





# Walking in the Spirit

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Sandy Haga



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## Chapter 1. Introduction

The other day, I was thinking about this book, about what I should write, and how I should explain what it meant to walk in the Spirit. I came home from work. It had been a long day with the devil up in my face every minute. One of those days you struggle to get things done. All I could think of was that I wanted to fix a bite to eat and put my feet up. After all, the last time I'd had time to eat was about 8:30 that morning and it was about that time in the evening now. I didn't feel good besides all that. I was trying to catch some kind of something. I just wanted to put my feet up and drown myself in the old "boob tube". God started dealing with me, speaking to me in my heart about something I needed to do instead. Oh, believe me, I wanted to stuff my fingers in my spiritual ears (that's flesh). But I have learned to respect God's leading because of the blessing that it brings, and because I love Him more than I love my own flesh, I listened to Him. (That's walking in the Spirit.) He told me instead of turning on the TV tonight that I needed to turn on the CD player with some good Gospel music. I obeyed Him. I thought to myself, what is so important about listening to music (that's walking in the flesh), but obeyed the Spirit (that's walking in the Spirit). Pretty soon I was caught up in the music and praising the Lord for how good He is. I soon forgot about the battles of the day and about how my body felt (that's walking in the Spirit). Victory started flowing in to my heart, body, and mind. God's Holy Ghost began to pray through me and bind up that sickness that was trying to come against me, (that is definitely walking in the spirit). The chills and aches of the fever that had been pestering me all day soon left. (By the way, I woke up the next morning feeling much better.)

I got my blessing from the hand of God. Then He directed me into doing something that would bless and touch the hearts of others. That's God's way. When we center our thoughts on our own selves, and we receive a blessing, and that's the end of it, sometimes we only get half a victory. When we get victory and turn around and bless others as well, our victory is complete.

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

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

I heard someone tell about a lady that had been caught in one of the Twin Towers Buildings during the 9/11 tragedy. She got up that morning and spent time praying. So she started her day walking in the Spirit instead of the flesh. She was what we call “prayed up”. When the plane struck the building, she grabbed her things and started running. The other people in her room asked where she was going. She told them, “God told me to run and to run in this direction.” They answered, “If He told you to do that, then we are behind you.” Over 30 people were saved that day because they followed a Spirit filled, Spirit led woman. What about those around you? Is the example of your life leading them to safety? Do you daily have victory, in spite of your battles? Do people see in your life a direction that they long to take? You can be that kind of person, you know. God’s Spirit is powerful enough to provide you with all you need. He has the peace, strength, love, joy, hope, victory, faith, and long-suffering, all you need. I guess another illustration that we can find in this true story is the destruction that following flesh can bring. We all know that not everyone was saved. Why? Even if they were Christians, were they prayed up and in the Spirit? Were they listening to His voice that day, or the voices of others? Were they hindered by bondages in their life so that they weren’t in an obedient relationship with Him on that day?

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

1. Strife (“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions....” I Corinthians 3:3).
2. Not understanding or receiving the things of God (“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” I Corinthians 2:14).
3. Spiritual death (For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” Romans 7:5).
4. Much more.

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

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

that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Let God's Spirit rise up and be victorious in you.

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

Walking in the Spirit is a personal thing between you and God. It can't be between you and someone else, and God. A lot of people try to do it that way, and they fail miserably, and then they usually make it hard on the people they are trying to follow. I've talked to so many people that tried on their own to be what they thought was spiritual. Many times their life was based on an idea they had gotten from other people who they thought were living spiritual lives. They did their best in the flesh to live up to the spiritual expectations of people around them. They weren't able to do so. The devil easily defeated them, before they got started. What was the problem? It was all about themselves and other people. Where was God? Where was His Spirit? You cannot perform a ritual on the outside and be something for someone on the outside, and make all that be real at all. This thing has to come from the heart. It has to come from a real, everyday relationship with Jesus. He has to be **number 1** for real in your heart, or it won't work. He has to be your love, your guide, your hope, your peace and joy, and your focus. Then you won't be doing it for others, you'll be doing it for Him. It will be real then. You can't walk in the Spirit unless you want to do so enough to commit yourself to Jesus. If you don't know Him personally, you won't really want to walk in the Spirit in your heart.

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

## Chapter 2. That One Spoiled Brat

I can tell you a story, and it won't be fiction, about one spoiled brat. This brat wanted everything his own way. He was so bad that he could not even see that he was bad at all, and that is pretty bad. Everything had to be just so. This brat couldn't go out of the way for anyone. He had a set direction in his mind and heart, and that was where he was going regardless of who needed what. He only gave God the leftovers of his time, his thoughts, and his energies. He knew just what he wanted from life, and that was what he was going to get. He couldn't see that he needed to change. He wanted to be the center and everybody had to focus on him or he felt like he was left out. If things didn't go his way, if he wasn't in control, he really would get shaken up inside. He was so afraid that he would get gobbled up by other people, or just by the battles of life that he constantly struggled to hold on to his identity. This made him have a contentious spirit, always battling with everybody around him and even with God, just to make a stand to be himself. He couldn't flow with anybody. He could only go in one direction, and that direction was his. What about love? Oh, forget that. You have to give in to love, you have to yield, and you can get hurt. He always shut himself up behind a brick wall so that no one could get to him. Even though he professed to serve God, it was not because he loved God, because when we can't love other people, we can't love and receive His love either. He served God because he was afraid not to. Not because he committed himself to God and turned lose of himself in God's love. He always was headed in the wrong direction some how. When he tried to do things for people, they always blew up in his face somehow, because his motivations were all wrong. Finally he gave up really trying and just made an attempt on the outside to look good. Life became playing games with those around him. After all that is what a Christian life is, isn't it, doing what people expect a Christian to do?

Well, have you guessed who that spoiled brat is? Sound familiar? It is our flesh. Maybe not all of this description fits.

But you may as well admit it, some of it does. We aren't that great in the natural. Our righteousness is, at its best filthy rags. We don't like to face ourselves at our worst, and we don't like to admit our faults. But if we want to walk in the Spirit, we have to understand our flesh. We have to see ourselves as we really are, and that is the number one incentive to give it up, and do it God's way. I used to get really upset when someone suggested that the best I could do was filthy rags. Until God put me through some things that, like we say in the south, "took the sass right out of me". Then I understood that it was so. Who says our best in the natural is just like filthy rags to God? God says so in Isaiah 64:6, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." In the light of God's perfection, the best that we are, the best that we can give Him, on our own without Him, is just filthy rags. If we are really honest, there are probably more than a few of the characteristics of that spoiled brat in the above story that we can relate too. We are basically not much. There is no way that we can on our own become what we want to in God, no matter how hard we try.

Paul faced this problem in Romans 7:18-25. Read this section of scripture. I haven't quoted all of this section of scripture. Please get out your Bible and read it. That is a good habit to get into when you read this book, and any other. Read the book with your Bible out. Read the whole section of scripture around the verses that are mentioned. This will add a lot to your reading, and it will be a habit that can definitely enrich your life. Here are some of the highlights of this scripture passage. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

We all know that feeling. God knew that we would. God knew how we would be. He made a way for us to overcome. He sent His Son to die for our sins so that we could be forgiven.



But He didn't stop there. He then sent His Spirit to live in our hearts, so that we could, through His being inside us, live victorious lives in and through Him. Galatians 2:22 says, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." We are able to overcome our flesh because Jesus is inside of us. We can overcome our flesh because of the faith of the Son of God, Who loves us. Notice it says His faith. Sometimes we don't have the faith that we need to overcome. But if we learn to let His Spirit rule inside of us and yield our flesh to God's Spirit in us, then we can have His faith. And believe me His faith is all we need.

Have you ever thought that Jesus lived in the same kind of body, flesh just like yours? He was the Son of God, but He was also the son of Mary. He was the great, great, and ever so many more greats, grandson of David. How did He overcome His flesh? He didn't sin. He let the Spirit of God in Him overcome His flesh and lived, and died, in total victory. He left the message in His Word that we can do the same. He didn't settle for His flesh. He knew that the wages of flesh is death, and knew the defeat that His giving in to His flesh would bring. He committed himself and submitted even to the death of the cross. There He died so that you could live. He died so that the Holy Spirit could come inside you. He died so that you could also live in victory.

So what will it be? What about that spoiled brat in you, old mister flesh? Who do you want to rule your life, him or Jesus? You have to make up your mind and not waver in it. You have to decide. Who will hang on the cross that you have at the center of your life, and your will? Will Jesus, or will that old spoiled brat?

### **Chapter 3.**

## **Putting That Spoiled Brat Where He Belongs**

So you have decided to put that spoiled brat where he belongs and let the Spirit of God control your life. You must have because you are still reading. You have seen that the wages this flesh reaps is death and you have chosen life, and life more abundant. So what comes next? Some religions teach that to crucify your flesh and to get control over it, you have to live in great self-denial, literally starving yourself into submission. Some teach you have to inflict pain on yourself to get in touch with your inner self. Some teach that you have to find your karma, your spirit person, through meditation. Some teach that you don't want to stifle your self; you should let the outer man live free and do what feels good so that you have freedom. What is the truth? As always, if you want to know the truth about how to live a victorious life, go to God's Word. The Bible teaches that when we are saved, we are no longer alone, that we have Jesus in our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost. (Colossians 1:27, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.") The first step to walking in the Spirit comes when you realize that when you are saved, you have Jesus in you through the power of God's Spirit. You also have a flesh man who tries to override and control the Spirit of God in you. That flesh man is you in the natural. You have to realize that you are your own worse enemy, and you have to want to do something about it. You have to realize that with God's help you can do so. Then you have to be willing to submit your flesh and let the Spirit of God control you and your life. (I Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.")

You have to be willing to submit yourself to God and commit yourself and your life to Him. You have to realize that old number one can't be number one any more. You have to recognize the problems this brings into your life. You have to declare that from here on out Jesus is number one in your life.

He is number one above your own self, your own desires, and your own life. The first step in doing this is to fall in love with Jesus. Get close enough to Him so that He can touch your life, and you can see Him the way He is. Every day I realize how wonderful it is to serve Him. I'll see Him working in the lives of the people around me, and in my circumstances, and again I am proud to serve such a wonderful God. Nothing can bring you into the kind of submission to give up yourself other than the love of God. I think that is the number one reason so many have such a hard time walking in the Spirit. They don't know His love for them. Deep down in their hearts, they are afraid to submit to God, because they really don't trust Him. They doubt that He will work in their behalf, and they doubt that He loves them enough to do so. No wonder they can't submit. If we aren't careful we can lose that first love.

Romans Chapter 8 is the chapter that is filled with teaching about walking in the Spirit, and the dangers of walking in the flesh. The chapter closes with one of the greatest passages of scriptures about God's love. Now would be a good time to reread that chapter. Verses 35-39 tells us, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 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." What greater love can we find? Stay close to Jesus. He is God's love in person. Don't let anything or anyone separate you from God's love. The only thing that can do this is you yourself.

Here are some more verses about God's love. John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His life for His friends." 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." John 3:16, "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.” I John 3:1, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...” Last but not least, here is God’s will for you. Ephesians 3:17-19 (another great place to read). “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” We serve a perfect God Who loves us this much. He wants the best for His children, and you are one of them if you have accepted His salvation. Why not submit and do it His way? What better way can you find! Is our way better? Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” We struggle in so many ways to prove that we are able and capable to control our own life. In less than 40 words, God proves we aren’t.

We have to realize that we want God to control our life, then we have to realize that there is no way that we can do this on our own. There is absolutely no way for human nature to submit and allow God to control. Sorry, that isn’t human nature. We can’t on our own put that spoiled brat where he belongs. So what is the answer? Do we just keep on doing our own thing, excusing our sins, until we face judgment? Have you tried to walk in the Spirit on your own? Have you tried to live a Christian life in the flesh? Have you failed? Then you know what I am saying. The only way that we can walk in the Spirit is to allow God to crucify our flesh. We have to be willing to do it, and then He has to do that work in us. Believe me, He knows how to break the will of our flesh. He has been doing this sort of thing for a long time. We can’t break our own self. This walk in God has to be a spiritual walk. It has to be in the supernatural, not natural. We have to believe in God to do His perfect work in and through us and trust in Him that He will do it. Galatians 2:20 ends with these words, “...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.” That’s how we do it. In the chapters ahead we’ll talk more about how God does this work in us, and our part in it all.

The key word in the above scripture is faith. There are two parts to faith. We have to know that God is “...able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” (Ephesians 3:20) We also have to know that He will do it for us. That is where trust comes in. God promises this for those that trust Him, “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.” (Proverbs 29:25) The devil works overtime in bringing fear, doubt, and unbelief against God’s children. The devil will work overtime to convince you that you are not worthy of God’s love. He’ll try to convince you that you cannot walk in the Spirit because you are not able to. He condemns us over and over for every little failure that we make, and then some. He binds us up using even those around us that we love the most, to make it seem we are unlovable. He brings constant defeat against our minds. He blinds us from seeing that the promises in God’s Word are for us as much as they are for others. He makes God’s love seem so far away, something that we can never reach. He blinds us from knowing that we are God’s children, paid for by the precious price of His Son’s own blood. He stops us from seeing our inheritance as Sons of God, and that one of the inheritances we have is the right and the power to bind him from working in our lives.

We read in I John 4:4, “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.” We are God’s children, paid for by the precious price of His Son’s own blood. The devil shakes at God’s children who know who they are, and who are determined to walk in the freedom that God has given them. The devil wants us to be off-centered, out of focus. He tries to get us to focus on who we are in the flesh. He tries to make us think that God’s love and His Word and promises for us are based on our having to be perfect to attain them. He gets us to focus on our flesh, and the defeat that the flesh brings. He doesn’t want you to find the power of that Spirit man inside of you. We become bound because instead of looking at God’s perfection, we keep our eyes on ourselves.

We keep our eyes on our own imperfection. Instead of looking at what God is perfecting in us, he causes us to focus on what God hasn't yet finished. We get out of focus and start centering on ourselves instead of focusing on God. This is walking in the flesh. This will all lead to our destruction and defeat. To overcome satan we have to walk in the Spirit, and not the flesh. We have to be centered and focused on God's Spirit in us. We have to lay down the flesh to let Jesus rise up in us and we will see that it doesn't matter who we are—God's Word and His love works. We'll talk more later about how to overcome the devil.

No, hang on. I haven't gotten totally off focus. Believe it or not it is all coming together in this paragraph. I have been convincing you that you have to put that spoiled brat where he belongs and I have been letting you know that you can overcome through Christ in you. That is the beginning to walking in the Spirit. That isn't easy, like we said before. Our flesh definitely doesn't want to be put down. Our flesh wants to be comfortable. We don't want to give up our way. We want to be the center of attention. We don't want to take a back seat and let anyone control our life, God or anyone else. We want to have things go the way we expect them to go without sudden changes. We have to come to the realization that when our flesh controls, this can only lead to defeat and failure. We have to realize that Jesus hung on that cross once already. Now it is our turn. When we do, God can start that work in our life of bringing our flesh under subjection. Then we can start to understand what it means to walk in the Spirit. Let that spoiled brat in you be put where he belongs.

## Chapter 4. Proving Us Wrong

One of the hardest things I think for Christians to realize is that one of the main jobs of the Holy Ghost is to prove us wrong. To get anywhere with God, we have to face who we are, and our weaknesses. We have to face our weaknesses and give them to God, for Him to be able to fix them. One of the greatest hindrances we can have is not facing them. We have to allow God to convict us. Today's church world has left the power of conviction out of their midst. The Spirit of God is no longer there to bring conviction to the hearts of the church, let alone to the hearts of the sinners. We don't want to be made to feel uncomfortable. Conviction is not comfortable. We have to realize that no matter how uncomfortable it is, we cannot live upright before God without it. We have to see ourselves as we are, and that is not comfortable. We are in sad need of letting God rule our life, every last one of us. I don't care how good we think we are, day to day, we are in need of change. We are as filthy rags in the eyes of a very perfect, righteous, and holy God. (Isaiah 64:6, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags....") We can't do it right on our own. I don't care how wonderful we think we are, or how bad we think we are, we can neither deserve, or not deserve God's love and His grace. That's why it is grace. Romans 3:23-25, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." You see, we have all sinned. The very nature of our flesh that we inherited from Adam and Eve is sin. But God didn't stop with things being that way. He made a way that we could be forgiven. He also made a way for us to overcome. God's grace is a marvelous thing. We have to believe in His grace. We have to see ourselves as we are, then we have to accept His grace. That is the beauty of conviction. Without conviction, we can never see our need to be forgiven. We will never repent, and because of this, we will never be forgiven.

We will never be forgiven from our sins. We will never be able to find His marvelous grace. We'll talk more in a later chapter about the how wonderful conviction is.

We have to realize that we are wrong, not most of the time, but all of the time, in our flesh. Day to day we struggle with ourselves, with the people around us, and with our circumstances and eventually all we can do on our own is fail. Still we want to prove that we are right and our way is the way it should be. We don't want to give up control. We even try to control those around us in some way so that they can't break up our little world and cause us hurt. Out of this need to control comes the jealousies and bitterness that destroy churches and ministries. If we can't do it any other way, we puff up ourselves and put everybody else at our feet so that they can't get to us. Out of that is born self-righteousness that makes us untouchable by anyone, and if God doesn't deliver us from that, even untouchable by the Spirit of God and His love. We live in thousands of little prisons that keep us defeated daily by how we think and how we feel. We can't give God those circumstances and people because down in our hearts we haven't come to the place where we can trust Him and we get out of our flesh enough to. Surrendering someone to God has to be done in the Spirit, not in the flesh. We struggle in our relationships with others, because we aren't letting God be Lord of these. We become bitter because they are not being like what we think they should be like. We never realize that if we would just release our own heart to God and let Him control our thoughts and feelings, we could release these people to God. Then He could be Lord in their life as well as be Lord in ours. That is walking in the Spirit. But we won't let go of the flesh.

The flesh is so full of negative feelings and thoughts. We can think anything that we want or choose to, but that does not make it the truth. We can feel anything about anyone or anything any way that we want to, but that doesn't mean that is the healthy and victorious way to feel. Our emotions are so bound by our flesh, and so easily accessed by the devil. He delights in attacking our minds and hearts and bombarding them with anything that he chooses to put in them so that we become bound. Only by walking in the Spirit can we be set free. We have to choose.



Do we want our minds or our emotions to rule us, or do we want the truth of the Spirit of God to control us. Do we want His word to control us? Our flesh with its emotions and thoughts, the devil, all our enemies, all these things can bind us. They can bind us up where we can't see God, His love, or His Word full of power for our life. And there we sit. That is walking in the flesh. Then the Holy Spirit comes on the scene and begins to prove how wrong we are. That is the beginning of walking in the Spirit. Then the Spirit of God begins to break us.

I have had more than a few battles in my life. In some of them I despaired of losing my life. When I was going through them, I was constantly rebuking the devil, who I knew just had to be behind what was going on. Or so I thought. When I was on the ground, flat on my back, and looking up, God would step in. Then I could see that He had been behind it all the time. I knew that the devil was only able to take the liberties in my life that God had given him (unless I myself had given the devil control). I knew that God was at work in me, putting me through the fire, testing and proving my heart, trying my faith. Here is another section of scripture to read, I Peter 1:3-7. I am putting here verse 7, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried in the fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." He also breaks our self-will by bringing us to a place where we have nothing left but Him. Then, and only then, can we see what it means to give Him total control in our life. He tries our heart to see that we really mean business, and then He brings to that place where He is Lord.

I was blessed not long ago to spend a month taking care of my aunt who was someone I loved very much who was dying with cancer. I can without a doubt say that was one of the worst times of my life. I can also say that during that time I received more from God, and grew more than at any time I have ever been through. I wouldn't trade that experience for anything in my life, even the best of times when everything was great. Now you may be thinking that this was one of the best times in my life because God won the victory over cancer and she was healed. It was a good time in my life because everything turned out perfectly.

No, this may sound strange but hear me out, I really don't think that would have changed my life as much as what happened. We serve a mighty powerful God who has promised us that even our worst times can turn into miracles. (Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.") I know without a shadow of doubt that this verse is true. Why? Because I have been through the fire. I have been through fires that literally broke my flesh, so that I had nothing left but God. I have been in places where only God could fix the battle, and when He moved, I knew that it was Him and only Him. I have walked with Him, and I know what He will do for me tomorrow, because yesterday, He was there with me. In this very difficult time in my life, I again learned what this means.

One of the blessings that came out of the fire with me was this. When my aunt lay dying, for days all she could do was swallow water dripped out of the end of straw. She had no strength left. She praised the Lord for each sip of water that she took. When all she had was strength to move her little hand that was just skin and bones up and wave it in praise, that was what she did. She did it until she went into the sleep when she died. I learned something that changed my life forever. We serve a mighty big and wonderful God. We don't have to be afraid of anything the devil or this world has. When we as children of God can lay in the chains of cancer, dying, and still find the victory in God to praise Him, what in this world do we have to fear. What can defeat us, other than we ourselves? I also learned that death is a precious thing. It is hard to watch someone grow helpless inch by inch and have their life slowly taken away. But through this I gained a life-changing glimpse, an understanding of what it means to surrender to God, and its importance.

My aunt fought death in a tremendous battle that went on for weeks. Then I watched God deal with her to surrender. He was her strength to be able to help her with this last and greatest surrender that she would have to make. First she had to surrender the issues of her life that had to be resolved. I watched her go through a time when she had to let God's Spirit do its final conviction, when He groomed and made ready His bride.

Then she went through a time when I knew she was interceding in her spirit for people that she had burdens. How did I know that this was so? Because one by one, as she surrendered them to God, He worked miracles. Then I watched her surrender herself totally to the hands of God. One night she passed away. I was asleep myself when she died. The quickening power of the Holy Ghost woke me up from a sound sleep. The Holy Ghost was so strong in the room. I knew before anyone told me that her last surrender was done. I caught a glimpse that night of God's glory that waited for her on the other side. Life is a succession of surrenders, and the last and greatest surrender leads to our last and greatest reward.

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

It is human nature to lie to ourselves about our shortcomings, our sin, who we are. This is so wrong. If we do this we will never let God fix the things in us that are wrong. It is so much easier to talk ourselves into thinking everything is fine when it really isn't. That is why so often people around us can see what is wrong with us before we can. We don't want to see. Thank God that the conviction power of God won't let us stay that way. Thank God that the Holy Ghost knows how to prove us wrong, and knows how to bring us to the place of surrender to Him. My prayer is this. "God, prove me wrong in You. Love away my struggle to control. Let me roll on the ground in defeat if that is what it takes to bring me to the place of surrender, so that I can find what it means to find victory in YOU. Put me on the potter's wheel. Break me and make me into something that you can use. I'm tired of my old flesh and its natural ways, and I am ready for the supernatural. God, I am starting to surrender. Finish that work in me. I can't wait to see what I will then be."

## **Chapter 5.**

### **The Baptism of the Holy Ghost**

Trying to walk in the Spirit without having the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is like trying to race a sports car that has a model T engine. You just won't have the power to win the race. I grew up not hearing about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. I grew up in an area that had been blinded and bound to think that this gift of the Spirit was not real. I was taught that when you were saved, you got all of God's Spirit that there was. I was taught that after salvation, you had it all. I grew up not knowing a thing at all about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Through a miracle, God brought me into contact with a church that believed in the Baptism of the Spirit. After I received it for myself, no one could tell me that it wasn't real. It was the key that brought me victory over a life that had been bound by sin, drugs, and alcohol. The devil had worked overtime in much of my life to destroy me because he knew that I would one day serve God. Maybe you are going through the same thing. Maybe it seems like every time you try to get up, you get knocked back down. You know in your heart that you should walk up-right before God, but every time you take one step forward it seems you get knocked three back. You may be about to give up in defeat, which is exactly what the devil wants you to do. It may be that he sees that up ahead, you will bust his little kingdom wide open in some area. You may be sitting there thinking that it is hopeless. That there is no use to keep trying. You won't make it. The devil has you where he wants you. You think it is because you are worthless. It may be because you are getting ready to rise up and be what God has chosen for you to be. It is your choice. If you give up now, you will never know. Maybe the key for you to overcome is the same as it was for me-the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

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

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

Now over 25 years later, I can say that no wonder the devil tried to keep me blinded. I have been working full time for the Lord for over 25 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. We need to come to the place where we can say, God, I have decided to do it your way. Come and fill me up to the brim. When that happens we are ready for the Baptism of God's Spirit. He fills us up all the way with His Spirit. That is what the Baptism of God's Spirit is all about.

Here is what God has to say about it in His Word. We first read about it in Acts Chapter 2. Here we read that the disciples were all gathered in one mind and accord. In verse 4 it tells us, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." What was the outcome of this? These few who were hiding in fear after the crucifixion became bold enough and so full of God's Spirit that they turned the world upside down. Without the Baptism, they would not have endured to start the church, and keep the Gospel that was committed to us today. Verse 41 tells of the outcome of that day, "Then they that gladly received His word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." This didn't stop here. We read about this throughout Acts. In Chapter 8, verses 14-17, these men received the gifts of the Holy Ghost. In Chapter 10, verses 44-48, the Holy Ghost is again on the scene filling the Gentiles. In Acts 19:1-6, these men also received the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they had believed. These men were already saved, but they had something in addition to salvation that they were about to receive. They answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." In verse 6 the Holy Ghost came on them; and then they spake with tongues and prophesied. I think of myself.

I think of how I was 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 the Baptism of the Holy Ghost through the prayers of others, or you can receive it through your own prayers. It is a gift of God that He has given us to empower us against the battle of satan. It is a gift that gives us boldness in our witness, like it did those on that first day. It is for you. I have heard many people argue against the Baptism of the Holy Ghost being real. They argue that it is not for us today. When I hear this I know several things about those people. I know that they are ignorant of God’s Word. In Acts 2:38-39 we read, “Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” I would say that means us, too. I also know when I hear people argue that the Baptism is not for us today, that these people do not know God. I know that He wants the best for His children. He wants us to overcome and be victorious. I also know that we live in the last days, which has to be one of the hardest times to live on the earth. Why would God give a gift to help the early disciples, tell us about it, and then deny us the right to have it or make it so that it is not available to us who need it the most? That is not the God I know.

I think that one of the things that hinders people in receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is that it comes along with the gift of speaking in tongues. For many, that is a stumbling block. This is because the devil wants to scare people away from our being able to pray in the Spirit, or pray in tongues. What it means when we pray in tongues is that the Spirit of God prays through us in His own language. He is praying directly through us.

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

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

One of the greatest stories I have ever heard about the power in the prayer of the Holy Ghost is this. The Holy Ghost moved on a man and began interceding, praying directly 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 interceded by speaking in tongues through those who had the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The situation was corrected, the life was saved, the soul was saved, the person was delivered, or whatever need there was, it was met. There is no prayer that is more powerful than the prayer of the Holy Ghost Himself. If you do not have the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, ask God for this. Seek it. The Bible says that when we seek God, or His gifts, we will find them. Who says so? Jesus. Luke 11:9, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Read this section of scripture through verse 13. In verse 13 we read, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"



## **Chapter 6.**

### **What To Do and What Not To Do**

One of the best illustrations I have heard about how to let the Spirit side of you rule in your life is this one. A man had two dogs. One grew stronger and stronger and the other grew weaker. Someone asked him how he got the strong one to be so much stronger. He answered that the one who was the strongest was the one he fed the most. You have a Spirit side (Jesus in you through the Holy Ghost). You also have the old man, which is your flesh man. The one that you feed the most will be the one that controls your life. That will be true whether you mean it to be true, whether you want it to be true, or not. Here is an example. Let's say your day is so full, you have no time left for prayer. Maybe once a week you open your Bible. If you have a minute to relax, you choose to unwind in front of the TV. Soon a minute of watching turns into a couple of hours. All that junk from there goes into your mind and spirit. When you have a minute to read, you pick up the latest novel instead of your Bible. Never mind the bad parts, you can ignore them and shut them out. (Hate to tell you but it doesn't work that way. Just like what we eat becomes a part of our physical body, what we take into our spirit, our mind and heart, becomes a part of us as well.) Most of your conversation with others has nothing to do with God. Your day is filled with talking about the weather, the latest world's problems, what you had last night for supper, or what you are doing after work. You are almost embarrassed to talk about God. Religious things are private. Instead of listening to Gospel on the radio on the way to work, you switch on whatever happens to come on. Which are you feeding, the Spirit side, or your flesh side? Which will be the strongest in your life? Which will lead you when you need guidance and you don't have time to stop and think? When that crisis comes, will the daily strength that you have gained from spending time in God's Spirit be there to strengthen you? When you need that extra love for those that are around you, will God's Spirit be there to love through you, or will your flesh be in control? When someone you care for is in need of prayer, will you be able to have confidence in your own prayers?

Will you have confidence in your prayers or will you have to run find someone to pray? When the devil comes in like a roaring lion to destroy you, are you standing in the power of God's Spirit and the promises of His Word? Who are you feeding the most?

If you know that you are not feeding the Spirit, then this is what to do. Realize your mistake. Repent, because these things are sin. Letting anything come between you and God is a sin. Ask Him to strengthen and help you in these areas. Wake up first thing in the morning and start your day in scripture reading or prayer. Proverbs 8:17 says, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." Another key, fall in love with Jesus all over again. Renew your relationship with Him. Remember what it's like to be in love. I get lonely for Him if I haven't talked to Him. Psalm 42:1-2 says, "As the hart (deer) panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" David loved his Lord. All throughout the Psalms we read how he longed to be with Him. We need to have a heart like David, in love with the Lord and longing for Him. Then our day will never get too busy for Him.

Another thing that will help is fasting. Fasting is starving your body for the things that it craves, which is namely food. Fasting is mentioned several times in the Bible. Many times in the Old Testament, God called His people to fast and repent. In Joel 1:14 they were called on to fast. In Matthew 6, Jesus talks about fasting. Examples of some of the men who fasted are: Moses, Israel, Elijah, Ezra, Daniel, Paul, and even Jesus. There are several ways that you can fast. One is to completely go without eating for a day, or even three days. Some people go on what is called a Daniel fast. Daniel went without eating any type of rich or sweet food, or any type of meat, for 40 days. You may choose to fast by laying down something that you like, and not eating it for a period of time, or even for good. Fasting helps you to put your flesh under subjection and let it know whose boss. We'll talk more about other types of commitments that you can make that will strengthen you in walking in the Spirit in a later chapter. When you fast, be sure to drink plenty of liquids. Also, when you go off of a fast, don't dive in and devour a meal.

Don't go in and order a 10-course meal first thing. Go easy and spare your system. Also, it is good to eat lots of fruits and grains before and after a fast. Another benefit of a fast is a very special benefit that Jesus Himself tells us about in Matthew 17:20-21. The disciples were upset because they were not able to have authority over a demon that they were praying out of someone. Jesus answered them when they questioned why this was so by saying, "Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." There will be some devils that will pester you that you have to fast to take authority over in your life. I don't mean that you can be possessed by the devil, because the devil can't live where the Spirit of God lives. But the devil can bind you and he can bind others you love, and the circumstances around both of you. By fasting you bring out the big guns and do serious Spiritual warfare.

So we have covered some to do's and some not to do's. Next we'll talk about how not to walk in the Spirit in the flesh, and what that means.

## Chapter 7. Walking in the Spirit in the Flesh

When I first started trying to walk in the Spirit I would try really hard to do things right. I just knew that I had it all worked out. I was doing my best at it. I read all the books and did the same things that everybody else did. I copied the people who I thought were being spiritual. I was doing everything except the most important step. I had to allow God to do this work in me. I had to start by realizing that I couldn't do it, and by allowing Him to break me. He was not doing this work in my life—I was. I kept getting frustrated with the people around me who weren't walking in the Spirit and got puffed up at them. Then too I would go through times when I would mess up. I thought that since I was walking in the Spirit, I wasn't allowed to make mistakes, and I was supposed to be perfect. When I made mistakes, I would either excuse them away, justify them, or blame them on everybody else, or on my circumstances. Or I would hit the deep darkness of despair, because I thought that I must not have God at all if I was walking in His Spirit and making mistakes. I wasn't old enough in God to understand that, even when you walk in the Spirit, you still have your flesh. Now I know that I did those things because I really wasn't walking in the Spirit at all. I was doing what I thought I should, and what it seemed like others thought I should, but I had not yielded myself to God at all. I had not allowed Him to break me. All I really had was a mess of all me. Now I know that by walking in the Spirit, we don't get puffed up at those around us who aren't walking where we walk. We won't help them understand that way. Now I know that one of the fruits that you have when you are walking in the Spirit is love. This doesn't mean a human, superficial love, but the life changing love of God. When you are in the Spirit, you will love even your enemies. And you will love yourself. You will not be centered in your own perfection, or in your lack of it, you will be centered in the perfection of God.

One of the first things that God started working in me when I started being hungry to walk in Him was His love. This wasn't a love that was dependant on who was being loved.

His love for me was not dependent on my perfection, and how I deserved it. It was not a love that would fade when it got rough to love someone because they weren't acting pretty. It was a love that went through the fire for someone until they could grab hold of it for themselves. God's love is rough to have sometimes. It is a love that will hold on to someone even when they are giving you a rough time. It is a love that enables you to go to the supermarket and see the pain on people's faces, people that you don't even know, and weep and pray and moan for their hurt. You can't sit in an ivory tower yourself, afraid to reach out to a lost and dying world when you are walking in the Spirit. God's love will rise up in you and compel you to reach out. God's love will definitely make you uncomfortable. It will demand obedience. It will put you in places that you wouldn't go on your own. It will change your life. When you are walking in the Spirit, God's love will be what you feel for His people. Jealousies, strife, bitterness, and all those flesh things will fade when God turns on the light of His love in your heart. God's love will humble you and you won't feel puffed-up at all. Because you will know His love and His mercy for you, you will feel it for others.

We also have to remember that part of God's love is His justice and His mercy. His judgment is not something contrary to His love. It is a part of it. Rather His love demands judgment and righteousness. So many people say that God loves them, so they can do anything they won't to. He won't judge them because He loves them. On the contrary, He judges us because He loves us. His love is a right and righteous love. His love is a just love. He is not weak in His love. He is not a push over who lets us get our way because He loves us. His love is much stronger than that. His love is so great that it demands obedience from us. Weak love, man's love, is the kind that says I love you no matter what you do, so go ahead and be yourself, no matter how bad. God's love wants only the best for us and that can only come from obeying Him. In that light how can you say that because God loves us, how can He judge us?

The other thing that I did when I first started walking in the Spirit was thinking that I had to be perfect. This was a sign that I had been trying to do it on my own. I couldn't do it.

I really thought I had to be perfect, that I had to be religious. Those who think that they are perfect are pretty far removed from God's truth. They are definitely in the flesh. The Spirit of God (and His Word) convicts us. If we allow God to work in our lives the Spirit of God will sort out our heart and our motives. It will literally tear us apart, moving out of us the bad, and restoring the good. Hebrews 4:12 tells us, "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." When we walk with God, nothing is hidden. The only perfection we can find is found when we admit how weak we are, and we admit that only by walking in the Spirit can we find any perfection at all. Walking in the Spirit really leaves us free to be ourselves. We are free in the work that God is doing in us. We don't have to be what we think people want us to be. We are required to be ourselves and free in what God is doing in us. What a relief. When God sets us free, we are free indeed. John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." God will deliver you from the weaknesses that you have, and turn them into His strengths. When the Spirit of God is around, He will convict and deliver you. He knows you from the inside out. He will change you to be in His likeness. Philippians 1:6 tells us, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." When He does convict you there will be no condemnation. That is the difference between God's conviction, and man's. We cannot do all this on our own in the flesh. Don't make the same mistake I did. Don't try to walk in the Spirit in the flesh. It won't work, and all it leads to is defeat. Then you will begin to think that this way of life doesn't work after all, which is just what the devil wants you to think. Let God's Holy Ghost do this work in you. Let Him break you.

## Chapter 8.

### The Dangers of Trying Too Hard

When I first started learning about walking in the Spirit (and many times since then), I was guilty of something that trips up a lot of people—trying too hard. One of the enemy's biggest weapons is using us against ourselves. Let me explain. We want really badly to do our best for God. We want to do our best for those around us that we are serving God with. We want to do our best to win the victory so that those we love can find it. We want the people we love to serve God. We want these things with all our heart, and this is the way that it is supposed to be. We love God, and we love those around us, and we want to do our best. The devil is a master at using our love for God and our desire to do our best for Him against us. He does this by causing us to try too hard. We overdo things. We miss the mark because we shoot on past it. We do this because, instead of walking in the Spirit, we are trying to do these things in the flesh. When we are in the Spirit, we are laid back, letting God take control. God never misses the mark. Trying too hard actually stops us from being able to walk in the Spirit. When we are trying too hard, we are pushing our flesh forward. God has no room to come in. We are just full of ourselves. When I try really hard to do my best at walking in the Spirit I am already doomed for failure.

To really walk in the Spirit we have to put ourselves in neutral and let God have control. Another mistake we can make is trying to make ourselves humble and beaten down so that God can rise up in us. That doesn't work either. We are still full of ourselves. The only change is that we are a beaten down self. The devil will even encourage this. He will come against you and tell you that you are only trying to lift yourself up, and that is wrong. He will cause you to think anything to stop you from finding victory. Tell him to shut up. You are walking in the victory that God has established for His children, that Jesus died for, and that the Holy Ghost inside of you longs for. Yes, we have to be broken, but that breaking is not something that we ourselves can do. God has to break us. We have to submit to Him for this to happen in our lives. It just can't be only halfway.

If it is halfway, in the end we will just have bitterness instead of victory because God didn't work this out in our life. Remember, walking in the Spirit is letting God walk through you. When you try too hard, this is not possible, even though your motives in trying are right. Sometimes, too, we try too hard because of the pride that our flesh packs along with it. We are too proud to mess up. We are too proud to submit and let God break us. Flesh carries an awesome pride with it. God can humble the proud.

One of my favorite places in the scripture is the story of Nebuchadnezzar found in Daniel Chapter 4. Please read it, I can't put the whole section of scripture here, but it is great. Read the whole chapter. Now this guy at the beginning of the story had it made. Verse 4 tells us, "I, Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace." He had everything at his control. He had power and authority, and all that he desired was at his command. When he writes this, though, he doesn't sound like the people who have all these kinds of things usually sound like. I have known some people who were rich and famous and had the world at their command. These people knew what it was like to have people flock to find their favor. If they were to write a chapter in the Bible, it sure wouldn't start in the same way that Nebuchadnezzar started his. He wrote in verses 1-3, "Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth Peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are His signs! And how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation." He makes it very plain that He is not writing this to show how great he is, but to show how great God is. His thought is not about himself, his purpose is not himself. He is empty of himself and filled with the praises of God. Does this sound like someone has had everything at his command? This is not what we expect from the rich and powerful. What happened to make this man the very unusual person that he became? He didn't start out that way.

Let's backtrack a little bit in Neb's story. In verse 30 he said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my



majesty?” He actually set himself up as the creator of this kingdom, and that by his might it was established. How wrong can anyone be? God knew that even though this man was proud enough to speak of himself almost as if he were God, that there was something in him to serve God. God didn’t leave Nebuchadnezzar the same way that He found Him. When God comes on the scene, changes will always take place. Read the chapter and see what happened to Nebuchadnezzar. God literally made the man to be like a beast in the field. In verse 34 we read, “And at the end of the days (of his having been made as a beast in the field) I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.” The last verse of the chapter concludes with a statement that will change your heart, “Those that walk in pride He is able to abase.” If you have read the chapter, then you know what happened to change this man. God broke him. The end of the story finds him to be a changed and victorious man, whose life was so changed that he was full of praise for the God that broke him. The first thing that he did after his senses returned was praise God. That would take a lot. But God had done a lot in him. Then God restored to him the things that he lost, and gave him more as well. Verse 36 tells us, “At the same time my reason returned unto; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me, and my counselors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.” Our flesh is proud. We need to be humble and broken. When we are, then God can use us, and excellent majesty will be added unto us. We can’t do it; no matter how hard we try. There is nothing good in us to be able to live a supernatural life on our own. That is not what God intended. He knew we couldn’t. So He made a way. If Nebuchadnezzar can praise God for breaking Him, we can do the same. Whatever He does may not be as severe. But it will get the job done. Praise God that we serve One Who knows how to abase the proud. He knows how to break us, and when we are broken, He molds us into vessels that are fit for His use.

The first time that God broke me and I recognized what He was doing was a time I'll never forget. The thing He used to break me was bringing me close to death. I had a physical condition that left me very weak. I had to have surgery. I knew that I was very close to death. There wasn't much of my flesh left. I knew that God had me at His total disposal, which is really how it is every day of our life, though our flesh does not like to admit it. This was when I first learned the beauty of being broken and how it leads us to submission and how wonderful a thing submission is. Now if you are reading this with the understanding of your flesh, you are probably thinking, now this lady is really crazy. She really sounds like some sort of masochist, someone who likes having pain inflicted on them. Hold on, bear with me. You may be thinking, hey, is this really what I want, even after reading all the blessings, and even the requirement that we walk in the Spirit. Let me go on with my story to answer these doubts. I was so weak from my surgery that all I could do was lay there. I had bled internally a lot. The doctors told me that I had filled up with blood. That was before my surgery. I had nothing left of myself at all. One night God came to me and stayed with me all night. I can say that if all I would have gotten out of this sickness was that one night, I would gladly go through it all again. That night I was too weak to move. My flesh was almost gone. I had absolutely nothing to try to prove anything with. I couldn't do anything but completely and totally surrender to God. He was there by side. My Father was there with me, and not only was He taking care of everything, His love wanted me to be comfortable. The love and peace that I felt from that total surrender that came that night changed my life. It wasn't a love and peace that came from anything I had in myself. It was a love and peace that came completely and totally from Him. That complete surrender lasted for many days, until my flesh gained its strength and again I had the struggle of it striving to take charge. I regretted having those days of surrender leave. That is what heaven will be like, none of us (our flesh that is), but a lot of Jesus. We will be in total surrender. Until then, we have to be broken. I would like to say that what I went through that time was enough to break this flesh for a lifetime. I'm sorry.

It doesn't work that way. Daily we have to submit to Him, and He has to break us. He will do that until that last day when our struggle will be over and we will live and walk one hundred percent in Him.

That time did leave me changed. I was no longer doing things to help God out. I was no longer guilty of doing what I thought He wanted me to do. That never works. He was doing things through me. I actually started feeling what people were feeling. Not what I thought that they felt. I hurt when His people were hurting. I could love with the love of the Lord without my own judgmental flesh standing in between. Did I regret my sickness, and the suffering I went through? No. God turned it into one of the most blessed times of my life. We serve a mighty wonderful God. If I ever need to go to that place of surrender again to that extreme, I would go there gladly.

Before that time I had written a lot of books. I had tried really hard to write books that I thought would help people, and maybe they will and have. After all this happened to me, I started writing again. This time I put old flesh on hold and let the Spirit of God flow through me and tell me what to write. I was not trying too hard this time. I was wrapped in God's security blanket. You see it is our flesh that gets insecure about doing things and that is what makes us try too hard. When our flesh is on hold then we have the love of God in place of insecurity. That first book that I wrote after this experience was "You Are Beloved and Longed For". In its rough draft form, I gave it to a good friend of mine who read it. I'll never forget her response. She later told me, "I finished reading this book on my knees crying, because I knew that God was speaking to me."

To work for God we have to walk in the Spirit. To serve God, we have to walk in the Spirit. You may be saying to yourself, "I don't work in a ministry like Sandy does. I don't write books. I don't do any of those things. Maybe this walking in the Spirit isn't as important for me as it is for her." To make daily choices that we have to make, to have right relationships with those around us, to make a difference in the lives of those around us, to do this, we have to walk in the Spirit. To live victorious over the powers of hell that try to destroy our testimony.

We have to walk in the Spirit. Matter of fact, we have already established that God requires this of us. You may think that you don't work in a ministry. Do you have loved ones that are not saved? Do you see colleagues at work making bad choices that are costing them their lives worth? Do you have family that you can't reach; children that you can't get through to and who you are watching bad choices destroy them? Do you have acquaintances that are hurting and they just need someone to talk to? Do you have anyone who is looking to you for answers? Now tell me that you do not have a ministry. You will not have a ministry like mine. Nobody will. But then again, no one will have a ministry like yours. God didn't do the work that He has done in me for me to do the work that He has for you to do. Neither has He done the work that He has done in you for you to do the job that He has given me to do. God's people fail when they look everywhere for their place except at the place that God has created them to fulfill. Obey God in what He has for you to do. He placed you on this earth for a reason, and He will use you do accomplish things that no one else can accomplish in just the same way. We aren't created to be like someone else.

When we stop trying too hard, God will flow through us and use us. The other day I had a short conversation with someone who had just lost someone close to her. This person had always held us at a distance, and I had worked with her off and on for years. This short conversation of only a few minutes totally changed her life. She has called and written notes to tell me how much I had helped her. To be honest with you, I have no idea of what I said. I do know this. Somehow Jesus, who knew her hurt, spoke through me with just the right words to give her the strength to overcome what she was going through. When Jesus talks, it doesn't take a lot of words. What credit can I take? Can I talk about how much I helped her? Guess not, since I have no idea the part of what I said that had touched her so. Guess I'll just have to leave the credit where the credit belongs. With her Savior Who reached out to her in love. If I had tried too hard, what would I have accomplished?

Insecurity is another thing that causes us to try too hard. Insecurity causes us to lose being able to walk in the Spirit.

That is why the devil uses insecurity as a number one tool to stop you from being able to flow in the Spirit. This has happened to me. I would be in the middle of doing something in obedience to God, just flowing along with what He was doing. The devil would send in his number one weapon, insecurity. I would start doubting that this was really what God was doing. Or I would doubt my abilities (which if I stop to think, really will not matter if I am walking in God's abilities). Or I would question whether or not the person I was talking to was receiving what I was doing (which again is not your business when you are walking in the Spirit, the outcome is God's business). These things would come against me, and I would bounce out of the Spirit and into the flesh. Flesh would get in the way and mess up totally what God was doing. The devil is smart. We just have to learn from our mistakes. When you learn his tricks, you know that insecurity is much the same thing as fear. Fear has no place in the mind of a child of God. When you feel insecurity, recognize it, and bind it, and keep on going with God is using you to do. If you don't, you will wind up trying too hard, and there you'll be.

Insecurity can bring so much against our lives. Insecurity causes us to doubt ourselves, God's love, and the love of His people. Insecurity causes us to constantly judge ourselves, and when that happens we wind up having a critical spirit against others as well. When we constantly are tuned in to see all of our weaknesses, we will be constantly finding the weaknesses of others as well. Insecurities can cause us to think that everyone around us is seeing our faults, because that is how we are, and we think the whole world is that way too. Insecurities cause us to even doubt God's love, because if we can't accept and have faith in the love of those around us, how can we have faith in His love. Insecurities bring along with them a little nest of nasties including: jealousies, contentious fighting spirits because insecurity causes us to constantly be on the defensive, unbelief and doubt because you think you don't deserve God's working in your life, and a whole bunch of other things just as ugly. I have watched a spirit of insecurity move into a church and paralyze it from being effective in working for God, and the things that were attached to that devilish spirit literally destroyed the church.

The people could not see that it was using them because they were too busy walking in the flesh. Insecurities can also destroy families. Insecurity causes us not to be able to trust the love of others because of the overwhelming feeling that we don't deserve it. We become critical of those who love us because we don't trust them. We may have a spouse that loves us with an incredible love, but we can't receive that love. This has split up more than one family. How do you stop the spirit of insecurity from controlling your life? You can stop it in just the same way that we stop any devil from controlling us. We recognize it, take authority over it, and refuse to let it defeat us. We don't mess with it, because we know the damage that it can do. We walk in the Spirit, and when it comes against us, we run to God to find out whether or not we should be feeling this thing. When He lets us know that it is insecurity, we despise it and refuse to let it rule. You have to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh to fight the devil that is constantly fighting you. You have to stand your ground and refuse to give in. We'll talk more about spiritual warfare in a later chapter. The number one weapon to use in fighting insecurities is God's love. The closer you are in your relationship with God, the more you realize that the children of God have no business in being insecure. It is really easier to commit and submit yourself to God, and walk in the Spirit, than it is to live in the struggles that insecurity can bring. It is really easier to relax, lie back, and put yourself in neutral, and let God control than it is to struggle to prove that you are. You just have to realize what to do when these things come against you.

God's love will wipe away your insecurities. The closer you get to Jesus, the more you focus on Him instead of on yourself, and the less you will see your insecurities. He can literally love away insecurities if you let Him get close to you and you open your heart to His love. His love will wipe away all of our fears. I John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment...." God loves you right now just exactly like you are. He knows you like no other can, and He loves you like you are. Even when you were a sinner, Jesus died for you. How much more does He love you now that you are His child? Stop focusing on yourself.

Start focusing on Him. That is walking in the Spirit. The more you walk in the Spirit, the more you will overcome insecurity, and all the other junk that the flesh specializes in. Like fear, jealousies, rebellion, resentment, pride, and all the other nasties the flesh carries. When you walk in the Spirit, you are filled with the fruits of the Spirit. These are the qualities of the Spirit that become your qualities when you let the Spirit rule your life. These fruits, or qualities are: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and meekness. These are found in Galatians 5:22-23. James 3:17 tells us, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” You know what, I don’t see insecurity listed anywhere here. Do you? Don’t let your insecurities cause you to try too hard. Let the Holy Ghost do His perfect work.

## Chapter 9.

### The Danger of Not Trying Enough

In the previous chapter we discussed the dangers of trying too hard. In this chapter, we'll talk about the danger of not trying enough. In everything in God there is a balance. Human nature is prone to go too far to the extreme of overdoing things. Human nature is also prone to go too far to the extreme of not doing enough. God has a balance. When you walk in the Spirit, you won't be in danger of doing one or the other. You will have a balance. In many areas this is true. One area is the area of doctrine. One group goes to the extreme of saying that no matter what we do; we are forgiven, so why worry. Another group makes rigorous rules that we have to follow, and they say if we don't keep them, we are bound for hell. Both groups are wrong. In God, there is an extreme right and an extreme wrong. But in many areas we find the path we should walk by finding a balance. Now, we have to be careful here. Some people use this as an excuse not to submit their total selves to God, as an excuse not to totally commit their lives to the Lord. They say, we don't want to go overboard in being a Christian. We have to find a balance. Well, serving God can't be halfway. The Bible says that a double minded man is unstable in all his ways and he shouldn't expect anything from God. We need to find the balance in some things, but using this as an excuse not to fully commit is not one of the places where we need to do that. However, we need to find the balance in how much effort we put forth to walk in the Spirit. In the previous chapter we talked about how trying too hard, going to the extremes to do our best, stops us from being able to walk in the Spirit. We talked about how we try too hard, we begin walking in the flesh, and God's Spirit no longer is in control. We also talked about how insecurities cause us to try too hard, and how these can be so detrimental in our lives. On the other hand, we can also be guilty of not trying hard enough. If we take the attitude that God's Spirit is in control of our lives, and we are sitting back in total peace waiting for Him to do His work, this is as wrong as trying too hard.

Let me explain. I knew a man who had a huge business.



He got caught in the way of thinking that he would be spiritual and let God take care of his business. He traveled around the country “trusting God” to take care of things. Other people gained control of his business and took advantage of his “do nothing” attitude by taking advantage of the company. Things went from bad to worse and his business fell apart. The man wound up feeling bitter at God because God didn’t take care of his business. We can’t sit down and take a “do nothing” attitude and wait for God to work out our circumstances. We have to be on the spot with a watchful attitude, waiting for God’s instructions. We have to be vigilant. The Bible talks about the Christian walk as being a race, a battle. These things are not passive sit down activities. These things are very active. We have 2 enemies. We have the devil and we have our own flesh. Both of these will take advantage and get the upper hand in a second if we let them. We certainly can’t take a leisurely, vacation attitude and hand our business over to God. How do you think God feels when we take an attitude that He is our servant to take care of things, and we are out to lunch?

One of the first times I heard people preach about walking in the Spirit, these people taught this attitude. They taught that God was in control. Our job was to put no effort forth, and to trust God totally. He was to do the work. I thought that sounded really good. I got into that attitude. Then I started watching the lives of the people who were getting caught up in this train of thought. I saw that they had rebellious attitudes, and other attitudes that were taking them over. I saw that they were not being active in watching their spiritual well being, and they were letting these things control them in their laid back attitude. I realized that this attitude was really lulling them to sleep so that the devil could creep in. We have a battle going on with the devil. We are given weapons of warfare to come against him. We all know about the helmet of salvation, sword of the Word of God, the shield of faith and all the rest of the armor of God. Why would God give us weapons of warfare, if we were never to have battles? Why would we need these things if we were just to sit back and let God do our fighting? We are given weapons of warfare to fight, not to stop trying and give up and surrender.

We don't need to take an attitude that God will take care of it, so we do nothing. We had better be vigilant to keep our attitudes right, and vigilant to keep our flesh in line. Vigilant to keep the world and its ways of thinking out of our mind. Vigilant to watch after the things that God has committed to our trust. Don't be guilty of trying too hard, but on the other hand, definitely don't be guilty of not trying enough. In God there is a balance. Find His balance by walking in Him.

## Chapter 10. Obedience

We have two ways of thinking. One way is to let our flesh control our mind and our responses to things. Another is to let our Spirit man inside of us control. When we do this we have the mind of Christ. I Corinthians 2:14-16 tells us, “but the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that He may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” When we need to make important decisions that may affect our future or influence our life we need to make sure that our thoughts are controlled by the Spirit of God. His way and thoughts are so far above ours. We can’t even really see today let alone the results of the decisions we make that will affect tomorrow. All too often split minute decisions can change our lives. Sometimes we don’t know the results until it is too late. In the course of day-to-day life we may have many such choices. We will be successful, healthy, and happy only if we let the Spirit of God lead us and we obey Him.

First and foremost in obedience, we need to read the Word of God, the Bible, and obey Its commandments. There are hundreds of promises that come for those who obey God’s Word. Some of them are:

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

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

Exodus 19:5, “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, “Oh that there were such a heart in the, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.”

John 14:23, “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

WOW! We will be blessed beyond measure if we obey God’s Word and we have His Word for it.

Then we need to daily obey His voice as He speaks to us through His Spirit. We need to learn to hear the voice of God. When we first start listening to God, it is sometimes hard. We have to learn to recognize His voice. When I first started learning to hear God’s voice, I asked Him to help me. He showed me this picture. I was upstairs and someone who I had never met came in downstairs. I did not know them at all so I did not recognize their voice. The next time they came in I was more familiar with their voice, but it still took several times for them to come in before I right away recognized who they were. We have to remember that there are three voices in our minds and hearts that we will hear. First, we have the voice of our own flesh, our own mind and heart. Then we also have the voice of the enemy who will put feelings in our hearts and thoughts in our minds. Then we will have that still, small, inner voice, the voice of God’s Spirit speaking in our hearts. When we first begin obeying God, and listening for Him to lead us, it will be hard to tell the voices apart. But just like in my illustration, if we keep listening for Him, it will become easier to tell His voice. Just like He helped me by showing me the illustration that He gave me, He will help you. He wants you to hear His voice. Your voice is precious to Him. He is your shepherd, and you are His sheep. He Himself promised in John 10:4, “And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.” One of the worst dangers of disobedience is this.

If we do not obey His voice, then we will come to the place that the sin of our disobedience will separate us to the place that we can no longer hear His voice. That is why it is important to obey. When God speaks to your heart, listen. Make obeying Him a priority. Don't put it off until later. Later may be too late. Treat His voice with the utmost respect.

I remember a time when I was on my way to church. I was late and in a hurry. I had washed my car earlier that day and I had left my car mats out on the grass to dry. My husband's last words to me before he left were, "Be sure and get those car mats in." I left them lying there and got in my car. I knew I needed to obey my husband, because God had placed Him over me in the Lord. The Spirit nudged me to get those mats in. I got back out of my car and was standing there with my mats in my hand when I heard a loud bang. The ground shook. I lived on a very narrow street that went into a one-lane road in a huge curve just above my house. A car had come too fast around that curve and had lost control in my neighbor's yard. It slammed into a tree so hard that the motor was wrapped around the man who was driving the car. As I stood there looking at that terrible accident, I knew that if I had not obeyed God, this car would have slammed into me. Now at the time, I didn't want to stop. I was in a hurry. My flesh would have led me into either being killed, or seriously hurt. The Spirit of God knows our future. I listened to Him. And I listened to my husband. One important thing to remember about obedience is this. If we cannot obey those that the Lord puts over us, then we will fail at obeying His voice. I see so many women who want to have control. They don't want to submit to their husbands. Their life is usually full of conflicts because they are not obeying God. If we cannot accept authority in our life, then we can't accept God's either. This goes for parents and husbands, and those that the Lord has directed to become our Spiritual elders and leaders. You might ask me, "What if my husband, or parent, is not saved? What if they aren't doing what they should? Or, what if my husband is not walking in the place that I am? What if they aren't being as spiritual as I am?" God taught me an important lesson early in my life. When I was young, my Dad was not a Christian man at this particular time of my life.

(I thank God that he gave his heart to the Lord not long before he died). One day I was heading to church. He told me that I could not go to church that day. Now I got really angry and rebellious at what he said. I thought that since he was a sinner, he had no right to tell me not to go to church. I had a very bad attitude about the whole thing and was considering going any way. I went to God about the matter. You know, that thing we do when we aren't happy with what someone is doing. That whiney thing we do when we say, "But God you know he isn't supposed to tell me not to go to church. But God, I don't think I should listen." God reminded me about the scripture that I was to obey my parents. He reminded me that rebellion is wrong, and my heart was full of it. I didn't go to church that day. Not long after that I found out that church that I was planning to go to was an occult church. The preacher was actually practicing witchcraft in the church. As a young Christian, I could have been prey for anything. My Dad had no idea. God used him, even though he was a sinner. Now I know that there are times that a sinner parent, or a sinner husband will try to get us to do things that are contrary to God's Word. This was different than those times. We do need to obey God's Word, and trust that He will bring understanding and peace in our homes. We will find though that if we treat sinner loved ones with respect and understanding, and we don't fight against them in every day situations, God can bring peace. We do need to obey those that God puts over us. Rebellion is rebellion. If we constantly walk in rebellion with those around us, we will carry that attitude over into our relationship with God.

I have had the Spirit of God lead me away from danger many times. I have had Him to lead me into safety. I have had Him to lead me into right decisions that led to success, away from failure. I have had Him to lead me to stay away from certain people and lead me to get close relationships with others, who became life long friends. You can't go wrong when you obey God. Obedience is not just something that we do once in a while; it needs to be a characteristic of our daily walk with God. Obedience can only come in its fullest measure in our life when we learn to walk in the Spirit. I would like to say that I have always walked in the Spirit. That is not true, and it won't be true.

The only time that we will be able to say that is either after the rapture when we have a perfect flesh, or after we die when our body will be changed to be like His. Until then, we are prone to mess up. We constantly will have this struggle between flesh and Spirit. As we grow, though, and as we practice obedience, this struggle grows less.

I remember this particular time when I did not obey God. You'll see why I remember it so well after I finish my story. It was nearly 30 years ago. I was getting my horse ready to take a ride. God spoke to me not to go. I went any way. I had gone riding thousands of times before, and talked myself out of obeying because I thought to myself why shouldn't I go. I was thrown and suffered a spinal injury that gives me pain still, 30 years later. It reminds me often about how disobedience affects our lives. One of the worst things that we can do is let our mind talk us out of hearing and obeying. We can think away what God tells us. Practice obedience daily, and you won't have to suffer circumstances that come when we don't obey. I have had people tell me that God punished my disobedience by letting this happen. I don't think that is the way things go. God want to lead us away from things that bring us harm. If we choose to go ahead and do those things, then harm will come. If I tell the students in my classroom not to play in the four lane, but they do any way, if something happens to them, it didn't happen because I was punishing them. It happened because they put themselves in harms way by not listening and obeying.

Another reason to obey God comes because we are in a world of lost and hurting people. Those around us need God to reach out to them. Many of the Christians around us are bound and need deliverance, strength, or encouragement. The only way that we can reach out to people around us is by walking in the Spirit and obeying God. Unless He shows us, we won't even know who needs help. Most people are the opposite on the outside than they are on the inside. When people are hurting, and are the most in need, they will put up a front to keep people from seeing this. They will put up a shield that we can't get to them through. Without God's love, we can't love them enough to reach out to them. Without that love, they would not respond.

Without God's knowledge of their hearts, we won't know what their problem really is, even if they tell us, it might not be all we need to know to be able to help them. Only the Spirit of God can discern hearts. Hebrews 4:12 says that God is a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." He sees what has happened to break the heart of those we are reaching out to. He sees what their need is, even when they may not know themselves. He knows how to reach out when we can only guess. When He does reach out, He will bring healing, deliverance, strength, peace, and whatever it takes for them to overcome. When we are reaching out to others, we need to remember that we are reaching out to one of His children, or to someone who has the potential to become one of His children. We need to be careful and as concerned as if He were reaching out. Indeed, we need to let Him reach out through us. Psychiatrists have all kinds of methods to help people. The most common is to make them face what is bothering them and helping them to come to terms with it, even if this takes 20 years. God can heal hearts. God can deliver and mend broken spirits. He heals scars in their minds and makes them whole. No matter how severe the hurt that they have been through, He can fix it. He can deliver from bondages that the devil has put against them. If we want to help someone, we have to flow with Him and let His Spirit flow through us to them. We have to become His mouthpiece to speak His Words of healing and life. We have to let His love reach out through us because our love won't have the power to heal and deliver like God's love. Our love can't lead the sinner to repentance like God's love. Face it-we can't help. But when we walk in the spirit, the lives of those we touch will never be the same. We have to obey God to reach out to others.

The family of God has done some of the worst damage that has been done to hurting people. That is tragic, but true. You may have been hurt yourself in this way. Maybe someone who was a Christian but who let their flesh be used by the enemy has hurt you. This hurts much worse than when a sinner comes against you. Sometimes this happens by people who are really, in their own way, trying to help. Don't get caught in the flesh and let the devil use you to harm others. Walk in the Spirit.



## Chapter 11. Lord Use Me

We talked in the last chapter about some of the ways that God can use us, if we obey Him. Another way that He can use us is in our gifts and talents. When we think of gifts and talents, the first thing we think of is the gift to teach, or the gift to sing, or to preach. That is part of it, but only part. God has given the church a list of the most stupendous qualities that any group of people can have. These gifts should operate in churches today, but sad to say, they often don't. Maybe because we are not committed and submitted to God, allowing the Holy Ghost to move in our lives. When we walk in the Spirit Monday through Saturday, it is easier to let Him use us in services on Sunday. All too often church services find people doing the flesh thing, the traditions and rituals, and God is left sitting on the sidelines longing to reach out to His people. These verses in I Corinthians Chapters 12, 13, and 14 tell us about the gifts of the Spirit and how they operate. Please read these chapters. In these chapters it shows a picture of how God intends His churches to operate. When they do, people are healed and delivered, salvation comes to the sinners, and you don't leave a service the way you came in. That is how God created the church to be. It will be, when we make a commitment to walk in the Spirit.

Here is a list of the gifts that God gives His congregation.

1. Word of Wisdom-Wisdom is a thing to be treasured. Wisdom speaks and wrongs are made right, peace is spoken between enemies, guidance is given to those who can't find their way. Wisdom gives understanding.
2. Word of Knowledge-Has God ever let you know something about someone, or about a circumstance that no one else could have known, yet He showed you so that you could reach out to someone. Or He showed you how to avoid a trap of satan, or know which way

to turn. This is the Word of knowledge.

3. Faith-God has given to all of us a measure of faith. How we use that faith determines how it grows. To some, however, he has given an extra measure of supernatural faith. These people are the cheerleaders, keeping us focused on God's promises even when the world around us looks like it is falling apart.
4. Healing-What a wonderful gift, to bring healing to the body, mind, and hearts of God's people. These people are not healers themselves. They just have that extra faith to pray for the sick and believe they will be healed.
5. Working of miracles-Not long ago I talked with someone who came back to the US after being a missionary overseas for many years. They were so disappointed in the churches here in the US. They told me that in just about every service in their overseas church people were saved, healed, delivered, the gifts of miracles were operating, and even the dead raised. When we talk about miracles here, everybody draws a big sigh. This is sad.
6. Discerning of spirits. This is talking about being able to tell the spirits of the devil apart from the Spirit of God. The devil has his little imps that operate to bind the body of Christ. He comes like an angel of light, looking like something that is great. He brings destruction and deception. Thank God for those people who let this gift operate in their lives so that they can discern him and warn the body of Christ.
7. Divers kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongue. The gift of tongues is a seal of the Holy Ghost. When someone receives the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, they receive the gift of speaking in tongues.

Tongues operate in the body of Christ in several ways. One of these areas is in the area of intercession, in the area of prayer. I have seen the Holy Spirit praying through a congregation. They were all completely in one mind and in one accord interceding, with the same Holy Spirit praying through them all. You talk about a powerful prayer. No wonder the devil wants to keep this out of today's churches. Has there ever been a time when this gift was needed more than now? Also the gift of tongues will come forth in a church when God wants to, in His own language, speak to His people. Then another saint of God will interpret what was said by yielding himself or herself to God. This happened not long ago in a service that was held in one of our food bank programs. We had had a terrible struggle just to keep this facility going. In a service, the Holy Ghost spoke and it was interpreted. God told us through these gifts that we were coming out of our battle there, that He was going to do a work. From that day on, we have not had a financial struggle. When God moves in a service, and speaks directly to His people, deliverance, strength, salvation, happens. Talk about a wonderful time in the Lord.

Through looking at this list we see how God intends His church to operate. He wants the best for His people. When you read this list you may think this is impossible. This does not happen today. If it doesn't in your church, walk in the Spirit 7 days a week. Bring this to church. If no one wants it, then go to a church that does. If you do have a church that lets the gifts of God operate, then cherish it. Definitely obey God when He wants to use you.

When God moves in His services, using His people, we see a glimpse of what heaven will be like. No flesh, no one doing something to be seen, no self-seeking agendas, just God touching His people. That is what happens when a group of people walk in the Spirit. When I see a church

full of people who work against each other, where jealousies and contentious spirits abound, I know it is a church that is not walking in the Spirit, but one that is full of flesh. When I see someone who is doing their own thing when the Spirit of God is moving in another direction, I know they are walking in the flesh, not in His Spirit. When we walk in the Spirit we forget ourselves, and our purpose is to serve Jesus. When we have a job to do, each person flows in the gifts that they have and they become a part of what the body is doing. The eye is confident in seeing because that is its job. It isn't looking at the ear and getting mad or defeated because it can't hear as well as the ear can. It is not attacking the mouth because it isn't speaking right. It is focused on Jesus, not on itself, and not on the others. It flows in the Spirit working in unity with all the parts of the body. That is what the Spirit does. When this happens, these people can do supernatural things for God.

Here are some famous quotes. See if you recognize any of them. See if you can tell which ones are flesh, and which Spirit.

1. Well, I just don't think that they should do it that way.
2. I've got to know everything there is to know about everybody and I will be glad to let you know. After all we have to keep up with what people are doing. We have to keep up with their problems, because we have to pray.
3. I don't think they should get all that attention. I do my job every day and nobody thanks me.
4. I give my time on Sunday. Why does that preacher think that I need to be there on Wednesday night, too?
5. I know she looked over here at me and I know what she is thinking. I have had it with her.

6. I don't care if she did say, "I am sorry", forget my ever forgiving her.
7. We know what she's like, don't we?
8. Isn't it someone else's turn to do this job this week?
9. No, I don't want to clean the commodes or mop the floor. I want to do something more spiritual.
10. Well, I know the preacher will take care of that, that's what he's there for.

Do these sound familiar? What do you think? Spirit or flesh? Now go back and translate them in to walking in the Spirit. What a change. Flesh has a big mouth. You'll find that the flesh talks a whole lot more than the Spirit. The Spirit is usually quietly at work in the background. When it becomes evident what is being done, though, everybody can see it quite plainly. Maybe some of these things are why the gifts of the Spirit aren't in operation in our churches.

Have you read this chapter and decided that you would like to have a gift of the Spirit? The Bible tells us how to do this in I Corinthians 13. Read this chapter. Charity is love. When love operates the Spirit is in control. Then you won't hear the quotes that we heard above. We are working in the body of Christ because we love. We love those around us and those that are lost. We love the One Who has called us to love them both. Why? Because He loves them both. That is the motive for all we do, because it is His motive. Seek God and His love and He will change your heart and your life. He will fill you with His Spirit, and He will use you for His kingdom. Guaranteed.

There are also other gifts that God gives His church. We mentioned some of them at the beginning of this chapter. These are talents like: preaching, teaching, singing, ministering, playing instruments, working with young people, working with the elderly, walking with children, and many more. You may have one of these talents, but you have been hindered from using it.

Maybe insecurities have kept you bound. Walk in the Spirit. When you feel fear coming against you, recognize it as a bondage satan has sent to hinder you. Bind it by praying in the Spirit. Wait on the boldness that God's Spirit brings. You may not have a talent like this. Seek God. He may be waiting to give you a talent. I remember a service that we had at our church where God gave out musical talents to some of the congregation who had been praying that God would use them in that way. Some of our most talented musicians in that church were born in that service. These were people who had never played an instrument. God can give gifts to those that seek them.

One of the most precious gifts that the church has is the gift of helps. These gifts may be: the ability to organize people, the ability to get things done, the ability to encourage others, the desire to do whatever you can-even if it is clean the commode, the gift of joy- that bubbling personality that strengthens the hearts of those you work with, the ability to say just the right things at just the right time. These are wonderful gifts. Don't ever underestimate them. Don't ever look at your weaknesses and refuse to do something for the Lord. I never will forget one time that I told the Lord I couldn't do what He was asking me to do. He told me in no uncertain terms that He had created the heavens and the earth with just His Words. If He told me to do something then I could do it and I wasn't to argue. I didn't. I dared to try, and I did it, because He was there giving me the ability to do so. I've been trying new things ever since. Never shake your head no when someone asks you to do something, because you are afraid that you can't. Do it, and wait to see what God will do with you. A lot of people want to be used by the Lord in a special way, but when someone asks them to do something, they shake their head. This will stop you from being used. Don't become one of those people who sit on the sidelines resenting those that God is using, and you always say no when it is your turn. Or maybe you are one of those people who won't obey God because you are afraid of failure. Have you ever thought that it is better to mess up than it is to disobey God? Nobody will expect you to be perfect. He can fix a mistake, but what can He do with nothing? God expects you to obey Him. Obey God. Let Him use you.

## **Chapter 12.**

### **Walking With Others**

I have been guilty at times of trying to walk in the Spirit by walking with others. In other words, I was very conscience of my walk with other people. I wanted to please the people around me who were spiritual, and I thought that by doing this I could please God. I know many people who do this. They may look up to someone like their pastor, pastor's wife, elders in the church, parents, or others, to be their spiritual guide. They live their whole life wrapped up in pleasing these people, and in their relationship with them, and have not a clue in how to find a relationship with God. The sad thing is that it takes a relationship with God to make it to heaven. I thought that by following these people that I had it made. But without any relationship with God, when the battles came, or the going got rough, I couldn't stand. My foundation was not built on a rock, but on the sinking sands of other people. We cannot walk in the Spirit by focusing on the people around us. I don't care how wonderful they are. If you think you can get to heaven by working in the church for people that you value, or by sitting on the pew with people that you value, then you are missing out on the whole thing. If you think you can copy what others do, and get to heaven, it won't work. The Bible says that each one of us have to have a personal one-on-one relationship with God. You have to get real and right in your own heart. You have to submit to God, not other people. Then when you submit to God and let Him work in you, you can find a relationship that is real with God and then it will be real with the people around you that you have admired. You have to find an identity in God. You have to learn to be your own person in Him. I know people who copy everything others do. They have no idea of who they are, of what their convictions are, of even what kind of personality they have, because they are so caught up in copying others. They are not secure in their relationships with others because they are not secure in their relationships with God. If you are trying to be like someone else, you will always fall short. No matter how hard you try, you can't be as good at being like someone else as they can be themselves.

Nor can they be any good at being you, like you can. Actually you do people an injustice by trying to live by their standards. When you put others up on a pedestal, you will always be angry with that person, no matter how much you respect them. This will be because, since you are trying to get their identity instead of your own, you will never measure up. How can all this be fixed? You have to walk in the Spirit. You have to identify these things, recognize that God has given you freedom to be yourself. You have to recognize His work in you. You have to get a relationship with Him. He will reach out His hands as you reach out yours. We have to make God our focus, and not others. Then we will be able to flow with Him, as we walk with others. Our relationships with others will be so much easier. We trust His love, so we can find peace in the relationships with His people. The struggle that we have to constantly prove who we are to ourselves will end. We will be going in the same direction everyone else is going, because we will be following Him.

Walking in the Spirit is the only way that the body of Christ, the family of God, can work together. We have to realize that our way won't work, and we have to realize that following someone else is really just being in the flesh. All we can do is mess up. I have watched God work at getting something accomplished for years, carefully putting piece by piece together, and somebody in the flesh (with good intentions) messed it up in five minutes. God's work is like a masterpiece. He doesn't do an instant work. He has all the right touches. He works things to perfection in us, in others, and in our circumstances. We all are a part of His brush extended, all working on a different part of the canvas. We are all painting on the same picture even though we may not be able to see the part that the other brushes are painting. God is the Master Painter, combining all our brushes together, directing our strokes by His Spirit at work in our lives. By walking in the Spirit, we add to the picture. Our part then fits smoothly into the Master painting. Then when it is all done, it will be a beautiful thing. Like a change in someone's life, salvation for someone lost, deliverance or healing for others, or a work that may lead hundreds to the Lord. Whatever it is, if we start our part and we do our own thing instead of the Master's,



we wind up destroying the whole picture for everyone else. Or if we become so afraid that we will mess up the painting that we don't take up a brush, we will mess up the painting as well. In the place where God intended to use us to paint a section, there will be only a blank, empty space. We have to walk in the Spirit to be able to work with others in God's work. It will not work any other way; no matter how hard we try. Our best just will not get the job done. Move in God and let Him move in you. You will find it is much easier than the stress of thinking that you have to prove yourself as good as everyone else, and as right. You see, none of us are good, and none of us are right. But in God's Spirit, we are all master painters.

Another of the mistake that we make in working with others is that we want to be the center of attention. A lot of times this comes because we are insecure, which we have talked about before as not being good. We want to be sure that we be recognized for what we do. We want to be sure that people notice the things that we have accomplished. This is completely in the flesh. We can't do anything on our own. When anything is done that is worth anything, God is its author. There may have been a thousand prayers prayed that brought about the thing that was accomplished. There may have been hundreds of seeds sowed by many hands. God's Spirit and His Word were at work accomplishing it. How can you take the credit for what was done? If you become an attention hog, you will find that God will not use you very often. God once showed me an illustration to show me how this works. I was standing in a brand new robe. It was very white and shiny. It was a symbol of His righteousness and the work that He was doing in me. A few people were standing there admiring the robe. I loved the attention and basked in it. I turned around though and suddenly they were gone. I was a little aggravated that they had turned away and weren't paying attention to me any more. I headed in the direction they went in. I saw a beautiful sight. As far as I could see were people in robes that were just like mine. They were all just as beautiful as mine. Each robe was glowing like mine, but together they were a beautiful sight. I soon forgot about wanting people to look at me. I certainly wasn't standing there being angry any more.

I wasn't angry because everybody had on something just as good as mine. We were all together and all a part of that beauty. I really forgot about having the attention on me when I saw where every eye was focused. There at the center, shining more brightly than all of us put together was Jesus. The glow that we had was really coming from Him. No more attention for me. Walking in the flesh causes us to want to be the center of attention. Focusing on Jesus and His people is walking in the Spirit. You won't get anywhere with God by trying to focus on yourself. When you get caught up in thinking of Him, praising Him, rejoicing in what He is doing and those that He is doing, then you will be walking in the Spirit. It won't matter who sees you.

Another thing that we have to watch in working and walking with others in God's work is that our motives don't go wrong. I went through a time when I served God with what you would call a sacrificial fervor. I did it all. It was never good enough and it was never enough. I wasn't doing the things that I was doing out of love for God, for His people, or for the lost. I thought I was. But I was doing it because others expected me to. At other times, I have done the same thing because inside my heart I was really trying to earn God's love and His favor. I couldn't see that I already had it. We need to find God's love, and then work for Him because we are in love with Him. We can only work for Him when our relationship with Him is real. It can't come any other way. In I Corinthians the Bible talks about the motives for working for God. In verse 1 we read, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." In other words, if our motive for working for God is not love, then we will just be a lot of noise. Love isn't something that we can squeeze out of our heart. Love has to come from God. If you feel that you aren't serving God from a right motive, ask Him to give you His love in your heart. After all, He is in you. Walk in His love, walk in His Spirit. Another key to finding God's love for others is by loving others. Give and it shall be given. This section of verses in Luke 6:38 is really talking about love. We use it for many promises of God, and this is good. But if we read down up in verse 35 and 37 we see that these verses are talking about love.

Love so powerful that it will enable you to love not only your friends, but your enemies as well. Give love, and it shall be given unto you.

Not only do we need to walk in the Spirit to be able to love others and to work with others, we need to walk in the Spirit to be able to understand others. All too often the devil will stand between two people and talk one thing to one of them and another thing to the other. Before long they are at each other's throats with no clue about how they got there. We used to have a young man at school who was always being used by the devil to cause strife between the other young people at school. More than once we would have two sides battling it out with one another. After much discussion as to what had happened it would always wind up that this young man had told someone that this other person had said something about him, or had done something offensive toward them. He would keep it up until there were battle lines drawn, and two divided teams at one another. Before long everybody figured out this young man's little games. Nobody listened when he would start his junk up, and both sides lived at peace. You will always have someone who wants attention bad enough to bring in a spirit of strife in the midst of God's people. If there isn't any one available for the devil to use, then he will send in his own little imps to sit on the shoulders of those involved until there are battle lines drawn and two divided teams against one another. When the family, or body, of Christ is divided, God can no longer get His work done. When we are divided, we cannot function. How do you keep this from happening? Make sure the motives of those involved are right. The devil will use those who are doing what they are doing for their own personal attention. Walk in the Spirit together as a unit, doing what you are doing for the glory and the furthering of the kingdom of God. Bind any spirits of division when they start, and before they can do damage to divide. Be aware of this tactic of satan. Seek God that His love is a vital part of all you do.

Another thing to remember when working with others is that the flesh can pack all kinds of emotions, thoughts, and feelings that can destroy you and others. Sometimes the weaknesses of our own physical body can cause us to have certain feelings.

Certain feelings that are destructive (women, how about that PMS, or how about change of life, even some kinds of birth control, and I could go on-by the way men, you are not exempt from physical things either). We can get things in our heads and we just know that this is what is going on. Or we can get feelings of depression, sadness, anxiety, stress, and more, and there may not be any reality in the foundation for these, especially when the reality that we are to live in is the victory of the Word of God and His Spirit in us. Emotions on the run can destroy saints of God if they are not careful. These things take root in our flesh. It is our flesh that has this battle. When we walk in the Spirit, the Spirit of God checks this. He quietly whispers (or yells-whichever is needed) that this is not the truth, this is not how we need to feel and think. He is the rudder that brings us back on course with our emotions and thoughts. Thank God!! People that are given over to the weakness of their flesh can let these things run wild, and they don't realize this is happening. They can be used to bring destruction to the body of Christ and this is not their intention. Matter of fact, when it is brought to their attention it breaks their hearts. How do we keep this from happening? By walking in the Spirit and letting God control our hearts and minds. Also, there are times when the enemy can attach spirits to us to oppress and fight us. He can't possess us, but he can cover us up with uglies. When we yield to the Spirit and let God quicken us, when we pray in the Holy Ghost, that can knock him right off of our front porch and into the yard.

Read this section of scripture found in I Corinthians 12. The whole chapter is great but I'll concentrate on verses 18-29. In this we find a picture of what the Body of Christ is supposed to be like. I don't just mean the particular church that you are in though it is true that because it is a part of Christ's body, it should perform in this way. But God here is meaning the entire body of Christ, the bride of Christ, His people as a whole. We are to function in unity in the Spirit. Verse 23 tells us that the less honorable and the weak are still honorable. They have their part and their function. That is a picture of God's love. The strong is to lift up the weak and the weak are to minister to the strong. After all, in Christ, we are all weak so that we can become strong.

We can become strong in Him. We are to function together as parts in a whole. Forget about your insecurities. Forget about your past failures. Forget about your fears of failure. Forget about yourself altogether, lay down that flesh, and walk as one with the body of Christ. He is the head and the body as a whole is to function following the head, following the Spirit of God. When the head says move by speaking to our heart and our spirit, then we are to obey. When we all function that way we will move in unity. If we keep our eyes on what people are doing, we will just have a mess. If we follow what we think God wants by following what other people are doing, we will be like that blind leading the blind and all will be in the ditch. You can't walk as a productive, victorious part of the body of Christ without walking in the Spirit, subjected to Him, and obedient to His leading. If you are striving to lift yourself up, or you are trying too hard to be a part of what God has for you, then you will surely fail. What holds the body of Christ together? The love of God. When one member suffers, we should all suffer. When one member is honored then we all should rejoice. As it is, all too often if one member is honored the rest hate that one because they have gotten some attention. Or if one member is weak, then the others rejoice because they feel better about their own weaknesses when they see the weaknesses of others. No, we can't serve God as the body of Christ unless we walk in the Spirit.

## Chapter 13.

### Judge Not

A couple of years ago a family came into the school office to enroll their child. They were really rough. As the old saying goes, they were living pretty far from Calvary. My first impulse was to enroll them and pray that if they weren't interested in God and a change in their lives that they would go on somewhere else. They were finishing up the enrollment process when God started moving through me to witness to them. The Holy Ghost filled the room and started dealing with their hearts. The man had tears in his eyes, but that was as far as a response that there was. For a couple of years, I treated them with respect in whatever situation came up. My flesh would rise up in me quite often, but I would remember how the Spirit of God dealt with them on that first day. That is walking in the Spirit. I would shut up and let God take over my feelings about the subject. His love would rise up in me once again. That is walking in the Spirit. Just the other day the mother came into the office. I could see something very different about her when she walked in the door. She told me how her husband had gotten them up Sunday to tell them they were going to church. The Holy Ghost was continuing the work that He had started. The Holy Ghost moved in the service that morning, and all three gave their heart to the Lord. God delivered the whole family from some habits that a lot of Christians struggle their whole life to be delivered of. They were wonderfully, completely, and gloriously saved. Before they left the church service that day, there were a few members of the congregation that met with the daughter. They more or less rubbed this girl's sin in her face. She was pregnant, they wanted to be sure that she knew that she had sinned, and the baby was of the devil because of her sin. When I later heard what these people had done, I was really angry. God reminded me of my own attitude earlier, and I had to rethink things. That is walking in the Spirit-having God set you straight in your attitudes. Now it would have been easy for that whole family to turn their backs on God. However, the newly saved mother who had not been in a church service since she was a child, ministered to her daughter by telling her this.

She told here that she should ignore what those people said. That the devil was just using their flesh and they probably hadn't meant to do the damage that they had done. They went on back to the same church, because it was the one God had used to change their lives. They are now victorious workers in that church for the Lord. That is walking in the Spirit. If their flesh had taken over, they would have never darkened the door of another church. How many times do we get offended over what someone says, and stomp off? Yet this young Christian had enough of the Spirit of God in her life to go back with the victory. As a footnote to this story, the daughter began having serious trouble early in her pregnancy. The doctor told them that if they didn't abort the baby the daughter could lose her life. God led them not to do this and gave them the faith that they needed to believe. She had a beautiful little baby. A miracle baby. If God hadn't saved them just months earlier, that baby would not have been born.

There is no better illustration that I could think of to show what I am trying to say in this chapter. It is so easy to judge people in our flesh. We think we know how people should act and what they should be like. If they don't fit into our idea of how they should be, then we think even God shouldn't have anything to do with them. Like Jonah, we sometimes even get angry at their deliverance (Jonah 4:2-11). When I look back through my life, I see how when I was an awful sinner, and I was one of the worst, God worked in my life through His love for me. He knew that one day I would serve Him. His love for me was there, even when I spit in His face. I was so bad that if somebody came to witness to me, I would do my best to work to destroy them. It was no wonder that soon I was isolated from Christians. When I was around them, I had a lot of flesh walking judgment, but not a lot of Holy Ghost walking love. My main problem was that I really wanted God in my heart. I just couldn't see that it was real in the people who were around me. I thought that if I could destroy it in someone, then it wasn't really real. The only One who got through all that to see my heart was God. When God finally got through to me, it was one on one. It wasn't in a church full of Spirit walking people. But He found me anyway.

He worked a miraculous change in my life. So much of a change that I have spent the past 30 years with the number one priority of my life being to serve Him for His wonderful love for me. There have been many times since then that flesh-centered people have tried to get me to rethink my life's purpose. I wish I had a dime for every time someone told me that I was too fanatical, too wrapped up in serving God. I have watched these people one by one fall by the wayside. When the enemy came against them, their house was built on the sand, and not on Jesus, and they fell. Flesh won't make it. Why am I still here? I was fanatical and centered in Jesus. What I am trying to say by all this is I have passed by a lot of people in my life who have judged me. Passed them up both before and after I was saved. We cannot judge people righteously. We can't know people's hearts. We don't know what they are doing, and what they aren't doing. What is worse than judging sinners, and preventing them from being in our midst, is the judgment that brothers and sisters have against one another in the family of God. If I asked now how many of you have been hurt by people in the church, I would find few of you who could answer no. We have no right to judge our brothers and sisters in the family of God. Matter of fact, God warns us against this. Read this section of scripture in Luke 6 verses 27 -38. Verse 37 says, Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." If we judge others, God will judge us. If we forgive, then we shall be forgiven. In this light, the only people who can judge are those who are perfect, and in no need of forgiveness themselves. What is the only perfect judgment? John 5:30 tells us the only perfect judge is Jesus. "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Some of the most dangerous people in a church or ministry are those who make quick judgment and run to tell others. I think that it gives some people a feeling of power over others to be able to be telling what they have learned about someone else. It makes them feel better about their own insecurities to be able to tell about the faults of others. They don't realize that what they are doing is heaping God's judgment on their own head.



One of the dangers of our judging others in the flesh is because people characteristically don't protrude what they are really like. We can look at them and see something totally different from what they are. One example, how often have you judged someone for being stuck up when they were really painfully shy? Or have you found that someone you thought showed no emotions was really so broken up inside that they had to put up a wall to keep from breaking down. There are a hundred and one examples of this that you can find, maybe some even in yourself. Only the Spirit of God can know someone else. So how are we supposed to relate to one another? Well, you probably by now know the answer to that one. In the Spirit. Here's an example that is kind of silly, but actually, if it would have kept on, it could have cost me my marriage. I didn't date my husband very long before we were married. God led us to get married, and we did, and that was that. That has proved out for the past 25 years to be the right choice. Because we didn't know each other very well, we had to learn what the other was like after we got married. When we first got married, Jim would say the dumbest things. I would think to myself-does he really think that. I would think to myself how could I have married such a stupid man. I got pretty discouraged. The Holy Ghost started dealing with me. God showed me that what Jim had was not a case of being stupid, but a case of having what we call "dry wit". Not long after that someone mentioned how much they enjoyed Jim's dry wit, how he could say the funniest things and not crack a smile or show that he was joking at all. I had to get out of my little judge mental attitude to see him as he was, not as I thought he should be. When I finally did, I realized that I had married one of the funniest people that I had ever met. I have enjoyed his dry wit through the years even more, because it has been a lesson to me about judging in the flesh. We can judge others around us a hundred times a day, and not realize that we are doing so. When we make up our mind what someone is doing, what they have said, what they look like, based on what we think they should, we are judging. How many times has this broken up families, churches, and marriages? We need to know that we don't know. Then we need to go to God to find out. That is walking in the Spirit.

To have any kind of victorious relationship with anyone, we have to do this. We can't even love one another unless we do. I remember a time in the ministry when the devil would actually stand between two of us and whisper stuff into our minds about the other person. This nearly ripped us apart. We had faith in one another, we trusted in that and in God, and we would go to God for the answer about what was happening. That is walking in the Spirit. It wasn't long before that devil went on its way defeated. When we walk in the flesh in the midst of the body of Christ, it will not only prevent us from being able to serve God, but it will also hinder those around us. Walk in the Spirit.

## Chapter 14. Discernment

I started to put this in the last chapter because it fits so close with that subject. I wanted to stress it though because it is important for many reasons. In God there is always a balance. We have discussed that before. Flesh tends to go too far to the right or the left, but the Spirit always finds the perfect balance. When some people read the chapter on judgment, especially those that may have been hurt by someone who has judged them, their reaction is going to be of a this sort. They will say to themselves, “No one has a right to make any kind of judgment at all. I need to love everyone. I need to accept every body as they are. I don’t need to make anyone uncomfortable by telling them that they are doing wrong. I don’t need to think at all that someone is not doing right because they have a right to do what they want to. God loves them, and who am I to judge.” This is all very, very wrong. This is going to the extreme opposite of what we talked about in chapter 13. Matter of fact, this is what is wrong with the churches today. Everybody is doing their own thing, because nobody is standing up for what is right. We are raising a generation of children in our churches that do not know right from wrong. I read a recent survey that showed that less than 30% of Christians believe that there is a moral absolute. Only 10% of Christian teenagers believe in a moral absolute, and less than 1 out of 10 live by them. The devil loves this attitude in the church more than he loves the bitterness, jealousies, and other tools that he uses to bind us. Because with this, he can take generations to hell, and they don’t even know they are going. I remember when this liberal attitude hit the church. I remember my grandmother, who was of the old school of knowing what was right and wrong putting her two little fingers up and going, “I don’t care what anyone says, there is a right and there is a wrong, and if you do wrong, you will face God’s judgment.” We as a church world today as a whole are so far removed from this that when we are in church, you wouldn’t know the difference from being in some other sort of social gathering. Where is God’s power of conviction? We’ll talk about how important that is in the next chapter.

To sum it up, without it, we won't make it to heaven, no matter how much we excuse what we are doing. Sure we are not to judge in the flesh, but we'd better read God's Word, and check with His Spirit to see what His judgment of the thing is. The purpose of the church is to gather together in God's Spirit. Yes, it is to gather together to praise Him, but more importantly it is to learn about His ways and His Word. We want to have praise parties in the church, but when the conviction power of God's Spirit moves to convince our hearts of our sin, we want to cut it off, because that is too uncomfortable. Pastors aren't willing to rock the boat and tell their congregation that they are sinning, and give them instructions. I believe that they will wind up in the same hell with those they deceived. How much more hell can it be than to be in torment with those faces who sat under their teaching coming before their face for eternity knowing that they led them wrong because they didn't want them to be uncomfortable. We are not to judge, but we had better discern things in the Spirit and know right from wrong. And we need to be able to spot the things in the lives of others that are wrong. If we don't, how can we instruct, or help them. Flesh can't judge. The Holy Ghost sure can. We just have to be careful that we know the difference. Discernment is such an important thing to have that it is listed in the gifts that the Holy Ghost gives the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:10).

This is another reason that discernment is so important to Christians. The devil does not always come in with little horns and a pitchfork. He does not always look evil. Matter of fact, the scripture tells us that he specializes in looking like what he isn't so that he can sneak up on us. In other words he becomes a wolf in sheep's clothing. Galatians 2:4 says, "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privacy to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage." What does Paul say that they did with these? Verse 5 says, "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you." These people had come to church. They were being used by the devil to bring the church into bondage. They didn't look like the devil. They spoke really nice, really good words.

The devil knows just how to present his ideas. If they had not had the gift of discernment working in their lives, the church would have been destroyed. The Bible says that the devil is an angel of light. II Corinthians 11:13-14 says, “for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” The devil knows just how to make things look good to our flesh. He is a master at talking to our flesh. If we are walking in the flesh, then we will be easily deceived. But when we walk in the Spirit, the Holy Ghost of God will rise up and rebuke the devil before we are even aware what is going on. The Spirit of God knows the truth and a lie. If something is not of the truth, or if it is not the truth, then the Spirit of God in us will not bear witness with it. We will know in our heart that it is not right. We have to be careful that our insecurities don’t get in the way of this. We will talk ourselves right out of knowing that something is wrong, if we aren’t careful, because we lack security in our ability to discern.

There have been many times that the devil has tried to side track our ministry. He would come and try to get us into ideas that were wrong, so that we would no longer major in the Word of God, but a derailed version. He would try to get us into issues that weren’t what God wanted us involved in, so that our time was taken away from doing what God wanted to get done. He would send people who talked a good talk, to tell us we needed to do something differently from the way that God had instructed us. Usually they would tell us that God had showed them that this was true. I can say, that without discernment we would today be far away from what God has called us to do. We would not be fulfilling what He chose us to do. (This is where you have to be careful. God has also sent counsel to us to instruct us, to lift us up, and to tell us that He was leading in a new direction. When God sends someone, they will be confirming what He has already shown you, or His Spirit will bear witness that this is true. Just because the devil sends those to deceive, we can’t take an attitude of hiding from everyone. They may be sent by God.) Discernment is important, and you cannot judge in the flesh. You have to be in the Holy Ghost.

If we walk in the flesh most of the time, and we very seldom get into the Spirit, then we will ignore God's Spirit when He tries to show us that something is wrong. We will ignore this just like we ignored Him earlier today, when He tried to speak to our heart. We need to be careful never to silence the voice of God. The devil will creep in and lead you to the side, and you won't ever know it, if you are walking in the flesh. Those people who started out serving God, and were drawn aside didn't jump all of the sudden from being God's child to losing out. The devil drew them aside little by little. They let his deception lead them astray day by day, inch by inch, until they traveled too far to be able to see Calvary, too far to be able to hear the voice of God that they had silenced from their life year's ago.

Another way that we can let the devil rule our lives, is by allowing those who are ruled by him control us. I know many people who have had a battle against a certain spirit for years. There have been many times in their life when this spirit has nearly destroyed their walk with God. They can see that this is happening, but the devil has a hook in their jaw, something to attach itself to them. Just like a fisherman he reels them in using this hook. They can't find victory because every time they do, the devil just reels them back in. This hook that he uses may be sin that they are not willing to let go of. It may be wrong thinking, or attitudes that they have not completely committed to God and lined up to God's Word. It may be other people that they won't let go of. I have known Christians who were bound by family members who were not serving God. They wouldn't turn loose of them. They felt like they needed to be there for them because they were family. They felt sorry for these people because of the destruction their lives were in because they weren't serving God. They wouldn't let go. The spirits that bound their family also came against them. Eventually they were destroyed. We cannot mix with the world. We cannot mix with those who don't serve God. I don't care how much we love them. We have to let them go and give them to God. Yes, we have to witness to them. Yes, we have to love them, but sometimes the best thing we can do is love them at a distance. We can let ourselves get bound by the same spirits if we aren't careful.

We will have a weakness for these spirits because we have the same bloodline, and may have inherited these same weaknesses then we will be destroyed and what hope will they have at all. The devil will use anything he can to destroy you. Especially those things in your life that he can get a hook into. That is why we need to be able to discern what he is up to. That is also why we need to walk in the Spirit. Then he won't be able to find anything to hook into.

We need to discern the spirits that come against us. This war is not a physical war. We cannot see our enemies. Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Discernment allows us to see the battle, so that we won't be consumed by it. The only way that we can be defeated is if we fail to see the battle coming. God has given us all we need to fight the war, and be victorious. Verses 13-18 tells us, "Wherefore take unto ye 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: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." We have a battle, yes. But do we need to be afraid? The answer is no. Not when we have on the armor of God. Do you stand in truth? Do you know the truth of God's Word, and are you walking in it? Do you have a breastplate of righteousness to guard your heart? Are your sins under the blood? Have you given up trying to make excuses for your sin, and are you letting God's Spirit convict you? Are you repenting and leaving your sin behind in the victory that God has given you? Are you busy about your Father's business, with the priority of spreading His Word number one in your life? That will surely keep you out of trouble with sin. You won't have time to do anything to the contrary. Do you have the shield of faith?

Do you know that God is in control and He will take care of you, and are you trusting Him to do so? Do you have the helmet of salvation protecting your mind from the thoughts that the devil throws against you? Do you have the sword of the Word of God attacking those things that are not lining up with God's Word? If you are doing all these things, then what do you have to fear from old satan. He has already lost. You might ask me, "But, Sandy, I can't do all these things. I am not big enough in God to keep all these things going." Maybe not, but you can if you walk in God's Spirit on a day-to-day basis. Then it will be the devil that has something to fear. Learn the power and authority that God has given you over satan. You have God's Word for it. A child of God has no place fearing satan. We have authority over him in the name of Jesus. When he comes against you remind him of this. Remind him that you are a child of God and the blood of Jesus covers you. Remind Him that you are the winner, and that he is the loser. He is the stupid one. He turned his back on God, and on all God had for him. Doesn't that make you a lot smarter than he is? Especially when you are walking in the Spirit, with the Holy Ghost of God rising up in you to rebuke him.

That is why the gift of praying in tongues that comes with the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is so important. As the verse said above, pray in the Spirit. God knows how to talk to the devil. All authority is God's. When He rises up in you and tells the devil where to go, he has to go there. We serve a God Who has power even over death, hell, and the grave. What have we to fear? I got out my Strong's Concordance, which is a list of words that are in the Bible, and where in the scripture they are found. This is a great study resource. I was going to count how many times in the Scripture God said to fear not. I got up to 60 times. I was only in Job. I gave up. (I learned later that the words were mentioned in the Bible 366 times.) We need to get the idea that God says we have nothing to fear. Certainly we don't have to fear the devil. The only thing we have to fear is fear itself. We live in a world that is being controlled by fear. The terrorist attacks placed a fear against all of us. Since that time, we no longer feel secure. This insecurity has brought fear against us in more areas of our lives than just this one. We are becoming a nation that is bound.



We are bound by fear. Fear is a spirit that the devil sends against God's people to bind them. These anti-God people who are doing this are being used by the devil to do just that. We have nothing to fear. We need to shake our selves and rise up out of this. I John 4:18-19 tells us, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because He first love us." Read this whole chapter. What is the greatest weapon we have to fight against the fear the devil uses to literally torment our minds? We have the love of God. We know that we are hidden in the hollow of His hand.

No, we are not to judge. Neither are we supposed to throw ourselves at the mercy of all those that let the devil use them. These people may not always be evil people. Some of the best let the devil use their flesh in a weak moment. We aren't perfect. Who we yield to in our lives is who will rule our lives. If we let the flesh rule, we will become the devil himself to those around us.

## Chapter 15.

### Conviction

In the previous chapter, we talked about how we should not judge an unrighteous judgment, and we should not allow others to judge us unrighteously. When people who are in the flesh judge us, it can cause us to be in bondage. I know many people who have been condemned by others until they totally lose their victory. We have to have our own relationship with God, and trust that He will convict us when we are wrong. But at the same time, we must never take the attitude that no one has the right to tell us that we are doing wrong. If we do, we are not far from taking this attitude with God. Matter of fact, how we take the correction of others will be how we take the conviction of God. If we get on the defensive with those who correct us, often that will also be how we respond to God's conviction. We have to be careful, though, not to get a defensive attitude. We have to realize that conviction, the correction of God is one of the most blessed things that we can experience. It too, however, is another area in which we must walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Conviction is God dealing with you about things that you are doing that are wrong. This may be actions, attitudes, or ways of thinking. If we continue these things, they will destroy us. Conviction is God's way of stopping us from doing these things. Conviction leads to repentance. When we repent, we become sorrowful for doing wrong. Without repentance, we cannot be forgiven. We don't realize that conviction is one of the greatest treasures that God gives us.

You may be asking what is so great about conviction. Let me tell you about conviction from God's point of view. A lot of times we look at conviction all wrong especially if we are caught up in the flesh. This is what conviction is really all about. Hebrews chapter 12 is a great picture of what conviction or chastening means. Verse 2 says, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...." We look to Him to keep us. He keeps us by convicting, or chastising us of our sin. Just like parents who correct their children because they love them and want the best for them, Jesus is sure to correct us.

Verses 5-13 explain how the Lord chastises us. Verse 6 says, "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Verse 8 says, "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." We are the children of a perfect Father. He knows how to correct His children. If we are not being corrected for our shortcomings, then we are not His children. He does not want us to go to hell. He wants us day-to-day to live in His victory. He directs our path in that direction. If we don't go that way, He will spank us. He gets us back on track, and going in the right direction. He cares enough to correct us. We need to allow Him to do so. We need to respect conviction. Never allow God's conviction to continue without listening and obeying, and allowing His Spirit to stop you. I remember a time when I was first saved. I had been doing my own thing, which was the opposite of what God wanted, for a very long time. I had been silencing the voice of God in my life for years. God got through to me anyway. He drew me to Him. Since then I have cherished the conviction of God, because I remembered a time when I no longer felt conviction. Without God's conviction we would be lost eternally. Sure conviction makes me uncomfortable. Sometimes it feels like God is literally ripping me apart. But when He puts me back together, believe me the pieces are back in all the right places. How should we react to God's correction? Many of you may be parents. You know how your kids react to your correction. If your children were to react to your correction in the same way that you react to God's, how would you feel? We need to get real with ourselves and with God. We need to cut the junk out and get our act together.

We need to be careful that we walk in the Spirit when we are convicted. Conviction is a Spirit thing, not a flesh thing. This is one of the dangers that we run into if we do not take God's conviction in the Spirit. I know many people who, when God convicts them, they make excuses, they justify themselves, they blame their sin on others, and they do many things other than repenting. They are never forgiven. Repentance is what shows us that we need to ask for forgiveness. Without forgiveness we will never make heaven. Without forgiveness we aren't saved.

Hindering us from being convicted is one of the devil's prime duties. He wants to make sure that conviction does not operate in our lives. Our flesh works against conviction, which makes his job easier. Our flesh does not want to be corrected. We do not want to be told when we are doing wrong. We do not want to accept responsibility for our sin. If flesh rules, we will never be forgiven. When God begins to convict us, we can react in several different ways if our flesh is ruling our lives. We can become so defeated because we have made a mistake that we lose our victory in God. When this happens we never really accept responsibility for our sin, we never repent, and we never make things right. We just become defeated because we have sinned. Or we get pitiful. Neither of these reactions will win us deliverance. Another reaction is to blame our sins on someone else. When we do this, everyone around us is a target. Our first reaction to conviction may be to turn it on someone else. I know when God is convicting some people because they start accusing others of their own faults. That is flesh. If we aren't careful when we are convicted, we can actually be convicted then turn around and accuse others of the very thing God convicts us of. That way we don't have to accept our own conviction. Another way that we face conviction in the flesh is to get a judgmental attitude to others. That way we don't have to feel conviction. Conviction hurts. It is very uncomfortable when we have to face ourselves as we are. We don't like that, so we avoid it. When we are being convicted, the devil will be sure that the faults of others around us will jump out at us. The devil will get you into a frame of mind that all you see is the shortcomings of everybody else. The flesh will see the flesh. The flesh in others will not look good. No more than your own flesh. The devil gets us into this frame of mind so that we can't love others. This prevents us from being able to flow in the spirit with them and do whatever work God has for you to do. You are not going to be able to work with perfect people. There are none. You cannot look for the faults of others, because you will always find them. The devil loves this, because you never accept your own faults when you do this. You begin to major on others, and minor on yourself. This can only lead to defeat. We can only overcome this by allowing God's love and Spirit to rise.

By allowing it to rise up over our flesh. Then we can accept God's conviction in the way God intends, and it will lead to our victory. The longer we wrestle with conviction, the weaker we will become, and it can eventually destroy us. We can have such a problem that it causes everybody else around us to have problems. We won't see this if we are in the flesh and we are hiding from God's conviction. When this happens, the person being convicted will watch people's reactions to the attitude that they have, but they won't see their own attitude. Because they have no idea why people are acting toward them in the way that they are, they become defeated. All the while God will be speaking in His small still voice in their heart, but they aren't connected with Him enough in the Spirit to hear. This tailspin destroys people.

We have to walk in the Spirit and hear God's voice. When He pricks at your heart, don't be like Paul in Acts 9 verse 5, "And he (Paul) said, Who art, thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." God will literally prick your heart. The hardest place for us to be is kicking against the pricks. Don't kick against God's conviction. Rejoice when he convicts you. Look at yourself when He does. Don't come against everybody else because that is the way the flesh will do. Cherish God's conviction, His correction. Through conviction we become as the Sons of God. Through His work in our life we are changed to be like Him. Let him complete the work in you that He has started.

Some people teach that we are sanctified, or all fixed perfectly, in one step after we are saved in a second act of grace. Sure hasn't happened to me. I've watched the lives of many people who were taught that this was so, and it sure didn't happen to them. Our flesh is there constantly to get us messed up. The devil and his world full of sin are there to battle us. We will daily be in need of submitting to God's Spirit, and allowing His conviction to work in our lives. On the other hand, never use this as an excuse to do wrong. Never assume that no matter how many times God is there to convict us that he will continuously do it for the same sin. If we choose to constantly commit a sin that God has convicted us of, we run the risk of not having His forgiveness.

(Hebrews 10:26, “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”) You can silence the voice of God until you can no longer hear it by being continually disobedient. Never, Never play with God’s conviction. Never allow sin to control your life.

One of the greatest blessings of conviction is not having to battle with condemnation. Condemnation is different than conviction. Condemnation is something that the devil brings against us to make us feel that we are not worthy of God’s love. Condemnation comes when the devil reminds us of the things that have been forgiven of. If we allow God to work in our life, mind and heart, then we are free from condemnation. When the devil comes and tries to make me feel condemned, I remind Him that God is convicting me of my sins. I have a peace in this. I know that I can trust God to keep my soul. Because of this, I can recognize condemnation when it comes. I can bind it and refuse to accept it. When people are bound by condemnation, then I know that they are not allowing the Spirit of God to bring conviction into their lives. They are not walking in the peace of trusting God to keep their souls. The devil is the accuser of the brethren day and night. He will constantly keep a barrage of accusations against you. He wants to accuse you into continual defeat causing you to feel so condemned that you can’t rise up victorious and serve God in His fullness for you. The devil, however, can only condemn you if you are not allowing God to convict you, or if you are not trusting in His conviction. When you are walking in the Spirit and you are trusting God that He will keep your heart, that He will take your weaknesses and make these into strengths, then the devil has no hold in your life. You can recognize his voice of condemnation and silence it. He can no longer condemn you. You won’t hear it. You know where you are with God. You have listened to His voice, and your heart is tender to Him. You know that, if there were something wrong in your life, God would definitely bring it to your attention. You know that those things that He is convicting you of, and those things that He is working on in your life, He has in His hands. Then there is nothing for the devil to hold onto to destroy you.

Anything that you keep, that you don't commit to God in this way, that you don't allow God to work on, will be something that the devil can hold against you. If this is the case, then he will eventually wear you down to defeat. Don't allow things to come between you and your God. Keep the lines of communication open. Don't silence God's precious conviction. Conviction and correction come because He loves you, no matter how uncomfortable it makes you feel. Better to be uncomfortable for a season now, then to be uncomfortable in hell for eternity.

One of the greatest hindrances when God convicts us can be our pride. We don't want to admit that we are wrong. Let me tell you, if it takes it to be able to be delivered from something, I will crawl or do whatever God tells me to do. Sometimes conviction will come with the requirement of obedience for us to be forgiven. God may require us to make our wrong doing right with someone. He may require us to ask their forgiveness so that we can be forgiven. Whatever it takes, humble yourself and obey God. He knows what He is doing.

After discussing it, now tell me, how precious is God's conviction? Are you His Son? Cherish His conviction; never silence the voice of God in your life.

## Chapter 16.

### Who We Yield To Rules

The other day I did something that I had to really repent of. I just said something at the wrong place and time. You might ask what is the big deal. Well, we have power in our tongue. We have the power to bind or to lose things. This is true not only for ourselves, but also for others around us as well. If we constantly speak negative, then these negative things will rule in our lives. We can actually help the devil out by what we say. In other words, what we say, we get. If we allow the flesh with its doubt and unbelief to control our tongue it will talk us out of a blessing or healing, right before we receive it. Back to my illustration. Someone was really battling an affliction that the devil was putting against them. Making matters worse, they weren't sure what it was. Through necessity they were holding onto faith for their healing. They had a lot of things going on. The devil knew this, and was trying to bring this affliction against them to stop them from doing what God was using them to do. I had heard someone else talk about other people who had those same symptoms. This was something that was a lot more serious than what this person thought they had. I popped out with my diagnosis, and went merrily on my way. It wasn't until much later that day that I realized that the devil had used me to tear down that person's faith. I didn't mean to, but that didn't really matter. If that person would have been weaker in their faith, I could have talked them right out of a healing. Have you ever had one of those times when you wished that you hadn't opened your mouth because it seemed the devil jumped right out of it. It wasn't that you were possessed by the devil, but you yielded to that old flesh side and he jumped in and used the moment to his advantage. One way to sum this up, whatever side we yield to will be the one that will use us. If we walk in the Spirit and yield to the Spirit of God on a regular basis in our lives, then that will be what controls us. If we constantly yield to the flesh, then the devil will be the one who rules. The devil isn't trying to use the sinners out there who aren't serving God. He wants to turn us against ourselves so that we consume one another. He uses the church against itself.



He will use flesh to cause us to war against one another, and then nothing can be accomplished for the kingdom of God. He uses the flesh like those ground to air missiles to shoot down our brothers and sisters in the Lord. We have to be sure that we aren't letting him use us. Flesh is enmity against God, so it is also an enmity (or an enemy) of God's people. Whether or not we mean to be used doesn't really matter. If we are walking in the flesh, we will be.

How can you prevent this from happening to you? Make sure that you are walking in the Spirit. Make sure that everything is under the blood, and you are committed and submitted to God. Make sure that the motives of your heart are right. If you are living the life that you are living, or doing the things that you are doing, because you are doing it for the people around you, then your motives are wrong. You have to walk this walk because you are doing it for God. Get real with God and He will get real with you. Make sure your priorities are in line. Remember, who you yield to will rule in your life.

## Chapter 17.

### Focused

Matthew 6:21-23 tells us, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness, If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” It took me years to get in my heart what this verse was saying. It just didn’t make sense to me. I think that this was because I didn’t have a single eye, so I couldn’t see what it meant to have it. When I came to the place that I was focused, I began to understand what it meant. The key is found in verse 21. “Where your treasure is your heart will be also.” If you focus on where your treasure is, then you will have a single eye. It won’t be taking in the whole panorama. It won’t be taking in what the rest of the world is doing. You won’t be noticing what everyone else is doing. You won’t notice the things that would lead you to the side of God’s will for you. You can’t see everything to the side of your vision, because you are focused on God, His love, His Word, and His will for your life. You have a “single eye”. When this happens, you will be full of light. Your life will be full of the victory of God, the joy and peace that this brings. If we focus on everything else, then our life will be full of darkness, turmoil, and trouble. I’ll illustrate this by using a visit to the optometrist. Have you ever had them put those drops into your eyes that caused your pupils to dilate. Recently I did. He told me to put on dark glasses before I left the office. I didn’t have any. Boy, did I regret that. When I came out of the office, it was a bright sunny day. I wasn’t able to focus at all. All that light hit my eye and I was literally blinded by the light. Our life can easily get that way. I see many Christians that are controlled by the world around them because they are not focused. They are literally blinded from being able to see clearly. Most of the time, they have not planned to let their life get out of focused. This happened gradually. The devil is a master at slipping in things into our lives to keep them from being balanced, and centered in God’s will. How do you know if this has happened to you?

Ask yourself, who or what is in control of your life? If you are constantly running and not getting anything done, if you are so worn out that you don't have time or energy to obey God, then you are caught in the devil's rat race. If you do not have time to spend in your relationship with God, then your life is out of focus. If this is happening then we already know that we are not walking in the Spirit. Sometimes we get caught up in doing all these things that we think we should do for our family. Mothers are especially guilty of this. But when the Holy Ghost is not in control of our lives, and we are out of focus, then we are doing a great harm to our children in trying to do our best. Is the Holy Ghost in charge of your life, and in charge of your families' lives? If not, then you will be out of focus. This may even be true of church activities. The devil would like to see you so involved in things that God is not the focus of your life, even if it is church things that you are involved in. If he can keep us so focused on other things than on our relationship with God, then we are defeated before we start in whatever we are doing. God may have a perfect will for us, something that He has called us to do, but we become so involved in everything else that we can't focus on that one thing good enough to do it well. We have noticed around the ministry that the devil will allow us to focus on something that does a little bit of good, to keep us from focusing on something that can do a lot of good. Let the Holy Ghost direct your activities. Stay focused in your relationship with God. When we do this, our children will learn to do the same. This will be of more value to them than a hundred activities that we have lined up to fill their time. They can learn by our example how to have a rat race life with little victory, or they can learn how a Spirit led life can be a life of peace and joy.

Before I came to an understanding of walking in the Spirit, I would come to the end of my day feeling guilty because I had not had time to pray or read my Bible. If I set down a few minutes to pray, then it was always the last few minutes of my day, and I almost always fell asleep in the pages of my Bible. I started to see that this wasn't working, so I got up a little earlier, and took time to read and pray. Then I would go on my merry way without another thought of God until the next morning.

I began to realize that my life was being controlled by everything but God. I was walking in the flesh. God was an afterthought. What about those other 10 waking hours of my day? Where were they focused? Who was in control then? What about those times at work when I needed that extra peace and love to deal with that frustrating situation? What about the peace that I needed to be able to deal with my family's finances? What about that day-to-day guidance that I needed to make those important decisions? What about the extra love my family needed from me, and patience? What about the guidance that I needed to guide them? What about the joy that is my strength that can only come from the Spirit? What about the Savior who gave it all for me? The one who had waited patiently in the background of my busy life to spend time fellowshiping with me? Now He is no longer an after thought or a guilt trip in my life. He is a focus. I walk with Him daily and that has not only changed my own life, but my whole world around me, and the lives of those I come into contact with. Focusing on God will change your world. Let Him lead you. Walk in the Holy Ghost every day. Obedience is not something that you should pride yourself in doing every once in a while. Obedience is an every day condition of the heart.

When we are focused on God, it is not as easy to be discouraged. I have seen a lot of people give up just before their miracle. I have seen people give up believing in their healing or other miracle just before they received it. I have seen people push on for years for a miracle. Right before they were to receive it the devil would do a blitz that caused them to draw back right before their miracle came. If you believe God for a supernatural miracle, stay focused. You have to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Keep your eyes looking forward, and seeking out your miracle. It is on its way.

One example of staying focused and looking for a miracle that I can think of is this book. For weeks, I had drawn a blank every time I started to work on it. I knew that God was leading me to write it, but I couldn't get any where with it. I almost put it away not to finish it. I almost gave up at writing it. Old flesh said, "If God isn't going to help you write it, then it doesn't need to be finished. You need to forget it." That wasn't true though.

Today I picked it up and asked God to help me write, just like I had done many, many times before. I was ready to go on and do something else. That was flesh. I decided instead to try once more. God honored my perseverance. Perseverance means that you keep on no matter what happens. You stay focused, and determined. That is walking in the Spirit. Another word for perseverance is importunity. Luke 11:5-10 is the best example of importunity. Read this person's story. Verse 8 tells us that this person finally came down and helped the neighbor because he would not go away. He was focused. They rose and "gave him as he needeth". If you have something that you are trusting God to do, stay focused. Don't give up. Jesus Himself told this story as an illustration as to how to get God to move. Well, like I said earlier, I kept on and didn't give up on writing this book. I stayed focused. God moved and started helping me. That was 5 chapters ago. I also got an outline for the rest of the book that was hot off heaven's presses. I just had to press on a little farther. Victories, and miracles, are not always instant. That's when you have to press on a little farther, and know that the greater the battle, the greater the victory, and the promises and blessing that you will reap. Psalm 30:5 tells us, "...Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Just hold on. Your victory may be just out of sight.

When we are holding on and waiting for God to move, it is important to walk in the Spirit. When we walk in the flesh, we won't have the strength that we need to be able to walk in faith. We have to walk in the Spirit when we are going through these times. We can count on His strength. When we are walking in Him, it is a guarantee that we will have all the strength that we need. Hold onto that vision, that promise that He has given you. Don't let the devil tell you that you aren't worthy. If God promised it, does it matter? His love is enough. You may not be perfect. God knew that before He promised what He was going to do for you. His Word is not dependant upon your perfection. Focus on Him and not on yourself. That is walking in the Spirit.

## Chapter 18. Commitments

One of the greatest keys in staying focused in God, and a key for walking in the Spirit as well, is commitments. Now of course the first commitment that you need to make is to let your life be focused on serving Him and obeying His Word. We also need to commit ourselves to stay free from sin. We need to allow the Holy Ghost to convict us and we need to submit to Him. We need to commit these areas of sin in our lives to God, and repent, and stop them with His help. That means not only actions, but also attitudes and ways of thinking that are not lined up with God's Word. (Romans 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.") These are the beginning of the commitments that we are required to make. Beyond that, there are other commitments that you can make that will strengthen you in being able to walk in the Spirit, and that will help you to stay focused. If you pray, God will lead you to make certain commitments. If you come up with something in the flesh and you declare to yourself that this what you're going to do, it is unlikely that you will be able to keep this commitment. If you allow God to lead you in making this commitment, and you daily live by them, this will interrupt what your flesh would like to do. Anytime you do that, you put flesh down and the Holy Ghost in you is strengthened.

Let me give you an example. Several years ago I had terrible kidney trouble. My kidneys would actually shut down totally for several days at a time. I would pray for God to heal me, and He would. Then I would wind up back in the same state. I had a bad habit of living on caffeine energy. Every day, instead of eating, I would junk up on caffeine for the day's energy. I would drink several cups of coffee and several soft drinks a day. God would heal me from my kidney problems, I would go on my way with this daily routine, and before long I would be right back.

I would be right back in the same shape. One day when I asked God to heal me, He told me no. He told me to change my habits. Believe me, I did. That was over 20 years ago, and I haven't had anything with caffeine or carbonation in it since then. At first there were times when my flesh craved it, but it really didn't matter. I had made a commitment that God had led me to make, and I had stuck with it. Now it isn't even an issue, I don't want it at all. One of the mistakes that people make in setting their commitments is not walking in the Spirit when they are made. If we just pick something that we choose on our own to do, that God hasn't led us to do, then we won't be able to stick to it. If God is leading you to make a commitment of this sort, then ask Him what it is you should commit. Whatever it is, your flesh won't like it. Stick to it. It will be one way to put your flesh where it needs to be, at the feet of Jesus.

There is another area that can help us to walk in the Spirit. That is plain old self-control. Flesh will have us to be a slave to our appetites. By self-control, we establish the fact that our flesh won't rule. This means in any thing that our body craves. Sometimes we can be controlled by the basic flesh appetites, and the devil can actually use them to control us. One of the first I think of is the appetite for food. If we become obsessed with food, we allow our flesh to control. Another appetite would be our appetite for sex, or for anything else our body craves. A lot of Christians allow satan to destroy them because they can't control their appetite for sex. This is especially true for young Christians that are overcoming days of sin when they let lust control their life. Sometimes it is easy to let lust control us after we have been a Christian for a time. Any time we let our appetites control us we will lose victory in God, and we will be stopped from walking in the Spirit. We can't have it both ways. We have to have one or the other. How do we gain victory over this area in our lives? We have to identify the problem and commit this area of our life to God. We have to stop allowing the devil to work against us using our own flesh. We have to do spiritual warfare, bind him, and bind our flesh from controlling us. Then we have to walk in the Spirit. God can even turn our very weaknesses into being our greatest strengths.

One of the few red letter words past the Gospels, words that Jesus said Himself is found in II Corinthians 12:9-10. These are Words that Jesus spoke to Paul, and he quoted them word for word. “And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Then Paul goes on to say, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” When we are weak, then He is strong. How can we lose when we walk in the Spirit.



## Chapter 19. Sorting Out the Clutter

I know a lady who is never quite able to find the total victory that God has for her. She knows how, but she never totally lives up to the knowledge of walking in the Spirit that she has. The battle that the devil uses against her to keep her from finding this is the “clutter” that he surrounds her life with. She has unsaved family that she allows to control her life. Her children and their problems control her instead of the other way around. The main thing that she does is that she allows the world to control her instead of letting her spirit be strong enough in God that she allows Him to control her world. All of the worldly things that control her unsaved family eventually control her because she thinks that she must keep up with them in the way that we think we have to keep with the Joneses’. Worldly thinking controls her mind instead of Spiritual thinking. Her phone line to God is filled with all this static. She cannot hear the voice of God clearly. She would be a great asset to the Kingdom of God, but all the “clutter” of her life binds her from doing so. Every time that God calls on her to do something, something always happens. Some of the “clutter” of her life gets in the way. She is not able to fight through this to be able to obey God. She cannot totally see that her flesh and the flesh of those around her are binding her. When we come to the place where there is so much clutter in our lives, our victory loses its edge.

What is the problem and how do we fix it? Number one, flesh has to go. I don’t care who understands, who accepts it, who likes it or lumps it, flesh has to go. Then we have to allow God’s will to be number one, not the will of those around us. When we allow the flesh of others to control us, we allow satan to control those people who are controlling us. Instead of our being strong and taking a stand in the Spirit, we give into flesh, and nobody wins. We may not want that to happen. We may love them very much, and if we could see what was happening, we would do all we could to prevent it. That isn’t how the devil operates, all out in the open. He uses the weaknesses of others, to destroy us, so that others around us are destroyed as well.

He is smart. The Spirit of God is smarter. We have to allow His Spirit to control our lives. We need to clean out our communications line to heaven. We do this by making hearing the voice of God a number one priority in our lives. This won't happen by getting to it once in a while when things are so crazy we can't stand it any more. Prayer and Bible reading put things in order. Then, just like we talked in a previous chapter, we have to get our commitments and priorities in line. When God takes over our life as number one, He takes out the "clutter". When we commit and submit to Him, He takes out the "clutter". When we walk in the Spirit and let Him lead us, we take out the "clutter" as well.

I know someone else who has allowed something besides God to control his life. When I first met him several years ago, the number one priority of his life was to serve God full time. Then he became involved in an activity that takes a great deal of his time. Little by little through the years that activity has begun to control him. He not only fails to spend time with God, but he also fails to spend time with his family as well. His time is no longer his own. I remember a time when every day he read his Bible, now I seldom hear that he has read it. I remember a time that daily he spent time in prayer. Now I seldom hear him pray. He has lost his spiritual edge. He no longer has a priority of serving God. I can see that if he doesn't escape from this trap that the devil has set for his soul he might not continue to serve God at all. He has allowed the "clutter" of this activity to control him.

The devil uses all kinds of traps to destroy us. One is to send things our way that we think are so great. It may help all kinds of people and do all kinds of good. It wouldn't be a trap unless it looked good. We won't fall for the things that look bad. The devil can make anything look good. He can give us all kinds of excuses, reasons to do this thing that he has set there for our lives. If we don't walk in the Spirit, we can't see these traps that he has set. If we are listening to the voice of God, and submitted to Him, He will tell us not to go there, and we don't.

I know someone else who has a lot of clutter in their lives that stop them from committing to God. They are a Christian. They are caught up in the world more than they are in God. They are caught up in doing all the things that the world does.

They are working hard to give their family all the things that the world says they are supposed to have. Their children are all involved in all the right things according to the world. Church has no priority, but it is something that they all do. You just want to be careful though that you don't get excessive with that though, so they say. They listen to all the world's preaching, the popular voices. These voices say that what is right for you might not be right for me. They say that we don't want to hamper anyone's style by telling them that they are on their way to hell, even if it is plain that they are destroying their lives. These voices say that we aren't to become involved in the lives of those around us, that they have a right to be who they are. You know those voices. You have probably heard the world's preachers say the same things. They may not always speak from a pulpit, but often through things we read and hear. TV is one of the world's greatest preachers. It seems like another thing that the world pushes is sports, and keeping up with all that is going on there. Oh yes, and we must have some type of hobby, something to get involved in. But that can't be the church, because like we said before, you don't want to get extreme with that, just with everything else. Clutter, clutter, clutter, clutter. That is all you hear when you talk to this person who has let the world control their life and their thinking. They think they are close to God, but they are so far away in their relationship with Him that they no longer hear His voice. The clutter of their life has pushed Him away. How can they fix this? They need to return to the One that paid the extreme price for them. They need to rededicate themselves to God. They need to come back to their first love. They need to commit and submit and walk in the Spirit. You can't let the world control you and walk in the Spirit. It won't happen that way.

Do you have excess clutter in your life that is stopping you from listening to the voice of God, and walking with Him? Is your life filled with a rat race confusion that is taking you nowhere? Give your will over to God. Walk in the Spirit. Let Him lead you, you can stop the clutter. If you don't??? That clutter that is taking over will eventually own you and your soul. The one who sent it to deceive you will own you. Walk in the Spirit.

## Chapter 20. The Truth Shall Make You Free

Here are some of my favorite verses concerning the truth. John 8:32, “And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” 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.” John 16:13, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” Ephesians 4:21, “If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.” There is a powerful sermon to be found in these verses. How many times in the course of a day do you need to know the truth about something? Yes, these Words are speaking about knowing the truth, the Word of God, knowing the right and sound doctrine, and the way to live. Without this truth we would all be lost. But there are other truths that you need to know. How many times do you hear something someone says, and you need to know if this is the truth? How many times have you heard someone say something, and if you believed it, it would change how you see your world? You were afraid not to believe it if it was true, but you were afraid to believe it if it was not. How many times has someone said something about someone else, you know, those people who love to let people talk and hear all they have to say so that they can turn around and tell it all? You heard them say something about someone and you didn’t know whether it was the truth or not, and you needed to know. What about the time that you went to the doctor, and he gave you a devastating report, and you had to choose between life threatening cures, you needed to know the truth, not what someone you barely knew was telling you? What about the decisions that you have to make, countless of them in a day’s time, and you know that the wrong one can sometimes bring you disaster? How many times do you need to know the truth? Jesus promised us that the truth would set us free. He promised us that He was the truth, and He promised us that He would guide us into all truth. Who better can we go to when we need to find out the truth? He **is** the truth.

He will guide you. You can count on the fact that your flesh will not be able to discern or tell whether something is true or not. Your flesh is not of the truth. Your flesh is of a lie. Those people who think that they have good sound judgment, but they are making this judgment in the flesh, are only fooling themselves. We need to walk in the Spirit to be able to discern what is best, what is right, and what is true. Before you make a decision, pray that you find out the truth about which is the best direction for you to take. Before you say something about someone, pray that God show you that this is the truth. Before you offer others advice about things that they should do, pray and ask God to show you the truth in how to direct them, and even better yet, pray that God reveal this truth to them. When a doctor, or anyone, tells you a diagnosis about health problems, go to the One Who made the body you are housed in and find out the truth. That is walking in the Spirit.

There is another reason why it is important to be able to discern the truth. There are more false doctrines that are engulfing people today than there are churches that are following the Word of God and walking in the Spirit. One of the deadliest ways of thinking that you can have is what I call the “end time spirit”. This is the spirit of compromise that has destroyed many, many churches from finding and walking in the truth. These churches are so filled with the world, and the world’s thinking, that God is left out. I will talk more about the “end time spirit” in my next chapter. We have talked before about how satan comes as an angel of light. The way of thinking that he brings in to destroy us is very subtle, and it sounds like it would come from an angel. But it is filled with lies that destroy and bind us from serving God in the fullness and freedom that we are meant to have. Only the truth can set us free. That is the whole and complete truth. I never will forget the first time that I realized the bondage that not walking in the truth in a church would bring against people. As a young Christian, I became involved in a church. After I had been there a while, I was amazed at the number of sick and crippled people that there were in the church. I would say 1/3 of the congregation was seriously ill or permanently disabled. These people were not all elderly.

I asked God to show me why so many were that way. Not long after that God began to reveal to me that his group of people had a very strange doctrine. They seemed to be Spirit-filled and walking in His Spirit, but they were not of the truth. He led me to leave the church. Because I left the church, they labeled me as having blasphemed the Spirit, and there was no forgiveness for this. Later on I found out that these people were so messed up that they actually believed that the prophet who founded their group would come back from the dead. I was a young Christian. I could have been swallowed whole by this falseness. It looked so good. The people were so loving. I felt like I belonged. In the flesh it seemed like it was the perfect church for me. It was actually one of the few Spirit-filled churches in the area, and that made it seem even more so. But I was not walking in the flesh. I was seeking God for what I needed to do. I trusted Him that He wouldn't let me get destroyed by wrong thinking. I was so young in the Lord that I didn't even know what I was supposed to think, but I knew that He would keep me from things that were wrong. I was right. He did keep me. That is walking in the Spirit. If you walk in the Spirit you will be able to tell wrong thinking from right. I have seen so many people get caught up in false doctrines and false thinking. This brought them into bondage. They followed everything but the truth. I think this happened because they were not following THE TRUTH. They were far removed from God and they were not following Him. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the light..." When we have a real relationship with Him, and we are committed and submitted to Him, we will follow Him. He will not let us be caught in wrong ways of thinking. We have His Word for it.

Why then do so many get caught in lies, and live in them? What is the end for those who do not follow after the truth? The Bible has many verses that talk about this. The most known is John 4:24, "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." We have to worship God in the spirit. We have to come to Him on His terms, the way that He is, not how we want to in our own flesh. There is one truth, and we cannot make that truth wrong, and create a new one, because we don't want to line up to the whole truth of God's Word.

Romans 3:4, "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged." There is a great danger in choosing to believe a lie rather than to walk in the truth. II Thessalonians 2:10 tells us, "and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." I am convinced by the sum total of God's Word that we can have a great relationship with our pastor, be loved by the entire congregation, be well known for all the good we do, and still go to hell. I am convinced that without knowledge of the Truth, and without a relationship with the Truth, that we will never be able to spend eternity in fellowship with Him. We can have knowledge of God's Word that amazes those around us, but if we don't have a relationship with It's author, we will never spend eternity in His love. How will we show that we are walking in the Truth and with the Truth? By our deeds. I John 3:18, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." People will know by your life style whether or not you know the truth. If it does not convict you to sin, then you do not know the truth. "For many deceivers are entered into the world... Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (II John 7-9).

## **Chapter 21.**

### **The Battle and How to Win**

We have talked a lot in this book about the battle of satan and of the world that comes against us, and that the only way that we can overcome these is by walking in the Spirit. I want to write this chapter to make sure that you know that even though there is a battle, we can be victorious in God. We have already talked about how Ephesians 6:12 tells us this about the battle. “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.” This tells us that we do have a battle, which is something that I am sure you already recognize. We see that the battle that we face is not a flesh and blood battle. We can’t go out and literally physically stomp the devil. We can’t even stop him, because we can’t even see him. Since this battle is a spiritual battle, we have to fight him in the Spirit. If we are walking in the flesh, this can’t be done.

What is the answer? How do we fight this battle? Ephesians has a lot to say about that subject in chapter 6 verses 13-18. “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; Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints.” None of this is something that we can do in the flesh. So that proves out that to fight against the devil, we have to walk in the Spirit. Flesh cannot win in fighting satan. When we walk in the Spirit, loosing is not an option.

We not only have to fight satan to keep the victory in our own lives, to be able to obey God and do things for Him, but we also have to fight satan in the lives of those we love.



We have to learn to take spiritual control of those in our household. I see that so much in working with our Christian school. I have watched this in over 20 years of teaching. When parents of children are walking in the Spirit and they are taking Spiritual charge of their children, their children face a whole lot less than those who are letting the devil control them and their children. Those that are letting the devil control them are often Christians. The devil will actually fight the children of Christians more so than the children of sinners. The devil hates God's kids. Especially those that may one day work for God. This generation of children is special. It will be the last generation before the Lord comes back. No wonder the enemy is so busy at trying to destroy our young people. Their only hope is parents who will stand and purpose in their hearts that the devil and the world will not get their children. We have to stand in Spiritual authority for them until they gain a relationship with God of their own and they learn to stand for themselves. If we don't, they can be spiritually destroyed, and it really doesn't matter whether or not we weep when it happens because we love them so. You not only have to walk in the Spirit and take spiritual authority for yourself, but also for those in your household. You have a right to overcome satan, and you have a right to establish grounds that he can't come across.

Whether the grounds that you are claiming for deliverance are your children, things that you are doing for God, your finances, your physical and emotional health, the health of your family, your church and its work, or whatever it may be, you have to take spiritual charge over satan. God gives us the right to do so. Why would He give us all the armor that we talked about earlier if there was no reason to fight? If He didn't expect us to win, why would He Himself provide the armor? I can remember a time when the devil had set a financial battle against the ministry. If God didn't undertake, we were in danger of loosing our property. We walked in the Spirit. We identified the problem. We recognized that satan was on the rampage. We listened to the voice of God. He told us to physically march around our property and bind up the stronghold that the enemy had brought against us and command him to loose our finances.

We did that. It was only a matter of days that the Holy Ghost broke through and the battle was over. Walk in the Spirit. Identify the problem. Recognize who it is that is behind it. Listen to the voice of God. He knows how to handle the circumstance. What He tells you to do may not make a lot of sense. No matter. The Spiritual things won't make natural sense. But the battle is not in the Spirit, nor is the solution. Find out what God says and do it, even if it blows the natural mind. I am sure that we looked really silly to our carnal neighbors that day while we were marching around. No matter. They understood our victory when it came.

## **Chapter 22.**

### **The End Time Spirit**

There is a spirit of the devil that is loosed on our world today. It destroys more Christians and makes more churches ineffective in serving God than any other. It binds them up to the place that they lose all knowledge of the truth of God, and how to walk in His Spirit. I am not talking about a spirit that works against sinners. Its main purpose is to destroy and make ineffective the body of Christ. Here are some signs that it has been at work. When it takes hold of a believer or of a body, there is no longer any knowledge of what is right and wrong. One of the most prevalent ideas in the church world today is, “What is right for me might not be right for you, and what is wrong for you might not be wrong for me.” This goes hand in hand with the idea that we are not to make people uncomfortable in our churches by telling them that they should not do wrong. No wonder we no longer have the power of conviction of God’s Spirit in our churches. We have compromised with the world, the world’s ideas, and the world’s sin until we are no different than the world. We do this with some strange idea that by doing so we will attract more people. When they get there, what do they find? Do we prevent them from being destroyed by the power of the enemy, or the lure of the world and its soul-damaging sin? This section of Romans talks about this end time spirit in Romans Chapter 1. Read it and see if it doesn’t remind you of today’s world. And where is the church in this chapter? This chapter is talking about the church. How do I know? Verse 32 says, “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” Why is violence at an all time high? Why do our children go to school, and live in fear? Why are homosexuality, teen sex, sexually transmitted disease, teen abortions, and pregnancy at an all time high? Because the church has lost the power of conviction in their services. Because God is no longer dealing with His people. They did not want to be made uncomfortable so they shut Him out. They shut Him out because they chosen to follow after a lie, instead of the truth of His Word.

Our children have grown up not knowing right from wrong. We no longer make a stand for righteousness. We no longer are of the truth. We are far removed from a right, and real relationship with God, and we are fooling ourselves into thinking that this no longer matters. We are no longer a light to the world. The Word of God is the only truth, the only righteous standard, and the only real guide that this world has. The church is to carry that light to the world. The torchbearer has lost its flame. No wonder the world is in darkness. How can we change this? II Chronicles 7:14 says, "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."

You can also tell a lot about whether or not a congregation has become bound by the end time spirit by their conversation. I was in a church for several years. When they were gathered together they wanted to talk about the activities they were involved with in outside of the church. They wanted to talk about all the activities their children were involved in outside the church. They wanted to talk about their favorite recipes or favorite shopping places. They wanted to talk about how their hair looked, and their clothes. They wanted to talk about the latest movies and books (never mind if they were filthy). They wanted to talk about sports. Their conversations came from their hearts, and their hearts were full of everything except God. Every now and again someone would feel guilty and talk a little about Jesus, but quickly the conversations would return to the things their heart was mostly concerned with. Every once in a while enough of God's Spirit would get through to convict them. They would repent for a season, but it wasn't long until they returned to doing their own thing their own way. They didn't want to commit to serving God. They never had time to work in the church. As a whole, they were angry when they were made to feel uncomfortable for not helping. That church no longer exists today. The end time spirit causes us to conform to be just like the world in our attitudes, actions, and the desires of our hearts. It rocks the church to sleep in a cradle of compromise. It will creep in and destroy.

One of the prevalent things that go with this spirit is what the Bible calls the pride of life. This is a way of thinking that this spirit brings against people. If we are caught in the pride of life, we have to fit in and be popular, think the things that everyone else is thinking, and do the things that everyone else is doing. We forget the verse that tells us, broad is the way to destruction, but narrow is the way to eternal salvation and few there be that finds it. We follow the crowd. The crowd says there is certain trend set, and we need to be in it. We get caught up in having a certain look for ourselves, and our homes. We get caught up in a way of thinking that our children should have these certain things, brand names especially, and they should be in these certain activities, or they are substandard kids. We spend lots of money and time and effort to make sure these things are so. If we don't fit in with this standard, then we are dissatisfied with ourselves, and those around us. The devil drains us of our finances, and we no longer have funds to give to God's work. The devil drains us of our time, and we have none left for God. And we are still dissatisfied. The final sign that this spirit is controlling us is that we are troubled by the same ills that the world is troubled with. We no longer are walking in victory, but in fear, doubt, unbelief, and worry. Our health and the health of our family suffer. We have nerve problems, depression, and heart problems. We lose our relationship with God, because so many things have taken the place of Him.

How can we stop from being overcome by this end time spirit? If we have already been consumed by it, or if we are finding ourselves in its grasp, how can we get loose from it? First we have to realize and admit our problem. Then we have to repent. We have sinned. We have turned away from God. We have to come to our senses. Then we have to long to return to a real and right relationship with Him. Then we have to walk in the Spirit, and put a number one priority on our relationship with Him. We have to fall in love with Jesus all over again. We have to return to our first love. Be a light to the world around you. Do those that you love who are lost see Jesus in you, or just a cheap imitation of the world? Where is your mind and heart set? Don't miss heaven for the world.

## **Chapter 23.**

### **What About Your Children**

The first question that I need to answer here is, no I don't have any children of my own. You may ask then how am I qualified to talk about children. I have been blessed to be able to have taught children of all ages for over 30 years. I have taught the children of parents who were sinners, and the children of parents who were Christians. I have taught the children of parents who have let flesh control their lives and I have been blessed to teach the children of parents who were walking in the Spirit. I have watched many of these children grow up and now they have children of their own. The patterns that they learned as children were what they later passed on to their own children. I have no doubt that these same patterns will be passed to their grandchildren. Do you have children? Do you let the flesh or Spirit control you? What is your focus? If your eye is single, your heart focused on God, then your life will be full of light, and so will the lives of your children. If it is not, then now is a good time to change. It is never too late. God will help you. When you do begin to change, you won't see the change in your children right away, but don't be discouraged, it will come. It may take some time for the change to come from inside their heart and mind out to where you can see it. Sometimes we don't see exactly what goes on in their hearts. But God's Word promises that when we train them in the way that they should, it will bring results. Proverbs 22:6 tells us, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." When I became a certain age, I departed from the truth. I did a lot of things that I knew better not to do. But the knowledge and training that I had as a child never left me. It kept working in my heart and mind. Here I am, all these years later, serving God, and have been for the past 30 years. If your children have departed from what they know, keep the faith. Keep believing in God's Word. Look for those little evidences that God and His Word are working in their lives.

For those parents whose children are letting their flesh control them, and they have turned away from the Spirit of God,

you will need an extra Holy Ghost filled walk. We live in a world that is focused at destroying our young people. They must be a very special generation, because the devil is on an all out campaign to destroy them before they can find a relationship with God that will keep them. We need to guard our children. We can't do that if we aren't walking in the Spirit. The enemy they face is a spiritual one, and we can only help them fight by waging spiritual battle. If you are trying to fight this battle in the flesh, you will be destined to lose, and so will they. To help them fight, you need to give them an understanding of how to walk in the Spirit, and you need to set this example before them. Let them know that you are not perfect, that you are weak, but let them see Who you get your strength from. Give them an understanding of the channels the devil will use to come against them. Don't allow music other than Gospel to be played in your home. What I have learned through the years about the power that the devil has in his music would make your hair stand on end. Control what they take into their spirits through TV, movies, books, or the Internet. (Just a note, beware of the chat rooms on the Internet. I could tell you many stories of young people whose lives were destroyed because of chat rooms, Face Book and the like). You can control their spiritual world when they are around you, but what about when they are not there with you? Pray. Pray in the Spirit. God knows where they are and what they need. When the Holy Spirit intercedes in your spirit for them, allow Him to. God can show you whether they have been where they say they are, and if they have been involved in things they shouldn't. The Holy Ghost can lead you in how to handle those times when they weren't. We all know what flesh can do to a parent, child relationship. Let the Spirit control your response to them, especially when you are upset with them. God will show you how to protect and shield them from the powers of hell, and also lead them into a victorious life in Him.

There is one important thing to remember here. Do not let fear control you. There are a lot of reasons that parents should be afraid. There are so many dangers out there for our children to face. However if we allow fear to control our lives and minds, then that same fear will eventually control our children.

No one wants to condemn their child to a life bound by fear. Walking in the Spirit, you will have no reason to fear. Place your children in God's hands. Let Him be Lord of their live, not your fear.

If you want your children to grow up to be healthy in body, mind, and spirit, and if you want them to be victorious and successful, walk in the Spirit. Only when you do so will they be able to do the same. Only by walking in the Spirit will they be able to overcome.



## **Chapter 24.**

### **Pay Back**

You may think that this is a strange title for the closing chapter of this book. It comes from a way of life that I am choosing. When satan comes against me, I come up with several things to pay him back. Lately he has been on the warpath. I have chosen this chapter as a pay back, as a testimony of how we can overcome him when we walk in the Spirit. There are a few other things that this time of trying has given me the fire to complete. Three years ago, God told me to write a statement on a piece of paper and date it when it was written. The statement read like this, "I am coming into a time of great blessing and prosperity." In the next two years I inherited some property. From the time that this was in the making the devil declared a war against me. Then one day God warned me that before the property sold the devil would declare an all out war against me to destroy me financially before I could come to my time of blessing. This is what happened from that time: first my husband was put on a four day work week for several months, then the person had rented our rental property moved out leaving us with an extra house payment. Then we got a bill for several thousands dollars worth of taxes from the IRS that was a mistake, but we were charged for it anyway. Then on the day before I found out that I needed bladder surgery, a tree fell on my house. This is not a joke, this all true. In the mean time my surgery was supposed to be at a certain hospital. The hospital checked with my insurance and they said it was OK to have it there. The person that worked with the insurance at my husband's work place caught it and the day before the surgery, I found out that the insurance had been mistaken. If I would have had it there, I would have been responsible for the bill. There were some other things that went on at the ministry, just an all out war from the devil. So how did it turn out? At first I was afraid. I told someone that this was as close as I had ever gotten to panic attacks. I could relate. I was panicked. On top of it all, the devil put an onslaught of a spirit of fear against me, a fear that I couldn't get everything done that I had to do. I swallowed this for several days, then I came to my senses.

I declared the victory of God. I was humbled. There was nothing that I could do about it all. I could just trust God. But I knew that victory was ahead. Now I have a beautiful new porch, I have had my surgery that the insurance paid for. We are paying our bills day by day trusting in God. I often think, what if I hadn't been listening when God told me that this time was coming. This was a great comfort. I knew that God already knew months before this happened that it was coming. I knew that He could and would take care of me. That is walking in the Spirit. I had discernment enough to realize that the fear came from the devil and I knew how to bind it. That is walking in the Spirit. I knew that I had to each day walk in trusting the Lord. That is walking in the Spirit. I had to get His Word out and bury myself in the promises in its pages. That is walking in the Spirit. I had to encourage myself in the Lord and know that it was in His hands. We cannot stand the battles of this life without all these things. We cannot overcome the powers of satan as he comes at us on our own, in our flesh. We have to walk in the Spirit. But praise God, when we do, His victory is sweet.

You may be facing a battle, a season of time when it seems like the sky is falling all around you, and there is nothing that you can do about it but run. You may be going through a time when it seems like the battle has been so long and hard that there is no end to it. Just hold on. There is a joy that comes in the morning. Satan cannot destroy you. He can roar and he can scratch at the air around you, but he cannot touch you unless God takes down the hedge that is around you. God is your shield. Walk in the Spirit. Stay under the blood with your sin. Be prayed up, instant in and out of season. Walk in the Spirit. God Himself will walk with you. Then you will come to your own pay back time.

## Closing

In closing, that old song titled, “Victory in Jesus” is not a myth. God intends for His people to have just that, Victory in Him. He intends for His people to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and do things on earth that He did, and even greater. He has provided everything that we need for us to be able to do so. It is ours for the asking. A life of victory is ours, when we walk in the Spirit. There are submissions that we have to make. There is obedience that will be required of us. We will have to give up our will, and our way. What we submit, and what we give up, will only be a pale shadow when compared to what we will gain. You need to have this victory in your life that is found when you walk in the Spirit. Your family and friends, and coworkers need you to walk in the Spirit. God Himself needs you to walk in the Spirit. Your body of believers, your church, needs you to walk in the Spirit. Those lost and hurting around you everyday who need God need you to walk in the Spirit so that you can reach them. It is my prayer that through this book you learn that you, as a child of God, can walk in the Spirit with a victorious walk. May you learn of the promises that are found for those who do. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” “And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...” (Romans 8:14 and 17).





