on this earlier. It has been really hard for me to accept God's love and the love of others. Things that happened to me along life's journey made that to be that way. I thought I had to earn God's love. I thought I had to do things to deserve it.

The truth is that His love is so awesome that we could never earn it or do things to deserve it. That is why it is called "grace". I worked so hard for so many years to earn His love. He was loving me the whole time, bringing me to the place where I could receive His love. That is why it is called grace.

It took a while for Him to set me free, for Him to deliver me so that I could receive His love. He didn't give up on me. That is why it is called grace. I am learning to

yield to His precious love more and more. One day I will be one with Him. That is where we are all going. That is why we are called the bride of Christ. The more we yield to His love the more powerful our prayer life will become.

You see, faith works by love. When you fall in love with God and you let Him love you as you yield more and more to His love, you can trust Him to hear your prayers. You can believe that as the scriptures say He will move heaven and earth to care for you.

You know He hears your prayers even before you ask and He is already answering them by the time you say them. You know that you are precious to Him and that He will hear your voice. Even though He hears everyone's voice, He knows yours, and He loves to hear your voice. Maybe you are going through something like I went through. God can deliver you. He can set you free where you can accept His precious, precious love. Through that, you can learn to receive His love and you can know how precious your love is to

Him. Spend time with Him. Fellowship with Him. Spend time in His Word getting to know Him. All these things will help you to accept His love. Nothing will increase your prayers like being wrapped up in His wonderful love. You know that He will hear because He walks with you.

Here are some other things that will empower your prayers. These are conditions of our heart. First of all, for God to hear your prayers you have to be saved. You have to ask Him into your heart and commit your life to Him.

I hear a lot of people who obviously haven't been saved and they talk all the time about how they pray and how God doesn't answer their prayers. One example is a person who was dear to my heart. He was an alcoholic. When we would try to lead him to the Lord, he would say, "I have my relationship with God." His life was a mess, but He thought that He knew God. That was until the day He met Jesus for real. God saved him and delivered him. setting him free. I know that there were a lot of times before he met Jesus when he

thought that God didn't hear his prayers. I know that there were many times when he thought that God didn't keep His Word, and I am sure that he blamed God. But the problem wasn't God's problem, it was his problem.

He had never accepted salvation on God's terms. He did, but it was on his own terms. That wasn't enough. When you come to God, you have to come to Him on His terms. Salvation comes when you submit yourself to Him, when you yield to Him and ask Him to forgive you.

It comes when you ask Him to come into your heart and you commit yourself to do things His way yielding to Him. When you do that, you become His child and He will hear your prayers and you will know that He does because you will see the proof when you watch your prayers being answered. Here are more scriptures that talk about things that are required of us to be able to have a powerful prayer life.

Proverbs 15:29 says, "The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of

the righteous.” We find in 2 Chronicles 7:14 another condition for a powerful prayer life, “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” We have to humble ourselves and seek God’s face and turn from our wicked ways and then God will hear from heaven.

If we have been saved, but we are continuing to willfully sin, then God will not hear your prayers. He will hear our prayers when we repent of our sins and we turn from them. We read in 1 John 3:22, “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” Jeremiah 29:13 tells us another condition for powerful prayers, “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” We will find Him when we seek Him with all of our heart.”

Mark 11:24 talks about one of the main conditions for powerful prayers is faith. “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” When we believe, we will receive. Coming up next is a chapter that talks about the power of faith.

I want to close with this note. The most important condition that you have to meet for God to hear your prayers is that you have to pray. If you don’t take time to pray, then your prayers definitely won’t be answered. When that happens, don’t be surprised that your life is a wreck and so are the lives of those around you that you love.

FAITH

I know I have mentioned faith a lot, but I want to discuss it further here. Faith is

when we look to Him above all others. Here are more scriptures about faith and what that means. John 6:28-29 says, “Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

Just an added note here, if God has called you to do a work for Him, and He has called all of us to do that, we can do the work of God through believing in Him, not by believing in ourselves. Believe in Him and He will enable you to do what He has called you to do.

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 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.” Mark 9:23 tells us, “Jesus said unto him, If

thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

We mentioned earlier that when we read the Word of God, it will increase our faith. When we fill our minds and hearts with the promises found in the Bible, it will encourage our faith. When we read about how God delivered those in the Bible, we know He will deliver us. When we read about how God heard the prayers of others and how He answered their prayers, our faith is encouraged that He will also hear our prayers and answer them.

Here is an important key that will unlock our faith. Galatians 5:6 tells us, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."

We have already talked about this. Faith works by love. Love is the basis of faith. We have faith in God because we know that He loves us. It is also the motivation for faith.

Most of the times when we need faith it is because we are praying for others because of our love for them. It is easy to just pray prayers for yourself, but when you love others, it is a motivation to pray prayers of faith. The more you see others around you who need to find God as their Savior, or those who need healing, and those who need God to move in their lives, and you see them suffering, that is the motivation to pray and this compassion will help you to find faith in your prayers because of love. Just as a note, the key to unlock any gift of God is love.

We read in 1 John 5:4, “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” How will we overcome this world and the mess that it is in? We will find victory through faith. How will we make a difference in our world? Through prayer and faith when combined with our obedience.
How do we become lights that will light up the darkness around us? Through prayer and faith combined with obedience.

As I mentioned before, nothing will increase our faith more than the Word of God. Coming up we'll talk about some of the prayers that God answered for those in the Bible. We'll also look at some key factors about those prayers that will add to our own prayer lives. First we'll talk about how faith works by love.

FAITH WORKS BY LOVE

I mentioned in the last chapter how faith works by love. We mentioned in the last chapter that faith works because we know and love God and we know that He loves us. That gives us faith that He will hear and answer our prayers. We can rest in that assurance and that is faith.

There is another side of this as well. When we love others and we see them in distress, we will pray harder and we are more determined to see that prayer answered because we love that person. Love for that person unlocks our faith. If your child is sick, you are determined to have faith when you pray for that child. If someone you barely know gives you a prayer request, then you may not pray such a determined prayer.

Love unlocks our prayers. Our love for the Lord, our knowledge of the love He has for us, and the love we have for the person we are praying for will unlock our faith. Faith works by love.

If we aren’t careful, we will only pray for our own needs and the immediate needs of those around us like our family. We tend to look at life through the wrong end of the telescope and we only see a little dot instead of the big picture. If we aren’t careful we don’t take time to pray for others around us.

You might say that we don’t love them enough to see their needs and their struggles and we don’t pray for them. Our prayer world gets really small. We don’t want to hurt for others or feel compassion for them, so we shut their needs out of our minds and hearts. If we aren’t careful we will even do that to our church family.

We read in 1 Corinthians 12:25-27, “That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

When one member of our body hurts we are to feel their hurt just like we would feel that pain if a part of our own body felt it. If we stump our toe, the rest of our body feels that pain. That is how we should be with our body of Christ.

I believe that this needs to go one step further than just our local church. We are part of the body of Christ and that body stretches out all over the world. When we hear of persecution in China, we are to hurt for our body there and we are to pray for them with that love that unlocks our faith. When we hear of another church in our area that is going through a rough time, then we need to reach out to them and pray for them believing that God will move for them because they are part of our body and part of His body.

All too often we get caught up in a competition between the churches and that is against the word of God.

We need to love them and pray for them. We need to turn that telescope around and love our brothers and sisters in the Lord enough to pray for them. After all they are a part of our body-the body of Christ.

ANSWERED PRAYERS IN THE BIBLE

I want to include here some of the prayers that were answered in the scriptures so that this encourages your faith. Also you will get a glimpse of what made those prayers so powerful. The first prayer I want to talk about is David's prayer in Psalms 18:3-6 and 17-19. This was a prayer that he prayed when he was running from King Saul.

We mentioned earlier that Saul had dedicated himself to the sole purpose of killing David. David had to run for his life for a long time. He had to live in caves to hide from Saul. This is a Psalm, a song that he wrote. We know this because of how the Psalm starts. "To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD, who spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said, I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my

deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears."

Verses 17-19, "He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me." This talks about what God did for Him in David's own words. God will deliver you.

He will answer your prayers. He will hear your cry because He delights in you.

In 1 Samuel 7 we read about a time when Samuel, a prophet leader of Israel, had called them together to fast and repent before God. The Philistines who were enemies against Israel heard that they were gathered there and they gathered together to come against them. “And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.”

The Lord heard the prayers of Samuel and He answered those prayers. We read in verse 10, “And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.” God fought their battle. They didn’t even have to fight.

Hezekiah’s prayer is found in 2 Kings 19. This tells the story of Sennacherib. We briefly mentioned him earlier. He was the King of Assyria, and he was coming to capture Israel. He had an army that was so big that it was like grasshoppers in a field. He had 185,000 soldiers. It was one of the mightiest armies of one of the mightiest countries that has ever been.

Hezekiah had everyone in his country to pray for God to help them. Hezekiah prayed this prayer in verse 19, “Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou are the LORD God even thou only.” Sennacherib mocked God. He mocked the prayers that they prayed.

What was the outcome of this story? An angel of the Lord killed the soldiers in Sennacherib’s army. Sennacherib had to leave in disgrace. He went back home and when he was worshiping his god in that temple, his own sons killed him. He made the mistake of messing with God’s people.

Just a note, one of the characteristics that we see in Hezekiah's prayer is that he prayed a prayer giving the glory to God. He prayed that all the kingdoms around would know the God is the one God. You know that He answered that prayer. How do we know that? Can you imagine how many people's faith have been strengthened down through time when they read this account?

We read in 2 Kings 18:5-6 some keys as to why Hezekiah's prayers were answered. "He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses."

He trusted God. He did not depart from Him and He kept His commandments. When trouble came, all of this was in place. He was not shaken but continued to trust in God just like he had every other day before.

I heard a song the other day that had the line in it “her faith was in place”. It was talking about a lady who was going through a hard time but her faith was already in place. Hezekiah’s faith was already in place.

I want to quote Hezekiah’s whole prayer here so that you can get some more glimpses of what an effective prayer is. “And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; (Hezekiah started out his prayer by praising God and talking about His power and might) thou hast made heaven and earth. LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, And

have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou are the LORD God, even thou only."

This was a prayer from Hezekiah's heart. He started out by talking about God's might and power and how he knew that God is the only God. He asked that God save them not just for their sake, but so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that God was the only true God. We see plainly that God heard Hezekiah's prayer.

This next prayer that I am going to talk about is one that God answered for the early church. Jesus had been crucified. He had risen from the dead and He met with His disciples. He told them that He would send the comforter, the Holy Spirit. He told them to wait in Jerusalem.

They were to wait for this to happen. They were there praying in one mind and in one accord. When people pray in unity, that is a key that unlocks prayer. We read in Acts 2 what happened next. The Holy Ghost fell on them. Peter preached and there were 3,000 people saved that day. God heard their prayers.

These are just a very few examples of the prayers that are found in the Bible and how God answered their prayers. The Word of God builds your faith. Just an added note here. It won't build your faith if you don't read it.

I want to sum up this chapter by talking about one of the greatest heroes of faith in the Bible, Abraham. If you remember God told him to leave his home and take everything he owned. The thing about it is that God didn't tell him where he was to go. Every day he obeyed God and went where he told him to go.

God had promised him that He would make of Abraham's seed a mighty nation.

Abraham obeyed by faith and the nation of Israel stands today as God kept His promise.

Abraham waited for over 25 years for a son. When Isaac was born Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90. Romans 4:18-20 tell us, “Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.”

One of the keys to understand Abraham’s faith is found in the word “considered” in verse 19. Abraham didn’t dwell on the impossible but he concentrated on his God who made all things possible. He didn’t dwell on the impossible situation of their age, bu he trusted God to make the impossible to be possible.

We don’t ever read that Abraham had conversations with God like, “Now God if you don’t hurry up we will be too old to have a son.” He didn’t dwell on the circumstances. Sometimes when we dwell on the circumstances, we talk ourselves out of a miracle. The devil doesn’t have to, we do it to ourselves. Be like Abraham. Refuse to consider the problem. Refuse to consider the situations that might hinder your miracle. Refuse to look at the impossible. Keep your eyes on the one who has promised you the impossible.

I want to add a note here. Surround yourself with those who live, walk and talk faith. Negative people will just steal your faith away.

Another thing that builds your faith is knowing who you have believed.

KNOW WHO YOU BELIEVE

The more time you spend with God, the longer that you know Him, the closer relationship that you have with Him, all these will build your faith. You know who you believe. You know God. You know His love. You know His faithfulness. You have watched Him carry you through the hard times. You have watched Him cry out "Peace be still" and the storm stopped. You have seen His love and you know He will hear your cry. Time after time you have watched Him answer your prayers. As time goes on, it is easier to know all of these things. But if you are new in walking with Him, then it is a little harder.

If you are new in walking with the Lord, then appreciate the battle, appreciate the storms, because when you see Him deliver you and bring you safe through them you know that in the next battle, the next storm, He will do the same. When you feel, His precious love wrap around you, you will know that you can count on Him to

hear you. You will learn through this that you can trust Him.

I think of this. I can remember being at the beach in a huge crowd. There were scores of kids yelling Daddy, but when we yelled Daddy, our Dad knew our voice and he would come.

It is like that with God. He looks down and sees the multitude of people who are praying. But He knows your voice. You are an individual to Him. He loves you as an individual and recognized you as an individual. He does that with every one of us. He created every one of us to be a unique person and He sees us as unique individuals.

He knows us in that way and He recognizes our prayers that we pray. He hears your voice. Even when millions are praying, He hears your voice and knows you. He has that sort of love for you. You can trust Him to hear your prayer. He recognizes your voice.

I love this picture that David presented about God hearing his voice found in Psalm 18:7-17 “In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.

There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.

At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent

out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.

You can picture God hearing David's cries, his prayer, and just whooshing down to help him and moving heaven and earth to do so. God will do the same for you. How do you know? You are His child as well. God will hear your cries.

God especially hears the prayers that are in His will. When you know God and you know His will, it becomes easier to pray a prayer that He will answer. When you know Him enough that you become yielded to His Spirit, that will unlock your prayers as much as anything. Sometimes I have to ask God how to pray.

When we pray in the flesh, that isn't an effective prayer. But when we allow God's Spirit to lead us in what to pray for, that is a very effective prayer. That is a prayer He definitely will hear. When you yield to God's Spirit and pray, He is praying through you leading you in what to pray for. Those are the most powerful prayers you can pray. Especially when you pray in tongues.

Romans 8:26-27 talks about this kind of prayer. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Ephesians 6:18 also talks about this sort of prayer when we pray in the Spirit. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

Often our prayers are not answered because we aren't praying God's will. We may be praying something that does not line up with God's Word. I remember a pastor that had a woman come up to him. She said she was praying for him to break up with his wife so that she could marry him. Obviously that prayer wasn't met because it didn't line up with God's Word. Also, we mentioned earlier that there are 3 answers God has for our prayers. It may be yes. It may be no, that is not His will. It isn't the best thing. It may be wait for the right time. But God always answers.

When we pray in the flesh without letting His Spirit lead us, we will often pray outside of God's will. We might even be praying something that is against God's Word. We won't see that prayer answered and we will start to doubt that God hears us. But it didn't have anything to do with God, but it was our prayer that wasn't right. When you submit to God and listen to Him and let Him lead you as you pray, that prayer will be answered.

PRAYING THROUGH

There is a saying that I used to hear the older people in the Lord use. They would talk about praying through. There are different aspects of what that means. One thing is that we don't need to just pray general little prayers like "Lord help her" or "Lord be with him".

We need to specifically pray for their needs. We have talked about how we need to let God's Spirit lead us. He is very specific in what He prays for. We need to do the same. We need to call out the needs of those we are praying for. Sometimes it is easy to cop-out when we pray. It is easy to just pray that general little prayer. It takes more faith though to pray the specific prayers, the detailed prayers. Those are the prayers God honors.

Another aspect of praying through is that you don't stop praying for something until you see the answer come. There have been things that I have prayed for years

and I won’t stop until I see the answer come, and I know I will see it because I won’t give up until it comes.

Someone asked me the other day, “Is it wrong to pray for something more than once. Is it wrong to keep mentioning something in prayer?” There is a scripture that talks about an importune woman. Importune means to harass someone persistently until they do something. This is a parable that Jesus told about how to pray. This is found in Luke 18:1-5. “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me,”

When we know that we are praying in His will, we have to keep on praying until we see the answer.

Here are some examples of Biblical prayers that illustrate this. Jacob wrestled with an angel. In Genesis 32:26 we read, “And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” Sometimes we have to declare I will not let go Lord until you bless me.

In Deuteronomy 9:18 we read a prayer that Moses prayed, “And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.“

He prayed and fasted for forty days and nights. I want to add a note here. Fasting is important if you are praying for something. I wouldn’t recommend 40 days with no food or water, but let God lead you in a fast.

Matthew 17:20-21 talks about a certain prayer that wouldn’t be answered except for fasting.

Another example of persistent prayers in James 5:17, “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.? In this scripture James was talking about how Elijah was a person just like we are. But he was persistent in his prayers. He prayed for the rain to stop and it did until he prayed for it to start again. God will answer your prayers as well.

There is another aspect of praying through. That is to pray until we feel something break in the spirit. We can’t always just pray a little short pray like, “God move for this person.” That isn’t enough. When we pray in the Spirit you can feel when the prayer is heard and answered. Also, the enemy might be blocking that prayer from coming about. When you pray through, you can feel that

binding of the enemy breaking. It may take a while for that to happen. Stick with that prayer until you feel this. This is the kind of prayer that we were talking about in the last chapter-a prayer that takes place when you aren't praying in the flesh but you are praying in the Spirit yielding to the Spirit of God and letting Him pray through you. God will show you how to pray through. Don't just pray a general and a short prayer about something. Pray until you break through.

TAKE YOUR AUTHORITY

Part of prayer is binding up the devil and loosing the things of God. Sometimes the devil will hinder our prayer from being answered. I believe that there is a lot of this that is happening today. When this happens God will reveal it to you. Then you can go through spiritual battle and bind up the forces that are keeping your prayer from being answered.

One example of this is a time our ministry went through. We had gone through a time when the enemy was determined to wipe us out. He was doing everything he could to stop us. It was a time when he was attacking us by coming against our mind, our bodies, our finances. He was attacking us on all fronts. He was stopping our prayers from being answered.

It wasn’t hard to see that this was a spiritual battle because you could just feel the devil’s forces around us. We came together in unity and bound the forces of the devil, taking the authority over him.

Taking the authority that God had given us. It took a while, but we kept binding him and one day we broke through and we pushed into a time of great blessings. If we hadn't seen what was happening, we would have lost. If we hadn't taken the authority God gave us, we would have lost.

I want to include here excerpts from my book How To Fight the Devil and Win. We read about the authority God has given us over satan. *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 this 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 are 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. We can plainly see in this scripture that we have been given authority to bind the devil. We don't have to be afraid of him. We just need to put him in his place which is under our foot.

When we refuse to let fear control us, and we stand up against the devil that is bringing fear against us, then we rise up above his control. Then we do all we can to tell God's people how to rise up as well. Then little by little we will take back our country for God. That is just one small example. In other words we are standing against the devil as individuals because we want to keep our personal freedom from the mess he brings against us, and we are also standing against him to keep the freedom that God has given all of us in our country.

In other words Matthew 18:18 says it this way. "Verily I say unto you that whatsoever you bind

on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever you shall loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." When we pray on earth and bind the devil, then changes take place where the devil rules, and those changes will come about on the earth.

You see this is a battle on earth but that is a reflection of what is going on above us. There is a battle that is being waged between the spirits that are aligned with the devil (demons) and the spirits that are aligned with God (angels). In Daniel 10, Daniel was going through some things. God came on the scene and told him that He had been delayed in coming to him because of a battle that was going on. God said he called Michael (the chief angel) to come fight and He got through to Daniel. We can see from this that there is a war going on.

I believe there is a war going on in the heavens right now that is bigger than it has ever been because there is so much at stake. What we do can shift that war. If we are busy praying and taking authority over the devil, if we are busy obeying God and allowing His Spirit to move in our lives and if we are busy reaching out to

others and obeying God, then we can shift this battle over to God's side. God will win, but what we do influences how soon this will happen. As for me I am determined to do all I can do and be all I can be to help this thing get over fast. AMEN. How about you? (Just a side note here. Do you know that all of God's kids have a guardian angel whose job is to take care of us. How special does that make you? That angel stands with you protecting you against evil. Do you have to be afraid of the devil?)

So it is important that we make a stand. To do that you have to understand the weapons that God gives us. Like I mentioned earlier, it isn't physical weapons because we aren't fighting a physical war. Instead it is spiritual. 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 says, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds)"

Not to change tracks on you, but let's talk a little about our armor that God has given us to protect us from the enemy, then we'll get back to our weapons. The Bible talks about it in Ephesians

6:11-17. I am going to add some notes to this scripture to explain some things. I will put my notes I've added in parenthesis. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth (our loins are the bottom part of your trunk and your thighs which is the strongest part of you. You protect this with truth.

You stand in truth. The truth of God is your strength. That is why it is important to always know the truth of God because it will set you free. Lies and false teaching won't.), and having on the breastplate of righteousness (Your breastplate protects your heart. Righteousness is doing right things and being a right person in God. If you allow sin to control you, then your heart is not covered with the breastplate.);

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (Soldiers have to protect their feet. Where are we marching. We are marching to spread the Gospel of peace); Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (Our faith is the thing that shields us, that keeps us from being harmed by the devil.)

And take the helmet of salvation (Salvation protects our mind. Jesus is in us when we get saved. His Spirit is inside our mind guiding us and teaching us, and giving us thoughts of victory when we fight the enemy.), and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (The Bible is what we fight against the devil with. It tells us about all our weapons that we have. It tells us about the authority that we have over the devil. It tells us everything we need to fight. It even tells us our need to fight. It is our sword).”

So that is our armor to keep us safe from the enemy, the devil. Here are our weapons. I am going to list them out in a list and tell about each.

1. God’s Word is your main weapon. In your armor, it is the only weapon that is listed.

In God's Word you learn who the devil is and the tactics that he uses against you. You also learn how to stand against him. You learn how God has given you authority and you learn how to use that authority. You learn the weapons that you have and how to use them.

That is why it is so important, especially in today's world, that you take time to read and study God's Word, the Bible. It is also important to do what it says. In one respect it is like any book. For example, you can read the best diet book in the world, but if you don't do what it says. you won't lose one pound.

The Word of God is powerful. The Bible tells us that once when Jesus was tempted of the devil who was trying to pull Him down, He answered everything that the devil said to get Him turned around with the words, "It is written." In other words when the devil tried to get him turned around, He answered that God's Word said this isn't so and God's Word says that this is true instead. God's Word stopped the devil. We have to know God's Word to use it against the devil, but when we learn how to do that, it works. For example, if the devil is attacking us in our

finances, we can say "God's Word says that He prospers us even as our soul prospers." That takes that battle right out of the devil's hands.

Now I mentioned earlier about how the devil can win if we don't know our rights as children of God. If we don't know those things that we are entitled to as God's children, then it is easy for the devil to slip in and take them. Matter of fact, it is in God's Word that we find that we have that authority over him. If we haven't read that, then we don't know that.

2. The name of Jesus is a powerful weapon. There were many times in the Bible that the disciples bound up the devil in the name of Jesus. When I feel the devil coming against me, I say "Devil you are bound in the name of Jesus." At the name of Jesus the devil has to run. He may be a little stubborn though and come back, just like a pesky kid does. But then when we have had all we can take and we get serious and we take authority, he has to flee.

3. The blood of Jesus is another powerful weapon. If we have confessed all our sins (and we know we have if we do this, when the Holy

Ghost convicts us of our sin, we repent of them), then the blood of Jesus covers us. Revelation 12:11 says how we can overcome the devil, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony". When the enemy is pestering me, I say, "The blood of Jesus is covering whoever or whatever I am praying for. I especially do that in these COVID days. Every day I pray that the blood of Jesus covers me and my family, our church family, those people who are a part of our ministry. The blood of Jesus protects us and shields us from the devil and his mess and lies.

4. In this section of scripture I wrote out in the last section, Revelation 12:11, you can see another weapon that we are given to overcome the devil. It is the word of our testimony. What we say is so important. The way we talk can actually give the devil victory over us. If we are always talking negative things, then we will get negative things. If we are always talking faith, then we will overcome the devil.

For example, I knew someone who for years kept saying she had cancer. I really wasn't surprised when she found out that she had it.

Another example, if you have a physical ailment and all you can talk about is all the symptoms of that, then don't be surprised when those symptoms get worse. What we confess we get. What we dwell on we get. Another example, if we dwell on covid and that is all we fearfully think about, we will get it. If we dwell on how God has given us victory over that, how we can dwell in healing, how God's Word gives us victory over COVID, then we won't get it. That is how faith works.

5. We have mentioned earlier about this gift. Praying in the Holy Ghost, praying in tongues is one of the most powerful weapons that we can have.

So with all these weapons we can't lose. When you know how to fight the enemy, it is actually easier to win than to lose. You have that much going in your favor.

So, back to this book here. When the devil is binding your prayers, when he is binding situations, when he is binding those you love, you can pray and take authority over him. He has to let go and your prayer can

be answered. This is especially important to do if you are praying for someone to be saved.

KEEP YOUR HEAD ABOVE THE CLOUDS

Keep your head above the clouds of worry, doubt, unbelief, and fear. If these things take you over, they will steal your prayer life. The devil has a way of putting a cloud of negative stuff around you. Maybe he will use other people around you to do this. To keep this from happening, it is important to have a regular prayer life and Bible study every day. I can tell the difference when I don't do this.

It is much easier to give in to negative thoughts and worry and fear when I don't do this. If we aren't careful, we can be just like the Charlie Brown cartoon character Pigpen who always had a cloud over his head. We can, through giving in to negative thinking, actually keep a cloud over us that God's light can't reach through.

So how do we keep our heads above the clouds. Praise is a key. When you are sitting at the feet of Jesus and you are caught up in praising Him.

When you are praising Him for His wonder, His power, His love for you, remembering how He has moved for you, then it is hard for doubt and fear to come against you. Another way to rise above the negative clouds is to take in God's Word. If you lack strength and you read in Isaiah 40:28-31, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary: and they shall walk, and not faint."

When you read this, then you will find strength to stand and rise up once again. When you begin to see the storms of life raging like they are and you start to fear that you won't make it, then you

remember that your house is built on the rock of Jesus Christ and as Luke 6:48 tells you,

When you think that darkness is surely going to consume the world, then you remember that Jesus is the light. You know that when you walk with Him you will not walk in darkness. John 9:5 “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

When the overwhelming lies that the enemy tells that surround us every day to steal our victory and our faith away, we need to remember that Jesus tells us in John 14:6, “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Then you remember that you are walking with the Truth and His Spirit will keep your mind from those lies.

When fear tries to steal your peace of mind and you remember that you are a child of God and you walk with the Lion of the Tribe of Judah who will one day reign over everything. Then you come to

yourself and know that you don’t have to be afraid. Then you remember that God's’ Word says over 366 times that we are to fear not, then you come to your senses and shake yourself and rise up victorious in God.

If you will read the first part of this chapter again, you will realize something. I want to ask the question again. How do you keep the victory in your mind and keep fear and doubt and all the negative things from taking control over your mind? It is by keeping your mind on Jesus.

The Word for the hour is “Keep your eyes on me. Walk with me.” When you do this, the enemy and his doubt, fear, and unbelief will just have to go. And your prayers will once again be full of God’s power and His anointing.

Don’t let doubt steal your faith. There have been times in my life when I didn’t stretch my faith to pray for certain things. I remember that at one time I was intimidated to pray for healing for other people. I was afraid to pray for miracles.

I would think in the back of my mind that I would be proven wrong when that miracle didn’t happen. I didn't have faith that these things would happen, so when I prayed for them to happen, I only halfway prayed. That was such a stretch of my faith. I just wouldn’t do it.

I would say that I would pray for someone who asked me to pray for them to be healed or pray for someone that needed a miracle. What God used to change this and to increase my faith in praying for others to be healed was love. There were people who I loved who needed me to pray for them and God let me know that because of my love for them I was one that needed to pray. God heard and answered those prayers. That increased my faith. The more I prayed for others to be healed and the more God answered my prayers, the more willing I was to pray.

I remember that at one time I was intimidated about praying for healing for myself. I didn’t have the faith to pray for myself. I could pray for others, but I

couldn’t see that God would do a miracle for me. I had to get deliverance from this attitude and then I began to have faith that God would heal me. I saw that I was His child as dear as others were.

The thing to remember when you step out to pray for others is that the focus isn’t on you. It is on God. It is on the person you are praying for. And it is on God’s Word and His anointing. The devil will be right there to tell you that you aren’t spiritual enough or perfect enough to pray for healing for someone, or to believe God for a miracle for them. Look at God instead of at yourself and know that it is about Him and not about you.

UNITY

Matthew 18:19-20 gives us an important key that will unlock power in our prayers. “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Wow.

When 2 or more agree they shall ask and it shall be done because Jesus is in the midst of us when we gather in His name. The key here is the word agree. When 2 or more gather in agreement, when they are in unity praying as one without disagreements, or strife of any kind. When they are united together and united in one with Jesus, that prayer will be answered.

I want to use an illustration here of something that I have experienced. My neighbor and I have set up a prayer time and we have dedicated ourselves to this time. We have been doing this for several

years and we have only missed a handful of times in all of that time. We have unity between us. We have seen amazing things happen through our prayers. Each of our faith encourages the faith of the other.

God has put a unity between us and that works because of the love He has put between us. We have had to guard that unity and love. The devil has tried many times to break the unity between us, but we have seen by how God answers our prayers the power of that unity. We have valued that unity more than we want our own selves to be heard. We have submitted to one another and to God and the devil can't come between us because we value that unity.

Another example of this is our church. We have a love and a unity between us. We value that unity. I think we value it all the more because we have been through the pain of being in churches where there was strife and wherever flesh ruled. Because of that we value love and unity in the

brethren. Because of that, the Holy Ghost moves in our midst. Our prayers are heard. That is a picture of what the church should be like,

Another thing that we do is we encourage one another's faith. Ephesians 3:12 says, "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."

I want to talk here about another unity that is powerful. I have been praying for things for our country. I would be praying in the Holy Ghost, praying in tongues. I knew that I had agreement with God when I did that. That is an even greater unity that you can have. Then while I was praying I would feel a Holy Ghost explosion. God would show me that there were others that He had praying for that same thing at that same time. Sometimes He has shown me people in different countries praying all together in unity for the same thing because we were praying in tongues in His Spirit.

We are unified as the bride of Christ. We are united in God. Talk about a powerful prayer. That sort of prayer breaks bondage.

THE POWER OF PRAISE

I have mentioned this before but it is a subject that needs to have a whole chapter. Praise unlocks things that are bound. Often when I pray for things at the end of the prayer for that thing, I get caught up in praise and I know that is the finishing touch that unlocks my prayer.

I believe that praise is something that God highly values. Our praise to Him unlocks our prayers as nothing else can. When in the middle of the battle, we stop to praise Him because we believe He will move in our behalf and we trust Him, that is something that touches the heart of God.

One example of the power of praise is found in Acts 16 starting in verse 16. Paul and Silas were in jail because they obeyed God. They weren't just in prison but they were also in stocks winch is a painful thing. At midnight when I am sure their hearts were heavy and I imagine that was a fearful situation, they weren't shaking with fear.

They weren’t shaking their fists up to God because they didn’t deserve to have to go through this. They weren’t throwing in the towel giving up. No. This passage says they were praising God. They knew that He would deliver them and they were singing praise to Him thanking Him and trusting Him.

We read starting in verse 25, about the results of their praise. The foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. How do you unlock the situation that has become like a prison to you? How do you find victory when sure defeat is what you see? You start to praise the Lord. Instead of focusing on the battle, you praise Him. Instead of concentrating on the need you have you focus instead on the One who can and will supply your need. Instead of dwelling on the enemy that you are facing, you dwell on the One that will give you your victory.

Praise the Lord and that will unlock your prayers to be heard.

I want to talk about another side of praise. When God answers your prayer, you can't take the credit. God gave you the unction to pray. His anointing gave you the prayer. His power answered it. What can you take the credit about. Spiritual pride is such a disastrous thing. It is a stench in the nostrils of God. I know a lot of preachers who are caught up in this. They strut about because God answers their prayers.

Then I see the humble servants of God whose focus is on the Lord. When God moves miraculously for them, they put all of the focus on God and none on themselves. Also, if you give God the glory He will honor that.

PUT PRAYER FIRST

Prayer is a walking talking relationship with God. When you focus on that relationship, that will unlock your prayers. God needs to come first in your life to have effective prayers. If your priority is on everything else, you won't even have time to pray. You have to decide if you really want to see the blessings that a powerful prayer life gives you. Do you want to see the lives of those you love change? Do you want to make a difference in your world? Do you want to watch the miracles that happen in the lives of those around you knowing that they were a result of your prayers? How much do you want to see these thing happen? They won't happen if you don't make walking with God your focus. They won't happen if you focus on worldly flesh centered things. They won't happen if you don't have time to pray because your life is so full of other things. You have to put prayer first.

Another side of this thought of pray first is pray before worry. Stress is a killer.

Worry can destroy your mind and soul and your mess up your body. Can you imagine how much it would help you if before you started worrying, you prayed? If before you started doubting that God could or would move for you, that you prayed?

Another side of this thought of pray first is this. Sometimes we wear ourselves out trying to take care of the situation. We are going to handle it ourselves. We are determined to fix it. So we grab hold of it in our flesh and we genuinely make a mess of it that only God can fix. Or we hold on to it and God can't take it out of our hands to fix it. Until you let go of the things, God can't fix it. You need to let it go. Give it up. Give it to Him first. Think of how much better that would be if you would do that. Pray first.

Closing

I hope that this little book about prayer has helped to unlock your prayer life and made you to be a true prayer warrior. We need more prayer warriors. How will our country be turned around? Through the power of prayer. How will your family find victory? Through the power of prayer. How will you find victory in troubled times? Through the power of prayer.