

Messengers For Christ

*Outreach Program
Handbook 2*

Acts 16:6,7:

Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ⁷ After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy traveled and delivered the decrees that were ordained of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem helping to establish the churches in the faith and increase in number daily. They continued traveling throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, but were forbidden to preach the Word in Asia. Obedient, they proceeded to Mysia and tried to go into Bithynia. It seemed like a logical plan to them, but again, the Spirit suffered them not.

Well, they obeyed, avoided Bithynia and kept moving toward Troas where Luke joined them. It was while they were at Troas that God preempted their plans. He gave Paul a vision, revelation that clarified His will and directed their actions. Notice that twice before the vision God said, “No.” to their tentative plans. They obeyed and kept moving. Even though they lacked specific direction, they moved ahead the best they could figure out. Their willingness to preach was evident. The vision Paul received, often referred to as the *Macedonian call*, was God directing and focusing their outreach efforts. The lesson we should learn from this is that we plan our outreach efforts the best we can, knowing that if they need to be changed, God will communicate it to us.

Acts 16:9,10:

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

¹⁰ And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

That’s the direction they had been waiting for. God tells them who needs their help. What do they do when the revelation comes? They immediately endeavor to go to Macedonia. Timing is important, and they respond immediately. Talk about missionary zeal or passion for outreach. It’s not about going to church; it’s about transforming the world. If we as Christians don’t get that passion again, the Muslims are going to shame us, because they have it, and they will demonstrate the energy of their convictions.

The Greek word for endeavor is *zēteō*, to seek after, to strive for with zeal. They set their mind and reasoning on accomplishing the task. Why did they immediately endeavor? It says they “assuredly gathered.” The Greek word is *sumbibazō*. It means to cause to coalesce or join together. It means to unite or knit together in affection, conclusion or opinion. It is used three times in Ephesians and Colossians of how the body of Christ is knit together. These four men came to the same conclusion. They were united in their stand with Paul and the revelation he received. Their unity of purpose served them well as they pursued the godly direction they received.

Acts 16:11,12:

Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course [they didn’t waste time or effort] to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis;

¹² And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

This was the first time that Paul took the Word of God to European soil. He and his fellowlaborers did so resolutely and immediately following God’s direction. That is how we should respond to revelation. Without specific revelation we operate under the revelation given in Acts 1:8, to be witnesses to the uttermost part of the earth. We decide on what part of the uttermost part of the earth we want to go to today. Then God can always change our plans if need be. We are willing to preach the Word of God anywhere and everywhere. Let’s have the zeal to make a plan. God can change it if he wants.

Affirmation: I preach the Word of God anywhere and everywhere. I let God change my plans when He wants.

Conversation Starter: God sent me to you, what do you need? Have you asked God for help recently?

Recommended Reading: Acts 16.

Acts 1:8:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven he promised his apostles that they would receive, *lambanō*, power when the gift of holy spirit came upon them. He also said they would be witnesses. He didn't say they would *go witnessing*, but rather that they would *be witnesses*.

We all know our responsibility to speak God's Word, so I do not want to discourage anyone from going witnessing, if by, that you mean speaking the Word of God to others. The point I want to make in this lesson is that we are witnesses. What we have witnessed is the transformation of our lives by receiving, *lambanō*, the power from on high. This power transforms our lives and provides power for Christian living, Christian service, and effective witnessing. As we use our God-given spiritual ability, we witness effectually to God's power because we demonstrate it in the world by the way that we live.

The great commission given in Mark 16:15, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, when believed and acted upon, would be confirmed with signs following (Mark 16:20). God confirms the words we speak in love, with signs miracles and wonders. It is the operation of the manifestations of the spirit that provides an unimpeachable witness. When we operate the manifestations of holy spirit we witness to the power of God by working together with God to bring signs, miracles, and wonders to pass. No one can deny the power of God as it changes people from the inside out.

These energizings are spiritual calling cards. A formal calling card has the name and often the address of a person or of a couple, for presenting when making a business or social call. It is used to gain introduction and make connections. Informally calling cards may refer to any mark, sign, trace, characteristic, or the like by which someone or something can be recognized. These unique energizings of holy spirit function in that same way. God grants us introduction and authorization by way of holy spirit, His gift in service to others. By it we make connections and facilitate relationships.

The revelation Jesus received when speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well established for her that he was indeed a prophet of God and opened the doors for many to come to know the Christ, the savior of the world (John 4).

The healing of the lame man by the Beautiful gate of the Temple not only brought deliverance to the man, but provided evidence to those who saw it that faith in the name of Jesus Christ gave him perfect soundness in their very presence (Acts 3). When Paul shook the snake off his arm and felt no ill effect, the barbarians who initially judged Paul a murderer later thought him to be a god. Then the healing of the father of Publius opened doors of service to the rest of the inhabitants of the island (Acts 28).

We must not neglect to use God's calling card. It will gain us introduction, establish the words we speak, and facilitate the building of relationships with others in the family of God. God has granted us the privilege, let's use it to His glory.

God's Calling Card by Lisa Tracy

I never won anyone to the lord by my personality.
 As nice as I may be there's plenty who don't want my company.
 I might have a hard time just by talking to get someone to care.
 But when I heal someone whose dying there ain't no denying there's something there
 When you talk to an average man he's as skeptical as can be
 He says, "I've heard that before, I have my own religion, it's a personal thing."
 But when he sees me walk right up and heal the guy next door.
 All of a sudden he's wondering and wanting to know just a little bit more.
 I leave God's calling card, the message is plain as day.
 You know witnessing ain't hard when you let God do His part.
 I leave God's calling card, something they can see.
 God's gift of holy spirit energized in me.
 Peter and John healed the lame man on their way to prayer.
 And when the man leaped up and hugged them they had the attention of everyone there.
 The miracle opened the door for them to speak God's Word and then.
 Many who heard believed and the number was about 5,000 men.
 We can do the same thing today God's Word hasn't changed at all.
 He's just as able and willing as ever if we'll just answer His call.
 Thousands of people hear and believe when they see the works you do.
 There won't be room to doubt God's Word when they see God's power in you.
 Just leave God's calling card the message is as plain as day.
 You know witnessing ain't hard when you let God do His part.
 Just leave God's calling card. It's the smartest thing to do.
 They'll see God's gift of holy spirit energized in you.

Affirmation: God confirms the words I speak. I use God's calling card I speak God's Word, and I am a witness.

Conversation Starter: What do you know about the power of God? Have you ever seen a sign, miracle or wonder?

Recommended Reading: Mark 16

Galatians 5:22, 23:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³ meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. ²⁴ And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

In order to walk by the spirit, we must first have the spirit. When we are born again of God's spirit we received God's incorruptible seed. "*Incorruptible*" means "*unalterable*" or "*unchangeable*." There is nothing that is ever going to happen to that seed; it will not die, decay, or wither away. It cannot be lost or stolen away. We have forever been changed, being brought from death unto life.

Having the gift of holy spirit, the power of God in Christ in us, we partake of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world. The old man is dead, and we are freed from sin to live for God as a new man. The gift of holy spirit is an enablement. We are empowered to live for God in newness of spirit (Romans 7:6). God gave us the gift of holy spirit not because we were so good we deserved it, but because we so desperately needed it. God gave holy spirit to do in us and for us, that which we could not do in and for ourselves. There is nothing we can do to reform the old-man. He is dead. We cannot educate him, polish him up, or whip him into shape. God simply replaced him. He gave us a new man. Just as living the wrong way and succumbing to sin was inherent in the old man, doing the right thing and living righteously is inherent in the new man.

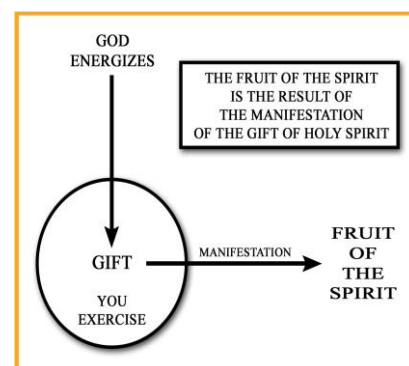
The gift of God in Christ in us is not an end in itself – it is the means to an end. The gift of holy spirit is what makes fellowship with God possible. We have a connection so we can commune with Him and develop our relationship with our loving, heavenly Father. God wants us to be conformed to the image of His son, and He gave us His gift so that we can. We can and should become more Christ-like day by day. This is accomplished as we renew our minds and walk by the spirit.

The magnificent realities called fruit of the spirit are resident within the incorruptible seed of God in Christ in us and are the supernatural result or expression of life and growth when we walk in the spirit. God put in the seed everything necessary genetically to produce fruit. All the qualities of the cucumber are resident in the seed. The cucumber results from the growth of the seed. When the seed germinates, you get a plant, then a blossom, and then fruit. The characteristics are inherent in the seed. When the seed develops and grows, fruit is produced.

Every time we operate a manifestation, God energizes. When we act, God energizes. It takes us working together. It takes my free will to operate it, to do it; and then it takes God supplying what I need to do it. Without His energizing, the manifestations would not happen. Every time we operate manifestations it is evidence that God is working. He is doing something. He is actively involved in our life—His power is being manifested.

When we are born-again we receive incorruptible seed. Inherent within that seed is everything necessary spiritually to produce the fruit of the spirit in our lives. The love of God, the peace of God, and the joy of God, all come from the seed. They are all part of the "spiritual gift package" we received when we were born again..

This incorruptible seed germinates and new life begins. As we operate the manifestations of the spirit, God energizes. With this invigorating work, growth proceeds, resulting in the very fruit of the spirit itself. I Thessalonians 5:19 commands, "Quench not the spirit." Doing so would retard or diminish the cultivation of the fruit of the spirit in our lives. So, quench not the spirit. Do not stop it. Let it flow! Let it go! When Jesus foretold of this, he said, "out of your bellies shall flow rivers of living water." If we will not quench it, we will be amazed at how easily it flows.



Affirmation: I operate manifestations of the spirit. I cultivate fruit of the spirit.

Conversation Starter: Did you know God called the gift of holy spirit, seed? How would you like more love, joy... in your life?

Recommended Reading: Galatians 5.

Galatians 5:16:

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Walking by the spirit is operating the manifestation of the spirit. It is not a mystical experience where one acquires some state of revelry or bliss and is led about without knowing what he is doing or where he is going. Nor is it the perfecting of technique or the memorization of formulas to apply as one lives. Neither is it losing control of oneself or giving the control of oneself to someone or something else who directs you through life as a puppeteer.

Rather, it is a walk of liberty and grace by which one lives according to his new man operating the manifestations of the spirit and developing his relationship as a worker together with God, his Father (II Corinthians 6:1). “Walk” in Galatians 5:16 is a command in the active voice. It is something we are responsible to pursue actively. We are responsible to walk. God commands it, and we can do it. The responsibility is ours; we have been given the authority and ability to do so.

When we walk by the spirit, we walk in liberty. Psalm 119:45 says, “I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.” When we seek to perform God’s Word, which is His will, we will have liberty. We are free to pursue the things of God without any restraint.

People seem to have a tendency to gravitate to the extremes. One extreme is legalism. We have a problem; let us make a rule for it. Attempts at legislating spirituality within the church have never worked and never will work. Laying down the law—dictating what is right and wrong—neither empowers people to do what is right nor to stop doing what is wrong.

Walking by the spirit is not conforming to a religious standard of behavior. Great Christian disciplines such as Bible study, prayer, going to fellowship, and witnessing are good and helpful, but merely performing these activities does not guarantee a “spirit-filled” life.

Of course the other extreme of license is not any more beneficial. Our liberty is not an undisciplined freedom without accountability. License provides an occasion to the flesh with its excessive and controlling appetites. License usually leads to the abuse of privilege. Walking in the spirit does not mean we do everything we want to do! Yes, all things are lawful, but not all things are expedient or profitable—not all things will build us up (I Corinthians 6:12, 10:23).

So what keeps us in balance? How do we stay put in our liberty and not swing between the extremes of legalism and license? The key lies in developing our relationship with our loving heavenly Father.

Christianity is a way of a Father with His family, and in every family there are responsibilities and accountability. We cannot live meaningful lives without loving relationships. The foundation of all our relationships is the one we share with God. It provides the basis from which all others are built. God established a permanent relationship with us by putting His seed in us. Now, we can choose to do whatever we want, but how should we respond to such a loving heavenly Father?

What some people see as freedom, is not freedom at all. It is a return to bondage. That is why God exhorts us to stand fast in His liberty.

Galatians 5:1:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Our freedom is in our ability to choose to live responsibly within the family of God. We are not independent “humanoid units.” God is our Father, and we have a family. Our freedom, our identity, our success, our fulfillment in life will come from our relationship with Him and from other relationships within this wonderful family of God.

Walking by the spirit is an *active choice* we make and a *definite course* we pursue. It is the only way to maintain liberty and avoid the extremes of legalism and license. Walking is simple; let’s put one foot in front of the other and proceed at God’s direction. Can you hear Him calling cadence?

Affirmation: I walk by the spirit, and enjoy my liberty in Christ. I will avoid legalism and license at all costs.

Conversation Starter: Do you walk by the spirit? Do you enjoy your liberty in Christ? Has Christ set you free?

Recommended Reading: Galatians 5

Romans 8:14:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Walking by the spirit and being led by the Spirit of God describe different aspects of the same reality. Walking by the spirit refers to the active role we take in operating the spirit and moving ahead with the things of God. Being led by the spirit refers to our response to God's direction via the manifestations of holy spirit. We walk; God leads. When we walk we initiate; when He leads, He initiates. We learn to work together to bring God's will to pass. Since we know His will from His Word we may initiate things of the spirit by doing as His Word directs. When He initiates the direction by revelation, we simply follow as He leads.

If we are ever going to walk in the steps of Jesus Christ and do the works that he did and greater, we are going to have to operate all the manifestations of holy spirit. Jesus Christ operated everything God had given him, and he made even more available to us. We need to utilize everything God has provided. To do so, we will need to know how to receive it and what to do with it after we have it. This is part of the more than abundant life that Jesus came to make available.

When it comes to learning more about things of the spirit (especially the revelation and impartation manifestations), it is essential to establish the proper motivation and set the purpose of our heart in a godly manner. Compassion is an important ingredient in developing a pure heart of service. Compassion will move us outside ourselves to serve and help others. Compassion changes our focus from "self" to "others," as we consider, "What can I do to help you?"

When God sees your heart to help, God will be there with you to help. Often times we want to help, but do not know what to do. That is where God can come in. If one really steps forward and gets involved in this field of the revelation manifestations, then it will be life changing.

Matthew 14 describes Jesus' reaction to the horrible news of John the Baptist's death. John was not only a great prophet, but he was also Jesus' cousin. When Jesus heard of the execution of John, he departed by ship to a desert place, a place of solitude where he could have private time to grieve and be with his trusted disciples. Jesus was a man. He had feelings like you and I, and he did not feel like ministering to others. He just wanted time for himself to heal his heart.

Matthew 14:13,14:

When Jesus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

¹⁴ And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

The world does not stop when tragedy happens in our lives. The greatest way to heal up is to reach out and help. "Moved with compassion" means "to feel the bowels yearn; to have compassion; to pity." You have a deep, yearning, desire to relieve others of their pain or suffering. Compassionate people are givers, even at times when it is not most convenient. They are also the receivers of God's revelation manifestations, because God knows those who will hear His voice and act, even in difficult times.

Matthew 14:15-21:

And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

¹⁶ But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

¹⁷ And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

¹⁸ He said, Bring them hither to me.

¹⁹ And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

²⁰ And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

²¹ And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

These healings and miracles were the result of Jesus coming forth and looking upon the people with compassion. He was moved within to serve even at a personally difficult time in his life. What an example he has set for us. Let's walk in his steps.

Affirmation: I am led by God's power. I follow God's direction. I am a fellowlaborer with God.

Conversation Starter: Have you ever felt led by God? What would it be worth to you to be led by the spirit of God?

Recommended Reading: Matthew 14

II Corinthians 3:17, 18:

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Walking by the spirit is relationship not regimen—family life not formulas. Within the confines of God’s Word and will, we are free to nurture a relationship with God, which is the essence of walking in the Spirit. We should nurture relationships with our brothers and sisters within the family, also. The love of God is the glue that keeps our relationships together, and the integrity of God’s Word in our lives provides the strength of the adhesion. The love of God unites and binds us in such wonderful relationships (Colossians 3:14).

This love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the holy spirit which has been given unto us (Romans 5:5). We simply renew our minds and manifest it. We can love with the love of God, just like Jesus did. We can love like Jesus Christ loved because his ability is in us, and we are **as he** is (I John 4:17). The more we recognize our identity in Christ and the more we are conformed to the image of God’s son (Romans 8:29), the more we can experience the freedom God desires for us. Trying to reduce walking in the spirit to a formula or regimen can only frustrate us.

We live in a new Administration. This is a new day and time to which the world still has not awakened. I Corinthians 2:9 says concerning the great mystery that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things [concerning the great mystery of Christ in us the hope of glory] which God hath prepared for them that love him.” Our freedom in Christ allows us to walk into the experiential reality of the great mystery. **We are on the greatest adventure there has ever been.** We can discover the great realities of our new man and the power God has given us to live and give within His family.

II Corinthians 3:6 says, “God made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” The letter of the law could never effect the transformation of life that God’s spirit can. The gift of holy spirit within us has transformed us into new people. We can walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). We can reign in life with Christ Jesus (Romans 5:17).

The Lord is that Spirit which transformed Moses on the mount. When he came down, they could not even look upon his face it was so brilliant (II Corinthians 3:7). We also are free to shine forth with the greatness of the brilliance of the Christ in us. We are free to unlock the *dumamis* potential within us. We see ourselves in the pages of His Word, and we walk forth as more than conquerors conforming ourselves to the image of Christ, by the gift of holy spirit within us. We are changed from the inside out—not by rules and regulations—not by following the lusts of our flesh—but by operating the power of God within us.

Our freedom in Christ is most precious. We choose. We are no longer relegated to walk according to the flesh, nor are we compelled to walk according to the spirit. It takes a freewill decision to walk by the spirit. When we walk by the spirit, we stop striving. We are no longer *driven*; we are *led*. It is the lusts of the flesh that drive us. The Spirit of God leads us. God shed his love abroad in our hearts by the holy spirit that was given unto us, and that love activates us. The fruit of the spirit is the proverbial carrot in front of our nose.

Proverbs 3:5,6:

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

⁶ In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

We acknowledge God by acknowledging His Word, and He directs our paths by the greatness of His Word. The Word includes instruction in the manifestations of holy spirit. Direction requires movement. If we do not move, God can provide no direction, because direction comes from movement. We put one foot in front of the other and march along to God’s cadence.

Although we want to be actively moving ahead with God, the “spirit-filled” life is not achieved through endless, exhausting activity, as if the harder we work for God, the more spiritual we will become. Sometimes activity is detrimental to relationships. Jesus certainly did much for God, but he also enjoyed quiet moments alone with His Father (Mark 1:35). Time for communication and fellowship are important and necessary.

We want to learn to walk according to God’s cadence, at His pace. We want to learn to avoid the extremes not sitting passively in inactivity or running ourselves into the ground by becoming too busy. Liberty and maturity will help us maintain balance as we learn. We can enjoy our freedom instantly, and when we maintain our liberty, we will be amazed at how quickly we grow.

Affirmation: I am free in Christ. I hear God calling cadence now. I know God as my loving heavenly Father.

Conversation Starter: Do you know God as your Father? Have you learned to trust God with all your heart?

Recommended Reading: 2 Corinthians 3

I Corinthians 12:7:

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

The manifestations of the Holy Spirit are essential to the Christian walk. Their operation was key to the growth and development of the early Church. Their operation is *still* essential to the growth and development of the present-day Church. The present-day Church is dysfunctional to the extent that the manifestations are neglected.

Operating manifestations is not a “fringe” subject. They are *not* optional equipment or luxury items that are attained only by pastors or some “religious elite.” God Himself energizes all the manifestations in His people, as they will to receive. They are essential to building up the Church. To do *any* part of God’s work, we exercise our authority and ability to manifest the spirit and produce the fruit of the spirit in our lives.

The absence of manifestations has often caused people to doubt God’s Word. Men who walked with God wanted to see His power in operation. Remember when God called Gideon addressing him as a mighty man? Gideon asked God, “Where are all the miracles?” (JUDGES 6:12,13) Moses knew without demonstrating God’s power the people would not believe him. (EXODUS 4:1) This is why God told Joshua, “As I was with Moses so I will be with thee.” (JOSHUA 1:5) This is why Elisha asked, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?” (II KINGS 2:14) This is why we are required to do the same things Jesus did and take up the work He left for us to do. (JOHN 14:12)

Every believer when he is born again gets the gift of holy spirit. With that gift comes the ability to manifest the spirit in nine different ways. Every believer born again of God’s spirit can manifest that spirit by speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, prophesying, receiving word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and discerning of spirits, believing or having faith, working miracles, and imparting gifts of healings. These nine are all powered by the one gift of pneuma hagian, holy spirit in the new birth.

The manifestation of the spirit has been given to every man. Our verse for the day specifically tells us that it was given to profit withal. “To profit withal” is archaic English which means “for the common good.” The New International Version, the English Standard Version, the New American Standard, the International Standard Version, God’s Word Translation, and the Bible in Basic English all translate that phrase that way. The manifestation of the spirit which may occur in nine different ways are for profit. They are advantageous to the church. They are useful and accomplish the good God wants to happen. They are bestowed on all equally, but not primarily for one’s own personal profit; rather they are for the welfare of the whole Church.

Serving in the body of Christ and giving to one another provides occasions for their use. We don’t learn to operate the manifestations just for our personal benefit. We operate them for the common good of the church to bring healing and deliverance to our brothers and sisters in Christ and indeed to all people. When our focus is on how we can serve, these supernatural manifestations will become common place. When our attitude is like Paul’s was during the storm at sea and we know whose we are and whom we serve (ACTS 27:23) everyone around us, believers and unbelievers alike, will be blessed and benefitted.

II Corinthians 5:18-19:

And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

God gave us the ministry of reconciliation and committed unto us the Word of reconciliation so we can fulfill the ministry He has given us. Doing so will require operating the manifestations. God knows how to move His Word. Despite the weakness and frailty of mankind, the truth has reached every continent and touched every nation of the world. It’s a testimony to God’s magnificence that He can work with imperfect people like us and still accomplish His good and acceptable and perfect will in this world. What an awesome God we serve.

Affirmation: I seek the profit of my fellow believers. I have the ministry of reconciliation and I use the Word of reconciliation.

Conversation Starter: Do you operate manifestations of the spirit? Do you want to profit in your life?

Recommended Reading: 2 Corinthians 5

Ephesians 6:18-20:

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; ¹⁹ And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

The nine manifestations of holy spirit were designed to function as a unit. Each has its specific profit and purpose, and they work in conjunction with one another as we walk in the spirit. Of all nine, speaking in tongues is the most versatile and the most presently available. Because speaking in tongues can be spoken out loud or silently to oneself, it can be operated at almost any time. It is a means God has provided for us to express our love for Him and keep ourselves energized for ministry.

Speaking in tongues is a wonderful way to develop our relationship with God and our brothers and sisters in the family of God. It is our avenue of perfect prayer whereby we can give thanks well. It provides an ever-present opportunity for praise, whereby we may speak the wonderful works of God and magnify God. It is proof of sonship and God's working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. It is a means of personal edification and brotherly intercession.

It is such a wonderful means of expressing our love for God and demonstrating our delight to acknowledge Him in all our ways. It is not illogical, magical, or mystical. Speaking in tongues is operated by choice. It is a freewill renewed mind decision to act on God's Word. After all Jesus said I should speak in tongues (MARK 16:17), and Paul said I could speak in tongues (I CORINTHIANS 14:5A).

Although speaking in tongues bypasses our understanding, it is not an unthinking endeavor. What we do with our minds directs the power of God where it needs to go. If I lift my heart in thanksgiving to God, I know I am giving thanks well. If I keep an image of my brother in mind as I speak in tongues, I know I am making intercession for him according to the will of God. When I speak in tongues, as I anticipate my activities for the day, I know it is perfect prayer. As I sing in tongues, I know I am making melody in my heart to the Lord.

What a unique and simple way God has made His power presently available to us. When we know the benefits of speaking in tongues and use it as God designed, for the purposes He intended, we are well on our way to walking by the spirit. Too often, speaking in tongues is just associated with trouble and crisis and not with opportunities of service.

Although I have used many techniques to increase the amount of time I spend speaking in tongues, it all comes back to my relationship with God. The love in the relationship activates us to do whatever we need to do to endear ourselves and enjoy the fellowship one with another. I do not know of many married couples who have not tried different techniques at times to improve their relationship. However, if after 15 years they are still awkwardly following a deliberate regimen of prescribed action, there has been little development in their relationship. At some point, we love enough to learn enough about each other so we do what blesses each other. Speaking in tongues blesses God and edifies us. That is a tough combination to beat.

Speaking in tongues magnifies God. It brings us closer to Him, and allows us to see more of His greatness and majesty. It is an exchange of divine secrets whereby our communication with God is enriched, and we are built up in our most holy faith. Using our God-given ability, we speak in tongues and build a habit of operating holy spirit that provides a solid foundation for the operation of the rest of the manifestations. Just like we become versatile in using speaking in tongues for all the specific purposes and profit for which it was designed, we learn to use the other manifestations as they were designed to be used since each of them also has specific profits and purposes.

Paul specifically asked for prayer in the spirit for himself so that utterance may be given unto him, that he would open his mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel. He was an ambassador in bonds; he was bound by his love and commitment to God to make the mystery known. He knew that he ought to speak and asked for prayer so that he would pursue it boldly. Let's pray for one another and for ourselves that we, too, do as we ought. Speaking in tongues is a wonderful lever in our prayer life that can help keep us focused on living the mystery and making it known.

Affirmation: I speak in tongues more all the time. I magnify God and bring Him closer to me.

Conversation Starter: Do you Speak in tongues? Do you persevere in prayer?

Recommended Reading: 1 Corinthians 14

Hebrews 4:12:

For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged 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.

The Word of God and the operation of the manifestations go hand in hand. Living the more abundant life God has called us to requires both the Word of God and the operation of the manifestations. God's Word is not just information; it is revelation. It is the living Word of a living God. It is His very breath bringing life wherever it goes.

His Word provides the nourishment we need: milk for the young and meat for the old. As Jeremiah, we would do well to find and eat them (JEREMIAH 15:16). It teaches us of the manifestations of holy spirit, and instructs us in their proper use. God leads us with His Word and His spirit. His Word lights our paths (PSALMS 119:105) and directs our steps (PROVERBS 3:6), and the manifestations allow us to walk precisely upon it.

Ezekiel 36:27:

And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

His spirit enables us to do His Word. When our delight is to do the will of God, there is nothing that can stop us. God has provided everything we need. We simply walk and God fills in the specifics that we need as we go.

God is not a man that He should lie. What He says in His Word, He will do. If God promises in the Bible, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." then He will not. We can trust His written Word. We can also trust word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and discerning of spirits. We can do what He says we can do, because He is Whom He says He is.

The Word of God is the only standard for godly living. Its presence in our hearts functions like a lie-detector against the devil. Filtering what comes to our minds through His wonderful matchless Word can keep us from being deceived. We learn to recognize God's voice because it flows with His written Word — not just the letter of it, but the "spirit" of it, also. It will never be condemning or disparaging.

It is during our time spent with God in His Word that we begin to learn how God speaks to our hearts. God's Word expressly declares God's will and lights our path so we can walk with Him. There is no substitute for being diligent to present ourselves approved unto God as workmen who need not to be ashamed as we rightly divide the Word of truth. When we know what the Word says, we know what God wants us to do. When we know what the Word says, we will be less likely to be surprised at His direction via the revelation manifestations.

For example, God's Word declares God's will that we prosper and be in health. We confess that promise from the Word of God expecting to manifest health and prosperity. However, when sickness occurs or financial decisions need to be made, sometimes we need further information — specific details, to bring God's will to pass. Sometimes the laying on of hands with the revelation and impartation manifestations provides specific direction and deliverance so we receive the wholeness God promised in His Word. Sometimes we need more information about making a purchase or an investment. We do the best we can to get as much information as we can so we can make an intelligent, informed decision, but God can provide further information that is impossible for us to know by our five senses. Then we can make the right decision and prosper as He directs.

We have enough direction to get going. God's Word sees to that. If we need additional specifics, God can supply them. If we need a course correction, He can supply that, too. We walk victoriously at liberty because we are *Bible Fed and Spirit Led*.

Affirmation: I am Bible fed and spirit led. God's Word has a home in my heart.

Conversation Starter: What do you trust absolutely? What feeds you and leads you.

Recommended Reading: Hebrews 4

Isaiah 48:17:

Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I *am* the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way *that* thou shouldest go.

If you are looking for a mechanical or magical formula or a menu of things to do to walk by the spirit, you may be very disappointed. Our walk with God is enveloped or wrapped up in our family relationship. It is a personal experience of living with a loving heavenly Father, not a legalistic regimen or a selfish self-indulgence.

Walking by the spirit is a great adventure and an awesome privilege. It is important that it not remain an elusive concept, like it was for Nicodemus (JOHN 3:1-21). Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin, one of the seventy rulers of Israel, and he came to Jesus under the cover of darkness with questions about spiritual matters. Jesus told him about the new birth that would be available in the future and about walking by the spirit. Nicodemus' response was, "How can these things be?" Jesus' reply was, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" Here was one of the masters, one of the teachers of Israel, one of the Sanhedrin, and he did not know anything about how to walk by the spirit. The original 70 did (NUMBERS 11:10-17, 24-29). They all had the spirit and prophesied. But, by Jesus' day it had been so neglected, it had been all but lost.

God made walking by the spirit so simple that even a child can grasp it and do it. In fact, Samuel was a youth when he started learning. When the youth Samuel was learning he went to Eli, his teacher, for help. Even though Eli was having difficulty with his walk personally, he was still able to help the young Samuel because he had been successful in the past. He had walked by the spirit; he knew how to do it. However, he stopped walking because he did not want to go where God was leading. God will never violate our freewill. If and when we choose not to continue, what can God do?

Remember we are workers together with God. That is what walking by the spirit is all about. God wants us to do His will, so He has to let us know what it is. He did so in His Word, and when we need more details to fill in the specifics for the situation in which we are involved, He will do so.

Things were critical for the nation of Israel when Haman the enemy of God's people initiated a plan to exterminate God's people (ESTHER 3:1-15). However, Mordecai went to his niece Esther, whom he had raised as his own daughter, and asked her to help. He asked her to put her life on the line and intercede for her people. At a critical point in their discussion Mordecai warned her not to think that because she lived in the king's house that she would be spared. He pleaded with her to speak up to the king for her people. He knew that if she did not God would still bring deliverance in another manner, but she would not receive it (ESTHER 4:1-17). Mordecai thought that God had placed Esther where she was so she could intercede in such an occasion as this. She did intercede, and God did deliver his people. They were given the right to fight for themselves and their families. They were victorious, and the adversaries of God's people were once again defeated (ESTHER 9:1-32).

It still amazes me to see what a difference one person can make when that one person walks with God. If you learn nothing else from this *Messengers For Christ* adventure, I would like for you to learn that you, as one person walking by the spirit can make a difference. We have been enabled by God. We just have to walk and manifest His power bringing deliverance to His people. God has made it as easy as He possibly can. We just have to walk one step at a time. I am sure you have heard it said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. Walking by the spirit happens one step after the other.

God has no hands but our hands
To give His people bread.
He has no feet but our feet
To walk among the almost dead. We
say that we are His and He is ours
Deeds are the proof of that, not
words...
And these are the proving hours.¹
Author unknown

Affirmation: I go wherever He leads. I am making a difference.

Conversation Starter: Do you have a formula for life that works? Do you ever seriously read the Bible?

Recommended Reading: John 3

Luke 24:32:

Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

When I was a sophomore in college I went to a concert in a castle along the Massachusetts seacoast. I think it was in Gloucester, MA. I took a young lady with me to whom I had been witnessing. It was a special performance of Handel's Messiah. We were seated in the great hall with maybe 120 other people, and the enormous pipe organ vibrated throughout with a sacred majesty. My most vivid memory was hearing the Hallelujah Chorus. The way the organ and voices filled the hall electrified me and touched my heart in a very unique and special way. It was something I will never forget.

However, my hearing the concert that day is much different than you hearing about it today. Unless you have had a similar experience you probably have no idea what went on in my heart. Similarly, what those two disciples experienced that day on the road to Emmaus when their hearts burned within them is quite different than hearing about it today. Some of us have had a similar experience, where our hearts also burned within us as the fire of God's Word, ministered with God's love, melted away the hardness of our hearts.

When that happens it makes an impression that is not easily forgotten. Having had a similar experience, our understanding is heightened, our appreciation is increased, and often reading an account like this can rekindle that fire in our hearts once again as we recall with affection God's gracious working in us.

I want you to have your hearts touched like these men did. I want the Word to burn within your heart, like it did for them. I want you to capture in your experiential understanding the quality of life and the depth of relationship that these men experienced. It is vitally important to me that you do more than just hear about walking by the spirit in these 100 days. As we read these accounts and go over these keys I want you to be able to recapture the experiential reality of God working in your heart. When we read about being led by the spirit, I want you to draw upon similar experiences in your life so that you can recapture the enthusiasm and intensity of doing the same.

God has worked in our hearts before, and He will continue to do so as we meekly follow where He leads us. Just do not ever give up! God **will** work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. It is a promise of His Word. God needs people like you and I to keep the fires burning, to continue to expect and thankfully acknowledge His gracious working in our hearts.

In John 6:63 Jesus said, "The spirit quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, the Words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." He spoke spiritual, life-giving words. They could receive them and cherish them in their hearts or let them fall by the wayside. At the time when Jesus spoke those words, many of Jesus' disciples did turn their back and quit following him. In fact, in verse 66, Jesus specifically asks the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Peter speaking for the rest said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Peter knew that the greatest fulfillment of his life would be in staying with Jesus, because he had the words of eternal life. No matter where people go or what they do, unless the words of God continue to resound in their ears they will not be satisfied. God forbid that we ever quit. Yes, we may get hurt and confused. We may be discouraged by friends who desert us and disillusioned by organizations and churches that sour. However, God and His son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, will never abandon us. Our cry like the psalmist is, "Whom have I in heaven *but thee?* and *there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*" (PSALMS 73:25)

Whenever Peter left and returned to fishing, or other people hesitated and were not sure whether they wanted to continue, Jesus would frequently challenge them with "Follow me!" He did not say, "Follow my religion!" or "Follow my orders!" or "Follow my disciples!" He said, "Follow me!" Do not let people or organizations or friends or situations crowd the Lord Jesus Christ out of your life. We are to follow him, and when we do we will be satisfied with an abundance of grace.

How do we follow him today? I Peter 2:21 says we should "follow his steps." I John 2:6 says, "we ought to walk, even as he, [Jesus Christ] walked." In John 14:12 Jesus made one of those "verily, verily" statements. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." That takes walking by the spirit. Our walk does not require refined intellectual abilities, just simple obedience.

If we had to qualify, perhaps some of us would not have made it. God qualified us with holy spirit. That is all that we need, holy spirit and a willing heart. Everything we needed God supplied with the exception of freewill. Do we want to get involved and do it? Do we want to take the excursion into the greatest adventure there has ever been?

You know, a key allows us access to something. As we proceed into these keys, we will find some great truths that will allow us to open doors of service. When you go walking by the spirit, be sure to figuratively take your key ring with you. You may never know when you may need to use one of them. Remember these "Keys to Walking by the Spirit," are not formulas. They are principles of how God has worked with people that have been garnered from His Word. We will want to incorporate them into our spiritual awareness as we labor together with God. We want to enjoy our relationship with God and increase the quality of our family life as we do so.

Affirmation: I walk in the steps of my Lord Jesus Christ. I love and follow my Lord Jesus Christ.

Conversation Starter: Have you ever had spiritual heartburn? What's the greatest adventure you have ever been on?

Recommended Reading: Psalms 73

Galatians 6:7:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

The adversary's objectives are to steal and to kill and destroy (JOHN 10:10). In order to effectively do so he must disguise himself. His *modus operandi*, his method of operation, is to deceive. Unless he deceives people, he will never be able to steal, kill, or destroy. Three times in the church epistles God commands us, "Be not deceived." (I CORINTHIANS 6:9; 15:33; GALATIANS 6:7. SEE ALSO II THESSALONIANS 2:3) Therefore, it must be available for us to walk in such a way that our adversary is not effective in deceiving us.

Our five senses are not reliable, but our spiritual senses are. II Corinthians 5:7 says we are to "walk by faith, not by sight." Sight is one of the five senses and just may be put by metonymy for all of them. It is important that we be careful, to not be fooled by them.

It does not matter how the situation looks in the senses realm. There is a spiritual realm, that although unseen, supersedes the natural realm of the five senses.

II Kings 6:8-10:

Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place *shall be* my camp.⁹ And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.¹⁰ And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

This happened on a regular basis. Elisha would receive information from God and pass it on to the king. See how important one person walking by the spirit can be?

II Kings 6:11-18:

Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us *is* for the king of Israel?¹² And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that *is* in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.¹³ And he said. Go and spy where he *is*, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, *he is* in Dothan.¹⁴ Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.¹⁵ And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?¹⁶ And he answered, Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them.¹⁷ And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see.¹⁸ And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

When Elisha's servant saw the great host he became upset and fearful. However, Elisha was not fooled by the five senses and prayed for God to open his servant's eyes. When the Lord opened his servant's eyes he saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. Instead of being outnumbered and surrounded, he realized that those that were with him were more than those who were against him.

If this was true for God's servants in the Old Testament, what do you think applies for God's sons in the New? I John 4:4 says, as God's little children, we have overcome our adversaries, the devil and his evil spirit realm, because greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world. With Christ in us the hope of glory, what do we have to be afraid of.

The key is being diligent and not being deceived by our five senses. Sure we can get startled and shaken at times, but there is no reason to be afraid of the sudden fear (JOB 22:10; PROVERBS 3:25). There is no situation in which you may find yourself, that you cannot handle. With God working in us, what can man do unto us? (PSALMS 118:6; HEBREWS 13:6) God always makes a way to escape and be victorious.

I Corinthians 10:13:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

He did that for Jesus in John 8. He also did it for Elisha and his servant as we read in II Kings. What is more, He will do it for you, too. I think one of the reasons we lack and get into such trouble is because we do not recognize temptation when it comes. When we do not recognize temptation, then we do not look for the way to escape. We just walk right into the trap. We must get better at seeing how our adversary lies in wait to trip us up and ensnare us.

Affirmation: I am not deceived by my five senses. Because God is for me no one against me will succeed.

Conversation Starter: Did you know there is a spiritual realm that's as real as the physical one? Did you know God is faithful?

Recommended Reading: 2 Kings 6

Ephesians 4:14-15:

That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; ¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:

When Saul went to anoint a king from among Jesse's sons, he thought that Eliab, the oldest, was surely the one. However, God subsequently instructed him about being fooled by appearances.

I Samuel 16:7:

But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

God is never fooled, and He never makes mistakes. He can communicate to us whatever he wants whenever he wants to. When we are about His business we need never be fooled by the five senses. We must not limit ourselves to our five senses. On the outside people can seem to have it so together, but God looks at the heart. Why should we ever question our heart. God chose us, and He knew what He was doing. He chose us, and He knows what is in our heart. So, do not let your heart condemn you. Walk in confidence with God.

By his five senses Samuel may have been fooled, but he walked with God and was not. God does not look on the outward appearance. How often do we? One of the great benefits of walking by the spirit is that we get to the people who want God's help without respect of persons and without being fooled by the five senses. I wonder how many of us would have not considered that God would have called an Amos, a pig herder, or a Paul, a murderer? We need to see people like God sees them, and we need to look beyond what is before our eyes.

We are not deceived by our five senses. Situations do not deceive us. People do not deceive us, and neither do the words people speak deceive us. Paul was not tricked by the words of the soothsayer in Acts 16.

Acts 16:16-18:

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: ¹⁷ The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. ¹⁸ And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

She said all the right things, but Paul was not fooled. He knew it was not genuine. He knew that there was a spiritual problem there, and he took care of it. He was not fooled by the five senses.

Ahijah the prophet was blind, but he saw perfectly well with his spiritual senses. (SEE I KINGS 14:1-18.) Although the queen disguised herself and feigned herself to be another, the Lord let Ahijah know what was going on. She didn't fool him.

The Herodians tried to deceive Jesus, but God warned Jesus of their intention and he beat the temptation.

Matthew 22:16-18:

And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man*: for thou regardest not the person of men. ¹⁷ Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? ¹⁸ But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

God can warn us in the same way, of devilish traps set for us, too. He always makes a way to escape.

Judas tried to fool Jesus with a kiss (LUKE 22:47,48) unsuccessfully. Peter handled the deception of Ananias and Saphira (ACTS 5:1-14) without being fooled. Neither was Elijah deceived by Gehazi's actions when Gehazi tried to hide them from Elijah (II KINGS 5:20-27).

We must remember God commands us to not be deceived. We have a connection with God, and He can let us know what we need to know. People may say they do not want to hear what we have to share, and God can tell us differently. People can also feign interest to keep us from reaching those we need to, and God can tell us to move on. Remember you have a connection; you don't need to be fooled.

Affirmation: I speak the truth in love and am not deceived. I look beyond appearances to see people's hearts.

Conversation Starter: Do you have a hero? Who do you hold in high regard?

Recommended Reading: 1 Samuel 16

1 Kings 18:36:

And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that I am* thy servant, and *that I have done* all these things at thy word.

Once God tells you something, stand fast and do not budge on His direction. He instructed us in His written Word to stand fast. It occurs six times in the church epistles (I CORINTHIANS 16:13; GALATIANS 5:1; PHILIPPIANS 1:27;4:1; I THESSALONIANS 3:8; AND II THESSALONIANS 2:15). When God is so gracious to give us some additional specific information and direction, we should be so thankful. The logical thing to do is to stand fast and obey.

In I Kings 13:1-26 we find the account of the young prophet to whom God gives an assignment. God tells the young prophet what to do, and he should have stood fast on His instructions. But, the old prophet, someone he should respect, tells him something different, saying, God told him to do so. Who would have thought that he would lie? If God had changed the revelation, He would have told the young prophet Himself. God will not give someone else revelation to give you. He will tell you Himself. God may have others establish the revelation for you if you are wondering or doubtful about it, but only after telling you Himself. We stand fast on what God tells us, if He ever wants to change things, He will let us know personally. He told us once, and if He needs to tell us again, He will.

Elijah stood on God's direction and eliminated the prophets of Baal. Elijah had been on the run for over three years, and he finally comes out of hiding and makes himself known unto Ahab because God has a job for him, to bring His people back to the one true God. (SEE I KINGS 18:21-28) Elijah does everything that God asks of him and prays that God let it be known that he is God's servant, and that he had done everything at God's word.

There is no verse of scripture that says when you are offering a sacrifice during drought, be sure to douse it with water three times. Elijah is not talking about written scripture; he is talking about revelation. He is talking about God telling him what to do and him following through. Why do you think he mocked them? Why do you think he let them go first? God told him what to do. Why do you think he put the water on it? Why did he choose twelve stones? It says here that, "I have done all these things at Thy Word." There is a word that says the people are to cleave to God, and serve Him only (DEUTERONOMY 10:20). That is what Elijah went there to do, to bring God's people back to the One True God. In order to accomplish that, he needed all the specifics that we read about in this account. The rest of the guidance was specific details of revelation that would allow him to bring the Word to pass.

Elijah is the one who cut the bullock up and put it on the altar. He is the one who insisted that they pour twelve barrels of water upon it. But, when he prays he says, "that Thou has turned their hearts back again." To whom did Elijah give the glory? He realized he was a worker together with God. They were doing this together. That is walking by the spirit. That is Elijah operating manifestations and God energizing them. Elijah never said, "See what a hot shot I am." He was giving the glory to God. See what one man can do when he is walking by the spirit.

One man going into this hostile situation with 450 prophets that hate his guts, with a queen from whom he has been on the run for over three years. He walks right into the middle of that mess because God tells him to, and he stands fast on what he has heard. He does everything God tells him to do. Elijah just did what he was told, standing fast on each bit of instruction, and God got the glory as His people turned back to him again.

Affirmation: I standfast on what God tells me. Whatever God says, I do.

Conversation Starter: Have you ever heard from God? Would you like to hear from God?

Recommended Reading: 1 Kings 13

Genesis 41:25,32:

And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he *is* about to do....³²
And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; *it is* because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

You especially need to stand fast when revelation is repeated. When it is repeated, it is established and shall absolutely come to pass. Do you remember the two dreams that Pharaoh had? There were 7 fat cows and 7 ill-favored cows. Then there were 7 good ears of corn followed by 7 thin ears. The ill-favored cows ate the fat ones and the 7 thin ears of corn ate the fat ones. When God gave Joseph the interpretation he said they were one. It was the same thing repeated.

It does not happen often, but when circumstances change revelation may change. It is important that we stand fast on the guidance. We never expect it to change, but if it does God will tell you. We get into trouble when we do not want it to happen, and we anticipate or look for it to change. That is what Balaam did and look at the trouble he got into. He was lured by the promised financial gain, and he sold out. When Israel took the Promised Land he ended up losing his life (NUMBERS 31:8).

It is important to note that revelation may change if circumstances change, but if it is given a second time it will not. If it changes it is usually because people repent and change their heart. Then God, at times, changes the revelation concerning them. Often times it would seem that God tells them just so they will know what is going to happen, so they will change their mind. However, when God repeats revelation it is established and will absolutely come to pass.

Isaiah told Hezekiah to set his house in order because he was going to die (II KINGS 20:1-6,9). Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed about it. Before Isaiah even had time to leave the king's court God told him to go back and tell Hezekiah that he would not die, but fifteen years would be added to his life. (It was during those fifteen years that Hezekiah's son Manasseh was born, who is listed in the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Mathew 1:10.)

One final point regarding standing fast on what we receive is necessary. Revelation is specifically for the situation at hand. Just because similar activities are repeated the guidance for one situation may not be the same as the next. (LUKE 9:1-6 VS LUKE 22:35-38) Each situation must be handled independently. God is big enough to tell you each time. You do not accumulate revelation and apply it to similar situations in the future. We walk today, and we walk tomorrow. God will work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure and provide what we need, when we need it.

Jesus healed many blind men as recorded in the Gospels. However, he never seemed to do it the same way twice. God gave him specifics for each situation, and he believed to bring the gifts of healings to pass according to what God revealed to him each time.

Every problem is not a nail, and we should not approach each situation with a hammer. God's toolbox has quite an assortment of equipment at our disposal. Remember walking by the spirit is not formulas, but family life.

Scott J. Shickler tells the following story of an old man in the doctor's office (Word of Wisdom, Kidsway Inc. Cited in Bits & Pieces). An old man seated in the doctor's waiting room, when called in to see the doctor, slowly got up and grasping his cane and hunching over, slowly made his way to the examining room. After only a few minutes, the man emerged from the room, walking completely upright! A patient who had watched him hobble into the room all hunched over, stared in amazement. "That must be a miracle doctor in there!" he exclaimed. "What treatment did he give you? What's his secret?" The old man looked at him and said, "Well, the doctor looked me up and down, analyzed the situation, and gave me a cane that was four inches longer than the one I had been using."

How often do we give everyone the same length cane? That is no more appropriate than giving everyone the same answer for every problem. Life is not that simple. People come with various backgrounds and belief systems, and the causes of problems can be compound and complex. Although "pat answers" and "specific regimens" are easily given they rarely bring the deliverance God desires. Jesus walked, saying and doing whatever God inspired. We would do well to follow in his footsteps and treat every situation as a unique opportunity to believe God.

Affirmation: If things change God will tell me. I understand every situation is different.

Conversation Starter: Are you stuck in a rut? Did you hear the story of the old man in the doctor's office?

Recommended Reading: Genesis 41

I Corinthians 1:20:

Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

Meekness is a disposition of mind to accept God's words and ways without arguing or stubbornly resisting. Unfortunately, we do not always maintain our attitude of meekness. We are men of great passion, and that is good. However, when our passion causes us to presume we know better than God, we are in a very precarious position. When we stubbornly do what we want presuming God will change His mind or give in to our "hissy fits," we should be ashamed of ourselves. Sometimes we act as if God left everything in our hands, this world would get in order real quick. We think that when He sees how well we get things done, He will give in and change. It is never advantageous to oppose God's will.

Jonah argued with God. Even though he spoke to God in anger and deliberately disobeyed, God did not forsake him. He was one of those holy men who spoke as he was moved by holy spirit. We will not read the whole book of Jonah, but let me give you a very short summary of it: In chapter one Jonah flees, in chapter two Jonah prays, in chapter three Jonah preaches; and in chapter four Jonah learns God's compassion is a good thing.

God told Jonah to go east to Nineveh, and Jonah heads west to Joppa. He wants to get to the coast so he can get on a ship headed for Tarshish, which is in southwest Spain. That is about as far away in the opposite direction as he could get. Jonah was very nationalistic. He loved Israel and was willing to give his life for the nation. Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria, and Jonah knew Assyria would conquer Israel. Therefore, he did not want to preach to them because if he did, and they repented, they would be spared. Then, if they were spared, they would end up defeating Israel. Jonah thought he knew better than God did so he decided not to go to Nineveh.

Jonah ends up being thrown into the sea and dies. The prayer of 2:1-9 records the last thoughts and words of Jonah before he died. They were written down, by him, after he was raised from the dead. Note the verbs in the prayer are all in the past tense, indicating that it was recorded subsequent to his death. He admitted to God before he died that he was wrong, and was sorry he acted presumptuously. He ends his prayer committing to obey God and pay his vows, knowing even as he was drowning that God could still deliver him. God has the fish deliver Jonah to the shore, and Jonah then preaches to Nineveh and they repent.

Remember, revelation may change, and here it changed when the people repented. Because they changed, God's judgment changed. The reason He had His judgment declared was to give them an incentive to change. Then when they had the incentive, they changed. After they changed, then God changes, too. Jonah preached, and the people believed and repented of their wickedness.

Jonah did not want to preach to them because he thought this might happen. Jonah did not want them to repent; he wanted them to be judged. So he gets angry with God, because now Assyria can conquer Israel.

God's will was done and Jonah should have been happy, but instead he was angry. You would think that if God sends you to preach to somebody and they receive your message, you should be blessed, not angry. In Ezekiel 33:11 it says that Lord God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but His pleasure is that the wicked turn from his way and live. God does not want people to die. He wants them to change. That is why He told Jonah to go preach. God then proceeds to teach Jonah that he does not do well to be angry. God's compassion is a good thing, not a bad thing.

He still wanted God to honor his desire to destroy Nineveh and not spare it, and he was going to sit there until he saw it happen. Then God prepared a gourd to provide shade for Jonah. Then a worm smote the gourd and it withered. Then Jonah got mad because the gourd was destroyed. Then God taught him a lesson about how great His compassion is.

Whenever we savor the things of man and not of God, we are liable to argue with God. We do not always understand why He does things. You can probably think of many examples of people, whom God told to do some pretty outrageous things, who did them without arguing. Like, Joshua taking of the city of Jericho (JOSHUA 6) and Noah building the ark (GENESIS 6:13-22). There are many other examples of doing it right, also.

When we have concerns about anything God asks us to do, we should always talk it over with Him and get clear on it so we can proceed with resolve and focus. It is not arguing if you have honest questions. Do not hesitate to go to God whenever you are not clear.

Affirmation: I do not argue with God. Father knows best.

Conversation Starter: Have you ever argued with God? Do you ever talk with God?

Recommended Reading: Jonah

Proverbs 29:11:

A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise *man* keepeth it in till afterwards.

There may be situations where it is important to not tell all you know. We need to learn when to keep our mouths shut. As much as we may be anxious to share with people just how much we know, sometimes things are better left unsaid! We do not want to get ourselves into trouble by saying something that should have gone unsaid. God can let you know when to *not tell all you know*.

It is good to especially be aware of this principle when we are sharing God's Word. The Greek word *euangelizō* is translated "preach the Gospel" or "bring good tidings" or "declare glad tidings." Its basic meaning is to teach well, but it does not mean you teach everything you know. You share everything that is necessary, and you do it well—but you do not try to teach everything you know. There is another Greek word, *katangellō*, which means to fully teach, announce, or declare. *Katangellō*, does imply a more thorough teaching of a subject where one could teach all he knows. At times that is appropriate, but not always.

Proverbs 17:28:

Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: *and* he that shutteth his lips *is esteemed* a man of understanding.

This is similar to the current adage, "Better to be silent and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt."

There are several examples in the Word. Joseph got into trouble when he told his dreams to his brothers (GENESIS 37:3-11). The word of knowledge was for him, not for the rest of his family. Had God wanted the rest of the family to know He would have told them or He would have instructed Joseph to tell them by word of wisdom. Solomon had no intention of cutting the child in two, but he didn't let the women know (I KINGS 3:16-28) until he found out who the real mother was. David knew he was in his right mind, but feigned to be mad before Achish the king of Gath (I SAMUEL 21:10-22:1); he didn't tell all he knew. The Magi never told Herod about the young child Jesus because they were warned of God to not go back and see him (MATTHEW 2:1-12). Obadiah never told Jezebel how he hid 100 of the Lord's prophets from her (I KINGS 18:3,4). Neither did Paul tell of his Roman citizenship when he was arrested and thrown in jail in Philippi (ACTS 16:19-39).

There may be things that you can only share with God. These can include commitments you have made to Him and promises He has made to you. Samson wisely kept the secret of his strength from Delilah for a while. However, he was deceived and seduced by her wiles, and finally gave in and told her, much to his undoing.

Judges 16:15-18:

And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart *is* not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength *lieth*.

¹⁶ And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, *so* that his soul was vexed unto death;

¹⁷ That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.

¹⁸ And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines... (You can read the entire record in Judges 16:4-21)

Sometimes in addition to not telling all you know, you may also have to instruct others to do the same. The instruction to "tell no man" occurs nine times in the Gospels. Jesus specifically told people to "tell no man" when God directed him to do so. (SEE MATTHEW 8:4; 16:20; 17:9; MARK 7:36; 8:30; 9:9; LUKE 5:14; 8:56; 9:21)

Affirmation: I say what I'm supposed to. I do not tell all I know when I am not supposed to.

Conversation Starter: Have you ever wondered about Samson's strength? Has anyone asked you to ever keep a secret?

Recommended Reading: Judges 16

Acts 9:40:

But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

These keys to walking by the spirit are all actions we may need to take to follow God's lead and walk by the spirit. God put these illustrations in the Word so we could learn from them. Then, when the direction comes, we will not be surprised or shocked.

When Jesus went to heal the ruler's daughter, he was confronted with scorn and unbelief from the minstrels and people who were present. He simply told them to give place and put them out of the house before he healed the child. He put the people out because they were not helping the situation. Although the reason for his action seems quite clear in this account, it is not always that obvious. (MATTHEW 9:18-25).

Later in Acts 9 Peter used the same key in the healing of Dorcas (ACTS 9:39-41). When Peter arrived he found the believers weeping and in despair. He put them out before he raised her from the dead. These people were not unbelievers, but their great sorrow was not helping Peter any. These were great folks. They were just extremely hurt. Their sorrow turned to rejoicing, however, when Peter presented Dorcas to them again, alive.

When Gideon was about to lead the children of Israel to war, God told him to remove certain people from the ranks. First God had him send home everyone who was fearful and afraid; they lost more than two thirds of their fighting force at that time. Gideon let the people make that decision for themselves. Next God told Gideon to test the people and keep only those who used their hand to drink. This took the number of the people for the battle from 32,000 to 300. The Lord then promised Gideon that "by the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand." Gideon was to "let all the *other* people go every man unto his place." (SEE JUDGES 7:1-25.)

Sometimes it is things and not people that you have to remove. When Moses came down from the mountain with the tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments on them and found the people worshipping the golden calf, he dealt with it harshly. He "took the calf which they had made, and burnt *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder, and strawed *it* upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink *of it*." (EXODUS 32:19,20)

There is also the example of the brass serpent, which at one time was a godly and powerful symbol of God's healing presence among his people (NUMBERS 21:7-9). Jesus even used this as symbolic of himself (JOHN 3:14). However, when it became unprofitable and devilish, it was time to dispose of it (II KINGS 18:3-5). Hezekiah's actions must have been controversial, but he did as God directed him to do.

This principle also works in reverse, as when Paul separated the believers from those who wanted to argue and fight.

Acts 19:8-10:

And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

⁹ But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

¹⁰ And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

This key is very flexible, and we may never know the reasons why God directs us to do this at times. However, our obedience will be necessary to bring God's will to pass. God may direct us to remove or move people or things when it will be beneficial to doing God's will.

Affirmation: I move and remove people and things when it's necessary.

Conversation Starter: What do you think about people being raised from the dead? Have you ever had someone close to you die?

Recommended Reading: Judges 7

Philippians 2:13:

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Often times revelation is clear and it comes long before we actually need it. However, there are occasions when it comes at the spur of the moment. We often act or speak without forethought or deliberation. We may even wonder why we did or said, what we did or said. This kind of inspired action and utterance by revelation may be necessary at times.

We develop or acquire this kind of precision in our walk, by being habitually thoughtful and deliberate with our actions and speech. There are times when God uses certain phrases to call attention to deliberate actions. In the healing of the leper in Matthew 8:1-4, God uses the phrase “put forth his hand” to show his intention.

Matthew 8:3:

And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

The words “put forth” are the Greek word, *ekteinō*. It means to reach out or stretch out. Obviously, if Jesus was going to touch him he would need to put forth his hand. Why the added detail? *Ekteinō* is used in a narrative to bring emphasis by adding detail. Kittel says it adds a graphic element in a story to make it more vivid. It was not by accident that Jesus touched him. It was deliberate action; he put forth his hand and touched him. It also established the will of God for this man. Reaching out and touching this man was the action that corroborated the words Jesus spoke.

We, too, must be willing to speak and to act in such a way that it has an impact on those to whom we minister. Jesus touched him in seeming contradiction to Leviticus 5:3. I believe the man was healed as Jesus spoke and reached for him. He was no longer a leper when Jesus actually laid his hands upon him. How important this touch must have been to him. How long it had been since he had known the tender touch of anyone besides those outcast with him. The master touched him. One lexicon suggested that this touch was an embrace full of love, compassion and joy.

When we get the revelation in advance we can act deliberately, but sometimes we do not get it much in advance. Our faithfulness to act and speak when directed to, will facilitate the times when we have to act spontaneously. When Peter and John healed the lame man at the temple gate Beautiful, Peter said, “Look on us.” He also took him by the hand and lifted him up. This inspired action and utterance brought deliverance to the man that day (ACTS 3:1-12).

When Jesus healed the man born blind in John 9, he spoke and acted spontaneously.

John 9:6,7:

When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

⁷ And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

Later when healing the two blind men in Matthew 20, Jesus asked them a question then touched their eyes. Later still in Matthew 30 it records that Jesus spit on the blind man’s eyes, and asked him if he could see. Jesus healed several blind men as recorded in the Gospels. However, he never seemed to do it the same way twice. God gave him specifics for each situation, and he believed to bring the gifts of healings to pass according to what God revealed to him each time.

Every situation is unique, and revelation is specifically for the situation at hand. Just because similar activities or situations are repeated, the guidance for one may not be the same as the next. Each situation must be handled independently, and God will work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure and provide what we need, when we need it. We just stay ready to say and do whatever God inspires.

Affirmation: I say and do whatever God inspires in me. I faithfully do as God directs me.

Conversation Starter: Have you ever seen anyone healed? Do you believe the healings in the Bible?

Recommended Reading: John 9

I Corinthians 15:9,10:

For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

¹⁰ But by the **grace** of God I am what I am: and his **grace** which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the **grace** of God which was with me.

Paul was an apostle who realized that it was the grace of God that allowed him to do what he did. It says this grace “was not in vain.” It was not empty or without substance. Grace is not just a word to be thrown around lightly. It is one of the great realities of life. God starts off and closes every epistle to us with grace. It is important enough to God to keep bringing it up. It should be as important to us to lay hold on it and not let it go. There is great power and impact and strength behind it.

Paul said God’s grace on his life was not in vain. That means that sometimes it can be. There is potential for us to miss the impact of God’s grace on our lives, and let it become vain. Paul never allowed it to be in vain and neither should we.

Notice the word “but” at the beginning of verse ten. It means “nevertheless or notwithstanding.” This is the strongest word of contrast in the Greek, *alla*. In contrast to it being in vain, look what it produces. He labored because of the grace of God upon his life. He taught and preached and lived for God because he was aware of God’s grace upon him.

This phrase “I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” is the figure of speech *epanorthosis*. In the English it would be called “correction.” This figure is used when a writer or speaker has said something and immediately recalls it in order to substitute something better, or stronger, or weightier, in its place, thus correcting what has been said. It’s as if as soon as he says it he realizes it’s so much bigger. It is not that what he said was wrong. He just wants to make sure we see how magnificent the truth is so he repeats it in a better, stronger, or weightier way so we don’t miss its importance.

He realized that it was the grace of God in his life that allowed him to do what he did. It was the grace of God that allowed him to minister, to teach, to preach, to move the Word, to believe for doors of utterance, to do signs, miracles and wonders. It was that wonderful, magnificent grace of God. Yes he *labored more abundantly than they all*, but just so people weren’t mistaken, thinking he did it by his own ability or will power, he restates it so no one will miss the point. It was because of God’s gracious hand of blessing on his life. We have the same hand on our lives; God is no respecter of persons.

It’s as if he said, “By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: [Did you get that? Let me be more clear and emphatic.] it’s not by my own ability that I labored so abundantly; its because of the grace of God which was with me which empowered me and allowed me to do so much more than I could have ever thought possible.”

God’s grace allows us to go far beyond what we ever thought we could do. Yes we can teach, we can minister, we can love people, but God’s grace allows us to do those things better than we ever thought we could... better than we have any right to do... far beyond where our natural ability could take us. It’s God’s grace at work in us that allows us to go beyond the limits that we impose on ourselves. I would have never thought that I could love people like I do today, but I do. That’s God’s grace working in me to will and to do of His good pleasure. God’s grace is the catalyst to our growth and our maturing in our walk for God. If we will just identify with Christ Jesus and allow that grace to work within us, we will be amazed where we can go and what we can do.

Paul allowed the grace of God to have an impact; he didn’t want it to be in vain. He identified with Christ and walked as more than a conqueror. Paul didn’t frustrate the grace of God, and don’t you do it either. Don’t allow anyone to do it to you, either. When people start molding your flesh and playing with your flesh and putting you under this law and that law say, “NAY!” We must not disregard the grace of God in our lives.

God forbid that we ever fall from grace (GALATIANS 5:4). We must bring ourselves up to the level of the Word and this wonderful grace of God, which makes it possible for us to do so. We can rise up and live the life to which God has called us. All the rules and regulations that pull us away from grace into bondage, should not be tolerated. We want our hearts fixed on the grace of God. Paul recognized the grace of God in his life. He also was aware of the traps set to pull people from grace and bring them back under the bondage of the law. He didn’t get into it, and neither should we.

Affirmation: By the grace of God I am what I am. I do my best, and God makes it better. I don’t tolerate legalism.

Conversation Starter: Have you experienced God’s grace? Do you understand what grace is?

Recommended Reading: 1 Corinthians 15

Psalms 50:14,15:

Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: ¹⁵ And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Opportunities to operate the power of God come all the time. We should be ready to jump on them as they arise. In our dialog with God we should make our desires known and act upon His Word to see results.

Matthew 14:22-26:

And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. ²³ And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. ²⁴ But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. ²⁵ And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit

The sea that they were on was not calm. The boat was tossed and the waves were big. As someone looked out, he saw a figure on the water. At that time, Jesus was on the top of the wave. Then they grabbed their brother and said, “Look at this.” But, by the time they looked, Jesus was down in the bottom of the wave, and they could not see him. When he was on the top of the wave, they could see him, but when he went down the wave, he disappeared from view. He kept appearing and then disappearing, and the disciples, not knowing what was going on, became afraid.

They had some real conflict in their hearts and minds. They knew Jesus told them to cross the sea, but why then this big storm? They were working hard to get to the other side, but they were not doing very well. They were doing the best that they could, but we know they were not doing very well, because Jesus walking catches up with them. They think they see Jesus, but they do not really know for sure. They think they see him, and then he disappears. Then he reappears, and they do not know what is going on. What is he doing on the sea? Who has ever heard of that?

Jesus saw the difficulty they were having and that is why he went. He knew they needed help, so he went to help. But when he gets there Mark 6:48 notes that he made as though he “would have passed by them.” He was going to walk right by them, but they saw him and cried out for help. What a great key! When you need help, ask for it. When we get in situations and are distressed and troubled, we should ask for help. Jesus went to them so that he would be able to help them, but he waited for them to ask.

Matthew 14:27-33:

But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer [Have your thoughts well arranged; believe positively that which is right; grab hold of your minds.]; it is I; be not afraid. ²⁸ And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. ²⁹ And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. ³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? ³² And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. ³³ Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

They all had renewed respect for Jesus, the son of God. When he got into the boat the wind ceased, the storm stopped. Why did he wait until he was in the boat to stop the storm? If Jesus wanted to calm the sea, why not do it before, and walk across on a flat sea? If he was concerned about them before, why not calm it so that they could row easily to the other side? Life does not always work that way. Difficulties arise. Storms and opposition occur, and we have to make it through. Jesus did not leave them comfortless; he went unto them walking on the sea.

If you want to walk on water, you have to get out of the boat. Peter had the audacity to demand, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.” Then Jesus said, “Come.” Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water. He gained a new level of intimacy with God and a greater understanding of the power of God. Once you get the promise, you still have to move—get out of the boat. Jesus said, “Come.” Peter had the invitation, and then it was up to him. He acted, climbed out of the boat, and walked on the water to go to Jesus. So what if he had difficulty and began to sink, when he cried out, “Save me,” Jesus immediately grabbed him. That is the kind of relationship we want to have. Then when we have need, we can cry out, knowing God will be there. If you want to walk on water, you must get out of the boat.

Affirmation: I waste no time asking for help. When I see opportunities I go for them.

Conversation Starter: Did you know Jesus wasn't the only one to walk on water? Do you ever stray from your comfort zone?

Recommended Reading: Matthew 14

James 1:25:

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

In Israel, lepers were outcasts. They were put out of the city limits. Yet, in one of Israel's most perilous hours, God delivered His abundance by way of four leprous men. There was a severe famine, but God gave Elisha His Word to speak. "To morrow about this time *shall* a measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria" (II KINGS 7:1). How would God bring His Word and will to pass? It happened because four leprous men decided it was time to act.

II Kings 7:3-9:

And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, **Why sit we here until we die?** 4 If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die. 5 And they rose up **in the twilight**, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, *there was* no man there. 6 For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, *even* the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. 7 Wherefore they arose and fled **in the twilight....**

The four leprous men knew nothing of Elisha's declaration. They had been sitting there for days. Why decide to act now? That's God's timing. Not only was it time for them to act, but when they acted (i.e. "*in the twilight*") God moved the enemy out; they arose and fled *in the twilight*.

They gathered some of the spoil and were tempted to not say anything, and carry off more and more. But they knew it was wrong. God had wrought a great victory and provided great abundance, and no one knew about it. The only right thing to do was to tell everyone about it. How about us? What are we doing with the abundance of God's Word we have found? The only right thing to do is to make others aware of it, also.

They went and told the porter of the city the amazing news. The porters woke the king, but when he arose he was not very delighted. He had just heard the words of Elisha that tomorrow about this time, there would be an abundance of food. Yet, when they present him with proof, an eyewitness account, he still does not believe. He thinks it is too good to be true. The people are in the city afraid and starving, and the king says, "No, this is just a trick." One of the king's servants convinces him to check it out, and they find out indeed that the enemy has fled.

The people were afraid and there was no enemy of which to be afraid. They were starving and there was nothing standing between them and the abundance of food God provided, but their own closed doors. They just needed to act, and they did. The people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.

Like the lepers who acted to see results, the man with the withered hand did so also. When Jesus ministered to him he had a choice to make. Receive God's promise and stretch out his hand, or think it's impossible and never act. Well, his hand was restored as he acted on what Jesus Christ told him.

Mark 3:5:

And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

It's the Word of God that makes the impossible, possible. We must simply decide to act upon it. Luke 1:37 says, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." This would be more accurately translated, "For no word of God shall be without power." God's Word will do what He promises it will; we just need to act on it with believing to see results.

We have to act to see results. Why sit we here until we die? We know what we believe by recognizing what we walk out upon. If we are not willing to act upon something there is very little evidence that we actually believe it. When it comes to walking by the spirit, action precedes results.

Affirmation: I act upon God's Word with great believing. I'm not going to sit until I die.

Conversation Starter: What scripture have you done today? Did you read the Bible today?

Recommended Reading: 2 Kings 6 & 7.

Isaiah 40:31:

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

When we are not clear on what God wants, there is protection in waiting. The flesh is usually in a hurry and wants instant gratification. It has little patience. Its focus is on “what I want” and not on “what God wants.”

Psalm 27:14:

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: **wait, I say, on the LORD.**

Psalm 37:9:

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that **wait upon the LORD**, they shall inherit the earth.

Psalm 37:34:

Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.

Proverbs 20:22:

Say not thou, I will recompense evil; *but* **wait on the LORD**, and he shall save thee.

Ahab did not want to wait on God in II Kings 6:33 when he decided to kill Elisha. When the flesh is denied it will grow impatient and expose itself. It will suddenly become ugly and demanding, railing at us and condemning us. When that happens, we know it is not the voice of God. Waiting on the Lord exposes selfish and prideful desires. Servants should desire to carry out their master’s will not their own.

Psalm 123:2:

Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of their masters, *and* as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes **wait upon the LORD** our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

Eliaphaz is the first miserable comforter to speak to Job. He uses his experience to justify everything that follows. He thinks it is God working in him, but he is very mistaken. Miserable comforters speak presumptuously.

Job 4:12-17:

Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. ¹³ In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, ¹⁴ Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. ¹⁵ Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: ¹⁶ It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image *was* before mine eyes, *there was* silence, and I heard a voice, *saying*, ¹⁷ Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?

Of course not! That is one way the adversary uses the Word against us. He starts with an obvious truth to get us agreeing, and then, goes off on some tangent. If we follow it all the way through, we will end up saying, “Good is evil, and evil is good.”

Job 4:18-21:

Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: ¹⁹ How much less *in* them that dwell in houses of clay, [people, human beings] whose foundation *is* in the dust, *which* are crushed before [sooner than] the moth? [The implication is that God considers us an annoyance and our time on earth as but that of an insect.] ²⁰ They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding *it*. [God knows the very hair of our heads. Is He unconcerned about us?] ²¹ Doth not their excellency *which is* in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.

The spirit encouraged Eliphaz to be suspicious of Job. How could anyone think they are right or righteous? Do you see the critical and condemning nature of the declaration this spirit made to Eliphaz? That is not the voice of God. When spirits speak, they will betray themselves.

Later on in Job, Elihu finally speaks up, impelled by spirits, also.

Job 32:18,19:

For I am full of matter, [He was full of it, alright!] the spirit within me constraineth me. ¹⁹ Behold, my belly *is* as wine *which* hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.

God does constrain, but He does not cause us to explode like verse 19 describes. There are times when Jesus got angry, but he never lost control. He always knew what he was doing. He made deliberate decisions of will. If we ever lose control, then it is not God working in us. That is when we need to wait.

Affirmation: I wait on the Lord and stay in control. I run, and am not weary; I walk and do not faint.

Conversation Starter: Are you always in a hurry? What would you like to happen today?

Recommended Reading: Jeremiah 42

Psalms 25:3-5:

Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. ⁴ Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. ⁵ Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou *art* the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

Although we know Him Who knows all, we often run into obstacles about which we do not immediately know what to do. At those times the best thing to do is wait. We do the best we can to order our steps on God's Word, knowing that it is the solid ground that supplies a foundation for our lives. The Bible has examples where people waited on the Lord for a variety of reasons.

When faced with two alternatives, neither of which is acceptable, don't be pushed to choose one or the other. When Jesus was teaching in the Temple in John 8 the Pharisees brought a woman to him whom they had taken in adultery. They reminded him that Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned, and they wanted to know what he suggested that they do with her.

They were correct about what the law said, and they had two witnesses so the matter could be established. However, they were not really concerned with the law or the woman. Verse six tells us their intent. They intended to tempt him so that they might have reason to accuse him.

They think they have Jesus in a no win situation. They would never feign respect for him and ask for his judgment unless they had something to gain. They had a hidden agenda, ulterior motives, but they did not catch the master off guard. Jesus did not let them push him into making a wrong decision because he was walking by the spirit.

They thought that no matter how he responded they would have reason to bring accusation against him. The Romans reserved capital punishment for themselves. If Jesus would have said, "Yes, do what the law says," and had the woman stoned, the Pharisees would have accused him to the Romans, because only the Romans could execute the death penalty. If Jesus would have said, "No, do not stone her," they would have accused him to the people for not upholding the Law of Moses.

Jesus did not know what to do so he did nothing. It was a custom in the Bible lands for the elders at the gate to write the word "God" (*Alaha* in Aramaic) in the sand and stay their mind on Him when making a difficult decision. That is exactly what Jesus was doing. Jesus was waiting until he knew what to do.

They feigned respect for Jesus and came to him with deception. Outwardly they seemed to recognize his spiritual authority to make this kind of judgment, but they were not interested in his help, they only wanted to accuse him. Although Deuteronomy 17 gave them a basis for bringing the matter to Jesus, it only cloaked the deceit hidden in their hearts.

The scribes and Pharisees thought they had Jesus right where they wanted him, because they gave him two options and either of them provided means for accusation.

Jesus knew what the Word of God said and was walking a step at a time. He did not want to commit to either alternative so he waited for God to tell him what to do. God told him exactly what to say, and Jesus stood up and spoke it forth. Look at the power of the spoken Word. The Word said that the accusers were to be the first to cast the stones, Jesus' simple statement put the matter back into the lap of the Pharisees. He wants to uphold the integrity of the Word, and he wants to do God's will concerning this woman.

Even these Pharisees, whom Jesus later describes as born of their father, the devil, could not withstand or defy the power of the Word of God spoken by Jesus. Remember, all the people he was teaching were still there. What a witness to them of the power of God and how to walk by the spirit.

Everyone left, so without two or three witnesses no stoning could take place. The charges were dropped; the case was dismissed. That is what God's will was in the situation. Jesus had to wait until he knew what to do, but he got the answer he needed walking by the spirit. It took revelation. They came to tempt and accuse the master, and they leave with their purpose spoiled because Jesus walked by the spirit. They thought they had him in a "no-win" situation, yet he prevailed because he waited for God's instruction and walked by the spirit.

Affirmation: I will not be pushed to make a decision until I am ready. I look for God's way out of temptation.

Conversation Starter: How do you handle making tough decisions? Ever ask yourself, "What would Jesus do?"

Recommended Reading: John 8

II Timothy 2:4,5:

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.⁵ And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

We have to deal with the affairs of this life because we live in this world. The key is to not get entangled with them. We cannot afford to let the affairs of life distract us from our focus of being about our Father's business. Because our time on this earth is short and the need so great, we must learn to live in light of eternity. Awareness of the urgency of the times encourages us to pursue the things of God instead of being entangled with the affairs of this life. Victory over distractions comes with focus and purpose. We can go as far with God as we want. We can strive for mastery in the spiritual realm. The opportunities in front of us are limitless.

If we want to travel far and fast, we are going to need to travel light. It is going to take nurturing the seed of the Word of God that has been sown in our hearts. Otherwise the cares and riches and pleasures of life will choke us and stymie our growth.

Luke 8:14:

And that [the seed of the word of God] which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

God wants us to have a meaningful life, and don't we long for it. We want purpose; we want fulfillment. Yet, so often we get sick and tired of life. Do you ever get sick and tired of life? Do you ever feel things are just too routine, too humdrum? Do you ever get a nagging feeling that life is supposed to be better than it is? Do you want to have a greater impact and make a bigger difference with the rest of your life than you have made until now? As **full** as our lives get, they may not be **fulfilling**. Well, you have been called to greatness, and without fulfilling our calling it is difficult to be fulfilled.

Ephesians 3:16-21:

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;¹⁷ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,¹⁸ May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;¹⁹ And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the **fulness** of God.²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,²¹ Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Now, that would qualify for a meaningful life wouldn't you agree? That's available to us, right now.

Those "sick and tired of the way things are going" feelings can actually be drawing us like a magnet toward the greatness for which we were created. Our restlessness may be a kind of holy discontentment, planted in our heart by God Himself. In fact, if you are one of God's spiritually restless ones right now, there is great news for you. Restlessness many times precedes a wonderful touch of God on a person's life. There is a dimension of you that cannot be fulfilled by anything but God.

Are you ready to break out into a larger, more significant future? If so, then you may need to shed some of the encumbrances that have kept you unsatisfied. God has made you restless for more because He wants to work within you to will and to do of His good pleasure. You will never be satisfied with less—no job, no accomplishment, no bank account, no sport, nothing, but a heartfelt relationship with Him and with your brothers and sisters in His family will ever provide meaning to life.

Maybe you have been settling for less than that, but you are tired of it. It is time for you to answer God's call to greatness. Build an atmosphere of expectation. See yourself in the pages of God's Word. Realize you are a laborer together with Him. If there are things keeping you from pursuing what you would really like to do, get rid of them. We should never be too busy to carry out God's will, and we will enjoy the benefits for eternity.

Affirmation: God has called me to greatness. I am not entangled with the affairs of this life.

Conversation Starter: Do you ever get sick and tired of life? Do you wish life would have more meaning and be more fulfilling?

Recommended Reading: 2 Timothy 2

Hebrews 12:1:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Sin and sin-consciousness will try to keep us burdened down. We will need to set them aside if we are to run with patience the race that is set before us. People act like their weaknesses are more important than God's grace. If you put your weaknesses on one side of the scale and God's grace on the other, to which do you give greater weight? We don't have to be perfect; we just do our best—God will do the rest. Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the Lord with all of your heart...." Do not do it half-heartedly—put yourself into it and do your best. That is all God expects. You do not need to be perfect, just do your best. Start doing something and you will get better, as you go. The point is production not perfection. We will never be perfect, but we can produce. We can do what God has called us to do.

Verse two tells us how we are to run our race with patience. We do it looking unto Jesus. We get our patience, our endurance, as we look to him and His example.

Hebrews 12:2,3:

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye [in order that ye not] be wearied and faint in your minds.

"Consider" is the Greek word *analogizomai* in the middle voice. It is action that we take unto ourselves. We must consider for ourselves. It is a strong word and could be translated, "consider for yourself carefully in detail." Why do you think all those details are in the Gospel accounts? Why do you think it talks about all the beatings that he had and the crown of thorns that was placed on his head. He went through 40 hours of torture... of being whipped and beaten. We are supposed to consider those things in detail. It's in there for a reason. Have any of us suffered like that for doing God's will? He is in us, we can endure anything because we have his strength.

In verse three it says Jesus endured, *hupomenō*. That's the verb form of patience in verse one, *hupomonē*. We are to run with endurance because he endured. We do not have to run with our own strength or endurance because we can run with his. We can do all things through Christ who actively infuses us with inner strength. When we are challenged and tempted to faint we look to Jesus, considering carefully all that he endured for us and conclude unequivocally that we can, too. Our strength is not small! We do not faint in the day of adversity! We conclude we can bear up under this; this is nothing compared to what he went through.

We consider what Jesus endured carefully in detail. We realize that he went through all that he did so that we would not have to. So why allow ourselves to go through it when he already paid for it. He paid the price; I do not have to pay it again. His sacrifice was full and complete and accomplished exactly what it was supposed to. However, if we suffer for doing good, we are in good company. We can garner strength from his example.

Hebrews 12:4-5:

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. ⁵ And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

When God lays stuff in our paths, and we know what we have to do, we just go after it and never quit. The challenge is always out there. The challenge is to be satisfied with what we have and not continue... not see our goals all the way through. Jesus said in John 4:34, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Jesus got his sustenance from doing the will of God. Not just attempting it, but completing it. He didn't quit until it was done, Jesus was focused and purposefully pursued what he was asked to do without quitting.

Once we know the will of God, we do it. Then we expect it to come to pass. It may take patient endurance until we see the fruit of our labor, but we will see it if we faint not. Whatever the promise of God is in your life that you are pursuing, just don't quit. Whatever the specific thing is that you are dealing with, go to the Word, find the promise, claim the promise, do what it says and don't faint. And, if you don't faint, you'll reap the harvest. When things get tough consider what Jesus endured for you, and endure yourself until you get it. God has promised, and He'll make it good.

When we see others failing due to lack of power or strength, we help them by going to God to get the resources we need to meet their need. When we face the danger of fainting ourselves, we are to remember the rewards that await us so that we do not faint. When considering whether or not to quit or give up, it is important to consider carefully, in detail, what Jesus Christ did to summon the strength we need so that we do not quit.

Affirmation: I run the race set before me. I look unto Jesus and get the endurance I need to carry on.

Conversation Starter: What gives you satisfaction? What do you enjoy about life?

Recommended Reading: Hebrews 12

Philippians 2:5: NIRV

Philippians 2:5: NIV

You should think in the same way Christ Jesus does. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

Jesus had just taught about attitude using the parable of the good Samaritan as an illustration, and he comes into a situation where there needed to be an attitude adjustment. When he arrived at the village Martha received him into her home.

Luke 10:38-42:

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.⁴⁰ But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:⁴² But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

“Cumbered” comes from the Greek word, *perispaō*, which means to be pulled or drawn from every direction. It is only used in this one place in the New Testament. It is used of one who is overburdened by various distractions. It is used by Polybius of turning around or wheeling about a horse by the use of reins and the bit in its mouth. It occurs here in the passive voice. Martha's mind was pulled in every direction. One thought after another grabbed her mind and turned her about just like a quarter horse turning on a dime.

To one degree or another, we have all had these kinds of disconcerting thoughts lead us about as a brute beast. Sometimes we are pulled in so many directions that it is hard to make proper choices. This feeling of being overwhelmed can severely affect our attitude. Look at how it affected Martha:

She questions whether the Lord even cared about her — “Lord dost thou not care...”

She felt forsaken by her sister who left her to do all the work — “my sister hath left me to serve alone.”

She tried to tell Jesus what to do — “bid her...help me.”

The problem was not that Martha was serving and Mary was not. That seemed to be OK with the master. The problem was that she was doubled minded about it. Jesus pointed out what her problem was. He said, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things....” She was letting things get to her. “Careful” is the Greek word, *merimnaō*, to be anxiously concerned about or to have distracting care. Her mind was distracted or divided. “Troubled” is the Greek word, *turbazō*, (used only here) meaning to be confused or disquieted as by the tumult or uproar of a clamorous and excited crowd. She had so much going on in her mind that she could hardly distinguish one thought from another. It was as if they were all yelling to get her attention. She really did not know what was going on in her head. All she knew was that she did not like it.

Furthermore, Jesus said, “One thing is needful....” The necessity was to make a choice and be at peace. Mary made her choice and was at peace. Sure, it is easy to spiritualize and say, “Mary chose to hear the Word and Martha did not.” That is true, but do not think the right decision is to always sit down and fellowship and not take care of your responsibilities. It is easy to run to a fellowship and hide from the things we should be dealing with.

Jesus said, “Mary hath chosen....” “Chosen” is the Greek word *eklegomai*, which is in the middle voice and means to pick or choose out for one's self. Mary made her choice for her life. Martha had no right to dictate what Mary's choice ought to be. Martha chose to serve, if that was her choice, fine. Jesus did not say, “Stop what you are doing and sit down with us.” He basically said, “Quit trying to run your sister's life. Quit trying to tell everyone else what to do.” Mary's at peace with her decision, you be at peace with yours.

The distracted and divided mind will never be peaceful. To walk by the spirit, you have to decide on your activities and approach them with a focused mind. If you carry the kind of distracting care that Martha did, you will never get very far in your walk. We must give our cares to God because He cares for us (1 PETER 5:7).

Affirmation: I choose and I'm at peace with my decisions. I think the way my savior does.

Conversation Starter: Do you know the Biblical story of Mary & Martha? Ever feel pulled in a zillion directions?

Recommended Reading: Luke 10

Matthew 9:27:

And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us.

These two blind men pleaded for mercy, and their request was granted. Mercy is a very central concept for healing since no healing is earned or deserved. Our God is a great and merciful God. Accurately picturing our Heavenly Father as merciful encourages healing, for we are often so aware of how undeserving we are. Healing is not dependant on our worthiness, but on His grace and mercy. In working with people, we have to make sure they know that. If they do not come asking for mercy, sometimes we have to let them know that they cannot earn it. It is a *charisma*, a gift of God's grace. There is nothing we have done, that denies it to us.

Ephesians 2:4:

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

Hebrews 4:16a:

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

It does not matter if we have made mistakes. It does not matter if we have blown it. That is when you need mercy. When you make a mistake, you just go to God. He knows! I guarantee, He already knows. But we go to Him, and we expect mercy. That is what it says, "That we may obtain mercy." Not only do we get mercy, it says, "And find grace to help in time of need." We get the mercy that we need, and we get more to give, to give out to people, to help.

Matthew 9:28-31:

And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.²⁹ Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.³⁰ And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.³¹ But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

They received as they believed, but they could not keep their mouth closed. This must have made things more difficult for Jesus. Why did Jesus sometimes say, "Do not tell anybody," and then sometimes say, "Go tell everybody." That takes revelation. It is done because of what the people need, or because of what he needs. Sometimes it was so that he would have the freedom to move and not be mobbed. There was a reason for it, but that was always done by revelation. Most of the time, I do not give people that guidance. I let them figure it out. But, if God tells me to say something, then I say something. I have said, "You need to tell your wife about this." We have ministered to people and said, "You need to talk to your parents about this." That was the direction that God gave. When He tells you that, then you say that. But if He does not, then you do not flip a coin and say, "I will tell them or I will not tell them." You just do as you are told. If you are not told specific instructions to give, then you let God handle that. If He wants you to be involved, He will tell you to tell them. Otherwise He will tell them Himself.

That is what they did here. It was their eyes that were their problem, and that is what he touched. He touched their eyes. Now, he did not do that every time, but a lot of times he did that. One time (with a deaf person) he put his finger in his ear. He did not do that every time, but he did it that time. That is what we do; we do what God directs.

Sometimes you will touch him; sometimes you will lay hands on him; sometimes you will touch the affected part of the body. In a lot of the accounts, he does different things. You just do whatever you feel like doing. You are in fellowship. You believe God is working in you, and if you want to put your hand on their shoulder, if you want to give them a hug, if you want to hold their hand, then you do what you want to do.

Do you think God is going to make you do something you do not want to do? You just do what you want to do. You do what God lays before you. It is not going to be "THOU SHALT DO THIS" most of the time. Sometimes it will be. Sometimes He will tell you that before they come. I have had that happen. "This is the way you are going to handle it." Oh, boy! Then you get excited because now you know what you are going to do. But it does not happen that often. Most of the time, you just do it as you go. Sometimes you hold their hand, and then you let go of their hand. You get up and take a walk, you come back; you just do what you need to do. God will let you know.

Affirmation: I remember God's mercy. I go boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Conversation Starter: Do you know what mercy is? When is the last time you received mercy or extended it to someone else?

Recommended Reading: Matthew 9

Hebrews 3:15:

While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

If we want to hear God's voice, we shouldn't harden our hearts toward Him. We want our relationship with God vital and vibrant. We want to interact and desire the pleasure of His company. That's our birthright as His children, even though we do not always walk the way we should.

Do you think you are too "hard-headed" for God to get through to you? I think not. Balaam became renowned for evil. He is used three times in the New Testament as an example of what not to do (II PETER 2:15, JUDE 11, AND REVELATION 2:14) Yet, even when he deliberately decided to disobey God and curse His people, God didn't forsake him. Indeed, he went to great lengths to get Balaam's attention.

Numbers 22:20-31:

And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, **If the men come to call thee**, rise up, *and* go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. ²¹ And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. [Even though the men never came to call.] ²² And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants *were* with him. ²³ And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. ²⁴ But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall *being* on this side, and a wall on that side. ²⁵ And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. ²⁶ And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where *was* no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. ²⁷ And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. ²⁸ And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass [I call that going to great lengths to speak to Balaam.], and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? ²⁹ And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: **I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.** ³⁰ And the ass said unto Balaam, *Am* not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since *I was* thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, **Nay.** [Since the ass spoke in his language, how thoughtful for Balaam to speak back in donkey language. Ha, ha!] ³¹ Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

What were the words that came out of his mouth, "I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee." When Balaam saw the angel of the Lord standing there with a sword in his hand, he knew he should have been the one dead. He was humbled as he realized that it was his life which should have been taken.

Numbers 22:32-34:

And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because *thy* way is perverse before me: ³³ And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive. ³⁴ And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.

Balaam changed his mind, and when he did the revelation also changed. Now that he repented and his attitude and his thinking was right, God said he could go. If you finish the account, you'll see that Balaam did indeed only speak what God wanted said, much to his chagrin. Don't ever think that God cannot talk to you. Even if we should deliberately disobey, He can still get our attention. His wisdom is vast and His mercy is great. God is big enough to talk to us directly; let's listen.

Affirmation: I hear God's voice when he speaks to me. God always tells me first.

Conversation Starter: Do you know the story of Balaam's ass? What would it be like if animals could talk?

Recommended Reading: Numbers 22-24

Acts 21:14:

And when he [Paul] would not be persuaded, we [Luke and the other believers who tried to persuade Paul not to go] ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

God told Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Paul described himself as “bound in the spirit.” Spiritually he was not free to go, but he decided to go anyway. Although Paul knew that bonds and afflictions were in the future if he went, he went anyway. Even though he was outside the will of God, God did not desert him or give up on him. When Paul refused to obey wanting the revelation to change, God still pursued him and tried to convince him through other believers not to go to Jerusalem.

Acts 20:22-25:

And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

²³ Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. ²⁴ But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. [Paul thought he would be able to get through to his kinsmen, the Jews.] ²⁵ And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

That had to be revelation. How else could he have known that? God must have not only told him not to go, but what the consequences of going would be.

Acts 21:3,4:

Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden. ⁴ And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

God had already told Paul not to go, but Paul was going to go anyhow. God still does not give up on him. He wants to keep Paul out of trouble, so He sends other people to confirm His desire that Paul not go to Jerusalem. Since Paul would not receive it directly from God, he heard from Him in another way. That is God's grace. Paul resisted His will, and God sent someone else to tell him again after He had already told him, Himself.

In Acts 21:8-12 Paul gets to Philip's house and his daughters prophesy. Then while he is there God sends Agabus, the prophet, to tell him not to go. God will always tell you first, but we may still hear from Him in other ways even if we decide to not obey.

God told Cornelius to send for Peter. However, before the messengers from Cornelius arrived to request Peter's presence, God told him in a vision that he should go (ACTS 10:19, 20). God told Peter first so he would be sure that it was His will that he go with them. God even gave him more direction to take some brethren with him when he went. Peter even told them about the revelation God gave him ahead of time when he arrived.

Maintaining our peace of mind is important because God can easily be drowned out by all the humdrum and hullabaloo of the world. Like Elijah, we need to be able to hear the still small voice of God.

I Kings 19:11b-13a:

... And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake: ¹² And after the earthquake a fire; *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire: and after the fire a **still small voice**. ¹³ And it was *so*, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out....

Remember God is big enough to get through to you. It behooves us to listen. There is no guarantee that He will keep working with us. He could no longer work with Eli because he refused to obey God's direction. Therefore, God started to work with Samuel. Paul had many occasions to change his mind and not go back to Jerusalem. That is God's grace. Why would we ever want to presume to know more than God? Let us just recognize God's still small voice, obey His will, and stay out of trouble.

God will keep us from harm if we listen. So let us make up our minds to pay attention to that still small voice. Let us recognize that God is big enough to talk directly to us. It will save us a lot of headaches and heartaches if we do.

Affirmation: God doesn't give up on me. When God talks to me through other people, I'm so very grateful

Conversation Starter: Would you like to hear God's voice? Has anyone ever confirmed what God had already told you?

Recommended Reading: Acts 10

Mark 14:38:

Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

As laborers together with God, we expect Him to direct our steps as He promised He would. We acknowledge Him in all our ways, and expect Him to direct our paths. We do our best to keep His Word and live the way He would want. We want to please Him. When we need further information on specific points to bring His Word and will to pass, He will give it to us. It is important to enjoy the pleasure of the heavenly Father's company. (PHILIPPIANS 2:13; PSALMS 35:27; 147:11; 149:4; ISAIAH 46:10; EPHESIANS 1:5; II THESSALONIANS 1:11) We never know when He might want to tell us something, so we always remain diligent to watch and be ready.

The Biblical servant was required to watch and be ready. To serve God, we must attend to His business. We keep our eyes upon Him, figuratively, as the eastern servant kept their eyes upon their lord. The servants who waited on their masters at the table became intimately acquainted with their likes and dislikes. They knew their preferences and could detect by simple hand or eye gestures just what their masters wanted.

Psalms 123:2:

Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of their masters, *and* as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes *wait* upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

Our penchant to watch and be ready is one of the indicators of maturity in our walk where we demonstrate we are more concerned with His will than our own.

1 Corinthians 16:13:

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men [act like brave men], be strong.

Revelation may come at the most likely and unlikely times and places. Of course, “likely and unlikely” are relative terms. What is likely to me, may be unlikely to you, and what is unlikely to me may be likely to you. I guess if I have received revelation in one situation before, when that situation comes up again, I may be more likely to expect it than someone who has not received revelation in that situation before. The point is—we want to stay ready because we never know when it may come.

There are plenty of examples in the Word of what I would call likely times and places. Here are several:

When writing God's Word, (Luke was directed by God)—Luke 1:1-4.

While serving in the temple, (Zacharius received revelation about John)—Luke 1:5-22.

While waiting for the outpouring of the spirit on Pentecost, (the twelve received the cue to speak)—Acts 2:1-4.

At the transfiguration, (Peter, James, and John were instructed by God)—Matthew 17:1-9.

On a mission for God, (Paul received additional information)—Acts 18:18-21.

When ministering healing, (God told Jesus what to say and do)—John 9:6, 7.

There are plenty of examples in the Word of what I would call unlikely times and places. Here are several:

While going abroad, (Samuel anointed Saul to be king)—I Samuel 9:26-10:1.

While keeping sheep, (Moses hears from God via a burning bush)—Exodus 3:1ff.

While a guest at someone's home, (Jesus confronted unsound thinking)—Luke 7:36-50.

While dying on the cross, (Jesus still heard from God)—Luke 23:39-43.

While walking on the water, (Jesus received further direction)—Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-51.

We ought to pay attention and stay focused. That's what “watch and be ready” means. As we carry out our responsibilities, both personally and ministerially, we want God's assistance. We expect that He will work with us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13) We desire to walk by the spirit, and we expect that God will work in us. Therefore, we stay alert, watchful, and diligent.

Affirmation: I watch and I'm ready. I enjoy the pleasure of His company.

Conversation Starter: What do you anticipate the day holds for you? When are you most likely to hear from God?

Recommended Reading: Matthew 24

I Peter 5:2:

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

Watching has many aspects. It means to look or observe attentively or carefully. Like a tracker we must be closely observant to stay on the trail and find what we seek. As we learn how God works with us, there may be specific things that occur over and over that we recognize as God working in us. He may habitually use the same things to communicate certain things.

We learn to look and wait expectantly with anticipation. Galatians 6:10 does not say, "If we have opportunity...." It says, "As we have opportunity...." There will be opportunities, and we should eagerly anticipate them. We will be more likely to observe them as we look for them.

Observing others in the Body of Christ can aid in our personal growth. Even when we are not directly involved, our observation of others walking by the spirit can bless and inspire us. Having teachers, trainers and mentors is valuable.

Those of us to whom God has given the responsibility of oversight must stay vigilant. The Old Testament watchman had to remain alert.

Ezekiel 33:1-7:

Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, ² Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: ³ If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; ⁴ Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. ⁵ He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. ⁶ But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. ⁷ So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

The watchman was supposed to watch and warn the people when they saw things coming. That is also our responsibility when we walk by the spirit. Paul extended this concept into the New Testament.

Acts 20:25-28:

And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. ²⁶ Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men* [Then he tells them why.] ²⁷ For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

²⁸ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Just as watching has different aspects, so does being ready. Ready means to be prepared or available for service, action, or progress. David's men said unto him, "*Thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.*" (II Samuel 15:15). Ready also means to be mentally disposed to do something, to be willing. The Bereans "*received the Word with all readiness of mind*" (Acts 17:11). Nehemiah said, "*Thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness...*" (Nehemiah 9:17).

Ready means likely or about to do something. I Peter 3:15 tells us to: "*Be ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh....*" Ready also means prompt in apprehending or reacting, as in a *ready intelligence* or a *ready response*. *Ezra was a ready scribe* (Ezra 7:6). The Psalmist said, "*My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*"

Galatians 6:10 promises us opportunities. If we stay ready we can respond when we see them develop. May we become men and women after God's own heart who, like Paul, can boldly say:

Romans 1:15-16a:

So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...

Affirmation: I watch and am ready to warn God's people. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

Conversation Starter: What do you expect to happen today? Do you have anyone watching over you?

Recommended Reading: Ezekiel 33

Jude 24,25:

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,²⁵ To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Although God is able to keep us from falling, each of us may stumble and fall. We are going to make mistakes at times. If we fall, there is still no condemnation, we just need to get back up and go at it again.

Proverbs 24:16a:

For a just *man* falleth seven times, and riseth up again...”

It is important that we get up again. God will never forsake us even when we fall flat on our face.

Psalms 37:23,24:

The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way [In the translations, it is about half and half that “He” is God.].

Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth *him* with his hand.

We just develop the mindset that even if we fall, we are going to get back up. Nothing is going to stop us, and that starts with “*numero uno*.” We must not allow ourselves to get discouraged. Sometimes we can be our own worst enemy. Our adversary is formidable enough; we do not need to jump on his bandwagon. We must encourage ourselves in the Lord. Our confession should be like Micah records, “When I fall, I shall arise!”

Micah 7:8:

Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD *shall be* a light unto me.

That is the kind of expectation we have. If we fall, we get back up. If we sit in darkness, we expect God to be a light unto us. How else are we going to walk by the spirit? If He does not give us the revelation that we need, if He does not provide the specifics of what to do to bring His Word to pass, we are not going to be able to do it. He has declared His will so specifically in His Word that we know what He wants us to do, and when we need the revelation to bring that to pass in specific situations it will be there. That is our God. He will enlighten us.

As in any family, the older more mature believers are to help the new ones. We want to come of full-age, which is accomplished by exercising our spiritual abilities. We must take responsibility for our growth. Sure, there should be elders in the family who can help us, but as we grow up, we become those mature ones who are able to help others. This growth is rooted and grounded in God’s grace.

Colossians 2:6:

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him:

Even people who know they are saved by grace think that they must walk by works. No, it is grace from start to finish. The good works are just a natural outgrowth of living in God’s grace. Sure, we want to produce fruit, but that is not accomplished by the works of the flesh. It is accomplished as we renew our minds to operate the manifestations and walk by the spirit. All we can do is walk and when we stumble, get up. We just do the best we can, and we make a difference where we can.

It is not often we get to do great things, but we always get to do small things with great love. And after all, it is not the amount of work you produce that is important. It is the love with which you produce it that is important and that is what will be remembered after the gathering together. We do not need to change the entire world, just make that portion where we live a better place. As we do our part in our place the world will change a place at a time.

Life is a balance. We do not want to become sin-conscious, afraid to make any little mistake. But, we do not want to become oblivious to temptation either. We do not want to miss the mark. If we do not recognize temptation when it comes, we will not look for the way of escape that God promised. II Peter 2:9 says, “The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.” **WE ARE THE GODLY!** Remember that temptation and accusation are the adversaries two favorite punches. Do not let him land them on you.

Liberty and maturity are necessary for us to walk in the spirit. Liberty and maturity will help us maintain balance as we learn. We can enjoy our liberty instantly, and when we make the proper choices to maintain our liberty, we will be amazed at how quickly we grow.

Affirmation: When I fall I get up. I walk at liberty and am maturing in Christ.

Conversation Starter: When you stumble do you get back up? Do you think God delights in your ways?

Recommended Reading: Psalms 37

Hebrews 5:13,14:

For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

No one ever gets mad at a child learning to walk. We coax and cajole; we do everything we can to encourage them to walk, knowing full well that as soon as they do we wish we would not have pushed them into doing it so soon. Walking is a simple skill that can be acquired. It is not difficult. God did not call it mountain climbing by the spirit or tightrope walking by the spirit. It is just walking. Now if someone is thirty years old and having trouble walking, that is another story.

Last winter was bad. Ice on the blacktop gave occasions to plenty of spills. After the first time however, we learned to pay attention and walk more carefully. Of course, sometimes as adults we may trip over things (even our own feet at times) which may cause us to fall. Drunkenness also makes walking a lost art at times. However for the most part, we grow up and master walking physically. Why would it be any more difficult spiritually? God uses the word “walk” for a reason.

Our liberty gives us the freedom to make decisions for our lives. Maintaining our liberty requires a balanced walk far from legalism or license. A balanced walk does not mean swinging from one extreme to the other. Rather, it means staying in the middle, enjoying our liberty. Making proper choices and staying put in our liberty shows maturity in our walk.

Many of those proper choices are to obey God, rather than men. Obedience to the written Word facilitates obedience to those specific words of knowledge, words of wisdom, and discerning of spirits that will come. Once we are moving on the Word the fine-tuning of the manifestations will seem almost effortless.

We will be tempted to go to the extremes. Legalism and license will both tug at us to join them in their activities. It is so easy for us to do what we want to do instead of obediently walking by the spirit. The more we mature in our Christian walk, the more we will see that we do not turn God on and off in our lives at our pleasure or whim. Walking by the spirit is not doing what you want until you get into a jam. God forbid that we become crisis Christians, where the only time we think about God and the things of God are in emergencies.

We are going to make mistakes, (I John 1:7-10) but that does not keep us from walking by the spirit. When we stumble, we pick ourselves up and start walking again. Walking involves a learning process. That learning process is maturation. We want to go from babies to children; we want to go from **milk to meat**; we want to grow up into the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:15) No matter how old one is when he gets born-again, he enters the family of God as a youngster. Proper nourishment and training promote healthy growth.

As in any family, the older more mature believers are to help the new ones. We want to come of full-age, which is accomplished by exercising our spiritual abilities. We must take responsibility for our growth. Sure, there should be elders in the family who can help us, but as we grow up, we become those mature ones who are able to help others.

I am not an architect, but I know that no great edifice or superstructure can be built without a proper foundation. To get that foundation we dig down and build upon the rock.

Matthew 7:24-27:

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. ²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: ²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Doing the Word is building upon a good foundation. Not doing the Word is building upon sand that washes away. Those that do are wise, and those that do not are foolish. As well as anything, that determines our maturity. When we act on the Word we encourage growth, and when we do not we stifle it. The choice is always ours to make.

Affirmation: I am getting more skillful in the word of righteousness day by day. I obey God rather than men.

Conversation Starter: Are your senses exercised to discern both good and evil? What kind of foundation are you building for your life?

Recommended Reading: Hebrews 5

I Peter 5:6-7:

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: ⁷ Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

One of the requirements of being about our Father business is casting all our care on Him. I Peter 5:7 doesn't say, "If you have care, cast it upon God." It directly tells us to cast our care upon Him. We will have care. We live and therefore must deal with the "cares of this life." Because we live in the world, those cares are also identified as "cares of this world." Those things "come with the territory," so to speak. However, God tells us how to handle them — cast them upon Him. Paul also talks about the daily care of all the churches that he had. Although he maintained his prayerful oversight and love for the saints, he had to cast the care that came with it to the Lord. Remember, I Peter 4:7 tells us to cast **all** our care upon God. When we do, we find out how He cares for us.

We relinquish those things to God so we stay humble and can run the race that has been set before us. The pleasures and pressures of life can be most distracting. We must maintain our focus on our Father's business, and get busy. This is part of the truth that frees us to serve. Continuing in the truth makes us free. It is not just knowing the truth that makes the difference — it's living it from a thankful heart.

John 8:31,32:

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

The people to whom Jesus was speaking already believed on him. He promised them that if they would continue in his Word, then they would be his disciples and know the truth. "Know" is the Greek word *ginōskō*. It means to learn by experience through the exertion of effort. It is the truth they experientially knew that would make them free.

The promise is that if they continued in the Word, they would learn the Word by experience, through the exertion of effort. Then that miracle producing Word of God would make them free. According to Jesus, it's not just the truth that will set us free, but rather, it's knowing the truth as an experiential reality.

Remember the story of the wise man and the foolish man in Luke chapter 6. It's a story of men who built houses. One house was built on a rock foundation and the other was built on sand, without a foundation. When the storm came, the house built on the rock withstood the storm, but the house built without a foundation, the one built on the sand, was completely destroyed.

The explanation of the parable was that the man who built his house on the rock was like a man who heard His sayings and did them. However, the man who built his house on the sand, was like a man who heard His sayings and did not do them. Both men heard the sayings of Jesus. Both men heard the Word. But even though both men heard the Word, only one acted on it. The one who acted on it knew it experientially. Only when we hear and do, are we truly believing and continuing in the Word.

There are lots of good people who spend a lot of time reading the Bible and hearing the Word. Many of them even recognize what they read and hear as true. However, it doesn't matter how much we read or hear, and it doesn't even matter how true we think it is. If we don't act on what we have learned, it will not profit us. To be made free we must do it.

If we want to weather the storms of life, we must do the truth. People can read the Bible through many times without ever acting on it. The Bible isn't only history; it isn't just knowledge about the past or a prophecy about the future. It is applicable. It was made to be lived... to be practiced. Reading or hearing the Word and not acting on it, is like knowing about God but not knowing God personally.

Experiential knowledge changes lives. Acting on the Word is the only way to get it. If we want the truth to make us free we must live it. Enjoy your freedom as you put into practice what you know day by day.

Affirmation: I cast my care upon God. I am a wise man who does what the Word says.

Conversation Starter: Are you maturing in your relationship with God? Do you use milk or meat?

Recommended Reading: Matthew 7

II Peter 1:12-15:

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth.¹³ Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting *you* in remembrance;¹⁴ Know-ing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.¹⁵ Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

As Peter approached the end of his life he became even more concerned about God's Word continuing beyond his lifetime. He wanted God's Word to always be available to God's people. He cared about God's Word and God's people. But it didn't stop there. Not only did he care, he demonstrated his love, care and concern by making a diligent effort on behalf of God's people.

"Negligent" is the Greek word, "*ameleō*". This is a compound word which comes from "*a*," a negative particle meaning "not" or "without," and *melō* meaning "care." *Ameleō* means "without care" or "careless." This could be called a double negative: "not" and "not caring." If you are "not-not caring," then you care. This is the figure of speech antenantiosis. It uses the negative in order to express the positive in a very high degree. [FOS p. 160] Peter's care was not anxiety or nervousness or distracting care. It was a heartfelt love and concern for God's people.

Because Peter cared, he resolved "to put them always in remembrance of these things." He did this even though he knew that they already knew them and were established in the present truth. This phrase, "the present truth" is, in the NIV "the truth that you now have." "Present" means "to have arrived" or "to be at hand." Certainly if it has arrived, it is present. "Present," not in the sense of time, but of location. The Word was present - it was there.

The "present truth" is not set in opposition to a "former truth." It simply means "the truth you now have." What is the truth that they now had that they didn't have before? (We will have to keep reading in the context to find out.) It was the revelation of the great mystery which was kept secret until it was revealed to Paul.

II Peter 3:15,16:

And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written [**that's past tense**] unto you;¹⁶ As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

The "present truth" to which Peter referred in chapter 1, is here identified as Paul's epistles which was the revelation of the great mystery. Peter noted here that even at that time people were fighting the revelation of the mystery. It is still being fought today. It is Christ in each and every one of us, no difference between Jew and Gentile. God can work in every one of us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Peter cared enough to put God's people in remembrance.

II Peter 1:12-15:

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth.¹³ Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting *you* in remembrance;¹⁴ Knowing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.¹⁵ Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

Peter didn't merely care. He demonstrated his care by exerting an effort on behalf of God's people. Of course he had learned this from the master. Jesus Christ both cared and exerted a diligent effort on behalf of God's people. (MARK 4:35-39; JOHN 10:10-15) People knew that Jesus cared because he acted on their behalf. He laid down his life for his people. As members of the Body of Christ we should have that same genuine care for one another.

I Corinthians 12:18, 24b, 25:

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him...²⁴ ...God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked:²⁵ That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

Peter worked diligently so God's people would have the truth as a living reality in their lives.

II Peter 1:12-15:

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in **remembrance** of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth.¹³ Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting *you* in **remembrance**;¹⁴ Knowing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.¹⁵ Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in **remembrance**.

Notice the three times "remembrance" is used. That's the goal. That's what Peter has in mind. How does he get there? First, it starts with his care for people. We care enough to put people in remembrance of the Word and the greatness of the revelation of the mystery. Second, it is righteous, just, and right to arouse people by putting them in remembrance. People are established as we wake them up or arouse them by continuing to bring the Word to their remembrance. Thirdly, to complete it, it is more than just repeating it when it is convenient. We must seek an occasion, look for opportunities, endeavor with all our strength to expend a diligent effort remembering the brevity of time.

Peter was encouraged to put forth the effort because he knew his days were drawing short. For us the anticipation of Christ's return provides the reality of the urgency of the times we have to put people in remembrance. It is always the right time to care enough about God, His Word, and His people to put each other in remembrance of the greatness of the Word of God and the great mystery.

Putting each other in remembrance requires that we speak to one another. Let's desire to present words fitly spoken... words that minister grace... words that are the power of God unto salvation. What a calling we have. Our program is not over we are still *Messengers For Christ* bringing God's wonderful Word of deliverance to all who will hear.

Affirmation: I care enough to put God's people in remembrance of God's Word. I won't be negligent.

Conversation Starter: What do you care about? What's worth remembering?

Recommended Reading: 2 Peter 1

Psalms 25:9:

The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

Meekness is the disposition of mind to accept God's Word and ways without arguing or stubbornly resisting. Meekness is demonstrated by the eagerness and willingness to act on someone else's suggestion or direction. God loves meekness because it allows Him to work effectually in one's life. The greatest example of meekness was the Lord Jesus Christ (MATTHEW 11:25-30). He always did his Father's will (JOHN 8:29). He knew God was true (JOHN 8:26), and he did not argue with God or resist His will in any way. It says of Moses in Numbers 12:3, "Now the man Moses *was* very meek, above all the men which *were* upon the face of the earth." If you know anything about either Jesus Christ or Moses you know the strength of character and resolve these men had. Meekness is not weakness. Although a modern synonym may be "timid" or "spineless," that is not the biblical definition. The lives of Jesus and Moses both attest to the strength of character associated with the biblical concept of meekness.

Meekness is a predisposition to act on instruction. It is based on the acknowledgment of a personal need for instruction, and the recognition of the authority and prowess of the instructor. It is also demonstrated by the eagerness to apply the instruction. It is being coachable or trainable or leadable. Without it, one will receive little if anything from God.

James 1:21,22:

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. ²² But [moreover] be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

We are not meek if we are not a doer of the Word. Meekness means we are willing to act on God's Word. Habits of meekness can be built and encouraged by recognizing God's majesty and seeking out His Word and will in all matters with which we are concerned. Meekness will not only facilitate our relationship with God, but it will make our relationships within the family of God much easier, also (GALATIANS 6:1; EPHESIANS 4:2, 3).

God worked in my heart early on to help me cultivate meekness. For years I have listened to the teaching of God's Word with a view to applying it. Whenever I heard the Word taught or studied the scriptures I would begin looking at how I could do something with it. I would write an empty list of "1," "2," and "3" at the top of the page with plenty of space after them in which to write. Then during the teaching or my study time I would believe for direction on what action to take. Sometimes it would be things like: Talk to Ferne about... Read the context of a particular verse. Apologize to this person for... Show my love and thankfulness to this person by... Share with this person what you just learned. Have a family meeting to discuss...

When going through a prayer list I learned to keep a pad and pencil handy. Then as I thought of things while lifting people and situations, I would write myself notes of things to do after my prayer time was over. As I lived and ministered God's Word to people, I would try to immediately act on thoughts to show love and appreciation to people for how they blessed me. If I thought something was revelation from God, I would act on it as soon as I could. Then I often found out what was and what was not revelation. Believe me, it is just as important to know when you have not received revelation, as it is to know when you have. If someone asked me to pray about a situation, I would say, "How about doing it right now!"

These are not formulas for developing meekness in one's life. Remember these are things I was led to do, and I found them helpful to me. I remember sharing these things with some close friends who excitedly tried it for a while, but found, for them, it was a big waste of time. It was a waste of time for them, but it was how God worked personally with me.

However, I believe God will show you specific things you can do to become more meek. Of course, then you will already have been meek to receive them. When we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desires of our hearts (PSALMS 37:4). We simply must move forward on those things He has put in our hearts according to the greatness of His Word. The greatest key I know for developing meekness is to passionately desire to work together with God.

Affirmation: I am meek and coachable. I am a doer of God's Word

Conversation Starter: Are you meek? What do you think of meekness?

Recommended Reading: James 1

Galatians 5:25:

If [since] we live in [by means of] the Spirit, let us also walk in [by means of] the Spirit.

Since we are born-again and have a new man, let us walk out and operate the manifestations of the spirit. “Walk” in verse 25 is not the usual word “walk” in the New Testament. *Peripateō* is the more common word. It occurs 96 times, like in Ephesians 5:2, where it says “walk in love.” It is also used back in verse 16. But here in verse 25 it is the word *stoicheō*, which only occurs 5 times. It means to walk in a line, to proceed under another’s direction. It carries a more orderly connotation according to a detailed standard, as in carrying out orders or following directions. It was sometimes used to describe soldiers who marched in response to the directions of their commanding officer.

People can get real prideful wanting to do everything on their own. Many of the self-help gurus of the day talk about a personal power that you can learn to tap into and use to accomplish your agenda for your life. First of all, there is really no such thing as a “personal power” or a “power of the mind.” The so-called “psychic power” that people talk about is really spiritual power, and it does not come from God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is devilish in its origin, and evil in its impact and influence. We want nothing to do with those things. Secondly, we are not as concerned with our agenda for our life as we are with God’s agenda. What does He want us to do? Where does He want us to go? What is His will, and how do we accomplish it?

We know God’s will from His Word. It is accomplished in our lives as we walk by the spirit. Operating the manifestations of the spirit unleashes the power of God in our lives. When we labor together with Him, we will have everything we need so that we can accomplish His will. God has not made it difficult. It is simple, and He will direct us. God wants to personally guide you into His will with the revelation manifestations, and then empower you to accomplish it with the impartation manifestations. We get more guidance than we are aware of. Keeping in step with the spirit is choosing to respond to His guidance.

If our attitude is positive and loving, we will more likely be positive and loving. Keeping our attitude true and our motivation pure is absolutely the best way to begin walking by the spirit. When our attitudes are right, and we are excited about life and sharing with others what God has done for us, as situations or opportunities present themselves we roll right into it.

Galatians 5:26:

Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

First, “Let us not be desirous of vain glory” - “Desirous of vain glory” means to be proud, conceited, and boastful. We are not to have a superior attitude toward our brethren. We do not patronize or condescend or look down upon them. The egotistical attitude that puffs oneself up is vain indeed. We do not walk by the spirit to bring glory to ourselves, but so that God gets the glory. We just need to stay humble and meek. Nothing encourages results as we walk by the spirit like meekness to God and His Word.

Next it says, “Provoking one another.” “Provoking” means “to call out or to challenge to a combat or contest.” Vaunting oneself can cause conflicts, but we are not to antagonize or pick fights with or irritate one another. When people do not get the glory or recognition they think they deserve, they are ready to fight about it. Ambitious rivalry instigates ungodly attitudes of dislike, aversion, and egotism. Egotism can push people to do the most obnoxious things (like trying to run everyone’s life). Trying to prove oneself better than someone else has no place in a loving household.

The last part of this tragic trio of attitudes to avoid is “envying one another.” Envy is to experience a feeling of ill will due to real or presumed advantage experienced by someone else, and it may cause one to hold a grudge. People desirous of personal glory are commonly envious of others’ success. Instead of rejoicing in the victories of others, envy causes one to feel ill will toward those who succeed.

Walking by the spirit is not a competition. We do not compete with one another. We do not compete with each other for His grace and mercy. We are to work together as members of one body fitly framed together. When we function as one body, each doing our part, then signs miracles and wonders become commonplace. God’s supply is unlimited. He has enough to go around and then some. Our conflict is not between one another, but within each of us. Do we walk by the flesh or do we walk by the spirit? Does our new man prevail or not? That is totally up to us.

Affirmation: I keep in step with the spirit. I keep my motives pure.

Conversation Starter: What motivates you? Do you envy anyone?

Recommended Reading: Galatians 5

Romans 1:15:

So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Through his epistles Paul describes an overwhelming sense of thankfulness and joy. He would go to any lengths to spread the good news of the Gospel. It was such a part of him, that he couldn't think of not doing it.

I Corinthians 9:16:

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

He realized what God had done for him, and he responded with a lifestyle of serving that expressed his heartfelt thanks.

I Timothy 1:12:

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; ¹³ Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴ And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

I Corinthians 15:10:

But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Paul knew how undeserving he was, but what astonished him and motivated him was the grace and love of God which made a way out of his wretchedness (I TIMOTHY 1:15,16). We too, like Paul, will find, as Fred Price said that "God's grace, undeserved and unearned, saves us from our sins, from having to be good enough on our own, from a guilty conscience and a sense of incompetence; to the realization of freedom in Christ, to hope and joy in our release from the guilt of sin. A release from doing what we must, to doing what we can."

Ephesians 2:1-10:

And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. {desires: Gr. wills} ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶ And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: ⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

It was the grace of God that changed Saul to Paul. He was much more than the self-made man; he was made by God in the image of Christ, sufficient in Christ's sufficiency. Changed — he felt a sense of urgency that compelled him to do good instead of evil... that instigated his journeys across much of Asia Minor, Greece and into Europe as he became the pre-eminent Ambassador of Christ and apostle of grace that God called him to be.

He was a prisoner of the Lord in self-imposed bonds. God's love and grace transformed him. It will do the same for us. The greatness of the mystery of God transformed Paul. There is little doubt that should the same truth permeate our lives, our transformation will be just as dramatic.

Affirmation: I am so thankful to God I am saved by grace and I continue in it.

Conversation Starter: Do you preach the gospel? What are you thankful for?

Recommended Reading: Ephesians 2

Colossians 4:12,13: [NIV]

Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. ¹³ I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.

Epaphras is mentioned three times in the Scriptures.

Colossians 1:7:

As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ.

Colossians 4:12,13:

Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

Philemon 1:23:

There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus.

In Colossians 1:7 Paul calls him his dear fellowservant (fellowslave, sundoulos) and faithful minister, and in Philemon he calls him his fellowprisoner. He labored with Paul in the best of times and the worst of times. However, it's Colossians 4:12 and 13 I want to concentrate on in this lesson.

Epaphras was a man who practiced the dynamic duo, praying fervently and working hard. I call that having both barrels blazing. He gladly did his part knowing that God would likewise do His. Paul says Epaphras was "wrestling in prayer." That's the Greek athletic term "*agonizomai*"; the word from which we get "agonize."

When Epaphras prayed for the Colossians, it wasn't just some casual, "Dear God, please bless and help them." He was like a wrestler, using everything he had, expending his last ounce of strength to win the match for the people he loved. He prayed with intensity and passion. He was contending with the adversary, with everything he had. He was invoking God's help. He wanted God to do those things that only God could do... like working in them to will and to do of is good pleasure... like helping them grow from the inside without compulsion.

Paul also said he was working very hard for them. Epaphras zealously labored doing what he could personally for them. He did his part knowing God would also do His. That's the double barrel approach. He prayed very hard for what only God could do, and he worked very hard on what God wanted him to do. Indeed the Word encourages us to work and pray always.

I Corinthians 15:58:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Ephesians 6:18:

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

We may be inclined to rely on one and neglect the other. We work hard, but don't pray enough. Or we pray hard, but we don't work enough. Because of our personalities, we may gravitate to one or the other. However, that would be to the detriment of both ourselves and those to whom we minister. We not only need to pray fervently and work heartily, but we need to pray for more laborers because the harvest is great.

Luke 10:2:

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

So, pray fervently and work very hard. In the words of the father of modern missions, William Carey, "Pray as if it all depends on God. Work as if it all depends on you." Keep both barrels blazing!

Affirmation: I keep both barrels blazing. I pray fervently and work very hard.

Conversation Starter: Do you know anyone named Epaphras? Would you like to be a slave?

Recommended Reading: Colossians 4

John 3:8:

The wind [*pneuma*] bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

We need to watch and be ready all the time because we do not know when God is going to reveal His will to us. He speaks when He wants and how He wants. It comes at His discretion, not ours. We must be willing to allow him to interrupt our business with His business.

John 3:8: [*A more literal translation according to usage*]

The Spirit of God breathes His Word wherever He wills or desires to do so, and His voice thou hearest, but you do not understand how or why it [the word or voice, referring to the revelation] comes and goes [i.e. happens or does not happen]. That is exactly how it works for every one, without exception, that is born of the *pneuma* (i.e. the gift of holy spirit available after Pentecost).

Why does God give you a picture sometimes and other times you hear a voice? Why do you sometimes smell it and other times taste it? Why does it come at both the most likely and unlikely times and places? We will never know. God does what He wants whenever He wants. Why do you sometimes know which of the five senses it comes through and other times you do not? We do not always know how it gets there. Sometimes it is just so forceful or impacting that you cannot miss which sense it comes through, and other times you have no idea. That is all up to God, and He does what He wants.

I think some people think of God like a “genie in a bottle.” They are so “super-spiritual” that they are ready to direct God, Whom they are sure wants to do whatever they say. They treat God like a “genie in a bottle,” they rub it and expect God to do whatever they ask. That is fiction! That is not real! That is not how God works. We are here to do His will — not vice-versa. We take directions from Him; not Him from us.

John 3:9,10:

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Nicodemus was in the Sanhedrin and didn’t know how revelation worked. Yet, God promised that His people would hear His voice. Jesus said in John 8:47 that “he that is of God heareth God’s words.” Do not be concerned or wonder about it. If God Almighty wants to talk to you, you will know it. He can and will do it.

John 10:1-4:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. ⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, **he goeth before them**, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

God does not drive, He leads. We are led, not driven. If servants before Pentecost could know His voice, how about you and I as His sons, today?

John 10:5,6:

And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. ⁶ This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

Sometimes learning to walk by the spirit cannot really be grasped until you start doing it. *Ginōskō*, learn by experience, comes to mind. It is available to get an experiential understanding, not just vague feelings. Revelation, in the Bible, is specific and detailed, not vague, enigmatic, or puzzling.

Affirmation: God talks to me in all kinds of ways. I listen to God’s ways.

Conversation Starter: Have you ever seen a vision from God? How does God lead you?

Recommended Reading: John 3

I Samuel 3:7:

Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

Although receiving revelation is a learned activity, it is not accomplished in a rote or mundane fashion. God made it so simple that even a child can grasp it and do it. In fact, Samuel was a youth when he started learning. When the youth Samuel was learning he went to Eli, his teacher, for help. Even though Eli was having difficulty with his walk personally, he was still able to help the young Samuel because he had been successful in the past.

Remember we are workers together with God in His family business. That is what walking by the spirit is all about. God wants us to do His will, so He has to let us know what it is. He did so in His Word, and when we need more details to fill in the specifics for the situation in which we are involved, He will give them to us. He worked with the child Samuel to teach him how revelation worked. He will do the same for us if He needs to.

The first thing we need to do is to respond to God and acknowledge Him when He speaks to us. When we respond and let Him know we are ready and willing to proceed, He will disclose what he wants us to know. We are responsible to respond in some manner. Samuel initially responded to Eli. He had never heard the voice of God before and was not aware of how revelation was given. God knowing that, had the voice sound like Eli so the child would go to someone who would help him. Although it took Eli three times to catch on, he eventually got it, and instructed the child to say, "Speak; for thy servant heareth." It is important to let God know He has our attention. (Important for our benefit, not His.) When Samuel responds to God he gets the rest of the message.

I Samuel 3:11-14:

And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all *things* which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. **13 For I have told him** that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. 14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

God told Samuel about what was going to happen to Eli and his house, only after telling Eli first. God is not in the business of telling your sin to anybody else. If He has forgiven it, He has forgotten it. God will always tell you first, then, if you do not act on it, you may hear again from another source. That is important because spirits of divination will try to tell you things as if they are from God when they are not. They will try to program destruction into your life. This one simple key, will keep you free from their vicious attacks.

I Samuel 3:15-21:

And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision.¹⁶ Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here *am* I. ¹⁷ And he said, What *is* the thing that *the LORD* hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide *any* thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. ¹⁸ And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It *is* the LORD: [He knew because God had already told him.] let him do what seemeth him good. ¹⁹ And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰ And all Israel from Dan [far north] even to Beersheba [far south] knew that Samuel *was* established *to be* a prophet of the LORD. ²¹ And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed [*galah*; LXX *apokaluptō*] himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

At the beginning of the account, the parenthesis in verse 7 explained how Samuel had not yet learned how to operate the revelation manifestations. However, God taught him all he needed to know, and by the end of the chapter he was established as a prophet of the Lord. Like Samuel, when we walk by the spirit, our words will be established, and God will not let them fall to the ground. We have a God Who is able to make known to us the treasure we have in our earthen vessels (II CORINTHIANS 4:7).

Affirmation: I'm still learning how God works with me. I listen to the voice of God!

Conversation Starter: Do you know who Samuel was? Do you know who Eli was?

Recommended Reading: 1 Samuel 3

Galatians 5:22,23:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,²³ Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Walking by the spirit, operating manifestations, produces the fruit of the spirit. All the fruit are beneficial in all aspects of life. Certainly longsuffering is a benefit to me, but where it really benefits me is in working with other people. The first three (love, joy & peace) primarily benefit the individual. The second three (longsuffering, gentleness & goodness) are very useful in working with others. The last group of three (faith, meekness, & temperance) predominantly deals with obtaining results as we labor together with God. I Corinthians 3:9 says, "For we are labourers together with God..." We are never left out in the cold, so to speak. God is actively working within us and with us. The first of each group (love, longsuffering & faith) activate. The second of each group (joy, gentleness & meekness) encourage. The last in each group (peace, goodness & temperance) guard.

Love is the beginning and the foundation of all the fruit of the spirit. It activates and energizes all of our godly service. It is a freewill decision. We must exercise a deliberate choice to love. We love God because He first loved us. He shed His love abroad in our hearts by the spirit that dwells in us (ROMANS 5:5), and now it is our privilege to operate it.

Joy encourages us in our walk with God. The joy of the Lord is our strength. It provides resilience to our lives. God wants our joy to be full, for we will be encouraged in our labor when it is (NEHEMIAH 8:10; JOHN 15:11:16:24; I JOHN 1:4; II JOHN 12).

Peace is a guarding fruit. It is to rule in our hearts. The great cargoes of life come in over quiet seas, and our peace with God maintains our quiet seas. It is opposed to disorder and has a quieting and comforting effect on us (PHILIPPIANS 4:7; COLOSSIANS 3:15; I CORINTHIANS 14:33).

Longsuffering allows us to persevere when working with people. It bears the offenses and injuries of others without retaliation. It provides impetus to continue to work with people despite their imperfections and shortcomings.

Gentleness or kindness is a quality that encourages others when we work with them. It is the opposite of harshness and abruptness. It is not sentimentality and is demonstrated by our willingness to actively seek occasions to bless others.

Goodness refers to one's uprightness. It has a lot to do with making the right choices. It shows one honorable with moral integrity. It guards us when working with others by upholding godly standards for ourselves as well as those we work with. It is evidenced more by a love of doing what is right than a fear of consequences from doing what is wrong. It makes one competent to counsel and admonish others.

Faith, believing, or faithfulness allows us to appropriate results as we labor together with God. It shows us faithful, trustworthy, and reliable as workers together with God. It provides an aggressive perseverance so that we remain faithful doing the Word of God so that we might receive His promises (HEBREWS 10:36).

Meekness encourages results. Without meekness we will not receive the things of God (JAMES 1:21, 22). It is a disposition of mind that encourages us to discover, appreciate, and ponder truth. It encourages us to accept the words and ways of God without arguing or stubbornly resisting. It allows for training and development and fosters growth.

Temperance is the grace by which the flesh is controlled. It is the strength of resolve that allows us to stay out of the strongholds of the weakness of our flesh. It provides for success by allowing us to follow through with the instruction without wavering or faltering due to the imperfection and weakness of the flesh. Just like love is the springboard and foundation of all the fruit of the spirit, temperance or self-control is the conclusion and consummation of all the fruit of the spirit. The fruit of the spirit begins with love and ends with self-control.

If we want to walk like Jesus Christ did and if we want to be more Christ-like, then we operate the manifestations of the spirit and produce the fruit of the spirit. Fruit is like a mark of quality, a stamp of approval. God gave us holy spirit to do in us and for us that which we could not do in and of ourselves. God wants to be actively involved in our lives. He is our loving heavenly Father who works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Affirmation: I cultivate the fruit of the spirit. I am more loving every day.

Conversation Starter: Do you know what the fruit of the spirit are? Would you like more love, peace, etc. in your life?

Recommended Reading: Matthew 5

Daniel 2:47:

The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth *it is*, that your God *is* a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.

One night the king had a dream and wanted it interpreted. But, he did not want his astrologers to just make up an interpretation. So, he refuses to tell them the dream and insists that they tell it to him along with the interpretation of it. Because he is so concerned about it, he demands that they tell him or they will be killed.

Daniel 2:19-23a:

Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.²⁰ Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:²¹ And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:²² He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what *is* in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.²³ I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee for thou hast *now* made known unto us the king's matter.

Under the threat of death Daniel asks God to let him know the dream and its interpretation. God has promised to supply all our need. He does so according to His timetable, not ours. We will never really understand when, why, or how it comes ahead of time, but when it comes we can be absolutely sure of it. We do not have to rely on vague feelings or hunches. If God wants us to know we can know that we know.

I am sure if we were in a situation like this, we too, would receive what we need to know also. Then Daniel explained to the king what had happened and God got the glory.

Daniel 2:28-30:

But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;²⁹ As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he [God] that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.³⁰ But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for *any* wisdom that I have more than any living, but for *their* sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

God wanted the king to know so He had Daniel tell him. Daniel is just making God's intent and message clear to the king. The king's dream was from God, and this entire scenario was instigated by Him. Daniel didn't initiate any of this, God did. Daniel is in reality carrying out God's will. God is not carrying out Daniel's. First Daniel tells the king the dream.

Daniel 2:31:

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness *was* excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof *was* terrible.

How would you like to guess about this? Would a vague feeling communicate this kind of information? Yet, people are willing to put up with that uncertainty. It does not work that way in the Word. Revelation is precise and detailed. Verses 32-45 contain the specifics of the revelation.

That is some pretty specific and detailed information. Revelation can be like that. Some people think of revelation as a vague feeling or undiscernable impression that they get, of which, they are never really sure if it is God or not. Some people may put up with God working with them like that, but that is not what He wants. He wants to communicate with detail, exactness, and precision. If He did talk to us like that, would we remember what He said? Revelation is certain and sure. It allows us to be certain and sure.

God got the glory, and that is the way it should be. If we can live our lives and bring glory to God, I think we would be happy. We can, and as we walk by the spirit, we will.

Affirmation: God loves me and tells me what I need to know to help His people. I know the God of heaven.

Conversation Starter : Do you know who Daniel was in the Bible? Do you know who Nebuchadnezzar was in the Bible?

Recommended Reading: Daniel 2

Luke 10:19:

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Revelation is so simple for us to receive. God speaks directly to our spirit, His gift of holy spirit in us. God is not a respecter of persons. If He has given revelation to anyone, he can give it to everyone. Remember the lesson Peter learned in Acts 10? When the sheet was let down, and three times he was instructed to eat. Peter said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.” What a revelation. Even the Gentiles were allowed in. God will work in any heart that is willing to obey.

The biggest difficulty I see with revelation is the same as with the inspirational manifestations of tongues, interpretation, and prophecy. We neglect to act. We stand at the precipice and wait to be pushed over the edge, instead of acting boldly. Until we act it will not be manifested in the senses realm. God never controls. We are not channels or mediums. We do not get possessed. If you ever lose control, it is never God who takes it from you. We have to act by our freewill choice or nothing will be manifested in the senses realm.

God’s Word is revelation, and it directs our actions. People have used the excuse of “I do not have revelation.” too often when people come to them for help. Yes, to impart a gift of healing or work a miracle takes revelation, but many times people hesitate out of fear. No one wants to look foolish or fail, but do not let those thoughts keep you from giving your whole heart to help God’s people and bring God’s will to pass. You already have the revelation from God’s Word that give you the authority to heal.

When people come to be ministered to, they come asking for help. If they could believe God on their own they would be healed already. In essence, what they are saying when they come for help is, “I believe, help thou mine unbelief.” As we act, reaching out to help, we will receive revelation. When we believe that revelation it will inspire believing in those to whom we minister. Remember the account of Jesus in Mark 9 of the man with the child who was pining away?

Mark 9:14-16:

And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

¹⁵ And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to *him* saluted him.

¹⁶ And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

What alarmed Jesus was the belittling questions the scribes were asking his disciples. Upon his arrival, he knew something was not right, and he confronted the scribes about their questioning. This word for question is *suzēteō*, which is only used 10 times in the New Testament. It is also translated dispute or reason. Friberg says when it is used in a negative sense, it means dispute, debate, or argue. The Louw-Nida Lexicon says it means “to express forceful differences of opinion without necessarily having a presumed goal of seeking a solution.” They were not helping; they were just making the situation worse. As we read the entire incident in the context you will see that the scribes were belittling the disciples, tempting them to doubt themselves and their ability to minister.

Jesus asks a question of the scribes, and the father of the child with the need interrupts, asking for Jesus’ help.

Mark 9:17:

And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

He knew what the cause of his son’s problem was, but he had not yet been able to believe for deliverance for him. He explained the problem to Jesus and ended saying, “if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.” Then Jesus challenged him saying, “If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth.” Then the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.” Then Jesus rebuked the spirit and delivered the child. Then when they came into the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could not we cast it out?”

No one likes to look foolish or incompetent, and the scribes had rubbed salt in their wounds making their lack of success even worse. I, like the disciples would be asking why, too. If you do not ask... If you do not pursue finding out why... you usually languish in self doubt and self pity and belittle who you are and what you have in Christ. Then Jesus taught them why.

Mark 9:29:

And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

It is not recorded in the account that Jesus prayed for the father or his son. He simply prayed to God to know what to do. Jesus asked questions until he found the problem. He saw the doubt; he heard the “if.” He reached the father’s heart. That is what the father needed to know. He needed someone to challenge him.

“Prayer and fasting” means “going to God with desire and doing whatever it takes to get the job done.” I am almost 100% sure that you will not know what is going to be required when you enter into a ministering situation. I am also an 100% sure that God will tell you what to do — He will give you revelation when it is your desire to get involved and help.

Affirmation: I have power to tread on serpents. I do what the Word says.

Conversation Starter: Can you name any of the disciples? Do you know what a dumb spirit is?

Recommended Reading: Mark 9

Romans 1:16:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

It's been over a month since you started your *MFC* commitment. I trust you have begun to establish some of the habits, and have gotten into a groove. [Not a rut!] Much of the great impact of these 100 days will come from the focus we maintain to be about our Father's business. I'm not suggesting that we should live this way the rest of our lives, but for these 100 days the focused push should be very rewarding. At different seasons we will have different focuses. It is essential, however, to evaluate and re-evaluate if God and I are determining the focus and therefore the impact of my life or if the world is. God needs people who are valiant for the truth.

We are not afraid of the world or intimidated by it. It's where we live move and have our being, walking in the spirit. It's where we carry out our Father's business. We are more than conquerors because, though we are in the world, we are not of the world. Our allegiance is to God, and we dedicate our lives to Him.

II Corinthians 5:15b teaches us that we should not live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us and rose again. We walk in the steps of our Lord Jesus Christ, living by the faith of Jesus Christ, showing the world there is more available than what the five senses world offers them.

The Bible is replete with examples of men and women who did their Father's will. Men and women who dared to go beyond the limits of their natural abilities... men and women who dared to do the impossible and change the course of history. Our lives can make a difference. We may never know how big a difference, but we must be willing to dare valiantly in great causes for God.

Theodore Roosevelt said, "Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure... than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in a gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat." Cecil Beaton also said, "Be daring, be different, be impractical, be anything that will assert integrity of purpose and imaginative vision against the play-it-safers the creatures of the commonplace, the slaves of the ordinary." We are free to be whom God made us to be, and that's not just like everyone else. That will take some "grit," however.

Sometimes I wonder: "Do I have 'true grit'?" Am I made of the "right stuff?" If the Bible is right, the answer to both questions is affirmative. We have the wherewithal we need to accomplish great things for God. Jeremiah so wanted to be with men *valiant for the truth*, but he lamented that there were none in Israel. That's where we can come in. We are among those who are valiant for the truth. We can walk in the footsteps of the master; we can demonstrate that we have what's required. We're made from the *right stuff*. We have *true grit*.

Jeremiah 9:2,3:

Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they *be* all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.

³ And they bend their tongues *like* their bow *for* lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD.

In the movie, *True Grit* the elusive nature of "grit" is a theme spanning the full length of the film. Although the quality is never explicitly defined, it seems to be just the right combination of toughness and bravery to get the most dangerous job done. It may not appear outwardly until absolutely necessary, but those who have it will summon it when they truly need it. Quite naturally it also includes a certain amount of self-sacrifice. In the movie none of the characters, no matter how resourceful or upstanding, emerged untouched by pain and suffering. It was as if it was enough merely to survive. In the movie escaping outright destruction seems to be the ultimate test of who has grit and who has none.

When the dust settles, are we still standing? When the faint of heart have vanished, do we still remain? When the call for help goes out, are we there to answer and respond? Invest yourself in people whom you love. Give of yourself to them and serve them wholeheartedly. As we have therefore opportunity we are to do good unto all, especially unto them of the household of faith (GALATIANS 6:10).

Affirmation: I am valiant for the truth. I am made of the right stuff. I have true grit.

Conversation Starter: Have you seen the movie True Grit? Do you know anyone who is valiant for the truth?

Recommended Reading: Philippians 1

Galatians 1:15,16:

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,¹⁶ To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

It is simpler to walk by the spirit when one is not in the habit of getting someone's OK first. Paul walked and talked with God. He responded to God's direction in his life immediately and decisively. He learned to walk according to the spirit, not according to the flesh. He did not walk according to his five senses because he did not want to be fooled by them. Do not look to the senses to confirm or refute what God tells you, they will only try to deceive you.

Galatians 1:11-24:

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.¹² For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.¹³ For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:¹⁴ And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,¹⁶ To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:¹⁷ Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.¹⁹ But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.²⁰ Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.²¹ Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;²² And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:²³ But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.²⁴ And they glorified God in me.

Of course, Paul was not against teachers. Neither was he abandoning the safety of a multitude of counselors. He was just intent on following God's personal curriculum for His life. When God gives you specific direction, do not seek the opinion of others; act boldly and decisively. Paul knew a lot of God's Word. But when he came face to face with the Lord Jesus he had to reevaluate what he was taught. His hearts cry became "that I might know him and the power of his resurrection." Paul did eventually spend time with the other apostles and prophets sharing with one another and learning from one another. In fact, Paul said every believer needs to be taught of the Lord: "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus." (EPHESIANS 4:21).

Galatians 2:1-6:

Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also.² And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.³ But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:⁴ And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:⁵ To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.⁶ But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed *to be somewhat* in conference added nothing to me:

We will always be tempted to look at flesh and blood to confirm what God has told us. However, we should not question God's information and direction. It is hard enough to not rationalize our actions by falling subject to our five senses. It is important that we not rely on flesh and blood, for our battle is 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*.

However, God may confirm His revelation to us, and we may hear from Him another way. Remember when Paul went to Jerusalem? All along the way God had others confirm His will by telling Paul not to go. John Shroyer told us the story of how God told him, "It is time for you to teach My Word." And how a little-old-lady confirmed it when he was contemplating it. The natural tendency when we do not think we can do something or when we do not want to do something God has told us, is to seek advise from someone who will agree with us. Then we can talk ourselves out of it. Remember if God said it, that settles it. You do not need anyone's permission or blessing. We want to develop the habit of relying on the Christ in us and not confer with flesh and blood before following God's guidance.

Affirmation: I confer not with flesh and blood. God does confirm things to me through people at times.

Conversation Starter: Do you know who Peter was in the Bible? Do you know who Paul was in the Bible?

Recommended Reading: Galatians 1

I Corinthians 13:12:

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away... ¹² For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

God speaks today, and it is possible to hear His voice. I am just not sure that any of us are going to hear it with perfect accuracy of hearing or understanding 100% of the time. I Corinthians 13 tells us that we “know in part--and we prophesy in part--but when that which is perfect is come--then that which is in part will be done away with.” Until then--the best we have is part... And anyway you slice part, you do not have 100%... not until he who is perfection himself gets here.

We simply rest in the truth that if we need to know something, God can get through to us... in or out of fellowship it does not matter. We have a perfect Word of God and a perfect God Who wrote it. However, that is no guarantee that we will have a perfect understanding of either. We are still fallible people and we should walk knowing that perfection is in the Lord.

I Corinthians 2:3-5:

And I was with you in **weakness**, and in **fear**, and in much **trembling**. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: ⁵ That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

How can Paul say in verse 3 he was with them in “weakness” and then in verse 4 say his preaching was “in demonstration of the spirit and of power?” They must not be mutually exclusive. Just what is the “weakness” he is talking about? But, before we look into that let us first investigate “fear” and “trembling” from verse 3.

“Fear” and “trembling” are used in the oriental culture of reverence and obedience. We come before God with fear and trembling. Not because we are afraid, but because we honor and revere Him. As we revere Him, our obedience is spontaneous, voluntary, and without constraint. We cannot legislate obedience, because it needs to come from a willing heart. When we reverence God, obedience develops without external influence or force. We obey so unselfconsciously, so unaffected or unprompted by compulsion that it almost seems the natural thing to do.

Jesus said, “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” As long as we live in these earthly bodies we will be weak. The weakness Paul refers to comes from being human and not knowing all the answers. Paul did not know exactly what he was going to face when he went to Corinth, and that can breed a sense of weakness. If we had perfect understanding of God and His will all the time we would not be weak. However, as long as we are in these bodies of flesh and blood we will have that sense of weakness, because we are not perfect. We cannot plan out every detail to the nth degree.

II Corinthians 12:7-10:

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. ⁸ For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. ⁹ And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in **weakness**. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

It was a messenger of Satan who troubled Paul. Satan instigated people to obstruct Paul. Paul received great revelation, and yet, things did not go “perfectly” for him. The thorns in the flesh were not removed despite Paul’s repeated prayer. Rather, God’s answer was, “My grace is sufficient for thee...” That truth has never changed. His grace is still sufficient.

Paul took solace in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: knowing that when he was weak, then he would be strong. Revelation did not always keep him out of the situations, but he was kept while in them. Like the old preacher said regarding Daniel in the lions’ den. “God did not keep Daniel **FROM** the den, but He kept him while he was **IN** the den.

The phrase “out of weakness was made strong” is the figure of speech oxymoron. An oxymoron is a figure in which what is said at first glance appears to be foolish, yet when we consider it in depth we find it exceeding wise. Some things are so rich that language falls short in expressing the truth. Since language falls short God resorts to oxymoron to try to describe it, so we can understand it. God’s grace allowed Paul to be strong in situations in which he was without strength. When Paul felt “weak,” he realized at those points that God would make him strong. Paul took on life’s challenges “head-on.” Paul’s strength was made perfect in his being challenged to handle the situation. There is nothing that humbles one more than looking one of life’s biggest challenges in the eye and taking it on. When we know we cannot handle it by ourselves, we are much more likely to rely on God’s grace to pull us through.

God’s grace is always sufficient and we can be more than conquerors in every situation. Our strength does not come from being perfect, but from knowing our weaknesses and limitations. How annoying are the “super-spiritual” who always say, “God told me this -- God told me that -- God told me this other.” They seem to think that their every thought is revelation from God. No one should be that presumptuous. God does speak to us, but He does not chatter away, day in and day out, the way some people claim He does. We are not the center of the universe. We are fallible and we will make mistakes, but when we stumble we get back up and keep walking, realizing that perfection is in the Lord. God does not expect us to be perfect, and He is willing to work with us anyway. What a loving God we have.

Affirmation: God’s grace is sufficient for me. My faith stands in the power of God.

Conversation Starter: Do you know the Biblical idiom of fear and trembling? Do you know what an oxymoron is?

Recommended Reading: 1 Corinthians 2

I Samuel 15:22,23:

And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams. ²² For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

Walking by the spirit requires obedience both to His written Word and His revelation manifestations. When it comes to revelation, oftentimes God tells us only what we need to know now. We just have to take one step at a time. When we faithfully carry out His first instructions, He gives us further direction. Obedience is the response that keeps our dialog going. What a great habit to develop.

Saul got into trouble because he let the people push him. His fear of the people stopped him from obeying the Lord. Do not delay obedience or let anything stop you from doing what God tells you. Paul asked in Galatians 3:1, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not **obey** the truth?” There is never a good enough reason to not obey the voice of the Lord.

Jesus addressed a parable to the chief priests and elders of the people (MATTHEW 21:23) who refused to recognize his authority and obey his teachings. Their refusal to obey kept them from the kingdom of God he was preaching.

Matthew 21:28-31:

But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. ²⁹ He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. ³⁰ And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, sir: and went not. ³¹ Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

As David Stevens said, “Obedience, pure and simple, opens up a pathway for the work of God.” The work of God is conducted by those who obey His voice. No man is excused from obedience by his position or function. The chief priests and elders of the people are as responsible as anyone else... everyone has to obey. Romans 12:3 says, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you...” No one is exempt; we all have to obey. In the Greek mystery religions, the initiated one had special knowledge or special privileges not afforded to others. It is not how it works in the Body of Christ.

Philip obeyed without knowing all the “whys” and “wherefores.”

Acts 8:26-35:

And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. ²⁷ And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, ²⁸ Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. ³⁰ And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? ³¹ And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. ³² The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: ³³ In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. ³⁴ And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

You will see the same kind of obedience in the account of Peter going to the household of Cornelius. He did not know everything before he left. He just kept walking and it was revealed to him as he went along. Sometimes I think that is very gracious of God to do it that way. First, because we do not have to remember every detail. Second, because if we really knew all that was entailed perhaps we would not start the journey. Just remember the Word of God will never take us where the grace of God cannot keep us.

Simply take one step at a time. God delights in our obedience. Obedience, pure and simple, opens up a pathway for the work of God.

Affirmation: I walk with God a step at a time. I obey whether or not I know the whole story.

Conversation Starter: Do you know who Cornelius was in the Bible? Do you know who Philip was in the Bible?

Recommended Reading: 1 Samuel 15

Hebrews 3:7,8,15:

Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,⁸ Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:¹⁵ While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

When we keep our hearts pure and tender we are more predisposed to be a *Messenger For God* walking by the spirit. It is important that we keep our hearts tender toward God. A tender and a pure heart is “good soil” in which the Lord of the harvest loves to work. Freewill obedience comes from a tender and pure heart and is always available. We should never act grudgingly or of a necessity. If we want to hear His voice we must keep our hearts pure and tender.

The voice of the Lord is heard both through the Word taught or read (I SAMUEL 15:19-22; I KINGS 20:36; ISAIAH 6:8; ACTS 7:31-34) and through revelation (EXODUS 15:26; DEUTERONOMY 13:18; 28:1,2,15,45; 30:8,10). If we want to hear God’s voice we must not harden our hearts to it. God will not violate our free will. Willingness and obedience is very important.

Zechariah 7:11-13:

But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.¹² Yea, they made their hearts *as* an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.¹³ Therefore it is come to pass, *that* as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:

It is not literally that God did not hear their cry. He heard it. It was that He had already answered their cry, but they refused to receive it. There was no use to say it again for they had hardened their hearts against it. Their obstinacy and rejection of the Word of the Lord was a freewill decision and these were the consequences.

Leaders in the church are particularly charged to keep their hearts pure. It is one of the themes of the Pastoral Epistles.

I Timothy 1:5:

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned:

I Timothy 3:9:

Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

I Timothy 5:22:

Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.

II Timothy 1:3:

I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

Paul did not do anything he was ashamed of. He knew nothing of which he was guilty. We keep our conscience pure. When we break fellowship we get back in fellowship. When we are wrong, we say, “I am sorry.” to God and the people we need to.

II Timothy 2:22:

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

We do not want to be stiff-necked or hardhearted. To be led by God’s power we should maintain a heart that is pure and tender.

Affirmation: I keep my heart pure and tender. I flee youthful lusts and follow after righteousness.

Conversation Starter: Is your heart hardened to anything? Do you know what the pastoral Epistles are?

Recommended Reading: 1 Timothy 1

Using Retemories

Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13 record the devil's assault on and temptation of Jesus. Both accounts highlight the victorious battle cry of our savior. "It is written!" was the standard he used against the assaults and temptations. Jesus brought the power of God to bear into the situations with a declaration of "It is written!" Not only did he use the battle cry, but he quoted God's Word following it. He used the appropriate Word of God, the sword of the spirit, to be victorious in every confrontation.

He went to the Word. That's the same privilege that we have. We go to the Word knowing that the Word will produce the same results today as it has on any day in history. The phrase, "it is written" in the Greek is in the perfect tense. The perfect tense indicates action in the past that is repeated or has its impact or completion in the present. Jesus said, "It is written," but when was it written? The verses he quoted were written many years before by Moses. It's recorded in Deuteronomy. It was written, but Jesus didn't say it **was** written. He said "It **is** written." Because it was not only written at some time in the past, but it was still written that day when he needed it. It was **still** God's Word. When he used it in that perfect tense he brought the impact of that Word to that specific situation that he was facing in life.

He spoke "It is written," and it backed down the adversary. He overcame that situation. He came out a victor, a conqueror, because of the Word that he knew. It's the Word that liveth and abideth forever. (I Peter 1:23) It is the living Word of a living God, and we live upon the firm foundation it provides. The Psalmist said in Psalm 119:93, "I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me." "Quickened me" is old English for "made me alive." He's made us alive! His words are words of life! They bring us life!

How can folks be bored when they have the Word of God? Psalm 119:92 declares, "Unless thy law *had been* my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction." Like Jesus, the psalmist knew that the Word made him victorious in the different situations of life he faced, and that's why he swore to never forget it. Too many people think... some day. I'll be healed someday... I'll be victorious someday... I'll be able someday... Someday! Someday! Someday!

We need to change our thinking to "this day." Why wait for someday? Why not expect it and accept it today? God hasn't made "someday" yet. If you wait for some day, it's never going to get here because it's somewhere down the road. But this day is here. This day is what we have to live and enjoy, and that's what God has for us. We should be thinking that we will see the power of God right now, this day. We want to enjoy God's victory and God's power today, right now. That's why we speak the Word of God. We bring the power of God to bear upon the situations we face by boldly declaring, "It is written!"

Jesus was victorious over temptation as he declared what was written. He had hidden God's Word in his heart so he could do God's will. He could say, "It is written!" because he remembered what was written. To declare *It is written*, we, too, must remember what was written. That's why we **retain** God's word in our **memory**. A **retemory** is a verse we **retain** in our **memory**. We commit verses to memory so we can use them in situations of life that require that we wield the sword of the spirit.

Psalms 119:11:

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

We put that Word in our heart to protect us and guide our hearts in the way. Loving God with all of our hearts necessitates putting God's Word into our hearts. Putting the Word of God into our hearts begins with reading and digesting it. Does the Word automatically float up into the mind and park itself? No. God's Word must be read and applied. When we read it, does it automatically permeate the innermost part of our being? No, it takes habitual and repeated effort to get something into our heart. However, our love for and delight in it will help us focus upon it.

Our hearts should sing with the psalmist, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97) "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8) The purpose of the "O" is to show some emotion and intensity of feeling. Sometimes we must summon the emotion, the resolve, that we want. If it is not there, we put it there. Hebrews 10:7 tells us that Psalm 40:8 was written prophetically of Jesus. He delighted to do God's will. He had a strong desire to do his Father's will. What an example to follow! Let's make "It is written" our personal motto, too. We are *Messengers For Christ* so let's live our life as he did, victoriously in service.

Twelve Reasons for Memorizing Scripture

- 1. We are commanded to. Deuteronomy 6:6; 11:18**
- 2. Hiding the Word in the heart helps one to obey it. Deuteronomy 30:14; Psalms 37:31**
- 3. It allows for meditation, which increases our understanding of the scriptures.
Psalms 119:98-100**
- 4. It will prosper us. Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1-3**
- 5. It provides both the standard to which we control our thinking and the means by which we do so. Romans 12:3; Philippians 4:8**
- 6. It will cleanse and transform the mind. Romans 12:2; Philippians 2:4**
- 7. It brings victory over temptation. Psalms 119:11; Ephesians 6:17; Luke 4:1-13**
- 8. It aids in witnessing and teaching. Colossians 3:16; I Peter 3:15**
- 9. It provides a basis for an effectual prayer life. I John 5:14,15**
- 10. It provides comfort during trials and bereavement. Psalms 119:50,52; I Thessalonians 4:13-18**
- 11. It provides a basis for life. Matthew 4:4; Psalms 119:93; Proverbs 4:4**
- 12. It improves our every day conversation. Matthew 12:34**