

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter One</u>	
Challenge Your Perceptions and Pray	2
<u>Chapter Two</u>	
God’s Commandments and Application.....	19
<u>Chapter Three</u>	
The Honor Principle.....	35
<u>Chapter Four</u>	
Thou Shalt Not Kill.....	52
<u>Chapter Five</u>	
The Seventh Commandment - The Sanctity of Marriage	67
<u>Chapter Six</u>	
The Seventh Commandment (Continued)	86
<u>Chapter Seven</u>	
The Eighth Commandment.....	104
<u>Chapter Eight</u>	
A Good Reputation	116
<u>Chapter Nine</u>	
The 10th Commandment	129
<u>Chapter 10</u>	
The Commandments Are for Our Good	139
<u>Chapter 11</u>	
Do Unto Others What You Want Done to You	158
<u>Chapter 12</u>	
Be Willing to Let Them Go	168
<u>Chapter 13</u>	
The Lord is My Helper	183
<u>Chapter 14</u>	
Dealing with Grief	198
<u>Chapter 15</u>	
A New Day with Faith, Hope & Love	212
<u>Chapter 16</u>	
How to Resolve Guilt	229
<u>Chapter 17</u>	
Overcoming Oppression	245
<u>Chapter 18</u>	
Faith, Hope & Love Overcome Oppression	270
<u>Chapter 19</u>	
Jesus, the Cure for Loneliness & Rejection.....	291
<u>Chapter 20</u>	
Out of Confusion, Distraction, & Emptiness.....	311
<u>Chapter 21</u>	
A Fresh New Day	331
<u>Chapter 22</u>	
Commandments & Consequences with Testimonies.....	341

CARING FOR PEOPLE
Challenge Your Perceptions and Pray
Chapter One

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God.

“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity [idolatry] or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: no immoral, impure, or greedy person – such a man is an idolater – has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore, do not be partners with them.

“For you were once darkness but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists of all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.”
(Ephesians 5:1-11)

Let God turn on the lights in your life, and take a look at yourself. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit is in charge of such a working, but sometimes you might feel that God should have flipped on the switch a little sooner. You don’t always know that you need to open your heart and recover yourself out of the snare of the devil. You need to want to do it, but you can’t do it without God’s help.

David said to the Lord, *“Search me, Oh God, and know my heart. Try me, prove me, test me... See if there is any offensive way in me...”* We need to have the darkness exposed. Darkness hides, and light will expose. Many times we don’t know what kind of creatures are lurking around until the light of God’s word comes in. God’s word brings light and life. It opens up and reveals things in us. We have to have a heart and a mind that wants to hear it.

The Light Exposes Deception

Do you have a chip on your shoulder? Maybe you want to keep it there so that somebody will knock it off. There is a button or switch that you are waiting to be turned on so that you can “go off” on someone.

There are such things as “hit me” spirits out there, and they will get right in your face. It takes two to have a fight, but a “hit me” spirit will challenge you. Its purpose is to intimidate and threaten you, and to start something. We can’t allow the thief to play anybody in that way because people are not the problem. Flesh and blood are not the enemy.

If we allow the problem to continue, we will be used and abused. Once the light is turned on, however, it reveals the works of truth, the works of God, and the works of righteousness. That is why self-control has been given to us by the Spirit of God.

Do you have a problem with anger? “*Be swift to hear and slow to speak*” because you are defiled by what comes out of your mouth, “*The wrath of man does not accomplish the purposes of God.*” There is righteous anger from God that is just for the moment. It deals with a situation, and then it is over and forgotten.

Perhaps you have said something that you wished somebody would forget. If so, you have a thief in the camp. If you opened the door to the thief, then you need to open the door to let him out. We can’t allow any thief to have an opportunity with any of us.

There comes a point when we have to put down the ax and take a good look at ourselves. What we do and what we permit is what we have. That is how life is. If we did wrong, we need to ask God’s forgiveness, humble ourselves, and deal with it. We must confront the issue. If it is something not of God, there will be an effect because there is a cause and effect for everything we do. Many times we say and do things for a reason, but it may even be unbeknownst to us. We may have been conscious when we did it, but we were not conscious of what we were doing. Remember what Jesus said, “*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*”

It certainly appeared as though they knew what they were doing when they were yelling out, “Crucify him, crucify him,” but they didn’t really know what they were doing because they were out of their minds. Every time someone willfully disobeys God, that person is out of his mind. He is what

the bible calls deceived. He has permitted the darkness to come back in rather than the light.

Jesus said in John 3 that they didn't love the light, and because they loved the darkness, they wanted to get rid of the light. He was speaking about Himself as the Light. However, it also applies to any of God's people because we are the light of the world too. Jesus said that we need to let the light shine through us, and get rid of and expose anything that is darkness. Exposing the darkness isn't a license for people to find fault with others, for that isn't helpful to anyone.

God wants us to stop the work of the thief. Therefore, we have to get all the facts so we can prevent the thief from stealing, killing, and destroying. "*Blessed are the peacemakers.*" The thief always wants to get us on some kind of agenda or crusade. Rights are a big thing nowadays. In reality, we gave up all our rights when we received Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Our rights and privileges are what God says we have. We have the right to forgive, to love, and to do good. We need to hate what is evil and love what is good. Bear one another to the cross, forgive one another, and let the burdens we try to put on each other lift.

The Lord has shown me many times over the years that if people would leave others alone, mind their own business, and do what they're supposed to do, they would have a lot less problems. They need to put their trust and confidence in God and quit trying to make things happen the way they want them to happen.

Exposure Can Set Us Free

When the Holy Spirit is changing us and working on our situation, God brings things to a head, and we have to deal with the issue whether we want to or not. It is not a bad thing because we have the opportunity to get help and get free.

The reason the Lord does things the way He does is because He knows you, and He exposes things in order to *help* you. The devil exposes something in your life to hurt you. When you are in the place where there is exposure, if you are listening to the wrong side, you will think, *This will hurt me*. You won't want to get rid of it, will you?

I have seen devils talk to people, keeping them from moving ahead in God because the people were afraid they would be hurt. They thought they were going to be exposed, and so, they didn't want to be vulnerable.

There is power in exposure. Once you identify what is in your life that is holding you back, you have the power over it at that point. When you are dealing with demonic influences, realize that they are usually working in cycles. There may be something that has been working in your life for years and years. Once you have that thing's name, you have power over it. Jesus said, "What's your name?" when He was speaking to the devil. In their society, if you had the name and the right of the name, you had the power of the name.

Whose name do we have the right to use? – Jesus, the name above every name. When you have the right to use His name, you have the power and authority that is behind that name.

When you are able to identify a spirit of fear, loneliness, not being loved, or rejection that has bound you, you are able to face that monster. You have the authority in Jesus' name to cast it out and deal with it. See, it wants the darkness so it can stay there, work in and through you, and continue to use and abuse you. Still, if that is what people want, then that is what they will have.

I love David's heart when he basically said, "Search me, O God. Prove me, test me, try me. If there is anything in me that's unclean, I want it out because it's keeping me back from the abundant life that you have for me, Lord. I want it disclosed and identified."

I am always happy to see people who want help or disclosure. Sometimes we touch on what they don't want to deal with, so we have to help them go into that area. Since they really want to face it, they would have faced it before now. They would have already dealt with it, but they haven't. Therefore brothers and sisters can help each other to face it in the Lord. *"Confess your faults one to another that you may be healed."* (James 5)

Something happens when it is exposed, when it is out. People are truly free when they can stand up as God directs and tell the world "This is what my problem was, this is where I have been, and this is now where I am. God

has set me free in Jesus' name." Such people are completely free. The devil can't come around with a thought, *What if somebody finds out about it?*

Just like the devil, gossip magazines dig up some dirt, and what is not dirt, they misconstrue and make it out to be dirt. The devil is a liar and a slanderer. He hurts the brethren. He threatens and intimidates. He tries to create a spirit of fear.

Love the Light More Than Darkness

Your life should be an open book, which means the light is coming in and you have nothing to hide. You don't have to run anymore. Fear always tries to keep you on the run and unsettled, and with no peace or joy.

"Know what the will of the Lord is. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness but rather expose them." Who knows your life better than you do? – God and the people around you.

Look at people's track records (the fruit of their life). Look at your own track record and evaluate it. People often hate tests or evaluations because they might come up short, but the test shows them where they are and where they need to grow. It is not about failing or condemnation. It is about, "Okay, I screwed up. I messed up. I blew it. I just bombed out."

Have you ever asked somebody for forgiveness, but they just looked at you? Perhaps they were in recovery, in trauma, or in shock because now they have to forgive you.

Have you wished you hadn't forgiven somebody? You see, the darkness is always trying to come back to take over. The light just shines. So if people want darkness, the Lord says, "Let them have darkness." Whatever kind of life they want, they will have.

I used to make the mistake of pushing a little bit extra because I love and care about people. Many times all it takes is stretching yourself a little, and you can break through to another level. Let me tell you, I will push. If there is a devil operating on someone, I'm going to push it. Hopefully the person's will isn't locked into it that much. If people are locked into it, then I have done them a disservice because they will be worse than they were before. When you cast out the devil, it wanders around and then comes back. If people want it, the latter end will be worse than the former. It

doesn't mean we didn't love them and care about them. It means they loved the darkness more than the light.

Many times you don't know certain people are scorners until you correct them. Then they hate you, and they will spread bad things about you all over town. However, that is their problem, not yours. You don't have to try to correct the situation. Just deal with what you have to deal with and believe that God will open everybody's eyes to clearly see God's purpose accomplished rather than the devil's. It is about the kingdom of God versus the kingdom of Satan.

God wants us all to come to a point of acknowledging the truth because He doesn't want to see anyone perish. "What is truth?" is a philosophy question over the ages, like "What is love?" To one person it is one thing and to another it is something different. What we learn from God is that love is selfless.

Love is caring and preferring others more important than yourself. Love your brothers and sisters as Christ has loved you. Love them like you love yourself. Many people don't love themselves because they haven't received the love of God. There is no help in that until they get right with Him.

Who will enable it to happen? "*With man it is impossible,*" Jesus said. You absolutely cannot change anybody. God is the only one who can help people and make them change. He is the only one who can get through the darkness and the veils in their minds, where they rationalize and justify.

God wants all the defense systems down so His truth can come into our hearts, minds, and lives, and we can be set free. "*Know the truth and the truth will set you free.*" That is God's heart, but for it to happen we have to be open to it. "*Today when you hear His voice, harden not your heart.*"

Cain asked God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" after he had just killed Abel. His vision was blurred.

We rationalize, justify, and try to make things fit our own way of thinking. Have you ever played the blame game? We won't blame ourselves when we don't want to deal with something.

Depending on where you are right now in your life, you will perceive what someone is saying in a certain way. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your thoughts and bring clarity. Have you said something that was taken the wrong way? Have you ever heard something one way, and it wasn't at all what the person meant? The thief has a playground somehow between the point of the words coming out of a person and the way another person hears what was said. We have to ask, "Holy Spirit, let peace rule in everything. Help me to hear and speak clearly with understanding. Give me the hearing ear and the instructed tongue and then the hearing ear again," because God talks to us and the devil talks to us.

Give the benefit of the doubt to people. Even a person who always consistently acts strange is consistent. It is easy to help a person like that because they are doing the same wrong thing. However, it is dangerous when someone slips a few good things into the mix, and yet they think the wrong way is good too.

What about condemnation? I know a little boy who was very upset because he had been grounded. I asked him why he was grounded. He said he was mad, which to me is an interesting word for a little five or six year old. He further stated that he was grounded because he hit his mother and sister. This little boy didn't see anything wrong with what he had done. I continued to ask him why he was mad and discovered it was because he didn't get what he wanted. I told the little guy, "You know, you grounded yourself by your actions. They wouldn't have grounded you if you hadn't hit anybody." He nodded his head yes. We are deceived when we think we can say and do what is inappropriate.

Condemnation is not a bad thing when you have done something wrong. If someone around you doesn't identify a wrong to you, they don't love you or care about you. Parents who don't discipline their children don't really love them. In fact, the bible says they will cause the children to go to hell. If children are allowed to continue in unacceptable behavior, they will have to deal with other people in society who will not put up with it. God won't put up with it either.

The word of God will condemn you, and then it will heal you if you repent. To repent means to turn from your own ways to God's ways and do what He says.

The only way we can ever repent is to have the light come into the darkness and expose the working for what it is. The Holy Spirit will do that in our lives through the process of sanctification. We are made holy by the blood of the lamb (Jesus), and then God is daily making us that way.

Receive Correction

God is in the process of changing those attitudes, thoughts, justifications, and rationalizations that we use to cover up. *“He who conceals his sin does not prosper.”* (Proverbs 28:13) We need the blood of Jesus to cover our sin, which will happen when we ask God for forgiveness and repent. If we are faithful to acknowledge our sin to God, He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness – like it never happened. (1 John 1:9)

He is the only one who can break the cycles in our lives. Nevertheless, we have to identify them. The person who is blessed is the person who receives correction and instruction. Proverbs says the fool will not receive correction and instruction. *“Even when I think I’m right, that remains to be seen,”* Paul said. He stated that God would determine whether he was right or wrong. He didn’t say people would determine it, nor would Paul determine it. (1 Corinthians 4) He said that God would determine what the case was, and things would be dealt with accordingly.

Do you always think you are right? The thief wants to hold you into thinking you are right even though it may remain to be seen.

The Lord taught me years ago, *“Son, you can speak My word, and it not be My word,”* meaning it wasn’t what He wanted me to say. It could be right out of the bible, but if it is not used correctly in the situation, then it is not His word. His word will produce His results. In Matthew 4 Jesus was tempted by the devil, and Jesus’ response was *“It is written,”* for the devil tried to misconstrue the word of God.

Mark 4 says the thief immediately tries to steal the word when it goes out. He can steal it when people don’t understand it (and they don’t want to ask questions), or when they don’t want to follow-up.

Years ago I learned to go back and ask people what they really said, even if I thought I heard what they said. I ask what their perception was and what their thoughts were. What did they hear? What did they understand? That way I get all the facts. I want clarification.

Diana and I had to learn this in marriage because it is all about power, you know – who is right and who is wrong. You may always think you are right, or you are one of those people who think you are wrong about everything.

There are times when you are correct, and there are times when you are not. We aren't always right. But who is? God is. I believe there is nothing that can't be worked out if people would sit down in an environment where they want the truth, and they don't put down the other person or themselves or try to build themselves up. Many people tear themselves down just to let somebody else be right. That is abuse.

All About Perception

Many people are in abusive situations. They are being beat up both physically and verbally. Such people lie down and take it, thinking, *I deserve it. I'm worthless. I caused it.* How many children have thought they were the cause of their parents' fighting and divorce? The thief has a hay-day with perception and thinking.

Cain actually thought God was wrong in disciplining him and that the discipline was too severe when God put a mark on him. It was mercy from God's perspective because the mark saved Cain's life. Have you ever been disciplined and thought it was unjustified or abusive?

When our children were small, I just couldn't bring myself to wipe their behinds. Diana was good at it, but I had a problem with it. I would just hose the children down outside. It only took a few seconds. (I didn't use the power washer.) I hosed them down a little bit to clean them up, and then put Vaseline on them. Later my daughter Erin would tease, "Dad abused us." (You know, child abuse.) "He'd hose us down."

One day after she had grown up and had her own family, I was over at their house. We were having a good time with them all. I looked outside and saw Erin with the hose, hosing down her young one. So I went outside and asked, "Erin, what are you doing?" She grinned, and I said, "Hey, it looks like abuse to me."

Using the hose wasn't hurting anybody. It was cleaning them up. It is all about perception. Circumstances can either be made or broken depending on how we look at them.

When you are up in the spirit, everything is good. You handle things well, don't you? When you are tired, you handle things differently. When you are refreshed, you are ready to go. It's all about perception. When we are loving our brothers and sisters and our neighbor as ourselves, we need to always be concerned about where they are and where we are. You can't do everything right.

Even if you try to please people, one day they like something one way and the next day they change their minds. You can make yourself crazy that way. Seek to do the best you can and put the best construction on everything. Don't allow any thief to have a foothold.

If you were thinking about someone, *Well, what did he mean by that? Why was he quiet about that?*, just ask the person. Talk to him, for the thief likes to cut off communication and isolate us, and that is how hatred and bitterness come in.

Have you noticed how big your ears get when you hear some gossip? "Did you know?..." You should respond with, "No, I don't know, and I don't care to know. It isn't any of my business. I wasn't asked about it, and I wasn't consulted." Wisdom would say, "I wasn't there. It is somebody's perception and impression, and I don't even know if it's true. I don't know what happened."

I bind the thief off my thinking in Jesus' name, and then I speak in tongues. Tell the Holy Spirit, "I want your thoughts. I want your perception." Then you need to work it. It takes time. You have to come in with the premise that God loves you, and He wants the best for you. He wants the best for you, and He is with you come hell or high water, in good times or hard times. Whether I'm in a good mood or not in a good mood, we are together. I use this expression, "We are all in this pot together." It's not a cooking pot, but it's the pot of life.

Sometimes you want to flush out the bad and keep the good, which is where you have to be – swift to go to the good and slow to let the thief separate and divide.

What is in the middle of communication?

“U”

What are *you* thinking about?

Coming together with *you*.

Unite.

Uniting together.

The thief wants to divide. He wants to steal, kill, and destroy. He wants to pit us against each other and separate us from God. *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and your mind and your soul,”* and secondly, *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

We are dearly loved of the Lord. We should approach everyone that way, with respect and with honor. We don’t always do it right, but we are pressing in. We are pressing in to the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

There is one factor that complicates things: people’s wills. The battlefield is in their wills. “As much as lies within you, live peaceably with everyone.” I have no control over someone else’s will, but I have control over *my* will. I have a choice about what I will do. We should say, “I want to choose you, Lord. No matter how I feel or what I’m thinking, I yield to you, Lord.”

In your circuit breaker box, there is an override switch which will click off to protect your place from burning down. In a similar way, I ask the Lord to override me if I get out of bounds. I want His will, not mine, be done. At Gethsemane, Jesus said, “Not my will, but your will be done.” What was He saying? “God, you have the override in my life. You’re the Lord of my life.”

Never allow the thief to get you to be “you against them.” You are not against people, but what is in you is against the spirit of the world, the spirit of the flesh, the spirit of Satan. You are of God. You are not on your own. Stay on your face and thank God that you are saved by grace through faith. God has shown us mercy, and we want to show mercy. This may be really difficult when you are dealing with people.

I remember one time when the thief was trying to ravage a couple's marriage. I had it right back where God could do something to heal them, when the guy suddenly flaked out. The wife had gone bonkers, but the Lord had her in a right place. The next thing I knew, they both went off in different directions, and I just sat there and cried. I was the only one left in the house, and it wasn't my house!

(God knows the pain that we have gone through trying to help people do the right thing over the years, as well as help them get their perception back into place as Christians.)

Later, the couple regretted what they had done, but they had already done it. Time allows much healing, but many lives go on a course they don't have to go on. If people would maintain the sanity (of the Spirit) in the moment and not let feelings come upon them, it wouldn't pull them out of the truth. God can actually keep them in the love of Christ.

The Best Intervention

The Lord taught me another way to deal with people after years of watching what goes on. I am not as involved or wrapped up in it now because I was always taught to treat others as you want to be treated, and do to others what you want done to you. I still believe in that, but the Lord has shown me I cannot just override someone else's choice. God knows I wish I could, but I can't, and even God can't override someone's choice. That is why people have many of the sorry things they have in their lives.

I would intervene and try to sit people down to talk. Many times as a mediator you are the one who ends up getting bit. As God would have it, at one time, I helped a couple get back together simply because they started hating me and came into agreement with each other for the first time in their lives. Later God fixed them up, and we became great friends again.

The Lord showed me that the best intervention for any one (in lovingly caring for them) is to pray for them. I may not even know you, but I am praying for you that God's best would come into your life and that you would be able to keep every moment a moment of Holy Ghost sanity.

You are only supposed to live one moment at a time, so don't be forecasting the future. Many people have "thrown out the baby with the bathwater"

when they were feeling something in the moment. A guy in Los Angeles killed his son in the tub. He said, “Something came over me. I didn’t even know what I did until afterwards.” He was totally devastated.

After he came to his senses he regretted what he had done. What happened? He had allowed the thief to come in, in that moment.

Let’s hold on to the Spirit of God. We have Him; let’s shut our mouths and cast down the thoughts that aren’t right with Him, and let the Holy Spirit fill the moment with His presence and His thoughts. That is my prayer for you and me – that we can hold on to what is good and what is of God, and throw out whatever is not.

There is nothing wrong with being wrong. As far as God is concerned, we are all wrong. I mean, get a clue. The only time we are right is by the grace of God when we allow the Spirit of God to work, and we do what God wants us to do. It is only because God is helping us to do it. Give other people that opportunity to grow and change.

The guy in Matthew 18 was forgiven a debt he couldn’t pay, but he went out to a man who owed him a nickel and demanded, “Come on, come up with it.” When the man said, “I don’t have it,” the guy threw him in jail. Then the master who had forgiven the great debt heard about it, and he called the guy in. He said, “I forgave you a debt you could never repay, and yet you punished a man for something he couldn’t pay.” (It doesn’t matter what the amount is.)

In a similar same way, if you break one commandment, you break them all. You can’t hold somebody to a commandment and then not look at yourself (and see that you did the same thing). The fellow who wouldn’t forgive the debt was turned over to the tormenters and cast into utter darkness. Not jail. Utter darkness. That was a result of his choice. How can I receive the great forgiveness of God and then turn around and not forgive my brother or sister?

I don’t go around telling people, “Oh yeah, I prayed for you. I did this, I did that.” I don’t believe it is necessary. We are not keeping a record of how many times we said “I care about you,” “I love you,” or “I did this for you.” You don’t keep a record of wrongs, and you shouldn’t keep a record of what

you do right. Anything good is God; anything bad isn't God. God doesn't keep a record.

Fear God, keep the commandments, live life the best you can in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord. Don't worry. The reality is that some day we will have to give an account. Simply do the best you can do. If that's not good enough for somebody, that's their problem.

You are responsible to God for what you did to yourself, to others, and to Him. I have learned this, you can never satisfy people. No matter how well you do or how badly you do, you can't even satisfy yourself. Only God can fill the emptiness.

I came to a realization that I am not God. That is, I can't do anything in me, and I can't do it in anyone else. I can't fill that emptiness. Only God can do it.

The best thing I can do for anybody is to pray. I can believe God and then do what God directs me to do accordingly.

My prayer for you is that if you are not doing what you need to do towards people, or what God has directed you to do, you start doing it. If you are doing what God directs you to do, you continue to do it, or if you have areas of your life where darkness has covered some issues, you remove the darkness.

Help from the Holy Spirit

Ask the Holy Spirit to bring your issues in the light and deal with them.

"The Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will." (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

When you stand before God, you cannot blame anyone else. You have to look at yourself. That is where it stands. If you don't like your life, ask God to help you change it.

You can't help a fool whether the fool is yourself or somebody else. How do you know that you are playing the fool? – by not receiving correction and instruction from God.

Who interprets God correctly? There is only one interpretation, the Holy Spirit. The same verse means many things to different people because they are at different levels of understanding. You can't expect people to understand if they are not there. We still don't know all that we will know, nor can we see it all perfectly.

Humble yourself in the presence of the Lord as I humble myself in the presence of the Lord with you. Together in the presence of the Lord we ask the Holy Spirit to heal, expose the works of darkness, and shine the light.

Prayer:

Lord, cleanse us. Remove anything that would hinder the flow of Your Spirit in us and through us that we might have all that you have intended. Together, Lord, with your people around the earth (past, present, and future), we will see your glory. We will stand with you, receiving your good pleasure and the words 'Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the pleasures that I have prepared for you.' Remove our agendas. Remove the thoughts and the words of the enemy, the plans of the enemy that have come to steal, kill, and destroy. Help us to find our life in you in Jesus' name. Amen.

Press Ahead

I think the more I live life and care for God's people, the more I see how, without the Lord, we can do nothing. With Him life is wonderful. Every day there is something different and new.

I have always sought to be consistent, and I ask the Lord to make me consistent. Ask God to take out what makes you inconsistent – the highs and lows, the ups and downs. Ask Him to put an override on it.

I am leery of people who are too high or too low, people who criticize you too much or praise you too much. There has to be a balance. Balance will keep you out of depression. It will keep you from funky expectations that aren't of God, which, by the way, will lead you into depression.

*Oh, lead me to the place of peace and life.
Help me stay there, Lord.*

The key is not to dwell on your mistakes, but learn from what you did. Don't make them again if you can. Break out of any patterns or cycles that defeat you, and keep going.

Paul said, *"This one thing I do. I forget the things behind, and I press ahead to the mark of the high calling of God that is mine in Christ Jesus."* Don't be the one who burns the bridges, blows them up, cuts off people, or puts down ultimatums. God says, *"Today I set before you blessing and cursing, life and death; choose life."* (Psalm 30:19) The Lord gave me this key to help me because I would go and snatch people out of the fire. I would have on my God-asbestos suit, and I'd walk right into "hell" to save many, many people over the years.

Sometimes when you are helping a drowning person, you have to knock him out. It is a true life-saving technique. You have to put him out, or he will bring you down.

"You, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life." (Jude 20)

"Be merciful to those who doubt." (Jude 22) When you believe God, you do right. When you doubt, you do wrong, you say wrong, and you think wrong. Be merciful. *"Snatch others from the fire and save them. To others show mercy mixed with fear [reverence, respect, and honor], hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh,"* (Jude 23) whether it is in yourself or anybody else. The corrupted flesh is what destroys people. It ruins lives and relationships, as well as everything spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, or financially. .

The Bible says when Jesus came to a certain man, He had compassion on him. The term used here is that He was angry. He was angry because a devil was tormenting and ravishing the person's life. Through compassion the power of God was there, then, to take it off of the man and heal him.

"To God who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without spot and with great joy." (Jude 24)

God hates what the devil does to His people. He will come from heaven. You think a mama bear is tough about her cubs, but God will come from the heavens with a fury after those who speak and do things against His people because He loves us.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
God's Commandments and Application
Chapter Two

“Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of Lights.”
(James 1)

God's heart and plan for all of us is every good thing He has prepared for us in advance.

Lean Not to Your Own Understanding

Sometimes we lean to our own understanding and we get off track. We run around the mountain a few times or take a few side trips. We have to get back on track, and the Lord is faithful to bring us along and get us back.

I don't spend much time kicking myself when I've gotten out of line. I spend time making sure that I get back on track. If you go back to God and ask Him about something you did before, but you had already asked for forgiveness, He doesn't even remember what you're talking about. The power of God is in the forgiveness, and it will change and renew. His mercy is fresh and new every day, like nothing ever happened.

God loves us, and He will help us to get rid of sin. He disciplines those He loves so if He didn't love us, He wouldn't say anything to us about changing. He wouldn't care. He would just let us all go to hell. In reality, God doesn't want anyone to perish. He wants everybody to come into His plan and His best.

No matter what we did or how messed up our thinking was, we can look back and laugh at it. Praise God He got us out of it and back where we could see the humor of how ridiculous the flesh really is. It's so awful but so funny.

I have seen the Lord do some amazing things over the years when we didn't lean to our own understanding about how something should be done, and we let God do it. He works everything out so well.

In Genesis, chapter one, Cain didn't want to be helped. He was angry and upset. God asked him why he was so angry, but he didn't answer. God

continued to speak. It is important to let God continue to speak. God said, “Why are you so upset? If you do what is right, you will be blessed.” There was no conversation there. There was no discussion. Cain didn’t do what was right, so he wasn’t blessed. Bottom line. Don’t expect to be blessed when you are not doing what is right before God.

Then the Lord said, “Sin is crouched at your door, ready to take you down, but you must master it.” Master what? You have to master yourself. You have to apply the self-control that God has given you. You have to say no. You have to step up and continue to do what is right if you are to see the blessing.

As the story goes, Cain went out and killed his brother. He plotted it out, and killed him right in the field as if he never heard what God had told him. Abel was like the lamb led to the slaughter. When God disciplined Cain, Cain said, “This punishment is too severe.” Who is Cain or anyone else to tell God what is what? Cain deserved death. (If you kill a brother, you die. That is the way the law reads.) However, God showed mercy in that he marked Cain so that nobody else could kill him.

God gave Cain a chance to turn around, but he never repented. He never asked for forgiveness. He never changed his ways. It is sad that he refused to do what was right.

Saul, the first king of Israel, never did repent either. He only asked Samuel to acknowledge him as the king in front of the people. Saul was more concerned about what the people thought of him than what God thought of him. Consequently, he lost the kingdom. His kingdom wasn’t taken immediately, but it happened over a long period of time, and the anointing left him during that time. Then he became jealous of David who had the anointing and blessing of God.

Learn from Your Mistakes

These are two very sad examples, but sometimes we can learn from those sad examples. Wisdom often learns from somebody else’s mistakes. Through wisdom we also learn from our own mistakes. You probably didn’t just learn wisdom from reading the word. You had to go through the hell of the experience.

That is real wisdom, which is why we teach God's ways to the people so they can learn them. They will see that they are having problems because they are not doing something correctly. Problems will come if you're doing what is wrong. Maybe it just hasn't caught you yet, but it will.

It will catch up with you because "the wages of sin is death." Sin will always have that consequence. It will come. I prefer instant consequences, so I say to the Lord, "Sit down on me, God, if I'm out of line, rather than letting something go on and on and on." Otherwise, I would have a very serious problem. I am always thankful when I get disciplined quickly. Quick and to the point, and then it is over. I'm "loved on" like nothing ever happened. I ask God's forgiveness, and I move on. I love it that way because I can get on to all the other good stuff that God has prepared. If I stay out of sorts, then I can't be blessed. No matter what God wants to do for me, He can't do it when I'm out of sorts. So, I just love that quick discipline, Lord. Thank you for loving me and loving your people in that way.

God's Standards

Many people go through life doing wrong things, and nobody ever says anything or does anything. God in His great love has set down some standards to help us care for people. Would that parents would do what God says and teach their children those ways. Would that our country wouldn't want to put away the Ten Commandments and remove the standards that God set down to bless people, to show them what is good and right, as well as a deterrent to keep them from doing wrong. Galatians discusses the law of God and the love of God.

Exodus 20 shows the Ten Commandments of God as the Lord laid them out. Those commandments need to be taught from the pulpits of our nation and around the world. They need to be taught in our homes. Keep them in front of your eyes wherever you go and talk with your children about the things of God. Lead the people in the ways of the Lord so that they know what the will of the Lord is.

We need to know what is right and blessed, and what is wrong and cursed. We live in a world where society is trying to remove absolutes, even though God has given absolutes. He says what is right and blessed, and what is wrong and cursed. Remember the question Cain asked. "Am I my brother's keeper?" He said it right after he killed his brother. His brother died at his

hand with malice and with evil intent. It was premeditated, planned, and executed . . .and his brother died. Then he had the audacity to say, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” He knew full well where Abel was – dead, out in the field where he left him.

Do I have any responsibility for my brother’s life? The Lord went on to say, “The blood of Abel cries out to me from the ground for vengeance.” In other words, God is not mocked. Whatever people do is what they will reap. Sow to the flesh and do what you want, and you will reap cursing. Do what God wants, and you will reap blessing through people, through life and circumstances, and ultimately the Lord is over it all.

When Cain didn’t listen to God’s word of correction, instruction, and discipline, he played the fool. He moved himself outside of God’s covering, protection, and blessing, which put him under the thief’s influence. Many people blame the devil, but you can’t just blame the devil. “The devil made me do it.” James 1 says that we are enticed after our own lusts, and we go after things because we want them. The devil just puts them out there to try to get us to take something outside the will of God. When we do so, we are opposing God, and we are opposing ourselves. Then we become vulnerable to whatever the thief wants to do.

We ask God’s forgiveness and turn from our ways (not just, “I’m sorry; I’ll never do it again”) but we have a change of heart. Repentance means a change of heart and turning from what is wrong. We turn to God, we change our ways, we make the adjustment, and we move along with God. Then He can bless us and help us.

Without repentance there is no forgiveness. We have to understand that. Many people think that God will just overlook sin, but He doesn’t overlook anything. God is not mocked, you cannot con God, and you cannot play God. However, you can con people, and you can con yourself. Many people have done that only to see their lives change for the worse. Because they have never corrected the problem, no sooner do they get out of one situation when something else happens. They have never gone back to the root and gotten rid of what was outside of God’s will and plan.

When you are caring for people, you have to speak the truth in love so that they can grow up and come into what God has. (Ephesians 4) We need the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the word of God, which is sharper than a two

edged sword, will cut between the spirit and soul, joints and marrow. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart. People cannot discern this on their own except that God show them.

The word of God clearly shows what God sees as blessed and what He sees as cursed. He gave us specific commandments to tell us how to live. Then by His Spirit He said, "I will help you do them." We are not out there by ourselves. Jesus died for us while we were enemies of God. He loved us even when we were caught up in all the things that were not of Him. He gave Himself for us so that whoever believes in Him and turns from their ways and turns to God will have life abundantly.

God gave us His commandments to show us our sin, to show us where we are outside of His will. Sin is a theological term for "separation from God." We shoot the arrow, and it falls short of the target [*artano* in the Greek]. God's target is holiness and blessing.

When we fall short, we have done something in our own understanding or will. It falls short of God's glory and purpose being accomplished. However, in Jesus we can hit the target. Jesus died for the forgiveness of our sins, to take away everything that separated us from God and made us right with Him.

Since we are right with Him, we are at peace with Him, in which case the law of God is not a deterrent to us. It is not standing in our way. It simply becomes a curb to keep us on the right track. Street curbs are there to keep the cars away and to let people know that beyond the curb is the wrong way. It shows us where we can stay and where we cannot. The law of God shows us what God wants us to do. It is summarized in the Ten Commandments and in the two commandments that Jesus quoted, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all you mind, with all your soul," and "Love your neighbor as yourself."

When Cain asked the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" what did that say about Cain? He didn't love himself because he didn't do what God said to do. In fact, he refused to do what God said to do. God is love, and everything that God tells us to do is said out of love. Even when He corrects us, it is the truth He is using, and if we heed the truth it will set us free.

The Lord will enable us to will and to do His good purpose in our lives.

God's Way is the Best Way

If I get off the track, it will cause me to come to a point of conviction and repentance, where I turn back so I can be blessed. Then it will set the norm for my way of living.

The Spirit of God is truth, and His Spirit operates in truth. Jesus said the devil is a liar and a murderer from the beginning. He doesn't want to do good to anybody, let alone to God. He wants to bring everybody down to be destroyed like he is going to be destroyed. It is saying, "I can't play the game my way. I'm going to take my marbles and go."

It is all about control. Let me tell you, if you try to play that game with God, you will be devastated. He is the Lord and there is none like unto Him. I just have to state it for the record because many people have tried to oppose God in the same spirit that Satan opposed God. God kicked him out of the heavens and threw him onto the earth. When he came down here, he threw a big temper tantrum and ruined everything. God had to start over. (Genesis 1:2)

God has no problem with that because what the devil intended for evil, God intended for good. God can change anybody's life from evil to good if they would let Him do it, if they would receive the blood of Jesus and start to live God's way. Again, only God's way is the blessed way. There is none like unto Him. He set authorities in the earth under His direction. He is the author of all authority, and apart from Him there is no authority. That means the devil has no authority, and he has no rule. He set himself up as a king, and only ignorant and foolish people follow him.

People who are disobedient to God follow the devil. His cover is self. He uses and abuses people, and when he is done with them, he casts them aside and destroys them. He has no love or care for anybody including himself. Cain had no love or care for anybody including himself. That is why he did what he did. He directly opposed God and thought that he could get away with it.

God is not mocked. Whatever people do is what they will reap. Cain hated his brother. He was jealous and envious of him, and he was bitter towards God. He went out and willfully, knowingly sought to harm Abel. If you

oppose God, you do harm to yourself. If you really loved yourself, you would not go there.

The devil asked Eve, “Did God really say that if you participate in this you’ll surely die?” He was challenging God. Eve said, “Yes, that is what God said,” but she went ahead and participated anyway, knowing full well that God had said she would surely die. After she sinned, she realized that she didn’t die in the way she expected, but her spirit died to God. Her relationship to God died. She had been one with Him, and now she was separated. Death came into the earth, sickness came into the earth, poverty came into the earth, confusion and every evil work came into the earth.

Abel was the fruit of Eve. Cain was the fruit of Eve. One brother loved God and obeyed Him, and the other didn’t love God and did what he wanted to do. Cain offered the sacrifice (his first fruits), but it wasn’t what God wanted him to offer. God said to Cain, “Why are you so angry and upset? If you’d do what is right, you’d be blessed.” Cain went ahead and did what he thought was the right thing to do.

Cain had a form of godliness, but he denied the power of godliness. He was going through religious motions. The Lord says to stay away from people who have only a form of godliness. They can talk it, but they don’t live it. Don’t get into their little discussions, arguments, and faulty thinking that will take you away from God. Such people try to justify and rationalize their behavior.

Jesus said that you will know people by their fruit. Look at their track record. Look at their lives. Then you can discern. I am saying discern, not judge. We are not to judge anybody. The word of God will judge people’s actions. You can discern what is of God and what is not of Him, and you can tell who is a sheep and who is a goat.

Some day God will separate the sheep from the goats. In the meantime, He said to let them all grow up together. In your own life you will know by the fruit in someone else’s life.

We have to go back to some absolutes. Exodus, chapter 20 gives us some clear absolutes, the Ten Commandments.

God makes it very clear what is of Him. Love is keeping the commandments of God. (1st John 5:3) If we really care about ourselves, if we really care about others, we will do what God says. If we really care about our relationship with God, we will do what He says. Jesus said, *“If you love me, keep my commandments. You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”* Continue in that.

The First Commandment

There are four commandments about loving God. *“You shall have no other gods before Me”* is a good start. Gods are anything you put your trust in or anything you spend your time, talents, and treasures on. You can tell you have an idol in your life when you fear what you will or will not have. Health can be an idol if you are fearing for it. Anything that you worry about or think about all the time is an idol.

An idol could be a child, a spouse, or even yourself. You are an idol to yourself if you are a *“legend in your own mind.”* *“Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and in due season He will exalt you.”* If I care about myself and I care about others, I won't put somebody up on a pedestal where I can set them up to fail.

“Thou shall have no other gods before me.” (*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul.”*) With that comes honor, respect, reverence, and worship. The Lord says, *“I care about you. Don't worry about what you will eat, what you will wear, how you are going to live, any of that. “Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and everything else will be added to you.”* (Matthew 6)

Our thoughts are to be fixed on God. *“He will keep them in perfect peace whose minds are stayed on Him.”* (Isaiah 26:3) What are we supposed to do with the cares? *“Cast all your cares upon Me,”* the Lord says, *“for I affectionately care for you and watch over you.”* If I am not casting my cares on the Lord, then I'm not letting the Lord care for me.

Without pride there is no contention. When you don't put somebody before God, there is no fighting. When you allow yourself to get into an argument or enter into fear, worry, bitterness, anger, or upset, that is not caring for yourself or anyone else. It certainly isn't helping anybody one bit. *“From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not of your own*

lusts? You want something; you can't have it, so you fight for it." (James, chapter 4)

I thank God for His commandments and His word. It tells me what I can have and what I cannot have. I don't know about you, but I am really simple in that way. Jesus said to have childlike faith. When God says something, that settles it. We will see when we go through the commandments what we can have and what we can't have.

"You shall have no other gods before Me." That means nothing can take His place. God is God. He is the Lord. I cannot be fulfilled except through Him, by Him, and through Him. Perhaps you felt you would be fulfilled and content if you could get a certain thing, and then you would be happy. When you got what you wanted, you weren't happy, especially if you took it from somebody else. They are not happy either. Nobody can take God's place in your life. He is a jealous God, and He won't put up with it.

The Second Commandment

"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or earth beneath and the water below, nor bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me." People who don't do what God says hate Him.

Did you just get a reality check?

The commandments are given because God loves us and cares about us. They are not bad. It says the commandments of God are not grievous. They are grievous only to people who don't want to do them. Anytime you don't want to do what God says, there is something wrong in your heart and mind, and you are deceived. Put a period. Exclamation point on that. End of discussion. There is no more rationalizing or justifying.

"God, if you hadn't given me this woman I wouldn't have all these problems," Adam complained. The woman said, "The snake made me do it." They didn't take responsibility for their own lives and actions, and they got the consequences of it. They all were disciplined. Why? God loves them, and He disciplines those He loves.

“...but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep my commandments.” (Hebrews 10:26) God is able to love and express His blessing in the lives of those who love Him and keep His commandments. If I love God, I keep His commandments. If I don't love God, I don't. Generational curses can come into people's lives because of not keeping the commandments. You have read about families where the grandpa did it, the son did it, and the grandson did the same thing. It was passed down from generation to generation.

We can pass blessing down from generation to generation too. Jesus and the blood of Jesus gives the power to change our situations.

The Third Commandment

“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.” Another version is, *“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.”*

God's name and His word are one, so if I don't do His word, I am saying I don't have a relationship with Him. Jesus gave us the right to use His name, the name above every name. *“...that at the name of Jesus everything in heaven and earth shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”* All power, all dominion, all authority.

If God doesn't have our attention, then we can't learn His ways, and somewhere down the road we will have a problem. We will be doing what we want to do even though He has something else for us that will be more profitable. A wise man, woman, or child receives correction and instruction. A fool doesn't. Instead, he gets offended. (Hello, Cain.) He was offended, wasn't he? Jesus offended more people than those who received what He had to say. They didn't want to hear it or do it. They thought they knew better.

“A broken and a contrite heart God will not despise.” (It is all about respect and honor.) *“Today when you hear His voice, harden not your heart.”* I am sharing His word, dads and moms talk to their children, and children share the word with one another, for the word of God deserves honor and respect. Jesus said, *“My words are Spirit, and they are life.”* They will bring life to you. They will heal you. They will turn your situation around. They will give you wisdom so you won't have many of the problems you have in your life. You can stop them and never have to go through them.

I have been spared from many problems over the years because of the word of God. Because I received the correction and instruction of the word, it stopped me from doing things that others were doing. If people could learn this when they are young, they would save themselves many problems. Our goal in teaching parents is that they in turn teach their children, so we work with them and their children. Our children won't have to go through what we had to go through. If we are blessed, they will see the blessing continue.

There is no correction that isn't grievous for the moment. It hurts, but Hebrews 12 says it will yield a harvest of righteousness. Much good will come out of it. If you can save one person from doing wrong and ruining his life, your life has been a success. We look at what will be the end of the matter. I want to see everyone of us (all the people of the world) with God in the new heaven and the new earth. We have to encourage and help each other to be there.

The third commandment says not to misuse the name of the Lord. If you were taught that it means no swearing and cussing, it is true. But let me show you another dimension. Jesus said, *"To them who believe, the works I do, you will do, and even greater works than these you will do because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do to the glory of the Father."* When you pray in the name of Jesus, you are to believe you have received the things that you asked, and it will be done for you. Every time we don't believe that we will receive what we ask in Jesus' name, we aren't believing that God will do it. We are violating the third commandment by misusing the name of Jesus. Why? It is intended to have faith spoken with it. The name and the Lord are one.

One day someone called me an old dirt bag or something to that effect. I said I didn't recognize that name. I had cared about and ministered to the person who thought it was funny to call me that. You can call me 20 times, but I'm not going to answer you if you call me a dirt bag, some old shoe, or whatever. Where I come from that isn't a positive term.

Having a relationship is part of caring for people. Those who don't have a relationship with God will not follow the Ten Commandments. They don't want to. They have their own set of values to live by. However, these are God's commandments. They were written by the finger of God Himself, and He carved them on stone. In the New Testament He has written them

(through the blood of Jesus) on our hearts. Those who belong to God have His commandments written on their hearts.

According to the bible you have a spirit, a mind, and a body, so it is referring to your spirit, not your physical heart. If you are true Christians and truly born again, these commandments are written on our hearts and our consciences, which become alive to God. Being born again means your spirit is born again. Then your mind needs to be renewed by the word of God to get God's commandments inside.

Today some people are wanting to remove the commandments from our country. They don't want them displayed anywhere, and they don't want them written publicly. God says to put them out publicly. We must obey God rather than man, so we have to be willing to accept the persecution. I have the commandments on the walls of my house, and I keep them in my heart and mind. Keep them in front of you because they will stop you from going outside of God's blessing.

It is a misuse of the name of the Lord when you don't even believe anything will happen. Why pray if you don't expect anything to happen? God says that when you use His name, believe that heaven and earth will move. What He has for you will come to pass in your behalf because you have relationship through Jesus Christ. Otherwise, you don't have a relationship.

As recorded in the book of Acts, certain men tried to cast out some devils. The devils talked through a guy who said, "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are you?" In other words, you have no right to use the name of the Lord. You don't have a relationship with Him. The devils in the guy proceeded to beat up the men, and they ran out of there naked to save their lives.

There has to be relationship. Care always involves relationship.

Paul said of Timothy, "I have no one else like him in the ministry ranks who has a genuine care for the people." There were many people ministering out there, but Timothy truly loved and cared for others.

Paul was referring to the kind of love where someone would give himself for them, like Jesus gave Himself for us. All the other ones ran to save their hides. That isn't care; it's "every man for himself."

The Fourth Commandment

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” How do we remember it? By keeping it holy.

Perhaps you were taught that the fourth commandment was *“Thou shalt honor your father and your mother that it may be well with you and you will live long on the face of the earth.”*

There is a long story about how this was all changed. Every catechism in the major denominations shows the fourth commandment as *“Honor your father and your mother...”* Actually, the order in which it is written in the Bible shows it to be the fifth commandment. There is a history to this, for man changed the word of God, and he changed the commandments of God. Tradition and doctrines of men oppose the truth of God’s word, and that is why people have become confused over the centuries. We need to go back to what God says and do it.

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” Most of those catechisms stop right there, period. Do you know why? They changed the Sabbath day (Friday dusk to Saturday dusk) to Sunday. It is a long, long story. Understand this, God never changed His commandment; man did (through traditions and doctrines of man).

If marriage were done away with today, in one hundred years (or three generations) nobody would know marriage existed. That is the kind of thing that happened.

Following God’s commandments get His results. Changing His commandments alters the promise and the blessing. The first day of the week isn’t blessed. God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, and He rested on it. (Genesis 1 and 2) You may be thinking, *We don’t have to take that literally.* Friends, stay alert. There is an enemy out there. Do it the way God says to do it. It says to hearken to the voice of the Lord. It says don’t deviate; don’t go to the left or to the right. Don’t change it. Keep it the way God said, and do it the way he said, and you will get the blessing that he has. If we alter the commandment, then we are missing a blessing.

Have you ever decided you didn’t need to read the instructions to put something together? You thought you could figure it out yourself. When

you finished it, you had some parts left over. You probably wondered, *Where do these go?* Then you had to take it apart and put it back together correctly. If you want it to work the way it was intended to work, you have to follow directions.

The commandment says, *“Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor your alien within your gates [company]. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”* (Exodus 20:8-11)

Just for the record, in the bible God never calls the Sabbath day “Sunday,” which is the first day of the week. The bible actually uses first day, second day, third day, etc. The first day is what we know as Sunday. The evening and the morning are the first day. (Genesis 1) The facts have been changed. Nowadays we say the morning and the evening, but it is actually the other way around. Saturday night until Sunday at dusk is the first day. Then the second day, third day, fourth day, and so on.

Obedience to God’s Commands

God wrote the commandments with His own finger. It is important to God, and what is important to God should be important to us. If we care about Him, then we will love what He loves. What He takes pleasure in, we will take pleasure in. What He loves and sees as important, we will love and see as important.

Because I love and care about God, and I’m so thankful to Him for all He is and has done for me, then I will love to do what He wants.

Get away from “Oh, I have to do it because I’m afraid of getting punished” stuff. I do His commandments because I love God and because He loves and cares for me with an everlasting love that never fades away or changes. He would never ask me to do something that He didn’t know would bless Him, me, and everybody.

Everything that comes from God our Father in heaven is wonderfully good, and it will bless our lives. It is just a matter of starting to understand what God says, and then how He wants us to do it. What is the application?

Knowledge. Then we will be blessed, and everybody around us will be blessed. The Lord will look down and say, “Whee, there’s my son. Look at him. Look at how he cares for my people. Oh, there’s my daughter; what an absolutely outstanding child she is. Look at how she cares and loves my people.” “*What you do to the least of these you do to Me,*” the Lord said in Matthew 25.

Oh, I just love to do what God says. How about you? We will do what He says. We will honor Him with our tithes (ten percent of the gross income off the top) and our offerings. (Malachi, chapter 3)

I have found that when you are obedient about everything you know, it opens up all kinds of blessings to you. All kinds of doors open because your confidence is in God. In fact, He said He would: “Open the windows of heaven, rebuke the devourer, and send blessings from the north, south, east, and west.” Blessing is coming to me as I honor the Lord in Jesus’ name.

I thank you, Lord, for obedient hearts.

You know, if you honor God, His word, and His authorities, you will see the blessing. Hebrews 13 says to obey those who are over you in the Lord, who watch out for your souls. They must give an account for what they do and for you. You have to give a report about whether you are obedient or not obedient.

Has an employer written a report about you? Whether you agreed with it or not, it was a report. You probably didn’t agree with it if it wasn’t good. Maybe you needed to take a good look because there might have been something there that you needed to see.

People will exclude themselves by not doing what God says, but we still believe for them to eventually do what He says to do. In the meantime, people will have what they are going to have.

The Lord has plans ahead for your life. They will be His plans, and He will put them together. They will be blessed, and they will be good. Just be patient and relax. Don’t try to hurry.

When Sarah and Abraham tried to hurry things along, they ruined the plans. It has to be right, and it has got to be God, and it will be good.

A broken and a contrite heart God won't despise, and let me tell you, a faithful heart just won't even know where all the blessings are coming from. From the north, south, east, and west. God rewards faithfulness.

When truth comes forth, and you have to do this or that, it shouldn't scare you. Right? Just conform to it. Do it. You don't need to be afraid about anything. The Lord is in charge.

CARING FOR PEOPLE

The Honor Principle

Chapter Three

The Lord Jesus gave His life that we might have life and have it abundantly, and that we might be able to keep the commandments. God's commandments are all about caring and loving. The first four are about loving God, and the second six are about loving your neighbor as yourself. Caring is what God is all about, for God is love.

Enter into God's Realm

When we are thinking only about ourselves, we are not operating by the Spirit of God. Perhaps you have told people how to care for you? You told them what you wanted and what your needs were. Let me put it another way, you said, "You're not meeting my needs," which is self-indulgence. Caring about how people care for you is self-indulgence.

The more you learn about God, the more you realize it isn't about me or you. It is about Him. If you want to care for yourself, then go ahead. People who only think about themselves complain and grumble about others not taking care of them or meeting their needs. I don't know anyone who can do everything for himself. It is sad when people think they can. God never intended for us to fight the good fight of faith by ourselves, or to care about ourselves that way. You have heard, "If you want it done right, do it yourself."

Have you operated in that? Then maybe you found that you didn't do it right either. People who use the excuse to do it themselves are often cheap because they don't want to have somebody else do it. They don't trust anybody else to do it, or they don't want to pay for it.

When I was three, I took some paints and moved them around on the walls, and one of my own children once painted the walls with stuff from the crib. That is how many people paint: they smear, which means there is a difference between a person who smears and a real painter. Likewise, many people live life, but not many people live it abundantly.

When you are caring for people, you have to realize that, the only way to do it is God's way. At different times people have different needs. There are

principles that we can set in motion which are consistent. As we look at the Ten Commandments, we will see principles that have been established from God's heart and attitude.

Many people may be doing the right caring things, but their hearts aren't in it. The motivation has to be that we are doing something as to the Lord. We are doing it by God's grace and God's strength. We are preferring others more important than ourselves and honoring them.

As mentioned before, the first four commandments deal with honoring God. Many people have the commandments switched around because they spend more time trying to please people than they do trying to please God.

If you please God, people who love God will be pleased. People who don't love God will be blessed because of what you're doing, but there will always be a little distance until they receive the love of God. It can happen as we care for one another, for God's loving kindness leads people to change. (Romans 2:4) When we grasp that, we enter into God's realm, the realm of honor.

The Fifth Commandment

The fifth commandment is "*Honor your father and mother, that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*" (Exodus 20:12) The first commandment is about honoring God, and the fifth commandment is about honoring father and mother.

Your parents are the ones God used to bring you into the earth, and they are the ones God wants honored for that. This commandment comes with a promise – you will live long on the earth. You will be blessed. You will have many good things because your parents are the first authorities God put in your life. If you honor them, then you will see that your life will be blessed. Live a life of honor; before you receive honor and promotion, you must have humility. Learn how to obey and submit to God and the authorities.

Everything Centered Around Honor

I found that everything in life is centered around honor. All care is centered around honor. When we care for people, we are honoring them, and we are loving and preferring them. We are wanting to see good things for their lives. When people are doing wrong (outside of God's standards of right),

they are disobedient, rebellious, and independent towards parents. In the last days many people will be rebellious, independent, selfish and self-centered, haters of their parents, and haters of good.

When people act like that, not only is there no honor in their lives, but they cannot receive any honor. Nobody wants to be around a person who is living that way. If you really care for yourself, you will do what God says. God's way will lead to blessing for your life. Again, honor is God's way.

People nowadays don't know how to honor, for honor actually comes out of thanksgiving. A thankful heart loves much and honors much. Even if you don't think your dad and mom loved you, or maybe they abandoned you or said you were an accident; you're here because of them. Even if children are born out of wedlock, they should be thankful for their parents.

God can turn a cursing around to a blessing. He can make things right. I have found that when parents are appreciated, and thankfulness is in children's hearts, it causes the parents to want to bless them even more. When we are thankful to God, it causes Him to want to do more for us. It also enables us to receive what He wants to give us. On the other hand, many parents raise self-indulgent children. It isn't giving things to children that spoils them; it is lack of discipline that spoils them.

How Children Are Raised

A child who is not thankful will not honor or obey his parents. God says that this is part of loving your neighbor as yourself. If a tree is bent in the wrong direction, it will grow crooked. The Lord says, *"Train up a child in the way of the Lord and when he gets older he will not depart from it."* Unfortunately, many children have not been raised in the ways of God, and they are bent towards selfishness and indulgence.

As a child, were you given everything if you whined, bawled, cried, or held your breath long enough? That leads to a "baby-baby" bent; such people will be weak when they get older. They will be selfish, self-indulgent, and their marriage won't last long because they won't get their way. They will have a hard time with employment and probably won't be able to hold down jobs because they don't know who is boss. If we were self-indulgent as children, we will grow up to be self-indulgent parents. That in turn will cause us to raise bitter children. On the other hand, there are neglected

children who are left to fend for themselves because nobody is there for them.

It doesn't have to be that way, but that is how the curse goes down from generation to generation. Somewhere along the line we have to pick up the slack and read the Book.

The word of the Lord says to honor your father and mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. People won't live long in the land and prosper if they don't learn principles of honor. They will have a hard life.

Have you ever noticed how selfish you really are? Maybe it came out when you got married, or it was probably shown at different points along the way with your boss. Maybe you didn't like the boss, nor did you care for people telling you what to do and how to do it.

That is not abundant life and living. Life will come up in your face and show you you are not God because God resists the proud and gives grace and ability to the humble. Again, humility comes before honor and promotion, so you will have to learn how to submit. Learning to care starts as a child. If you thought your parents were supposed to care for you, God doesn't have a commandment in there about that.

When my daughter was just a little tyke, but old enough to have ideas, we were talking about something and I told her "No, we aren't going to do that." She said, "But dad, you owe it to me to do this." I looked at her and said, "I don't owe you anything." What did she ever do for me? I am the parent; she is the child. A child is called to honor her parents.

Likewise, what have I ever done for God? God has done everything for me. He deserves the honor.

I asked, "Why do you think I should do that for you?" She answered, "Because you're my dad." I said, "That's right. I'm your dad, but I'm not your friend. God put me on this earth, and one of the things He wanted me to do was raise you up in the care and admonition (discipline and training) of the Lord, and to teach you God's ways."

If you want to be your children's friend, you have stepped out of the role that God called you to. You see, friends like to please each other.

God's Approval vs. Men's Approval

Being a minister of God with the people of God, I love them beyond measure, but I have to tell them about (and enforce) the things that God wants. There are times when I have to discipline. I have to correct. I have to admonish. I have to get them back on the right track if I love them.

If parents love their children, they will discipline them. If they want them to be their friends, they are looking for the children to meet their needs. That isn't God's order. He said, "Where were you when I made the heavens and the earth?", which is basically what I told my child. "I'm the parent, and you don't tell me what to do and how to do it. You've got the order mixed up. I'm not looking for your approval on my life."

People who are looking for approval from others will lose the approval of God. These are hard training facts. If the people in my congregation want to walk with God, I can teach them the ways of God. I will do everything God wants me to do to take care of them. I will make sure they have everything they need for life and blessing in order that they will end up with Him some day in the new heaven and the new earth. Nevertheless, if they don't want to walk with God or hear what He has to say, it is their problem, isn't it?

Parents are called by God to make sure that their children are taken care of spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, and in relationships. God tells parents to take care of their children, but He doesn't include it in the Ten Commandments.

Lead your family in the ways of God and eventually you will have to present them to the Lord, just like Jesus will present all of us to the Lord some day. Get the right order. With honor comes obedience and submission. If folks don't learn it in the short time they live at home, they will have one hell of a life. God knows that.

Parents who allow their children to do whatever they want whenever they want don't really care about them, and they are not training them up God's way. Are you a product of what I am talking about? You were left to choose your own ways and do your own thing. You threw your little temper

tantrums. You did your little “boo-hoo, bah-ha, I hate you, I don’t care about you” to your parents, and you got away with it.

It’s never too late to start to honor your parents, but you want to do it before they are gone. Start today. I raked one fellow over the coals (in the Holy Ghost) for not talking to his dad for forty years. He not only asked God’s forgiveness, but he took a plane back east and talked with him. His dad died five days later, but that man had a clear conscience, and he was so excited. In fact, he led his dad to the Lord, and what a wonderful thing that was. Think of all those years that go down when people don’t honor their parents.

You might say, “Well, I don’t like what my parents are doing.” When you were a baby, it didn’t matter to you what they were doing. You just cared about you. When you were a child, you didn’t care what they were doing because you didn’t know many things. Later when you got a little older, you started getting your own ideas, and you began thinking and seeing.

Honor is to be there whether parents are doing the right thing or the wrong thing. To do what God says in our lives, we don’t do what they do, but we are still there to honor them and to honor God. Remember, honor is always as to the Lord, and with it comes thankfulness because of who they are in your life.

The child isn’t to call the shots. This has been mixed up in our society. It used to be “Father Knows Best” on television, but now it is “The Simpsons” – a little brutish kid who thinks he knows better than his parents do. I’d take him out back and minister the love of God to him.

I have been a spiritual dad to some people, raised them up in God and taught them everything they know. Then they got to be teenagers in the spirit, and they thought they knew better. I just tell them, “Man, I wiped your butt when you didn’t know anything, and you couldn’t do anything. You were a mess, and God turned you around. Don’t tell me you know better than we do.”

God asked Job. *“Where were you when I made the heavens and the earth? Since when have you been my counselor?”* God was talking to Job just like I talk to people and just like I used to talk to my children. There comes a time when you will have your own children, and watch what they will do

with you. Let me tell you, if you sowed bad seed as a child, your children will be worse.

Did I just traumatized you?

To begin with we have to teach people the right way. Let's get the honor principle and the thankfulness back in. Let's see the appreciative child, the obedient child, the one who doesn't have to question everything (why, what, where, when and how, and why-don't-we-do-it-my-way) kind of kid. There is no blessing in it.

Such children are not questioning out of honor and respect, or even wanting to know what we are doing. They are questioning how and why we do certain actions because they "know better."

Have you thought you knew more than your boss? Maybe you do know more, and that's why the boss has you there, but as soon as you aren't small in your own eyes, you won't be there very long. The boss isn't going to need you no matter how indispensable you think you are, no matter how much you think you know (and maybe do know). The boss is the boss, not you. If you don't learn that as a child (honoring your dad and mom), you will have a hard road in life with God's wonderful world of authority.

The prophet, Samuel, came to Saul and said, "There was a time when you were small in your own eyes, but God made you to be the king, and now you think you can do what you want to do rather than what God wants done. Obedience is better than sacrifice." Samuel told Saul that the kingdom had been removed from him. God had given him the kingdom, but He removed it because Saul did not honor the Lord or the people. He didn't set an example of obedience. Instead, he followed the people. He wanted to please them rather than the Lord.

Have you compromised as a parent, actually putting your children in danger because you wouldn't stand up and say, "This is the curfew, and this is how things are going to be done"?

The Importance of Discipline

I set some rules when my daughter was a little girl. I told my wife, "Before she's sixteen, the guys can visit outside of our fence. They can talk to her

through the fence. After she's sixteen they can come into the yard with the family (with supervision)." Erin grew up with that understanding.

Sometimes children buck your rules if they are strong-willed. Others go into place if you look at them cross-eyed.

When Erin was old enough for her eighth grade ceremony, the school had a special dinner. It was a really nice event. We took her out and had her hair and nails done. We did all the things you do to get ready. The day of the event, she talked back to me a few times. I told her that wasn't the way it was going to be. "If you mouth me anymore, you're not going to the dinner," I asserted. We had done all these things in caring for her because parents want to bless their children.

Giving them things doesn't spoil them, but lack of discipline does. Well, she talked back again. That was it. I told her to go to her room, and it was only a half hour before we were to leave the house. She was in her beautiful little dress. I have a picture of her all dressed up, ready to go... with no place to go now.

She went to her room and didn't speak disrespectfully to me again. She didn't say anything. She came back an hour or so later and said, "Dad, I'm sorry. I ask your forgiveness." She didn't say, "Well, I'd like to go now." No, because it was done. She truly had a broken and contrite heart. She went back and took off her dress. There wasn't any pouting or crying, "How could you, Dad?" No, because that didn't work with Dad. It might work with Mom sometimes, but it didn't work with me.

Understand this, if she had been permitted to get away with what she did by dishonoring me (it was pivotal point in her life), then that would have given her permission to dishonor her husband today and to create dishonor in her life. When you dishonor someone, you are not bringing honor to yourself (in God's eyes and in the authorities' eyes) or in those around you. They are watching, and when they see that dishonor is permitted, then it breeds dishonor, rebellion, and independence.

Dishonoring Your Spouse

When a wife dishonors her husband, it is a shame. She can be a rotteness to his bones. In the same way it says a whole lot about a husband who dishonors his wife, doesn't it?

You go through many different situations in life. Sometimes you get away with something that you shouldn't get away with. If you are self-indulgent, you got your way as a child, and your parents never corrected or trained you in honor, you will expect others to do everything you want them to do. Your response would be, "You don't care about me because you're not doing what I want." It doesn't work in life, however. In life there are two options: what you want or the right thing. What will bless everybody? The people who dishonor don't care about anybody else except themselves, and they really don't care about themselves.

Back to the principle. If we don't do what God says to do, then we don't care about ourselves. We don't love ourselves. If we don't love ourselves, how are we going to do anything for anybody else? Where is the appreciation? A husband should have appreciation for his wife. A wife should have appreciation for her husband. The children are watching.

I have found when a wife honors her husband, the children honor their dad. If a wife is seeking approval from the children, then dad is always the bad guy, and she will side with the children. Then the house is divided. There is no honor in that. A wife undermines her own house with her mouth.

If the husband leaves, he creates a mess for his wife and children to handle. There is no honor for a man in leaving the house and putting everything on his wife. Then the children get bitter. They grow up either self-indulgent or bitter against the world. It is basically self-indulgence too because they don't care about anyone else.

Abundant Life

Jesus came along and changed all that. If you look at the fifth commandment closely, you will see something: "*Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*" It isn't just living long or existing; it is having quality of life and not just occupying time and space. Jesus said, "*I have come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly.*" He is talking about quality of life, not just breathing, walking, talking, and getting around. He is talking about having a really exciting, blessed life – spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially and in relationships.

Get the whole tamale. Wholeness. Not fragmented, not just going along struggling, trying to make something happen. If we don't learn to honor when we are little, it will affect our entire life. Have you gone through situations you didn't have to go through because you didn't honor your parents? You didn't honor what they said. They told you what they told you for a reason because they have lived a lot longer than you have. They know more about what is out there. I tell children, "There are lions and tigers and bears out there. Don't be afraid of them, but realize they are there. There are unscrupulous people, people who will do you harm."

Protecting is Caring

Children won't think about it because they are not aware of it. Therefore, we protect and care for the children. We don't smother them. We help them learn to make choices and decisions, what is right and what is wrong, what will work and what won't. I would choose three good options for my children and set the choices before them. God also sets good choices before us – things for life and blessing, for our good.

Children have to know that their parents love and care about them, that they are there for their good, but not like a sugar daddy where he gives the children whatever they want. "You know, you owe it to me," my daughter said. That was a slap in the face, but I didn't receive it. It didn't bother me. I had to straighten my child out, though.

There is foolishness bound up in the heart of a child, and they don't really know what is going on. Therefore, I can't believe parents who say, "I give my children the option to think for themselves and to decide for themselves what they want in life." God says foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. Children cannot make proper decisions on their own. They look at our example. They look at what they want themselves. If you put a healthy plate of food out on the table along with a plate of popcorn, candy, and all kinds of pastries, the kids will go to the donuts and sweets and leave the broccoli and cauliflower alone. They will sit there with the soda pop and drink it all day long until their teeth fall out because they didn't have to brush their teeth.

I have seen parents let their children's teeth rot right in their head, and wouldn't make them brush their teeth, oversee the brushing, or even show them how to do it. That is abuse.

On the other hand, I have seen two year old tyrants run the house. The parents bow to the little one's wishes like they are genies in a bottle. "I'm here at your every command, (you doting little tyrant)."

Honor works both ways. I honor my children by doing the right thing towards them and by being a living example. When we don't do the right thing, we are dishonoring them, and we are dishonoring ourselves.

Honor Others

A wife hasn't learned honor and respect when she says, "My husband doesn't do anything honorable, and there's nothing worth respecting in his life." The bible doesn't say respect and honor your husband because he is worthy of it, does it? It just says to do it. Do it. If we would look at how her mother acted toward her spouse, we would probably see a wife who dishonored her husband, and that was the girl's role model for her life.

She has become like her mother who dishonored her dad. It is very sad. Then we see the other side where the dad abused his wife, and the son was watching it. He learned the ways of his dad. He does it to his wife now.

Honor your father and your mother *so that* you may live. If the honor isn't there, you will not live a life of blessing. A spirit of lawlessness, rebellion, and independence has developed in you if you say, "I'll do whatever I want. I don't care what the law says" to your employers, government leaders, or policemen. Let me tell you, the law won't budge, and you will run into one authority after another, each one getting stronger. Ultimately you will have to give an account to God.

Let's say you spend your life in prison, whether it is in a prison as we understand it, or a prison of your own making. People may not be incarcerated in a facility, but they live in their own prison. Honor has something to do with it. We have to humble ourselves to decide to do what God wants as well as humble ourselves to do things our parents' way, not to mention the way the employer and government say to do it. The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus and get Him to go against the government. He told them to give Him a coin, and He asked, "Whose portrait is this?" (There was a picture of Caesar on the coin). Then He said, "*Render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and render to God what belongs to God.*" (Matthew 22:21)

When He was twelve He said to His mother, *“Know ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”* Still, there was respect in Him. There was honor in Him. He went home with her, and *“He grew in the favor of God and man.”* Why? He was an obedient son.

What Jesus was telling His mom wasn’t dishonor. It was that He knew who His heavenly Father was, and He was doing what God wanted Him to do at that point.

Very rarely have I seen a child who wanted to do “his thing” as to the Lord under the Holy Spirit’s direction.

Lasting Impressions

I saw a paper my daughter wrote for a school assignment about her family. She made a picture of us all, and then she wrote about us. She wrote that her mom was really good to her, helped her, and did wonderful things for her. She wrote that she was a negotiator, but Dad had the last word. I thought it was kind of cute that she used the word negotiator because that is what she was.

When she got married, I was thrilled that everything Diana had taught her by word and example, and what I had taught her by word and example, started to happen. Her marriage made an opportunity for expression. What a blessing that can be. Understand, nobody is perfect all the time, but if you have the honor principle, you are going to honor one another as to the Lord. It means you are going to bring out God’s best.

God will bless the children who honor their parents, in spite of the parents. God will promote and bless the people on the job who are honoring the employer. They are actually there to bless the business and the employer rather than thinking about how much they make, what their benefits are, what their vacation time is, and when their breaks are. No, it should be, “I just came to serve. I want to be a blessing.” Those are the people God will honor and promote above everyone else. They don’t even have to think about wages because they are going to be compensated. God will make sure the blessing is there.

Most people don’t think about it that way. It is always about them. They have to make sure they get what is coming to them. You need to be careful with that because you might get what is coming to you. Nobody is

indispensable, and the problem is that people who don't honor think that they are indispensable. They want people to honor them, but they don't honor anyone else. *"Do to others what you want done to you."* The principle works on all the commandments of God, and we are now dealing with loving your neighbor as yourself.

You may think that you didn't have love as a child because you weren't in that kind of environment. Well, you are in the environment of the Holy Spirit now. Start to honor now. Today is the day of salvation. Today is the day of change and blessing.

As a child, did you go out and do your own thing and not listen to what your parents told you? Did you get yourself into trouble and danger by doing so? You moved out from the covering of protection.

When our children were teenagers, they once said, "You don't trust us." So Diana and I had to tell them that it wasn't that we didn't trust them. We trusted them implicitly. We knew they had God's principles. They knew what was right and wrong. It was the world we didn't trust. We trust God, but we don't trust the world.

God's Authorities

If you do what God says through His authorities, you will benefit, and you will receive the blessing. The blessed child is the one who goes out and does what God says. Sometimes it's tough, but it gets easier.

Paul called himself a spiritual dad. He said he raised Timothy in the faith. *"Remember your leaders who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."* (Hebrews 13 :7) This means look at their example. Look at their track record. Learn. Imitate. Ephesians 6 says, *"Be imitators of God as dear children."*

God will put it on your heart to bless your dad, mom, boss, or minister of God. We encourage people to take care of the minister of God in their church. Don't make it hard to take care of them. Bless them in Jesus' name, and you will be blessed.

Where the ministers of God are blessed, the people of God are blessed.

To me the fondest gift is that people do what the word says. I don't mind the process they go through when they are getting to that point. Jesus told the parable about the two sons. One was told to do something, and he said he would get right on it, but he never did. The other son said he wouldn't do it but later repented and obeyed. Jesus asked, "Who is blessed?" Everyone answered, "The son who obeyed." (Matthew 21:28-32) Joyful obedience is the best for being blessed. Great joy comes to a parent or a minister of God when people do and see the blessing... and realize the blessing.

"..Consider the outcome and their way of life. Imitate their faith." Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Don't get carried away with strange doctrines.

It really bothers me that in our society today the parents' role is being taken away. Counselors and others in the schools aren't required to tell the parents or involve the parents in what is going on. I say, "Man, we have a problem here because who did God entrust the children to? Who are those children accountable to?" The parents, as to the Lord.

Diana and I always told the children, "If you have something going on, talk to us. That's what we're here for. We're not here to slap you down, but we are here to encourage and help you."

If people would talk about things before they do them, many times problems could be saved. You don't have to go through all the grief.

Submit to the Authorities

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage for you. Pray for us."

People have to give an account. Parents have to give an account to God some day for what they did with the children. Children have to give an account for what they did with their parents.

Ministers of God have to give an account to God for the people they were given to care for, for better or for worse. Therefore, obey the ministers, honor them, and submit that they might care for you with joy.

You may be thinking, *That sounds kind of cultish to me.* Sure, cult is the counterfeit of what is true. It is where people aren't accountable to God.

I am accountable to God and so is every other minister. That is why I say, "Is it what God says or isn't it? If it is, then do it. It has to be the Lord." If it isn't what God says, forget it. It's just somebody coming up with an idea.

A true minister of God isn't a hireling. One time a congregation told me, "You owe us. We take care of you and pay your salary." I said, "No, you don't. God does." What they wanted me to do was *not* what God wanted me to do. They were the same ones who said, "Don't open that Book. Talk sense to us instead." Hey, the word of God is sense, and it's what we need. Well, they wanted to have a little country club. God sent me in there, but there was trouble there. They had 10 pastors in 18 years. There was a problem, and they have had a bunch since.

A pastor or minister has to give a report, *"That they might give it with joy and not with sorrow because that will be unprofitable to you."*

When parents come to talk to me about their children, I look at how they raised the children. If they didn't deal with the little tyrant at age two, come 16, they have a monster on their hands. It is not the time to start to do to the children what should have been done to them at age two. It's too late for that. The parents will have to live by faith and set a godly example. There will have to be some repenting going on and a lot of humility that the children even listen to them anymore.

There is grace, and God will help them. Isaiah 54 is a great promise: *"And all your children will be taught of the Lord."* Let them behold your example — faith, humility, love, caring. It will take a while to get through the trust barrier because they mistrust you. It doesn't mean it couldn't come down in a day. The Berlin wall came down in a day. Nobody ever thought it would, but God can change anything in a day. Just watch when that trumpet blows, and Jesus comes from the heavens. Everything will change in a day, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye it will all be changed.

Care for yourself. Everything about care is about honor. Where there is no honor, there is no care being given. Familiarity is not honor.

A parent who can't enforce discipline has lost the respect of his children. People who don't honor God have no fear of God. They give no reverence, respect, honor, or worship, and they don't do what He says. God will deal with them. A boss who runs into disrespect and rebellion will put up with it for a little bit, but then he will terminate the person, and he doesn't have to give a reason. If you are a believer, you ought to know the reason.

If people go against the law, they will sit in jail. They will have problems. I don't care what kind of a crooked lawyer you get, God will give the discipline at the end of the matter. You may get off or cheat the system, but you won't have a life. Why won't you have a life? Because you didn't do what God said and honor the authorities.

In Conclusion

In the fifth commandment God is talking about honoring the authorities He has placed in your life for your good – to benefit you, care for you, instruct you, and show you the way to go. The parents are the first authorities under God in a child's life, and from there the other authorities come into play – the church, the workplace, the government, etc.. God is saying if you honor the authorities, you honor Him. If you don't honor the authorities, your life will not be good. *“Honor father and mother [and the authorities of the God in your life] so that it may be well with you, and you will live long on the face of the earth.”*

People are always looking for somebody to care for them, but the commandments are written for you to care for yourself in relation to others. Understand, most parents will do anything that God wants for their children, and God will do anything for him if the child is doing what dad and mom say to do. At the workplace, they will rise to promotions, promotions, promotions.

Policemen are our friends if we are doing what is right, but they are still the authority of God. Have you ever tried to be friendly with a policeman? They do what I did with my children. They are cordial and friendly (depending on the circumstance or situation), but they don't let you get familiar. *“Touch not God's anointed.”* Don't disrespect them. When you disrespect authority, you disrespect yourself.

Romans 13 states, *“All authority (servants and ministering servants) comes from God for our good, if we are doing what is right. If we are not, then they are ministering servants of God for discipline and correction.”*

One of the major problems in most people’s lives is authority. Satan’s problem was an authority problem. It was passed on, wasn’t it?

You owe your parents a note of thanks and gratitude for what God has done in caring for you over the years. A little thankfulness goes a long way. A little appreciation. A little honor. Give me just a little bit of respect.

What do people want? If you want a little of something, then give a little of it. Give and you shall receive.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
Thou Shalt Not Kill
Chapter Four

When the Lord tells you to do something, He intends for you to do it because there is something good there for you. He doesn't ask you to do anything that won't bless you. When you get to know Him, you will start to see it. Trust Him and do what He says.

Because God loves us, He gave us His commandments. Now we are to do them, and we will be blessed. In them He has shown us how to live and what is pleasing to Him. They are not grievous to a believer (1st John 5:3), but they are grievous to people who don't want to do them. If you don't want to do the commandments of God, then you are not a believer. Do something about it.

Have you had thoughts that you didn't want to do what God said to do? Do you not like God telling you to do *anything*?

If people cared for themselves, they would do what God says. They would believe He loves them with an everlasting love that never fades away or changes, and He wants good things for them. He gave them the commandments which were written with His own finger. It says in the book of Hebrews that the commandments of God are now written on our hearts.

When you received Jesus, you became born again, and your spirit came alive to God. Now it is holy. You have a mind that needs to be renewed by the word of God in order to think God's way rather than the old selfish, self-centered way. You have a clay pot called a body, which needs to be taken care of because it is the way you get around. It is basically a bunch of dirt, water, and inert gases. Depending on what you eat, gases may multiply.

The spirit man is the real you, and that is where the Ten Commandments are written. That is, your conscience is alive to God.

There is a battle between your unrenewed mind and your spirit. You know the right thing, but you want to do something else. Go with your spirit. Tell your mind to shut up, sit down, and line up with the Spirit of God in you. Then tell your body to line up.

People who are dealing with physical infirmities have to tell their bodies to line up with their spirits in Jesus' name. The mind has to get out of the way and believe God. The mind is the area of the will (intellect, emotions, and will). Even though God is prompting you and talking to you, you can choose not to do what He says.

An Explanation and Information

"Thou shalt not kill." (Exodus 20:13) The sixth commandment is about befriending your brothers and sisters. Seek to always befriend them. Look out for them and bless them, protect them, care for them, and seek to do and be your best towards them. Believe for God's best.

This commandment is about more than killing someone (taking a life), although it is certainly about taking life (human life and well-being). In other words, this has to do with caring for people and caring for God. We care about God's commandments because we care for Him and we take care to do what He says to do the way He says to do it.

God holds life in high honor. We need to do so also because God is the author of life. He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who lives and believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live. He who lives and believes in Me will never die."* We go through death (and through Jesus – like through a veil), and we go to the other side to be with God forever.

I tell people, "If we are going to be together forever, then we might as well start liking each other now. We might as well do something good to each other."

"Thou shalt not kill."

Here is a definition of the sixth commandment from a small catechism used to train children in the ways of the Lord: "We should fear and love God so that we may not hurt or harm our neighbor, but help and befriend him in every bodily need." It isn't just talking about the physical realm, but the mental realm as well.

There is mental pain and there is physical pain, mental hardship and physical hardship, financial hardship or relational hardship.

“Thou shalt not kill.”

If I really cared for myself, I would love people, and I would look out for their well-being. I would protect them and care for them. I would seek to help them.

However, there are three people you cannot help:

- the ones who don't want any help because they don't see a need for it
- the ones who think you are the problem
- the ones who don't care about God's ways or doing God's word

The day will come when they may begin to care because things may get so tough out there that they will want help. You have heard, “If all else fails, pray.” If we believe God, praying is the first thing we should do!

“Thou shalt not kill.”

I am going to protect human life and well-being. What does this say about our nation where abortion is permitted? God is the author of life. The thief has come to steal, to kill, and to destroy. Jesus said in John 10:10, *“But I've come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.”*

Our heart's desire is for ourselves and for others – to love others as we love ourselves. Jesus summarized the commandments: *“Love the Lord your God with all you heart, your mind and soul,”* and the second, *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

What I want to do is bless other people. I want to protect their lives. I want to care for them. I don't want to do anything that will cause harm, jeopardy, or pain in their lives.

In the sixth commandment God forbids us to take the life of a fellow man (murder) or our own life (suicide). *“Whoever sheds the blood of man by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God has God made man.”* (Genesis 9:6)

Life or Death

“All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” (Matthew 26:52) This deals with capital punishment issues. When you take the sword and kill somebody, you will perish with the sword. *“[The government] bears not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”* (Romans 13:4)

Government has the right to inflict the death penalty and to wage just wars – defensive wars and wars against oppression, terror, and people that inflict harm upon others. In other words, the Lord will not let evil (killing, stealing and destroying) run rampant. The city rejoices when the evil person is struck down. (Proverbs 11:10) Why? If the oppressor is left to oppress, nobody would have freedom, justice, or life. Understand how the thief works. When he was kicked out of heaven, he came down and destroyed everything.

In Genesis Chapter 1, verse 1 God created the heavens and the earth. Verse 2 says that the earth was without form and void, but God does not create without form and void. You see, He had to redo the earth, so He started over.

God said, “Let not the oppressor oppress.” Don’t let that plague continue. Don’t let the cancer grow in your body. Stop the oppressor. Jesus said, *“I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.”*

What causes every war? *“From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not of your own lust? You have not, and you want something, so you try to get it.”* (James 4) It also says you have not because you ask not. When you ask, you ask amiss, to consume upon your own lusts. Many don’t realize that the liberty we have in our nation is because men and women stood up, lived, and died for us.

Freedom is not automatically given in this world. It costs. We have to stand up for whatever is right, just, and true. We need to stand up for whatever is of God. Many people say, “That’s not my fight.” It is a sad thing when people have no concern for dying or suffering people in other parts of the world. The only time people get really concerned is when something is happening to them or to someone close to them. That isn’t love, and it isn’t care.

Cain killed his brother Abel. (Genesis 4:8) God asked him, *“Where is your brother Abel?”* And he answered, *“Am I my brother’s keeper?”* knowing full well he just struck the guy down and killed him out in the field. God said, *“Abel’s blood cries from the ground for justice.”* Innocent blood wants justice. There are many innocent people dying today. The blood of every baby that is aborted is crying out to God for judgment and justice. People need to seriously look at protecting life and the rights that God has given for human life.

Everyone in God has a right to a good life. *“God’s plans for us are for good, not for evil. Plans to prosper us and give us hope and a future.”* It applies to everyone because God is not a God of partiality. He doesn’t prefer one person over the other.

Not everyone is receiving that life nor are they wanting God’s life. They are not receiving His ways and doing His ways, but God wants them to have well-being – peace, joy, love, and happiness: spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, and in relationships. Blessing is the heart of God, the heart of His love. It needs to be our hearts as well.

Love God’s People

We have God’s heart because He gave us His heart when we received Jesus as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit wants to do good through us and through His people around the earth. If we love God, and love His people, then we will start thinking about it. Cain had no care about his brother, did he?

You know this by, *“Am I my brother’s keeper?”* which makes it obvious. He seemed concerned about himself, but he wasn’t really concerned. If he had been, he would have done what God said. *“Why are you so angry and upset? If you would do what’s right, you’d be blessed.”* If you are really concerned about yourself, you will do what God says the way He says it, and not modify it to fit whatever is convenient for you. It is *“Yes, Lord, I’ll bring the whole tithe and honor you with my giving.”* He says to bring the whole tithe and offering, not, *“I’m doing good enough just to bring the tithe.”*

People modify what God says, and because they are doing part of it, it makes them feel good, but they are not doing the other part.

Sometimes you have got to go through something to get to the blessing. If you go through an infirmity, you know what it's like to have an infirmity. You know what people are going through when they're experiencing pain or suffering mentally, financially, or in relationships. All of a sudden you have a big heart of mercy. Before, you might have thought, *You must be a sinner that this is happening to you.* (Hello, Job's friends. Quote, "friends." God knows, they were toxic. I don't know if you want such friends around: you do, but you want to love them out of it.)

If we were looking for a perfect person, there would be nobody around. We wouldn't be looking a long time because we are not perfect either. Get that perspective about life. Everybody has a right to life because God gave life, and He is the author of life. He is the author of every blessing that goes with it. We are here to protect one another's lives. We are here to encourage one another, to build one another up in God and in the faith, and to preserve life, not take it away. God forbids us to harm our neighbors. That means not doing or saying anything that may destroy, shorten, or embitter their lives, or cause them pain. Jabez prayed, "Lord, let me not cause pain or experience pain."

Come Against the Trauma

God taught me about trauma many years ago since I have worked with people through all kinds of hideous situations. Whenever something like that happens, it creates trauma in people's lives, and it throws everything upside down. It is intended to steal, kill, and destroy. The Lord taught me the prayer against trauma. It is one of the first things I pray for people, whether they have been in a car crash, a divorce, or whatever else can happen.

We pray against the trauma because it is what sends their minds into confusion. All the pain, sorrow, grief, and suffering start coming up, and they can't think straight. They can't get their faith locked down. Therefore, we come against the trauma. Then the person is able to get rooted and grounded in the faith again and stop the swirling chaos.

Experiencing trauma is like getting sucked down a whirlpool. You don't know how you will end up, and you don't know what you will do. The Lord taught me to tell people not to look at all the ups and downs of what they are going through. Let's say you get a report that something good is about to happen. Your hopes rise. When it doesn't work out, down you go.

Something else gives you hope, and you go up. It doesn't work out, so down you go again. The Lord says, "Don't look at all the ups and downs in life." He asks, "What do you see at the finish line? How do you see this will end up? That is your point of faith." Don't look at everything that goes on in between. When the dust settles and everything clears, what will you have? That is what you will have. We help people get to that point. When we are protecting the well-being of others, we see that some other things happen. Note: David didn't care for the life of Uriah (II Samuel 11:15). He committed adultery with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, and he had Uriah killed.

Judas didn't care for his life when he killed himself. (Matthew 27:5) God would have forgiven him, and Jesus would have forgiven him, but he didn't hear any of it. He was caught up in his sorrow and grief, which was demonic oppression. If you don't receive God's word of forgiveness, it will create such guilt that it will drive you to despair or suicide.

Watch Your Words

Jesus talked about the sixth commandment in the book of Matthew. Do you realize you can kill with your words? You can embitter someone's life with your words. In addition, gossip is in the list with all of the other abominable sins that people consider to be the most abominable. God includes gossip (1 Corinthians 6) because they embitter people's lives. They steal lives. They steal reputations.

A person's reputation is just about everything in this world. If somebody ruins your reputation, they are taking your life. It is an assault on your life. God will deal with them, for vengeance is the Lord's. As for us, we don't ever want to say or do anything that would embitter somebody or steal the blessing that God has for them. Life or death is in the power of the tongue. If you care about people, you won't be talking trash to them. You won't tell them what a failure or loser they are, or that they will never amount to anything. Such comments can ruin their lives.

Often I have to deal with this. What was told to people when they were children is still affecting them today. They may be 40, 50, or 60 years old, and it is still affecting their lives. Jesus said, "*Better a millstone [a wide, thick stone] be put around their necks, and they be drowned in the depths of the sea, than to offend one of these little ones [God's people].*" Believer or unbeliever alike are still God's people. That is, God's creation.

What is inside people is what defiles them, and what comes out of people defiles them. Being a good or not so good person is determined by what you say and do (more by what you do than what you say). Sometimes it takes awhile to find out the truth. Con artists are sharp with their words, but they are conning themselves above anybody else. They are missing the blessing of God. Every time you lie, not only do you cheat and defile yourself, but you are abusing someone else, and you are affecting a life. This is *“Thou shalt not kill.”* Have you had your life affected by somebody else’s lie? God says it is wrong because it isn’t love or caring.

Forgiveness

Speak the truth whether you are right or wrong. Speak the truth about your actions. “I did wrong” is one of the finest things you can say. The only thing that makes a godly marriage different from an ungodly one is the element of forgiveness and admitting you have a problem. Forgiveness. Jesus came to take away the sins of the whole world. When Jesus died on the cross, the sins of the world were taken away.

Let that thought cross your mind and sink down deeply in your heart. Would that the word of God was like a spear that went in and through you until it stuck in your heart and your head.

Don’t ever forget that Jesus died on the cross to take away the sins of the world. It was for believer or unbeliever – everyone from the beginning of time. He took away the sins of the whole world.

Now we must receive not only forgiveness, but also the love of God in Jesus. When we do, we ask God’s forgiveness for our lives and we receive the forgiveness He provided and supplied. Then He makes us clean in His presence. Isn’t that exciting? He says, “Go and do likewise to your brothers and sisters and forgive them as well as I have forgiven you.” *“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, rather give place to wrath for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine. I will repay,’ saith the Lord. If thine enemy hunger, feed him. If he thirst, give him drink...”* (Romans 12:19, 20 KJV) It is caring for a brother or a sister. Did you think they were your enemy? We were enemies of God when Christ died for us – the godly for the ungodly. To God there is no such thing as an enemy, and to a Christian it should be the same. I look at folks and I believe everybody loves me.

People have come to me and said, “Pastor, that isn’t true. I know somebody who doesn’t love you,” and I say, “It’s true as far as I’m concerned.” In other words, I’m not receiving it because I love that person. What they think towards me is their business – it is between them and God, but I don’t want to do anything to hurt, offend or cause them pain. If I have to, I will ask for forgiveness. Many people’s pain is in their heads. I’ve caused pain to some I don’t even know. That is the spirit of the thief trying to hurt and stir up people. How can you cause pain in someone you don’t even know?

People project pain out to others around them. Still, everybody stands accountable to God for his own life. We don’t want to do anything that will cause problems. It is a good thing to humble yourself. If it means setting someone free, I’m willing to say or ask forgiveness for anything.

If that is really what is needed to set somebody free, then we need to be willing to go the extra mile and do whatever is needed to be done to help a person get free. You can be wrong even when you’re so right. What is more important – the relationship or being right? Needing to be right ruins many marriages and relationships, for it is a power struggle. You throw away the relationship or the life of the relationship because you have to be right. Consequently you trash the other person. To be right means everybody else has to be wrong. It is what we call the “I am conqueror” game. Some other games people play: the “he said, she said, who said what” game and the blame game. It means that you have to win at all costs and, someone will have to lose.

If you are living like that, you are deceived in your mind. You need to ask God to forgive you and get free from it. You are not submitted to God because you can’t be right when God says you’re wrong. The word clearly shows that kind of behavior is wrong, and so we need to ask God’s forgiveness, which means humbling ourselves.

No Anger or Hatred

God forbids us to bear anger and hatred in our hearts against our neighbor.
“Thou shalt not kill.”

Joseph’s brothers harmed him and embittered the life of their father, Jacob, by their wickedness. They killed an animal and put blood on Joseph’s coat. Then for years their dad thought Joseph was dead because his brothers lied to him. In the end God turned it all around. Joseph said, *“What you*

intended for evil, God intended for good to save the whole world.” In spite of what folks do, God can turn things around. Praise His holy name.

You can imagine how glad Jacob was when he heard that Joseph was alive. All those years the poor man had suffered because of what the brothers did out of jealousy, rage, and anger. I would love to have been there when the moment of truth came forth and people were set free. There is nothing finer in life than seeing that happen.

Joseph forgave his brothers for causing him pain. He said he didn't hold anything against them, but he made them accountable. He made them responsible to their commitment. What was their commitment? A brother to a brother. I mean, how can we do the things we do to one another? When God was teaching me about marriage, He told me, “Son, if you say a word or think a thought about your wife that is not edifying, blessing, and causing God's best to come to her, it's like stabbing yourself in the back.” In the back, not the front. The back is stabbed by treacherous cowards and murderers.

Many people won't say something to your face, but they will say it behind your back because they are cowards. They are losers. They have treachery in their hearts. They want to hurt and harm somebody. The Lord said to me, “If you even have a thought about this, you're stabbing yourself in the back. You're a coward and a treacherous person because you're not allowing my best to happen in behalf of your wife.”

I got down on my face before God. I must have been very close to doing something because, you know, He wouldn't have brought it up. Sometimes He is teaching a principle, but let me tell you, many times what we teach comes from what happens to us. What is common to one is common to all. Has it gone across your heart to undermine someone else? You thought thoughts that weren't of God, and you said things that weren't of God, and you talked out of school? “*Thou shalt not kill.*” That is what the accuser of the brethren does. The liar, Satan, is a murderer, Jesus said. From the very beginning he was a murderer, and he puts murder in people's hearts. We don't care for ourselves when we have murder in our hearts. When we think that way towards somebody else, it's even worse.

“I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.” (Matthew 5:22) Of course everybody

says, “I have got a cause.” Let me put it this way, you don’t have a cause. Just get that out of your head. Righteous anger is just for a moment, and then it is over. If you hold on to it for two minutes, you’ll have a devil.

A lady came to me one time and said, “Pastor, I’m angry at my husband and I’m going to hold it until just before the sun sets.” I said, “Honey, you’re going to have a hundred devils by the time the sun sets.” What was she doing? She was quoting the word of God out of Ephesians 4:26. “*Be angry, but don’t sin. Don’t let the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place or opportunity [home] to a devil.*” She was figuring she could hold it until the sun set. It was about 11:30AM at the time. If you aren’t right with God, then you’d better get on your face now, ask God’s forgiveness, and let it go. If you don’t let that go, you’re going to be ensnared by the devil. That’s just what he wants. He wants to take you down. He wants to ruin your life, your marriage, and your children.

The devil wants those children. He wants those godly offspring. He wants everyone of them perverted and destroyed. Oh, I wouldn’t want to be in the shoes of the person who is showing young children pornography and putting it on the internet where kids can access it every day. Let me tell you, it is an affront to human life, and it is killing people. It is destroying lives, relationships, marriages, and homes, and it takes out everything of God.

Giving someone alcohol or drugs violates “*Thou shalt not kill,*” but it happens every day. People are being exposed to it. Sex outside of marriage exposes people to what isn’t blessed of God and opens up doors to the devil to ruin their lives.

There is no safe sex except no sex. You’ve heard it. Let it be said again. There is no safe sex. The only safe sex is no sex. That’s it, bottom line. Many people are being exposed to wrong things every day. “*Thou shalt not kill.*”

“*Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer.*” Have you have held bitterness or grudges? It was just for a few minutes, Pastor. “*Thou shalt not kill.*” Do you realize a person can die in that instant? All it takes is an instant. Bam, and it’s done. A guy drowned his child in a bathtub in Los Angeles and afterwards he was beside himself. He didn’t know what he had done, and he couldn’t remember a thing.

It took just an instant. A moment of rage or moment of anger. Somebody punches someone else, down they go, their life is impaired or taken in an instant. A person who is angry or drunk gets in the car, drives off, and someone else is maimed or dead. It only takes an instant to ruin a life.

The bible talks about “in the twinkling of an eye.” God can work a miracle in a twinkling of an eye. An instant. For blessing or for cursing. For life or for death. If you harbor bitterness in your heart, or revenge, anger, or hostility, it will ruin your life, and not just your life. You will contaminate and defile everyone around you. Proverbs says, “*Stay away from an angry man lest you learn his ways.*” Anger defiles. Have you ever noticed the trauma that comes upon you when someone yells at you? Or whispers a sweet nothing that goes down inside of you and tears you apart. Thus, you’re traumatized. It only takes a word, you know.

Have you sought to build relationships? You can destroy in a minute what you have worked so hard to establish over time. It doesn’t take much. Have you noticed how you can immediately remember the bad things but have to think about what good things are happening? There’s something wrong with that.

“Thou shalt not kill.”

What does God require of us in the sixth commandment? We should help and befriend our neighbor in every bodily need. “*If your enemy hungers, feed him.*” (Romans 12:20)

My Brother’s Keeper

Abraham rescued Lot from his enemies. (Genesis 14:12-16) David protected the life of Saul even though he had an opportunity to strike him down. David said, “*Touch not God’s anointed.*” He befriended life in that situation. A good Samaritan helped the man who had fallen among thieves. (Luke 10:33-35) He went out of his way, didn’t he? In that day the Samaritan was an enemy of the Jew, and they didn’t have anything to do with each other.

One was from the northern kingdom and the other was from the southern kingdom, but “never the two shall meet.” The good Samaritan story was in relation to the greatest commandment Jesus was teaching. “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your mind, and your soul, and secondly, love*

your neighbor as yourself.” The disciple asked, “*Who is my neighbor?*” (Who is my brother?) Contrast this to Cain, “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*”

Jesus proceeded to tell the story of the good Samaritan in which the man’s enemy was the one who helped him. The two religious people walked by and took a wide berth so they didn’t have to get involved. That has been the problem in our world today. Folks don’t want to take the time to get involved. It is easier to stay at a distance, maybe send some money, you know, do something, but don’t get involved. Apathy is the hand tool of the devil. “Am I my brother’s keeper? If it doesn’t concern me or isn’t affecting my life, my family, or my country, why should I get involved? That’s their business.”

I have had that thought cross my mind a time or two. Let people work out their own stuff. There is a time for that to happen, and then there is a time when we need to get involved. In World Wars I and II people needed to get involved. I don’t care what people think about the rest of the wars. The people in the ministry are giving their lives on behalf of our country. Such people need to be honored. Their lives are important. We need to be praying, and we need to be believing God for them. We need to get involved.

Helping Others Through Prayer

You can get involved by praying! Let’s pray and believe God, and then the Holy Spirit will show us what else we can do or need to do in the process. To say, “Too bad; it’s tough. I feel sorry for you,” which is sympathy, never helps anybody. It comes up beside pain, and what does it do? It agrees with it. “Oh, you poor thing. It’s really tough.” People may want that, but they don’t need that. They may want somebody to coddle them, but it isn’t helping the situation. It is just identifying with it.

If we are to help, we need to believe in the compassion of God that will overcome the situation and move the person out of the situation into the place of blessing.

Many times we have seen God step in and turn the tide as God’s people humbled themselves, prayed, and sought His face, asking for forgiveness. When they sought Him with all their hearts and turned from their wicked ways, God healed the land and did all kinds of wonderful things for families.

That is getting involved, but to say, “Oh, it’s tough; too bad” is doing nothing.

Years ago the Lord told me not to read the papers or watch the news for about eight months. He said, “Son, I don’t want you to listen to anything that has to do with the news.” Even the news is questionable reporting nowadays. For example, in my last car crash, one newspaper reported that I was the one at fault. Well, how could I be the one at fault when I was the third car going through a green light? The person clearly ran a red light, and everyone around said what was what, but they still reported it incorrectly. They didn’t retract their report either.

What do we do with sensationalism, nonsense, and lies? At one time God said, “Son, I don’t want you to listen to any of the news. I don’t want you to be a part of it.” After the eight months, He came back with, “Now, son, I want you to read the newspaper and listen to the reports on television and radio. I want you to pray for every situation you hear about.” He invited me into the situation. So I started doing it, and I’ve been doing it ever since.

When I hear a fire engine, ambulance or police car coming down the street, I say, “Father, in the name of Jesus, step into that situation. I bind whatever is not of God, and I speak life and blessing into the situation.” I don’t always follow through and find out what happened because it isn’t necessary. I know I put the blessing of God out there. When I pray, I believe it is done. I’m telling you this, however, if we are praying for your health but you’re continuing to smoke, or you’re not eating right, that will negate the prayer. It doesn’t matter who prays or how many pray. God Himself cannot do anything if you are refusing to do what He says. You need to look out for yourself that way.

In Conclusion

Have you ever tried to help others and encourage them to do the right thing? Did you get frustrated, angry, or upset because they didn’t do what was right? Then you stopped doing the good thing yourself. Let it go. Be merciful, kind, and forgiving towards your neighbors. That is keeping the commandment.

By reading this lesson, did you find that you were a murderer? Do you need to ask God’s forgiveness? You can do it right now. “In the name of Jesus, forgive me, Lord, for murdering people and myself.” If you speak badly

about yourself, you undermine the work of God because you are God's good workmanship. Don't you dare talk trash about yourself or anybody else because that is the work of the devil. He was a murderer from the beginning.

Are you forgiven? Receive it. Many people ask for forgiveness for the same thing a thousand times. God forgives you the first time. You need to receive it and accept it.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
The Seventh Commandment
The Sanctity of Marriage
Chapter Five

When the Israelites rebelled, Moses would fall on his face before God. He didn't talk to Aaron or Miriam. He didn't deal with the leaders or the crowds. He just fell on his face before God and worshipped Him. The next thing you know, the Lord showed up to deal with Aaron, Miriam, and the leaders of Israel.

This chapter deals with "*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*" If you have committed adultery, did you ask God's forgiveness? If you haven't, we're going to catch you before you go any further. Thank God for forgiveness, but it is better to walk in holiness. Then you don't need forgiveness.

Early in our marriage, Diana and I had to learn some things about life. Everybody has their little squabbles (or all-out World War III) every now and then, but one thing we learned was that, just like Moses, we needed to fall on our faces before God.

If one person won't, then the other needs to, in order to get it started. Then the other spouse will come in line. That is how we broke strife out of our lives. Period. This is for people everywhere. Single or married, get rid of strife because it hinders the Spirit of God "*...lest your prayers be hindered.*" (1st Peter 3) In this passage Paul was talking to the husbands about how to deal with their wives with honor, acknowledging them with honor as the weaker vessel and dealing with them in knowledge so that they would be blessed. Otherwise their prayers would be hindered. When strife comes in, it creates commotion.

Jesus said, "*The thief has come to steal, kill, and destroy,*" and the thief works through strife and division.

What Does It Mean?

The seventh commandment deals with marriage and purity. "*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*" What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we may lead chaste and decent lives in word and deed. Each of us is to love and honor our spouses.

The Lord paints a picture of the way people are in relationship with Him. He is the husband, and the church is the wife. He talks about us committing adultery towards Him and going after other gods. When we get to the seventh commandment, “*Thou shalt not commit adultery,*” we are looking at purity of life.

Whether you are single or married, start to live your life in purity towards God, yourself, and others. If you commit sexual immorality, you have defiled your own body. (1st Corinthians 6) It not only creates an opportunity for problems in the physical realm such as sicknesses and disease, but a spiritual break with God occurs, and you develop a tie with someone else.

There is a godly tie in marriage, but outside of the blessing of marriage, an ungodly tie is made at the moment intercourse takes place. People don’t realize that they are defiling their own bodies at that point. They are sinning not only against themselves but against the other person, and ultimately they are sinning against God.

In Psalm 51 and Psalm 32 David repented of his involvement with Bathsheba and his breaking faith with Uriah, her husband. This kind of unfaithfulness violates everyone concerned – the children, the parents, the spouse, the other people around, and today it violates the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1st Corinthians 5 Paul brought something against the church at Corinth because they were not dealing with a fellow who was practicing immorality. (He was living with his dad’s wife.) Paul said that kind of behavior wasn’t even being done among unbelievers. Not only that, the believers weren’t saying or doing anything about it. God wants His church to be pure. He is not concerned about numbers, but He is concerned about purity and holiness.

Without holiness no one will see the Lord. “*Let there not even be a hint of sexual immorality in our midst*” (Hebrews 12) because this is an abomination to the Lord. It violates all of God’s principles of purity and holiness that He has intended for His people. With purity there is naturally blessing. “*The marriage bed is undefiled.*” (Hebrews 13:4) Every other bed is defiled and every backseat of a car is defiled – outside of marriage. The marriage bed is the only bed that does not produce guilt. God wants us to

live a lifelong union in marriage, and He wants “till natural death do us part.” One man and one woman is what God ordained.

“The two shall become one.” It doesn’t say multiples thereof. It says one man, one woman. Jesus took it to an even higher level in Matthew 5, *“If you look at a woman [or man] with lust in your heart, you have committed adultery.”* The bible gives two terms to describe sexual immorality – fornication and adultery. Fornication is done by people who are committing unacceptable sexual activities outside of marriage. Adultery is within the marriage; somebody in the relationship is married and there is a violation.

Marriage was instituted by God in Genesis 2, entered into by rightful betrothal and engagement. Matthew 19 talks about how the two shall leave father and mother and cleave to their spouse and become one flesh. *“What God has joined together, let no man put asunder,”* means a holy union.

Not only are we dealing with the sanctity of marriage but also with the sanctity of relationships. In other words, as brothers and sisters, we do not in any way want to defile one another by unfaithfulness. *“To the pure all things are pure, to the defiled everything is defiled.”*

Projection is a term to explain that people are putting their thoughts onto someone else. Have you told your children to stay away from sexual immorality, and you were afraid they would behave that way because you had done it? If so, the curse has to be broken because of what you have done. Many times we speak to the children out of fear that they will do the same things we did. As a result, they do the same things we did because of the fear. *“That which I feared the most is that which came upon me,”* Job said. Ask God’s forgiveness and seek the blessing.

Defilement in the Earth

We live in an age where divorce is rampant, even in the Christian community. This is an amazing violation of God’s commandment. It seems people don’t think anything of the sanctity of a relationship or the blessing and holiness of relationships. It has to do with trust. If people are not pure in thought, word, and deed, then they will seek to do things that will defile others.

Right now there is much impurity and defilement going on in the earth. People are being pressed to accept values that aren’t of God. For example,

you can hardly drive down the street nowadays without seeing a sexually explicit billboard, nor can you watch talk shows without hearing about all kinds of raunchy topics. Those things are defiling God's people, and that is the way the devil intends it. Jesus said, "*Take heed what you hear.*" You can be defiled by what you hear. It can enter in and start to defile you because you dwell on it and visualize it.

There is a sweep of pornography across the earth right now, and unfortunately there is easy access to it through the media. There is no censorship. What is now PG is actually R. And what does R mean? Restricted. It is restricted to a certain age group. Many such movies are perverting people and causing them to be contaminated – even those who are older than 17. Why should adults watch or listen to it? If you have ever been caught up in a movie or program that draws you in, it is intended to do so. There is a spirit behind it, a spirit of defilement.

Jesus called those kinds of spirits unclean spirits. Unclean spirits work to defile people's life and get them to think about and look at things that they shouldn't be thinking about or looking at. Then it goes beyond looking and thinking. People start to involve themselves. The uncleanness comes upon them. That is the working of the thief to come to steal, kill, and destroy. Have you ever felt that defilement? It comes on you, and you just feel yucky or unclean. You have seen something, and you weren't given any warning. This can happen while sitting at a movie. Before you know it, there it is. In just an instant your mind has been imprinted.

Your mind works like a camera, and it can imprint defilement. Ask God's forgiveness and move on. Here is how it happens: at first you close your eyes, and then you start to peek a little. The next thing you know you continue sitting there, and God forbid, you are defiled.

Even in the marriage bed there are acts which defile because lust is always defilement. It isn't purity the way God intended. The marriage bed is supposed to be a mutual loving, caring, and sharing; and the goal is ultimately godly offspring. It isn't any of the kinky stuff that goes on.

What God Forbids in the Seventh Commandment

A small catechism by Martin Luther is what we used for children in days gone by (but it works for adults too). It reads, "God forbids, in the seventh

commandment, the breaking of the marriage vow by unfaithfulness or desertion.” This can also apply to relationships, friendships, or any breaking of faith that is mentioned in Malachi 2 (where it says God hates divorce).

Breaking faith with people implies you no longer want anything to do with them. You don't care, don't pray for them anymore, nor do you even think about them. You wish they were dead and buried, or you wish you didn't have to have anything more to do with them. That is breaking of faith. God hates it because He so loved the world. While we were His enemies, Christ died for us, the godly for the ungodly. That is the heart of God, and that is what He has put in the hearts of His people. If we are His people, then we have the heart that says, *I will be faithful to the people around me. I will love and care about them, and I will not be overcome of evil. I will overcome evil with good, and as much as lies within me, I will live peaceably with everyone.*

You have no control over what somebody else will do, but you can surely set an environment for people to live in harmony, love, peace, and blessing. “*A soft answer turns away wrath.*” We don't have to enter into strife. “*Be angry, but don't sin. Don't let the sun go down on your wrath.*” Don't separate from people. Humble yourself, get on your face before God and ask God's forgiveness for all concerned.

I learned early in marriage not to point my finger at my wife. You have probably heard that if you point one finger out, all the other fingers point back at you. Yes, that is true, but the Lord put it even more explicitly for me. As stated before He said, “Son, if you talk badly about your wife, you are stabbing yourself in the back.” You can think what you want about it, but that is what is really happening. When you speak out something bad, you're cursing. When you speak out a cursing, a cursing is coming back, and coming back in multiples. It doesn't go out and come back in singles. That is stabbing yourself in the back. That is treachery.

How does the devil work? He is treacherous. He lies. He cheats. He steals. He kills. He tries to cause harm to people in many ways. The Lord told me if I did that towards my wife, it would come back to me in multiple cursing.

I'm not going to curse people, nor am I going to speak badly about them because it will come back to me. We need to ask God's forgiveness on a

daily basis. No sooner are you doing well when something suddenly slips in (or slips out), like “Clown, why don’t you learn how to drive?”

In your thoughts you glossed it over, but “*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*” We have to be careful with this because God will judge whoremongers and adulterers. (Hebrews 13:4) Whoremongers are people who satisfy their own selfish desires and don’t care about anybody else. When they speak sweetly, don’t listen to them. They have seven abominations in their hearts. I tell the young ladies, “Guys who say they love you won’t touch you. They’ll respect and honor you. They’ll be committed to you and cherish you.”

I’m saying “don’t touch” because one thing leads to another. Once the engine is revved, it’s revved. That is how guys are. Don’t let anybody touch you except your dad or your mom in love. There are certain places that are never to be touched. Period. I don’t care if it’s dad or mom or whoever. Until you are in the sanctity of marriage, why be exposed to things before the time? Sex education is being taught to fourth and fifth graders. They have no business even thinking about it at their age.

What if children were exposed to the word of God like that? However, we can’t bring that to school. We have to take the commandments out and get rid of them – or somebody might get blessed, somebody might learn how to have a happy life. In the garden Eve was looking at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God didn’t want His people knowing evil or being exposed to evil. He wanted them knowing good.

At one time we had to deal with the fact that there were some pornography shops in the city (we are still dealing with it). It is amazing how evil just seems to hang around. Thank God there won’t be any more evil when God establishes His new heaven and new earth.

Because some Christians were going into those shops to get information about what was occurring, they became so defiled that they were no longer the same people. We had to cast some devils out of them and pray over them to get them cleaned up. Sexual cravings and perversions got into them just by watching and being exposed to it.

The bible says, “*Keep yourself pure.*” Paul told Timothy, “*Flee youthful lusts.*” If you have trouble with donuts, don’t go into the donut shop. Keep your mind pure. Keep it holy before God.

One day Diana was looking up the word “chocolate” on the internet, and I can’t even go into all the stuff that came up on her screen. It wasn’t chocolate. You go in there looking for a recipe, and they give you a recipe, but it isn’t what you were looking for. More than ever we need to have preventative filters in order not to expose the children to these kind of influences. We don’t need to go there even as adults.

To continue, God forbids in the seventh commandment:

1) unfaithfulness and desertion, the breaking of the marriage vow. He permits the innocent party to procure a divorce when the other party is guilty of fornication. (Matthew 19) God sets the person free from impurity when the spouse is involved in other things because they have broken faith. There is forgiveness, but they have still broken faith. Some people have exposed their spouses to all kinds of hideous diseases because one time they went out and “did something.” That’s why I tell people to request a blood test if they are getting married. I make it mandatory around here. Why? Full disclosure is important. You don’t expose the person you are going to marry, or your spouse, to anything that will defile their lives.

2) Fraudulent marriage is another reason for separation. Fraudulent marriages occur when people don’t disclose their thoughts (like the fact that they don’t want to have children) until after the marriage, or they are carrying diseases. A blood test will immediately tell it where it is. Then people can decide what they will do.

You want to have full disclosure. People say, “Don’t you trust me?” It isn’t an issue of trust. It is an issue of, “Am I going to harm the other person by what I’ve been involved in?” It’s really all part of loving, caring, and faithfulness. You say, “I was involved in this and that. You know, and yeah, I’ve got this.” People can make a decision about what they want to do, whether they want to get married or not.

Requiring disclosure is very important because many people say one thing but are something else, or pretend that they have resources, but they don’t. When they marry, the spouse discovers they were actually *looking for*

resources. Diana always says I married her for her car. I must admit, her car *was* better than mine at the time.

What have we got? Full disclosure. Let's put it all out there. To the pure all things are pure. Many people have been contaminated by the world, and their idea of purity isn't pure anymore.

The Fantasy Realm

I have seen Christians who thought they could do all kinds of acts. For example, there wasn't any penetration involved, they weren't committing fornication. That is simply not true. It might be a good idea to have sex education classes at church because many Christians have wrong thinking, even though they go to church every week. Some are watching pornography and fantasizing. The Lord wants us pure in thought, word, and deed.

I can't tell you how many guys and gals have been damaged over the years because they started comparing their spouses with others. In many cases, I think those other people were fictitious. The only person who is real is the one you are with. Everybody else is a fantasy. The fantasy realm is the devil realm.

People are meeting others over the internet, and it's all fantasy. Horrible things can come of it because you don't really know who they are, even when they show you a picture. They could be showing you a picture of anybody. There have been many problems caused as a result of those kinds of things. I was just reading where a fellow who was well-known in a denominational church had been on the internet picking up on a young girl. The young girl was really an undercover police officer, and praise God, the man is in prison.

God says, "*Let what is hidden be revealed.*" Not to demean anybody, but we need to get rid of much of what has been going on in the church for years. It has been exposed that people were committing immoral acts with others. It wasn't just ministers and priests, but dads, moms, uncles, and aunts – all kinds of sick and perverted people.

God loves everybody and wants everybody forgiven and cleansed. That is what the blood of Jesus is all about. However, somewhere it has to end – and let it end with us.

One time I ordered a satellite dish which gave you the freedom to watch different movie channels for a certain time. There was such absolutely raunchy stuff on those channels that I had to get it out of the house. I called up the company and said, “Man, there’s stuff on there I don’t want to watch,” but they didn’t care. They just cancelled my subscription and took it off. But, it is out there for others to see, and it comes in many forms.

Keep yourself pure. Make a vow to do that, a vow to chastity and purity. Since I love the people around me, I don’t want to defile them, and I don’t want to defile myself. The result is we will honor the other people and we will honor our spouses. We will look at them as a gift from God, holy and beloved, and we don’t want to do anything to hinder them or cause them pain or hardship.

There has to be a vow or a purpose of the heart because evil is all around us, everywhere we go. Companies that sell jeans aren’t really selling jeans. I could never fit into a pair like some of those guys or gals do. What is being advertised has to do with something other than the product. The Lord says, “*You are in the world but not of the world,*” and in the world is corruption and decay. We are not of that spirit, and we don’t want to participate in it. You know the saying, “See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.” I always add the fourth one, “Do no evil.” God stepped into the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego because they did no evil.

If we are seeing no evil, hearing no evil, and speaking no evil, it is very likely we won’t do any evil. People act out what they allow in to themselves. The mind is stimulated by the flesh, and the mind controls the body parts. Romans 6 says “*Use these body parts for the glory of God*” – not as instruments for unrighteousness, but as instruments for righteousness (for blessing people). The mind will act out whatever you’re hearing, thinking, or watching. That is what you’re going to be desiring and craving. It may be a lusty novel. They call them romance novels. Well, what are they? Fantasy.

There Is Forgiveness with the Lord

Would that people would look at the bible. Many Christians don’t realize that Lot’s daughters had relations with him after they got him drunk. And what was Sodom and Gomorrah all about? I tell the people in our generation to take heed. I mean, they can parade and flaunt all they want,

Sodom and Gomorrah is still on the record as to how God looks at their lifestyle. If it happened there, it could happen here.

Is there forgiveness with the Lord? Yes, there's forgiveness. Even if people are born a certain way, the Lord says, "*You must be born again.*" Whatever it is you're involved in, or had going on in your families for generations, can be stopped by the blood of Jesus right now. It can be changed, and new things can happen in your life. No matter how soiled, defiled, or how driven you have been in the past by the lusts of the flesh and the desires and cravings thereof, the Lord can wipe you clean and make you as fresh and new as the driven snow.

God said, "*Though your sins be as scarlet...*" (Scarlet was a fabric dye that was impossible to get out.) You know, sin is inevitably etched inside of you so it would be impossible to get it out. God says you will become as white as snow. Think of new, clean, fresh snow.

However, you have to want to be clean. That is what the seventh commandment is all about. You want to live a chaste, holy and clean life before God. You want to get rid of the things that are out of line.

Committing adultery caused David great grief in his life. It also causes families much grief. Children may not think they can cause pain to their parents by going out and violating God's principles, but they do. Babies should not be the consequence of sin, of wrong living. Children are intended to be a blessing.

People think that they can quickly get married, and then it will be okay. No it won't. It was done before you got married. There is a curse that has to be removed on that kind of thing.

If you get married to someone who doesn't care one bit about you and is just marrying you because people say you have to get married now, then you will have one hell of a life. There will be no relationship. All you had in common was intercourse. What a bad scene.

In many cases the couple doesn't have a way to take care of the children, so they end up being dumped on the parents or raised by the grandparents, or aborted, which is worse. Then people have to live with the guilt of having committed murder.

Unfaithfulness

Society says, “Well, that wasn’t the loss of a life. There was no life there until the child is born and delivered, and then we consider it to be alive.” Do you see how society and the world covers up sin? God says, “*Thou Shalt Not Kill,*” and He says, “*Be faithful.*” Faithfulness does not abort, whether it be in a marriage or a relationship. A person with faithfulness does not give up or get discouraged.

You can be pure again. The blood of Jesus was given to wash away your sins and take them all away like they never happened. This is one of the biggest issues that people deal with – faithfulness and holiness of life and relationship.

People are defiled by word and deed. How sad. Many guys and gals have been used by their spouses, even though 1st Corinthians 7 says that your body is not your own; it belongs to your spouse. Let me tell you, there needs to be some kind of a willingness and consent from both parties. Society says sex is okay between consenting adults. It has even gone to the level of consenting 13 and 14 year olds. I don’t think so. God is not giving consent on any of this, and what God doesn’t consent on is not valid or blessed.

God forbids all unclean thoughts, desires, words, and deeds. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, theft, false witness, and blasphemies. (Matthew 15:19) “*Whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her [or looks on a man to lust after him] has committed adultery with her already in his heart,*” (Matthew 5:28) which would include fornication, all uncleanness, and covetousness: “*Let it not be once named among you as becometh saints, neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.*” (Ephesians 5:3, 4)

Ephesians 5:12 “*It is shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.*”

Potiphar’s wife, with lust in her heart, cast her eyes upon Joseph. (Genesis 39:7-12), and Sampson committed fornication. (Judges 16:1)

Note, “With lust in her heart” was a predatory act. She was already defiled because she had lust in her heart, and then she went after Joseph, a pure man

of God. This happened every day, and every day Joseph fled from her. He politely and courteously put her off until finally she made her move and attacked him, tearing his clothes off of him.

Joseph ran out of there in his birthday suit. Then he was falsely accused because defiled people think in a defiled way. What a shame for Potiphar to have to live with a woman like that. How difficult it must have been because her attention wasn't on her husband, was it? She was unfaithful to him.

Unfaithfulness occurs all the time in the earth. How many times have we had to deal with damaged children because of their parents' divorce? The parents had parents, who divorced as well, and the parents' parents divorced, and we've got a big mess. A welfare society has often resulted because people have been enabled to know that if they get divorced, they can go down and get welfare. Ladies wouldn't be so quick to get divorced if they knew they had to work, take care of themselves and the children. People also think, *I'll just give them to my parents and let them take care of them.*

You need to be committed, accountable and responsible for your life and actions. Jesus said, *"Better a millstone be put around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea than to offend one of these little ones."* When people are doing this kind of impure action towards one another, they are defiling others, and as a result, Jesus says it would be better for them to have a millstone put around their necks. A millstone is about four feet thick and 20-25 feet across. I'll stand corrected if somebody has the exact dimensions. If it was put around someone's neck, the person would be dead and gone, drowned in the depths of the sea.

In the new heaven and the new earth there will be no sex. There will be no marriage or giving in marriage. The only place that sex is to occur is in marriage. So if there is no marriage, and there is no giving in marriage, then there is no sex.

The percentage of sexual activity within an average marriage often takes up less than 5% to a maximum of 10% of married life.

What does the world put emphasis on?

Maybe it wasn't just an apple on a tree that Eve participated in. The term used there in the Hebrew is "to lie with another." What was the curse about? Childbearing. And the only way to get a child is through intercourse.

What are we looking at? What the blood of Jesus is all about – Holy, holy, holy. Whatever you have done in your life, the Lord and His blood can make you holy. He can bring you into His purity again. Whatever you've done or been involved in, if you ask God's forgiveness, He will be faithful to forgive and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Don't use forgiveness as an excuse to go out and do it again, though. We don't want to trample underfoot the blood of Jesus. We want to honor God.

Uncleanness vs. Holiness

"*Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery*" doesn't just deal with sexual union and marriage, but with thoughts, words, and deeds. We are to live holy before the Lord, and then we come into a marriage union and a relationship. Paul said to single people in 1st Corinthians 7, "*Remain single as to the Lord.*" To the married he said, "*I say, 'as to the Lord'.*" In other words, whether you are single or married, live to the Lord. Jesus has to be number one in your life. The Lord has to be your number one love, and then He will bless all other relationships.

The man at Gadarene, who had been running around naked, had an unclean spirit, and Jesus cast it out of him. The man would lash out at people in anger, and nobody would go near him. They tried to bind him with chains, but he would rip them apart. An unclean spirit is very strong.

In many cases, Jesus cast that spirit out. He cast it out of the lady on the street who had an unclean spirit. He cast it out of the man at Gadarene. Such a spirit defiles a person, and only the blood of Jesus can get rid of it. When a person seeks God, only the blood of Jesus can make him clean before God.

No matter what is going on in your life right now or in the past, the main thing is that you get rid of what is in you.

One day a woman came to me who had had an abortion many years before. She had never told anyone about it, but it had bothered her for years and years. That day the Holy Spirit brought it up, and the woman got free,

forgiven, healed, and has never been the same. Because of the goodness of God, her guilt was taken away.

There isn't anything unclean that doesn't bring with it a spirit of guilt and condemnation, but people try to cover it over. Man seeks to cover his sin, make excuses, rationalize, justify, and hide it. David says you won't prosper when you seek to hide your sin. You need to expose it, ask God's forgiveness, and let it be covered with the blood of Jesus.

When Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves, God came along and covered them with animal skins. There was a blood sacrifice involved and the Lord worked the cleansing. From then on the blood sacrifice was instituted to forgive sins.

The devil counterfeits blood sacrifices, but only the blood of Jesus will cleanse sin. Bulls and goats, yes, the Israelites had to offer those sacrifices every year, but the blood of Jesus will cleanse us once and for all. It will make us pure. It will make us clean. It will make us holy.

Once you have asked God's forgiveness, you are forgiven. Don't let anybody bring it back up. People have a tendency to do that. You are forgiven by the blood of Jesus, the blood of the Lamb. It is over, and it is done. Walk away from whatever you were doing. No guilt, no shame, no condemnation, and no blame. Just don't go back to it. God told Cain "*You must master it.*"

If you have something that needs forgiveness, acknowledge it to God right now. Our goal is to get out what doesn't belong in you anymore, in Jesus' name, under the blood. To get free, people have to acknowledge it to God. They need to repent of it. That means acknowledge it, turn away from it, and go the other way.

"If we are faithful to acknowledge our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God says we need to be cleansed from all unrighteousness, removed as far as the east is from the west. The Lord says, "I'll take it away from you."

Whatever it is that has been defiling, taunting, or tormenting you (it may be a spirit of strife, discontentment, or anger), you need to let it go. Ask God to forgive you and take it out of you.

Greed will defile you. Greed divorces a person from God. It is idolatry. When you have greed, you have another god in your life. Not only does it separate you from God but it separates you from people. If you are greedy, you probably won't have many friends. All you want is something that they have, or you may be trying to keep what you have. A stingy person isn't a blessed person.

A clean person, a pure person is generous and undefiled. Such people do what God directs them to do.

God Can Deliver Us

If you have violated the seventh commandment and have committed adultery, you have come against yourself (Galatians says you war within yourself). Your spirit and mind are warring within you. You are torn between the good you want to do, but you don't do it. Well, it's time to start doing it and not just wanting to do it. Do it in the name of Jesus. You have to get rid of whatever is hindering you.

One time a guy came up to me on the street and started talking. He said, "I have sexual urges every time I come around anybody or anything." He continued to say, "I've violated anything that moves." The bible shows us that is what unclean spirits do. It doesn't matter who or what. I asked him, "Where did it start?" He answered, "I was having relations with a woman when I felt a burning sensation come into my body. Ever since that happened," he said, "I'm worse than an animal." My heart was going out to the guy. Unclean spirits had come into him. They came, in his case, in a burning sensation, but the effect is what I saw. He was driven. All his thoughts were centered around that kind of activity.

You can always tell what kind of spirit has influenced a person because all their thoughts are focused on that kind of activity, whether it be fear, greed, guilt, or what was happening to that man. Loneliness is a horrible spirit that comes on people. All they think about is, *I'm all alone*. And even sitting in a big crowd of people, that is what they are thinking.

God can deliver us out of anything that has come to defile us.

When you are dealing with those lusts, cravings, or desires of the flesh (it could be food), and it's occupying your time and your thoughts, you have to

cast it down and flee from it. Don't go near there. When I was growing up, I used to have a morning paper route which was just about half a mile from the donut shop. Every morning I could smell those fresh donuts calling to me.

Have you ever noticed how a person is drawn away and enticed by the lusts of the flesh? (James 1) The devil doesn't make you do it. He just makes it easy for you to do. He puts it in your path. Let's say you're having problems in your marriage relationship, and all of a sudden here comes a wonderful person, so understanding, so kind, and so perfect. You look at that person and then you look at your spouse and think *oh*, and you look over there again. It is what I call sucker bait. God wants you to have a heart and desire towards your spouse only.

Keep yourself pure before God whether you are single or married. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit, bought by the blood of the Lamb, and you belong to God in spirit, mind, and body. As such, you are an agent of God's goodness in the earth. That is why you don't want to defile anybody else or lead them into anything that would cause them separation, problems, or pain.

Think what could happen if God's people would go around the world, saying, "Nope, that's not of God. That's not right. Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more. You're free from it. You don't have to do it." Jesus told the lady caught in adultery. "*Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.*" Stop the sin. It isn't blessing your life. It is damaging you. Stop it in Jesus' name. God will help you to do it, for God has a better plan for your life.

The lady caught in adultery, by the way, responded to the word, and she had a whole new life. She was so thankful to God for what He had done for her in setting her free.

Hate the Sin

You will be tested on whether you keep the seventh commandment. Are you going to do well? Keep it fresh in your mind.

You know the Ten Commandments are actually written on your heart. They used to be on tablets of stone (external), but in Jesus they are written on your heart. (Your spirit is your real heart, the real you. The commandments wouldn't be written on your physical heart, but they are in you.) Don't you

think something the world wants to take away as badly as the Ten Commandments is important?

The spirit of lawlessness in the earth wants to take away the law of God. It wants to establish its own laws and its own ways. That is what the devil wanted to do from the beginning. Ex-out God, put himself in there as chief and commander, and ex-out God's ways.

Counterfeit. Lies and destruction. "*The wages of sin is death*" remains at the end of that kind of action and behavior.

People have violated God's principles in relationships, and they have found that their lives were damaged as a result of it. They need to ask God's forgiveness and seek to change. I have seen where great friends decided to step it up to another level with physical contact. A spirit came on one of them, just like the one that came on David's son, Amnon. Before Amnon raped David's daughter, Tamar, all he could think about was her. After he raped her, he shunned her and put her away. He had nothing more to do with her.

Such a result happens because the sexual activity is outside of the will of God and blessing. Having relations didn't make them closer. It actually ruined the relationship. It was over, and a curse came on the both of them. In fact, Amnon was eventually killed by his brother in vengeance for his sister. What a mess.

This has to do with what you permit. These children were all David's seed, weren't they? David had problems with sexual immorality, and it was passed down to his children. David didn't do anything about correcting it either. Many times people have compromised their lives, not hating the sin as much because they have done it themselves. Therefore, it isn't a big issue to them. David went that way in regard to his daughter and his son. It was a non-issue to him. Absalom hated David for it because David didn't deal with what happened to Tamar.

Later, Absalom led a rebellion against David, the king, to take over the kingdom. Still, God doesn't stand for rebellion, and Absalom got his head cut off. Nobody won in that situation.

It doesn't have to be that way anymore. We can stop it. We can change it, but we have to hate evil. We have to hate being spotted by the world and the flesh. We must be clean before God.

Let's say you took a bath and put on nice clothes from the dry cleaners. You were all fresh, but when you went outside, somebody drove along the street shooting mud on you. Likewise, don't let yourself be defiled by the world. You are God's child, holy and dearly loved.

You need to hate the sin. Hate evil, for you know it isn't of God. Instead, love what is good. Don't compromise for anybody or anything. Many times people who compromise are permissive. For example, according to the word of God, a minister of God is to be the husband of but one wife. The scripture isn't saying the husband of "one wife at a time," but people don't want to hear that nowadays. Those are the qualifications that were set down for a minister of God. (See Timothy and Titus) I'm talking about an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher.

People of God can minister; they can do anything that God wants. We train people who can minister as well as I can, but the scripture shows that you can't talk about sin to others if you have been unfaithful to your wife. David could not build the temple because God said he was a man of blood. Was it because he was a warrior and participated in all those battles? No, those were battles God wanted done. What was it? He took Uriah's life, and he took his wife.

Was he a man after God's own heart and did God forgive him? Sure. Did God love him and establish an everlasting covenant with him? Yes. Does that mean that God can't use such a person? Absolutely not. But when it comes to the care of God's people, that is another thing. Why? There is compromise there.

"If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, who shall stand? (Psalm 130) "But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared. I wait on the Lord; my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope."

We need to help each other to remain pure before God, forgive each other, and stand up for each other. Believe God for each other more than ever before because the evil in the earth is increasing every day. Thankfully,

God's grace is abounding even more, and this isn't a time to be a fruit inspector.

People who are ministering, or want to minister, have a standard to keep in order to qualify. Many times I have seen men of God go off the track. Bless God for forgiveness and restoration, but in the meantime all the people have gone through havoc.

I have seen congregations torn apart because a man of God did something squirrely. That's why we need to pray for the ministers and the people out on the front lines, not just wait for them to fall. (Thank God for grace and mercy.) How wrong is it for people to wait for you to fall? For what purpose? By the grace of God, I am still around. I don't know where the ones who fell are, but I pray good things for them and blessings because it could just as easily be me as them. This life is too short for that kind of nonsense.

Purity means I always want the best for everybody. *"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. It never fails."*

CARING FOR PEOPLE
The Seventh Commandment (Continued)
Chapter Six

Boundaries are essential in care. Remember when the Lord said, “*Today I set before you blessing and cursing, life and death; choose life.*” He was showing us what is what, and He said to choose life.

The Lord cares for us and loves us. That is why he gave the commandments. They are not just a bunch of rules. They were given out of God’s heart of love for His people, to help us to learn how to be blessed in our lives, to show us what is good and acceptable and what will produce life, and to show us the opposite – what will curse us and cause death. We want to stay away from what is cursed (and of death) and go with what is blessed (and of life). Then we will have the abundant life.

I thank God every day that He shows us what is good, right, and pleasing to Him, which helps us be blessed in our lives. We want to encourage one another and help each other too. Ecclesiastes 4 says pity the man alone should he fall and has no one to help him; but if there are two, one can help the other. There were probably times when you needed some help and other times when you were the helper. In any relationship we need to stand together and pull each other up. Then, according to Ecclesiastes, a threefold cord is hard to break.

The Lord gave us the commandments to be a blessing to us, in order that we could learn how to love God as He loves us, how to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to know that we are loved by God. We want to help others when we know we are loved by God.

When we pray, we know we receive what we ask. We have seen many, many changed people over the years because we believe in what God says and what He will do. If we believe Him, we will receive it.

What God Can Do

God’s love will transform our lives. Condemnation has no place or power. If you are blamed for doing wrong, then ask for forgiveness and quit doing what you’re doing; change. God will help you. If you’re not doing something wrong, then don’t receive the blame, condemnation, or criticism.

God will determine what is what and go from there. Don't put yourself in a place of temptation and allow yourself to fall when you don't have to.

Many people wreck their own lives, but God can put Humpty Dumpty back together again. By the way, do eggs belong on walls? No, but he wanted to be high and lifted up. "*Pride cometh before the fall,*" and great was the yoke thereof. It's a sad story in itself, and it says all the king's men and horses couldn't put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

The Lord spoke to me one day many years ago in a way I could relate. (Different people learn in different ways.) The Lord will speak to you where you are. One day out of the blue while I was just minding my own business, I heard Him say, "I can put Humpty Dumpty back together again."

I thought, *Whoa*. The Lord was saying that no man (nor all the king's men and horses) could put him back together again. Then He said, "I can do it!"

He can, and He would if people would allow it to happen. It is a humbling process. We need to submit ourselves under the mighty hand of God and in due season He will exalt and help us to make the changes.

More About the Commandments

This chapter continues with the seventh commandment, "*You shall not commit adultery.*" However, note that each commandment is actually about something different than what it says. The seventh commandment is about purity, remaining faithful and pure to God, to yourself, and to others. "*Know ye not that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit? You are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your spirit and your body which belong to God.*" (1st Corinthians 6:19, 20) If you commit impurities in your life, you are sinning against your own body.

In the previous chapter we looked at what fraudulent things people can do, and how they defile themselves through sexual fornication, pornography, or thoughts.

Jesus said in Matthew 5 that adultery is committed in the mind before it is committed in an encounter. Many times people project what they are thinking onto others.

So, if you have something going on in your life, it may be something that went on in your dad or mom's life. It may be something that went on in your grandpa or grandma's life, and it is being carried down. There are learned behaviors which defile your thinking. *"To the pure all things are pure. To the defiled all things are defiled."* Have you ever noticed you can see a fault in somebody else because you have the same thing working in yourself? Really, you're not even seeing them; you are seeing you. The Lord Jesus said to get rid of the log in your own eye so you can see clearly to help someone else.

Not only do these commandments tell us what *not* to do, but they also tell us what to do. This seventh commandment encourages us to help each other to be pure and not to judge one another. A lady who had just committed adultery was brought to Jesus before the people were going to take her outside of the city to kill her. In those days that was the law, and there was a lot less adultery because of it. In America we don't have that kind of thing. Many "Christian communities" don't even deal with adultery. As a result, that spirit carries over to others. What will everyone do? – they will go out and sin. The nation wants to take away the Ten Commandments, and yet the principles upon which our justice system was founded were the Ten Commandments. Harvard was not only a law school but a seminary.

Move out the commandments of God, and people have license to do whatever they want. Romans 6:1 says, *"Shall we continue in sin so that grace might abound?"* Paul said by the Holy Spirit, *"God forbid."* We don't want to trample underfoot the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus saves us from our sins. We don't want to willfully, knowingly go against those principles.

Resisting Temptation

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation." When the temptations come (you can't stop them from coming), there are ways to prevent entering into them. The back seat of a car is meant to sit in and for no other purpose. Don't put yourself in a place of temptation. Use some wisdom. Ladies, just because a man says he loves you doesn't mean anything. Let it be proved in action. Let it be proved in deed. If a man really loves a woman, he wouldn't be going where he's going. If he is truly Christian, he will keep the commandment *"You Shall Not Commit Adultery [or fornication]."*

I learned something important from a man who had been a Christian for a long time. He said he goes by what people do, not by what they say. That is how I try to live. What you say and what you do should be the same, though. You may make mistakes, but ask God's forgiveness, and you will be stronger the next time.

If you're not thinking right, you will do wrong. Have you ever had to shake your head a little bit to come to your senses?

I had just become pastor of a new church when I had to do some "cleaning up" in the church. I had to deal with a worker there who was having sex with the women. Where I come from, a Christian man doesn't sleep with the women! If she isn't your wife, you don't have sex with her. If he is not your husband, you don't do it. It is simple.

I told the guy that the marriage bed is undefiled; all other beds are defiled. It doesn't matter where it is that you make your bed. It is defiled if you're not married to the person you're with. I said, "Do you know what fornication is?" and he looked at me like I was from Mars. I said, "Bro, what you're doing is what the bible calls fornication." I read him a few chapters out of 1st Corinthians 6 and some other places where it says that people who are committing fornication, adultery, homosexuality, or any kind of defilement (perversion, greed, lying or cheating) aren't going to enter the kingdom of heaven. Drunkards and addicts are included. I add that because the term drunkard in the bible is for anybody who is "on" something. The guy dropped his mouth open while I was reading the passage. Then I said, "You're a fornicator." I spoke it in love, for I was trying to help him get out of what wasn't right. I wanted him to be blessed.

Since he didn't even know what fornication was, I wondered who had been teaching around there before I came. What were people learning? What you believe is what you will do, and what you have learned is what you will be the product of. It will shape you into whatever it is that you're listening to. "*As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is.*" So what you think about is how you will become.

The man on the street I mentioned earlier had a burning sensation come into him after having intercourse with a woman. From then on he became like a dog, having sex with anything that moved. God set him free, thankfully, but that was all he could think about night and day. It is what possessed him and

drove him for years until the day he met me on the street. I didn't know him from Adam. He just came up to me because God sent him. As he came closer, he suddenly started crying, and he hadn't been crying until then.

He was crying out for freedom, for help, and from thinking in that perverted, defiled way. It drove him night and day, just like the man at Gadarene when Jesus came off the boat and cast the devils out of him.

When I first read "fornicator" in the King James Version of the bible, I didn't know what it was. I had to have it explained. A fornicator is somebody who is having sex outside of marriage. Adultery is somebody having sex while in a marriage (not with their spouse).

I told the guy at church, "You are a fornicator," and he asked, "What do I need to do, Pastor?" I said, "You need to quit having sex with women because you're not married. God will help you to do it." The bible says you defile yourself by doing and thinking about such things. (1st Corinthians 6) Then I said, "You want to care for people. You want to help people. You can't be running around doing this. I will have to remove you from your duties for a while until you get this straightened out." Then we prayed, and he asked God's forgiveness, and I forgave him. "*Neither do I condemn you,*" Jesus said to the lady caught in adultery, "*Go and sin no more.*" Stop it. You know, she was so thankful to God because she was free.

Live God's Way

Freedom comes in obedience to God. There was freedom, and all that lifted off of her. (A spirit had been working on her and through her.) "*Be angry but don't sin. Don't let the devil have an opportunity. Don't let the sun go down on your wrath.*" (Ephesians 4:26) Don't give him a home, you know. Don't give him a chance, and get free from it. Come out from it.

If your spouse fears that you will leave, thieves will come and make it happen. A perfect, understanding person will come along. You look at your spouse and think, *eick*. You look at the new person and think, *oooh*. A liar is working. A deceiver is working, for the thief doesn't want your marriage to last. God wants your marriage to continue. You have to decide which side you will go with because it won't be as good as it appears.

Settling outside of the will of God can't be good. You may say, "Well, I know someone who was divorced, and it looks good." No. Part of you dies

when you get divorced. What I'm talking about is unfaithfulness. I have ministered to people who have been divorced five, six, even seven times. It reminds me of the lady Jesus encountered at the well. She said He told her all about her life, for she had been married many times, and the one she was with wasn't her husband. Jesus didn't condemn her. He took her at that point and let the grace of God go to her to change her life.

If you want to live happily ever after, you have to live God's way. Let me tell you, "happily ever after" isn't within yourself or within others around you. It isn't in what you have or don't have. Happiness is only in the will of God. Because who is your first love? Jesus.

I talked to the young women with whom the guy at the new church was having sex, and they all said, "Well, he's such a fine Christian." I was thinking, *Oh, my God. Oh, my God; we have a problem that's more than meets the eye.* Before I had thought that I could get him fixed up easily. Just one fornicator. He didn't even know what he was doing. He thought it was okay to fornicate.

The guy wasn't ignorant anymore, but unfortunately he went along for just a while, and then he went back to doing his own thing. Fornication can't remain in the church because God doesn't want the church defiled. (1st Corinthians chapter 5) The man went down the block to another church, and he is a "fine upstanding Christian" there. You know, ravaging the women.

Man, I would tack that wolf to the wall. We protect our women around here in Jesus' name, and we protect our men. If there are any Jezebels coming in, we will deal with them because God loves and cares for His people. We can't have any of it. We are protecting the young ones especially. They don't need that kind of example, which is the flip side of this commandment.

Befriend Marriage

In "*Thou shall not commit adultery,*" we are going to befriend marriage. We will stand up for what is right and what is of God. We will encourage people in their marriages.

Marriage is tough. Paul even said it was. He said it was better not to be married. At least when you're single, it's just you and God. When you're married, you have a spouse to think about. You have children to think about. So we need help. God help us all.

Marriage is an institution of God between male and female, not you and the internet, you and the books, magazines, or videos. It says you and your spouse. (There are children being polluted and defiled by the internet, and they should not even be exposed to it.)

We need to encourage, befriend, and support each other in marriage. It is very important to keep yourself pure and not go where God says not to go. There was a lot more than a piece of fruit going on in the Garden of Eden. The fruit wasn't really the issue. When you look at the curses that came after Adam and Eve disobeyed, you can see exactly what was happening. It had to do with the womb, the fruit of the womb, and childbearing. You can only have a child through intercourse. (Mary was the only one who had an immaculate conception, and no baby should be the fruit of a curse. Get those babies prayed over.)

Many a time folks believed a lie and entered into immorality. You get what you want. You need to make sure what you want is what God wants. Check with God before you start wanting, needing, or desiring anything. Save the young men, save the young women. Read the Proverbs passages about the adulterous woman (and there are adulterous men out there too. They are nothing more than wolves in sheep's clothing.) I know this: anybody who is a true Christian will befriend people. They will not be a stumbling block to them. They will not cause them to fall and will not even ask about having relations before marriage. This has to be understood. They can say all they want about how spiritual they are, but there are two forms of spiritual. One is of God and one is of the devil.

A Pure Life

Keeping your life pure is what this commandment is about. "*Thou shall not commit adultery.*" It is about purity in thought, word, deed, and lifestyle. The temptations are everywhere around us. Those ads on television aren't selling products. In fact, I've never seen jeans that look like that. You've got to say, "Eyes, you belong to God."

What Joseph did was a perfect example of how to do the commandment, "*You shall not commit adultery.*" Every day Potiphar's wife brought pressure on Joseph to have sex. Many guys would say, "Whoa, ho-ho-ho," but not Joseph. He was a godly man. Potiphar had put him in charge of his household. Joseph had even been entrusted to the care of Potiphar's wife,

which means Potiphar really trusted Him. He was to take care of her, protect her, and to look out for the household completely. Joseph did what he did as to the Lord. Every day the wife brought pressure, but Joseph wouldn't have anything to do with her. Why? He loved God, he loved himself, he loved Potiphar, and he loved Potiphar's wife. He is an example in the community of God.

When she finally couldn't handle it anymore, she ripped his clothes off. Then he ran away.

Paul told Timothy, "*Flee youthful lusts.*" The only way you get away from a flesh temptation is to flee. Don't stand there thinking, *I can handle this*, or *Through Christ Jesus I can handle this*. No, the next thing you know, you are dead meat. You will fall.

God says, "Get out of there."

One chapter in my book entitled *Victory* is about overcoming temptations. The information in the chapter explains how to deal with the three areas of temptation – spiritual, mental, and physical. For physical temptation, you get away from the situation. If you have trouble with food, and the refrigerator is calling you just after you ate, walk on by. Go work in the yard. Do something else. Get on those weight machines.

Joseph said, "*How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*" He wasn't asking, "How can I do this?" The temptation was presented to him. She was standing right there, ready and willing, but he left. Basically he said, "I can't do this. I belong to God. I love God. I love Potiphar. I love his wife. I can't do anything that will harm my brother or sister's life. I can't do anything that will affect my walk with God. I refuse. I'm out of here," and he ran out of there.

Praise God, there was a pure man of God, and God blessed him. I mean, God blessed him and blessed him. If you want to be blessed in your life, that is how it happens. If you are sowing "wild oats," you will get back wild seed, which is trouble. Just watch the movie *Fatal Attraction* sometime. It will scare the hell out of you.

Attraction that is fatal is attraction outside of the will of God, and it will cause great problems. If you want great problems in your life, then just

ignore this and go on your merry way. I won't say, "God bless you" because He won't, and I won't either. We need to pray for one another that none of us fall, but if we have fallen, we need to help each other to seek God and ask His forgiveness. "*Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.*" Get on with your life, and do it God's way. Let's be strong and not let anybody or anything else influence us.

Thank God for His forgiveness, and then hold on to it. God forgave me; therefore I forgive you. Remember how much God has forgiven you and shown you His love, in order that you not go out and defile anyone.

The guys who boast in the locker room are really a bunch of nerds. They treat women like dirt as if they are objects to be used. Women are the holy daughters of the Most High God, whether they are believers or unbelievers. God loves them the same. You don't touch them to defile them. What you do to them you do to yourself. How do you expect to have a blessed and happy life if you are messing around?

This is the irony of it all. A guy who defiles women looks around and says, "Well, I'm trying to find a virgin." I tell him, "I'm trying to keep the virgins away from you. Right now you're just a dirty dog. You're not even a man." Many people think it's manly to act that way, but it is devilish. You are really being used and abused. You are just being run around by your "second head."

The ladies say they want a man who is strong, who loves God, who understands them. Then they think, *He says he loves me, so I'll just give myself to him.* What kind of man did you want? A strong man? A man that loved God? He needs to give respect and honor.

The ironic thing about the guy who is looking for a virgin yet defiling and leaving women in his wake is that he won't marry the ones he tarnished. I have seen people have a very fine friendship and relationship but go beyond it (out of bounds), and they've ruined their relationship. They cursed it.

Many people have done immoral things in their lives, and they think that everybody else has done such things. They are always thinking that others are going to act immorally. Then because they are jealous, they drive the other people away. A spouse can't stand to live with it anymore because of

the lack of trust. They don't trust their spouse because they have stuff in them that is an issue to be dealt with.

Still, God can surely put Humpty Dumpty back together again. There isn't anything that God can't work out if people are willing to work it out.

Purity, holiness. Pray for one another, stand together. Pray for me, my family, my wife, and pray for the integrity of God in our lives that we be able to walk in the holiness of the Lord. It makes a big difference. Don't ever do anything that will get somebody sidetracked. Modesty goes a long way.

In the Lutheran Church people would come up and kneel for communion. One day a woman came up to the communion rail. She had a little something there, and it was all hanging out. I took one glance and had to glance the other way. When it came her turn for communion, there were Henrietta and Matilda.

I had to call that lady aside after service. I thanked her for loving God and for coming to church, but I told her, you know, a woman's shape is a beautiful thing. Understand, however, a man should delight in the breasts of the wife of his youth. I told her, "Just cover them up a little bit more, honey. Don't put temptation in fellows' ways." Quite frankly, I don't know a guy who doesn't have an issue with that. Some control it better than others. I told her, "You don't want to give the impression that you're easy pick'ns. You are a woman of the Most High God, and you need to dress modestly and discretely." I wasn't telling her to cover up from head to toe.

You Will Give an Account

Think something of yourself. You are a child of the Most High God. Save yourself for the blessing, and then be the blessing. 1st Corinthians 7 is a good chapter about marriage and relationships. In marriage, your body isn't your own; it belongs to your spouse and no one else. It says not to defraud one another and hold back except for a time of prayer and fasting. Don't give the devil an opportunity.

The Commandments are fun. I love the commandments of God. They help us not allow the thief to defile us, for God has cleaned us up. He has washed us. He has forgiven us. He has cleansed us. He has made us His dearly

loved children. The thief tries to come along and defile us, stealing the blessing.

When Esau was hungry, he threw away an eternal birthright for a bowl of vegetable mush, a passing fancy. It came and went, and that was it. What did he have? – nothing. He lost his birthright. Many people have thrown away their virginity – for nothing. God forbid you be the one that took it from them. Better a milestone be put around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea than to do that.

We are talking about loving our brothers and sisters with this commandment. We don't want to do anything that will cause a brother or a sister to stumble. Strange things happen though, like the time a lady "fell in love" with me and thought I was giving subliminal love messages to her through the television program.

God bless people. I love and care about them. I do. Otherwise I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing, but I love my spouse. I guess to some people a ring doesn't mean anything, but to me it does. Whether I'm wearing my ring or not wearing my ring, I'm still married to my wife. I honor God, I honor her, and I honor myself. Don't dishonor yourself in by doing otherwise. If you love yourself, you won't dishonor yourself that way. Protect people, and especially protect the young ones.

Ladies, if a man calls himself a Christian, don't let him treat you disrespectfully; don't buy it. Just walk on by and say, "Don't call me anymore, and don't come around. You are trying to defile me." Let him think about that. If he doesn't call himself a Christian, he will do whatever he will do. Some day he will stand before God like we will stand before God. All will have to give an account for their lives and actions. God is the one to judge unbelievers, not me and not you. However, we are to judge ourselves and those in the household of faith. I don't want to cut somebody off, and I take no pleasure in somebody failing God or falling. It grieves me to no end. I want to see everybody cross the finish line with God, so we are going to help them.

We need to stand together and encourage each other. Don't step back, and don't talk death to people.

I told that fellow at church, “I’m calling you a fornicator right now because that’s who you are. That’s what you’re doing.” You are known by your ways. Even a child is known by his ways. Then I continued, “As soon as you ask God’s forgiveness, as far as I’m concerned, you’re a man of God, and you’re going to walk it straight.” In other words, I would believe God for him and with him. I was going to stand beside him, but he couldn’t go back to those actions, or I couldn’t stand with him anymore. I would pray for him. I would believe for God’s best for him, but it was his life. He would have what he would have. It was his choice. It was his relationship.

How many children have been defiled because of their parents? There is a big mess in our society, in our world, and even in the Christian community because people aren’t doing what God says to do... and they think it’s okay.

Would you like to know what the bible says?

I can’t do anything about what has already gone over the dam, so to speak. I am not talking to people who have been divorced and remarried, divorced and remarried, divorced and remarried. I can’t talk about that, but what I do tell people is the word of God. That is why many people don’t come around here. We hold them to what the word of God says.

Many churches won’t hold you to what God says. I am not happy about it, but I can’t do anything about it. What people permit in their lives is between them and God. I’m not going to stand before God some day and have Him ask me, “Why didn’t you tell them about this?”

I have to give an account to God some day for my life, my family, how I handled the ministry of God, and what God has entrusted to me (the people of God). I have to give an account for everybody I have ever met and what I have done towards them. I won’t tell you something that won’t help you and bless your life. I don’t want your blood on my head.

Encourage Each Other with the Word

What you do with whatever I share is your business. It is between you and God. I am not responsible for that. Would that you would do what is right. *“Today I set before you blessing cursing, life and death; choose life.”* What you will have is your call, but we will enforce the word of God in the house of God because God wants it enforced. In the same way, He wants it enforced in the family. It is a dad’s and mom’s role to enforce the word of

God in the family and get the children to line up in the ways of God. Otherwise they will just go out and do whatever (and not be blessed).

I don't know about you, but I want to see my children blessed. I want my children's children blessed. I want my children's children's children blessed. Enough of this cursing being passed down.

Another way we can befriend and help each other in regard to this commandment is by keeping the word of God in front of us. Let's encourage one another with the word of God. Let's put the law up there when it needs to be brought up to deter us from sin, to show us our sin, and to help us to know what is right to do.

“Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. To the married I give this command,” (This is what the Lord says to the married): *“A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband...”* (1st Corinthians 7:8)

We can't deal with what people have already done in the past, but we present what the word says. You will see many Christians who think they can do anything they want. It is amazing to me how people who call themselves Christians just don't have any thought about doing what God says!

God's rule is: *“Or else be reconciled to her husband.”* Previously we looked at the reasons for divorce, like fornication, adultery, or pornea, which is fraudulent marriage in which somebody misrepresents himself to his spouse. He doesn't tell her that he doesn't want children (or other things) until after the marriage. People get married, and then all of a sudden the information springs out.

If you are going to get married nowadays, get a blood test. A spouse has a right to know what is going on in you. They no longer require blood tests, and do you know why? It might expose some stuff that needs to be exposed.

When God exposes something, He does it to bless or help somebody. When God exposes sin, He does it to bless people and to get them out of the sin so

He can forgive them and get them off to a better life, not to condemn them, put it in the newspapers, and gossip all over town about what they did.

The best selling magazines are the ones that spread crap about people. Some people just love it. God says that the people who listen and participate in that will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

“...And a husband must not divorce his wife. And to the rest I say this, I, not the Lord. If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her, and if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him.”

My question is, why did they get married? Getting unequally yoked happens. People marry people who aren't believers, they will naturally have problems. You can believe for that person to come into God, and they are covered by your faith, but you will have many problems. Can God turn it around? Yes, but we don't recommend missionary dating because God doesn't recommend it. It will be a hard road.

Make the Most of Your Marriage

Then people use this one, *“...but if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing woman is not bound in such circumstances. God has called us to live in peace.”* (1st Corinthians 7:15) Many people use this as an excuse to get out of the marriage. *“God has called me to live at peace.”* Have you had moments where you thought about living at peace and leaving your spouse? You can have peace living with your spouse because your spouse isn't the problem. Peace is within you and isn't determined by circumstances around you. You either have peace or you don't have peace. Jesus is the One who brings peace to a person's life.

You will be a better spouse if you have peace within you. Ask God's forgiveness when you don't have peace and get going. It doesn't say that a person has a right to divorce. It says if you leave your spouse, you remain single.

Consider these circumstances. This church isn't packed out (with lines down the street) and running over because you can't get a free divorce and think it is okay. If your spouse is unfaithful or fraudulent, that is another situation. God can put Humpty Dumpty together again down the road.

What makes you think leaving the frying pan will be better than going into the skillet?

How many times have I seen people get out of one situation and go into something worse? Is there hope? Yes, there is hope. The marriage you are in is the last one you're having. Make the most of it. If you can't make the most of it, make the most of it.

Are you a believer or not? Are you one of God's men or women or not? Is God in the house or not?

The next verse says, *"How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband, or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in his life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches."* All the churches don't abide by this today.

Of course, God is free to take the candlestick out of a church too. There are many churches that are packed out, but God is not there. Man's church is not God's church.

Verse 14, *"For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife. The unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband; otherwise your children would be unclean (defiled)."*

"But as it is they are holy." In other words, the children are covered by the faith of the believing parent. When believers are doing something outside of the commandments of God, they are acting like unbelievers. It takes somebody to stand in faith for them because they are out of their minds. They are in the snare of the devil. We can help each other and encourage each other with our prayers, our standing with somebody and our encouragement. *"A servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome, but gentle, patient, apt to teach perchance your God will grant repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, that the person might be able to recover himself out of the snare of the devil."* (2nd Timothy 2:24-26)

Stand for God's Best

We will not compromise the word and promise of God. If people see you, and they don't want to hear it, they'll walk away or they won't want you around. It is alright. They saw you. Conviction is on their heart about what

they are doing. “Per adventure,” they will change. We are not going to condemn anybody; stay out of that. We are not going to judge anybody. We are going to believe for God’s best for them.

We stand for God’s best for each person. If they are not accepting, hearing, or receiving God’s best at that moment, they are caught in the snare of the devil. They can’t see the forest for the trees, and only God can set people free and deliver them from that. Only God can do it, but somebody has to be holding the ground, believing God.

Early in our marriage (It was a miracle we lasted two years because the thief tried to take away; it’s amazing. If you have a few years I can tell you about it.), the devil tried to separate and divide my wife and me. That is what he tries to do in people with defilement. People aren’t really the issue. We are fighting principalities and powers of darkness that want to destroy everybody and everything in the earth and get nobody to go with God and be blessed with God.

They are on a mission to steal, kill, and destroy, but Jesus said, “*I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.*” God will help me stay pure even if I was defiled. That is what forgiveness is all about. That is what the blood of Jesus is all about, friends. I don’t care what you’ve done or how bad it has been. God is faithful to forgive those who are faithful to acknowledge what they did, to ask God’s help and forgiveness, and to change. God is faithful, and He will take it off the record. Help people with that, believe that, and see them come out of the snare. God’s loving kindness leads people to repent.

Have you ever tried to hammer somebody with guilt? Did it work? It never does. It drives them even further away. “*Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.*” How clear. He didn’t condone or compromise what she did. He just said, “I don’t condemn you” about it, and don’t do it anymore. It isn’t helping you, it isn’t blessing you, and nothing good can come of it. I believe that was the same lady who later came and anointed Jesus’ feet, putting the bottle of perfume worth a years’ wages on Him and anointing Him for his burial. She was so thankful to God for touching and changing her life. That is our role too. That is what we are supposed to be about.

How Should We Minister Care and Love?

I’m a pro-marriage and a pro-purity advocate.

A Christian man went out to an abortion clinic, killing some doctors and shooting up a bunch of people because he was against abortion. Abortion is murder, but murder is murder also. What is the difference between that man and the ones who were doing the abortions? – nothing. There was no difference. God wasn't in that situation.

“The wind and the sun had a meeting one day. The wind said, ‘I can take the jacket off that man quicker than you can.’ As the guy walked along, the wind began to blow. The guy wrapped his jacket around him even tighter and held it down. He brought another one out of his bag and put it on. Then the sun said, ‘It’s my turn.’ The sun came out and shone brightly, so the guy quickly peeled off the first and second jackets.”

That story reminds me of how we should minister care and love to one another. Just let the love go out – no judging, condemning, belittling, or demeaning. You show what is right, what is good and true, and then you let God’s love work it.

You can’t compromise what you know is true, and you can’t go into the sin with them. I have told people, “You’re in the quicksand. Don’t expect me to come in with you. I’m not going in, but I’ll throw you a line.” Somebody has to stay on the rock. Somebody has to be doing the right thing.

Early in our marriage, Diana shared with me, “We can’t both be down at the same time. Somebody has to stay up in God.” It’s really easy to figure “the hell with it” and let it all go down the shoot. Any loser can do that, but we are born of a different spirit. We are born of God’s Spirit, with faithfulness, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, meekness, and self-control. If you do something wrong, ask God’s forgiveness, ask the person’s forgiveness, but don’t hang onto it. Don’t take it personally when somebody is in a rage. Don’t listen to a thing they say because they are out of their minds.

“...*And they are being influenced by a devil.*” (2 Timothy 2:26) Have you ever been out of your mind. You said and did things you never would have thought of saying and doing. “Well, they pushed my buttons.” Remove the keyboard then.

Another one of Diana's observations is "You can't argue with a wall." When she told me that, I was walking in the Spirit. I've had times where I didn't walk in the Spirit, and I got "into it." I had to fall on my face and ask God's forgiveness for all of us. I had to clear the devil out of the house because some thief had come in trying to ruin what God had put together. "*What God has joined together let no man put asunder.*" Certainly don't let a devil influence you to enter into strife.

You are a blessed person of God and should want what God has for your life. Don't think about how right someone looks. If the person is not your spouse, out. That includes all pornographic fantasy in your mind. It perverts reality.

The audacity of a man to think that someone in a magazine or on the internet would want him. He is nothing more than a fornicator or an adulterer at that moment. Who would want to know a fornicator or an adulterer? How could anyone ever trust him to be faithful or committed?

CARING FOR PEOPLE
The Eighth Commandment
Chapter Seven

“Thou Shall Not Steal” (Exodus 20:15)

Desire to bless others and not steal what God has for them. It is part of caring and loving people. *“Thou shalt not steal”* involves not taking something away from somebody’s life. The opposite of “to steal” is “to benefit,” or add to somebody’s life. God is always into adding, giving, and blessing.

Jesus said, *“The thief has come to steal, and to kill, and to destroy, but I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.”* (John 10:10)

Jesus said the devil is a thief and those who are of him are thieves. They steal, they kill, they destroy, they abuse, they use, they harm, they seek to control for selfish purposes and interests, and they are not adding anything to anybody’s life.

The thief wants to take away the great salvation that the Lord has supplied through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His blood. It is the thief’s nature to steal.

“Let him who steals steal no more.” (Ephesians 4:28 KJV) *“He must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.”*

As the Holy Spirit directs us in this commandment *“Thou Shalt Not Steal,”* we want to do everything in our power to add to people’s lives, to bless, to protect, to preserve, to enable them to keep and be blessed in what they have. We don’t ever want to do anything to take away what belongs to somebody. I want to care for them and everything that pertains to their lives.

Each commandment deals with an area of people’s well being. In *“Thou Shalt Not Steal”* we look at protecting one another’s property and goods.

Stealing Takes Many Forms.

The Lord says, “Don’t be a God-robber.” (Malachi 3:8, 9) People steal from God through not giving tithes and offerings, which is not giving Him the honor that is due Him. By so doing, they steal the blessing of God from themselves. God wants to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing so great that they are not able to hold it, and He wants to rebuke the devourer.

By not honoring God, we are not honoring ourselves. He said that if you honor Him, He will honor you.

When we honor our brothers and sisters, we honor what is theirs. It isn’t “finders keepers, losers weepers.” We are to help them find whatever they lost, so that they will be blessed, and we are to go out of our way to be a blessing to them. We want to help each other maintain the quality of life that God has intended so that nobody comes up short on anything.

To borrow something from somebody and not return it is stealing. If you broke what you borrowed, you need to replace it. Bring it back with something of equal or more value.

The Lord is a generous God. He cares for His people and has set down the principle that as we give we shall receive more than what we gave out (pressed down, shaken together, running over shall people give unto our bosom).

The commandments of God are principles which still set in motion that which causes blessing to come to those who do them. When we are honoring people and the property God has given them, we are understanding that God gave us whatever we have. Dishonest gain leads to poverty. The thief’s life is that of poverty. He is always in lack, and he looks to gain something from somebody else.

Receive the blessings from God, and then as you give, you shall receive. God causes things to come to people from the north, the south, the east, and the west because of His blessing on their lives. A thief tries to get it on his own. God helps us when we honor Him and don’t seek to harm our brothers or sisters.

Loosing the Blessing of God

“Do to others what you would have them do to you.” Surely you don’t like having things taken from you. We shouldn’t take anything from anybody either because God is our source and in Him we trust. If we want something, we can go out and work for it. We will earn it. That looses all the other ways for God to bless us. In addition, when you honor God with a tithe and offering, then He can cause the blessing to come back in many ways, even ways that you are not expecting. The Lord can cause it to come spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, and in relationships. The Lord can make the blessing start to happen, but we set the blessing into motion.

I always taught my children that their paycheck wasn’t their source. It is just the labor of their hands. It opens up the blessing because when you work and earn, tithe and give offerings, you are helping, giving, and sharing. You are loosing the blessing of God in the spirit realm. You become a fertile environment for the blessing of God and the favor of God to cause things to come to you. They will come from the north, south, east, and west because your source is the Lord, not your paycheck. Working for money is a form of poverty thinking. You are actually to be working to provide a service to the glory of God in the earth. Whatever you do, do it with all your heart in the name of Jesus to the glory of God. It isn’t for income or as your source, although it is a benefit that comes out of it. Do it with the best of your ability and with all that is within you.

The doors for God’s blessing, favor, and promotion will then open. *“Yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.”* (Psalm 37:25)

What does a thief do? He begs. He lacks, but *“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.”* (Psalm 23:1) I shall not lack. The thief takes something for his own benefit and gain. He doesn’t have, and so instead of working and getting it in the ways that God has set down, he goes out and takes it from somebody else. It is just like a rape or a harsh act towards another person. Stealing is an act of violence in the spirit realm because you are taking something that is not yours to take. Consequently you are defiling people, causing lack in their lives. You are raping their lives.

“Do to others what you want done to you.” Anybody with a right heart and mind won’t think about causing harm to a brother or a sister by taking something that belongs to them.

“Thou Shalt Not Steal” means you don’t take anything that doesn’t belong to you (or you have no business with), except to make sure it gets back to whoever owns it.

God will take care of you as you honor Him and live for Him. What you do to others will come back to you. *“You reap what you sow.”* The principle of the Lord is to be a giver because God is a giver and that is what the commandment is about.

“Thou Shalt Not Steal.” I will befriend my neighbors and protect not only them but what belongs to them. I will honor them, cherish them, and care for their goods because that is part of what belongs to them. Because you love your neighbor, you want to do the best that you can towards them. You want to think how you can bless, protect, and befriend them in every way.

That is God’s plan and purpose. When you are doing this, God will look out for your goods. *“The angel of the Lord encamps around about the righteous.”* Nobody messes with what God gave to His people because it belongs to Him for the use of His people. God will look out for His own. We are not of the nature that has to steal, kill, and destroy. We are of God’s nature to give, to bring life abundantly, and to bless people.

From Whence Come Wars?

When God’s people live by His commandments, what will be the result? – abundant life and living. *“Refresh others and you will be refreshed.”* You look out for your neighbor’s things, and your neighbor will look out for yours. The next thing you know, people can live in unity and harmony. *“From whence come wars and fightings amongst you?”* They come of their own lusts because they have not but they want something. Most wars happened because nations wanted what some other nation had. They wanted it, and they were jealous, and so they fought for it.

That is not a war that God will bless. In every case people who have done that kind of aggressive act to take over somebody else’s belongings have not prospered, and somebody else came and took it from them as well. *“You reap what you sow.”* On the other hand, if you seek to defend, bless, and promote life, as has happened in our country, all the wars that we have been in (outside of the Civil War) have always been victorious. We came in to

help nations that were having problems or were under oppression and tyranny. God has always honored our nation and blessed us because of it.

People say, "It's none of our business what happens out there in the earth." That will work until it has to do with your things. People often don't have a concern about what is happening in the rest of the world. In Rwanda years ago there was a horrible massacre where millions of people died. It really wasn't an issue anywhere in the world.

"*Am I my brother's keeper?*" was Cain's question to God when God asked, "*Where is Abel?*" Cain had just killed him, taken his goods and his life. We have looked at that in the commandment "*Thou shalt not kill,*" but now we are dealing with property. Am I my brother's keeper in regard to his property and goods? The answer according to God would be a resounding "Yes." I am responsible for my brothers and my sisters. I have a moral obligation.

We are referring to a moral obligation, not a legal obligation. A moral obligation goes beyond. If they want your coat, give them your shirt as well because God is your source. He is bigger than anything.

No thief can steal from you when you gain that attitude of heart. There isn't a thief out there that can steal from you because God is your source. Whatever is taken away, God will return seven-fold.

Attitudes in Life

Jesus said you can gain the whole world but lose your soul. Then you have nothing. This commandment deals with our attitude toward provision and the things that we have. What do we have that we could not live without except life? Do you put too much importance on "things?" That is where you lose contentment. The whole world is afraid that something is going to be taken away from them, and that is how the thief works. He is always projecting that you will lose something, or it will be taken away from you.

The only thing that really matters in life is Jesus. Paul said in Philippians 4 "*I've learned the secret to being content, whether I'm abounding in much or I have little.*" If you have God, you will be content, and if you have God, then you will have everything that you need for life, health, and blessing. When you put your thoughts on other things, then you are committing what is called idolatry; you have another god you have put before the Lord.

Whatever you are afraid of losing is an idol in your life. What you are concerned about keeping and holding onto is an idol, whether it is a person or “stuff.” Have you ever thought that if you got a certain possession you would be happy? Did you get it, but you still weren’t happy? (It didn’t do what you thought it would.) Does that mean that it isn’t important? No. It was important to you, it gave you perspective about your life. You started to see that it wasn’t as important as you thought it was.

If something is important to somebody else, then we want to hold that as important too. That is love.

Husbands, did your wife talk to you about something but you thought it wasn’t really important? If it is important to her, it should be important to you; and if it is important to you, it should be important to her. If it is important to the child, then it should be important to the parent. The Lord is trying to cultivate and develop that kind of mutual care one for another in the people of the earth.

Set Your Heart on God

Unfortunately, people don’t go by the moral commands of God; otherwise we would have a Utopia. Everyone would get along and everything would be good. *“From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not of your own lusts? You want something, you can’t have it, so you fight for it.”* Some people just don’t want someone else to be happy, so when they see that something makes someone else happy, they try to ruin it by breaking it. There is such insanity out there in the earth, and it is all intended to take away the blessings.

The devil lies awake nights thinking up ways to ravage God’s people and to take away the blessings that God has put out there for them. He can’t have them unless we have our heart and thoughts on those things rather than on God. If you have your heart set on God, no thief can steal anything that you have, and if he does, it doesn’t really matter because you will get back something better. If your heart is set on things, then every thief can steal anything he wants. Idolatry causes you to be outside of the will and the blessing of God.

We steal from ourselves by putting more importance on things rather than on the One who gave them to us. God gave us all things for us to enjoy. Do you enjoy what you have?

How important it is to be thankful. Anything good comes from the Lord for believer and unbeliever alike. Heaven and earth will pass away, but the word of God won't pass away. You brought nothing into this world, and you will leave with nothing. You will leave what you have to the next guy, whether a wise man or a fool. They will carry on.

Benefit Others

Get a proper perspective about life. While we are with people we want to do good things for them. We want to add to their life and enhance it. *“Only good and perfect gifts come down from the Father of Lights,”* so we want to give good and perfect gifts to one another, praying and asking the Lord how we can benefit and bless others.

Think about how you can be a blessing. I have always had it on my heart to be a channel for God's love, goodness, and provision in the earth. People don't like the word channel; they think it's demonic, but the devil counterfeits everything that is of God. There are people who are a channel of cursing in the earth. I want to be a channel of blessing into the earth, so God's provision will flow through me and then go out to where God wants it to go in order to be a blessing to others.

Stealing stands in direct opposition to the blessing God may want to put through, but it is being stopped up, perhaps by an attitude of “me first, me first.” That is the thief's attitude. We want God's attitude. In God's attitude there is no lack. The thief steals because there is lack in his life and that is all he knows. He has a poverty mentality. We want to develop God's richness and a goodness mentality which comes from His throne where there is no lack. There is plenty for everybody.

Have you tried to be the first in line for food? Why? On the other hand, if you are at the end of the line, what are you doing, taking a chance?

Prefer others more important than yourself. There will always be something for you, so be free to give out. You don't have to steal. Be a giver.

The commandments of God are given out of the heart of God, out of the love of God. They are intended to bless our lives and make them fruitful. God has blessed us with goods and provision. “*Do to others what you want done to you.*” If you don’t want a thief stealing from you, then don’t steal from somebody else. I don’t even think about being stolen from because God is looking out for me.

If you are tithing and giving offerings, being generous with people and doing what God says, the Lord will always protect and bless you, even when things look like they are being taken from you. When you give, then you shall *receive*. It will come back. No violence or vengeance towards the thief – just get your mind off the stuff. The problem is idolatry.

Give it to God

The first commandment was “*Thou shall have no other gods before Me.*” The counterpart in the second half of the commandments is “*Thou shalt not steal.*” If you don’t have an idol, it can’t be stolen from you. I encourage people to give everything they have got to God. Give your life, health, time, talents, treasures, family, house, and vehicles back to Him. It’s all His, and it was His to begin with. It never has been yours. Every good thing you have came from God. He gives it to you to use and enjoy. Then when you are gone from this earth, you won’t need it anymore. People spend their lives acquiring and trying to acquire. They are never satisfied or content, and have missed the purpose of life and living. How sad. That is being stolen from.

Think about the classic thieves — some go out for personal gain and some are drug addicts. There are family members who don’t work but use and abuse people. Alcoholics service their habit. It all leads to poverty, and poverty is lack. Dishonest gain leads to poverty.

If you want to add to somebody’s life, then you need to be honest with them and give them a fair deal. Don’t take advantage of anybody.

If we don’t give God the credit and the glory for something He did, we are stealing the credit and glory from God, and the thankfulness isn’t really there. The Lord taught me years ago that thankful people give to the work of the Lord. In the same way thankful people will bless other people and help them because they are so thankful for what God has done for them. They want to allow the blessing to flow onto somebody else as well.

When you are not giving and seeking to bless others, like God has done for you, in a sense you are stealing. Ingratitude is stealing. You're not giving praise where praise is due. You're not giving thanks where thanks is due. You're stealing the glory from God, and thus you are stealing the benefit and the blessing from yourself. Complaining never benefits anybody.

Borrowing

If you borrow something at work and don't give it back, you are not representing God. You shouldn't be borrowing anything from work anyway.

Many people borrow items from work, but it isn't theirs to borrow. I don't care how long you have been an employee there. You were not given permission to take anything off the grounds, or to use anything for your own personal interest while you were there. That is stealing. It needs to be clarified for people because they get the idea that things belong to them. Unless you paid for the tools, or the tools you're using on the job are yours, then they belong to somebody else. You are also stealing when you are doing personal business on work time.

You are getting paid for company time but you are using it for your personal use. An honest person would say, "No, I can't take the time. I need to have it deducted from my pay because I did something for me." Doing internet correspondence on the worksite, and not on your break or lunch hour, is stealing.

Have the Servant's Heart

When somebody makes a negative remark to you, it steals your joy, but you allow it to be stolen. Actually, the joy of the Lord cannot be stolen from you. You may have taken a personal affront because you were in the flesh which allowed that, and you got bitter. The joy is in you, but you are not recognizing it because you got into the flesh over the remark and the person. You took it personally.

When you are working, have a servant's attitude, a servant's heart. Do what you do to the best of your ability to the glory of God and to be a benefit to your employer. If you have the attitude of working for your paycheck, you are what the bible calls a hireling. Hirelings are not a blessed people, nor will they get promoted. They may even train others who will get promoted

over them because they have a hireling attitude, which is really a poverty attitude. It is all about them, not about the boss, the job, or furthering the employer; it is about furthering themselves. Hirelings are thieves. They are the ones that Jesus talked about when the wolf came; they run. They won't protect the flock but will try to save their own lives. They are not a benefit or a blessing. They will use things for their own purposes or gain.

Paul prayed that he would find somebody like Timothy who had a genuine heart for the people. There are plenty of ministers out there, but only a few have a genuine heart for the people. The rest are hirelings.

You shouldn't have anything more important in your life than the Lord. Therefore, why do you want to steal something from somebody else? It is just stuff. It is won't add anything to your life. Besides, dishonest gain leads to poverty because it's cursed, so whatever you stole was cursed. As long as it is in your house or in your possession, you are cursed. If you do something to somebody who has never done anything but good towards you, it says the curse will not depart from your house.

People wonder why they have holes in their pockets. It is because there is a curse working somewhere in their lives. They have done something wrong to somebody who didn't do anything wrong to them. A curse steals everything coming in that would be a blessing, and it goes out the other door. Fill up a cup with holes, but it will drain out, and you will never get to enjoy it. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what it is because some place, somewhere you did something to somebody that opened a door to a thief to come into your life.

A Matter of Conscience

Sometimes when I go to a smorgasbord, I put my fork, spoon, and knife in my pocket so I can get my plate and sit down. Many is the time I had to run the silverware back to places because I walked out with a spoon or something.

We are dealing with a sacred matter of conscience. It is a matter of conscience with *all* the commandments of God. I am made in the image of God. He doesn't need to steal from anybody including their reputations. He needs nothing. In the same way we need nothing; we have God.

When you have Him, you have everything. The other is a poverty mentality that sneaks in and steals, kills, and destroys. We don't have to go there anymore.

Don't talk about the pastors. Don't talk about the president. Don't talk about dads, moms, or any authority in a bad way. If you want to talk about authorities, say good things about them and let God deal with them. It is like biting the hand that feeds and cares for you. How can you be blessed? You can't. I read the Book.

"No weapon formed against you shall prosper." (Isaiah 54) Every word that is spoken against a servant of God (meaning a child of God – His righteous ones) will be turned back on those that have spoken it. Such is the inheritance of the righteous. What people don't realize is that what comes back to them is worse than what they spoke out. That is the principle. Give and it will be given unto you, pressed down, shaken together, running over. It is coming back multiplied.

Don't let the sun go down upon your wrath, for the issues you have are issues you came up with. There really was no issue. It was just a thief trying to steal, kill, and destroy. Have you ever sat there by yourself, minding your own business, when an ugly thought came across your mind?

You don't have to be afraid of anything being taken from you because the Lord is looking out for you. He is in control. I gave Him everything in my yard. If something grows, then God wants it to grow. If it doesn't, then He wanted that moved out of there. In addition, He plants the trees. I gave it all to Him, rather than stewing and fussing about it. Was your good attitude stolen because you didn't give something to God?

Have the right attitude about yours or somebody else's things. The value of it is put there by the owner. You have heard the expression, "One man's junk is another man's treasure." It is precious to the user, to the one that has it. At different times we put different values on the same thing. Were there people in your life who were once really valuable, but over time you figured they were trash to get rid of? Maybe a thousand and one things happened, but the bottom line is you don't see them as valuable. You don't cherish them or the relationship anymore.

Stuff is one thing, but people are not to be thrown away. You are not a throw-away. Don't throw people away, and you won't be a throw-away.

Watch your desires. If you desire something that you don't have, then you are expressing lack. In addition, if you're not thanking God for what you do have, you are expressing lack, for what you have isn't of any value to you. You aren't enjoying it when you are not thankful for it.

If you are always looking at what you don't have for your source of joy, contentment, or peace, then you will never have it. You will live an empty, vain, shallow life, never being fulfilled. Whereas, if you thank God for what you do have and appreciate it, then it enables God to be able to give the other things. *“Delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”* What He has He will bring in. What He doesn't have, we don't want. Many people won't put their goods on the altar and sacrifice them to God. If God gives it back, they will receive it, but if He doesn't, they won't let it go. We need to let it go because if God doesn't have it for us, we can't have an abundant life. It won't benefit or add to us even when we think it will. God says it is vanity.

The book of Ecclesiastes gives a perspective about the value of life. Perspective shows you what is significant in life. The key is to always add to, not take away from. Always be a blessing.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
A Good Reputation
Chapter Eight

The commandments of God are a miracle of God. They were written with God's own finger. He carved them on stone tablets at Mount Sinai.

In the New Testament when you are born again, Jesus is your Lord, and you have received the life of God. Therefore the commandments are now in your heart. They are not on tablets of stone (external), but they are internal. When you do them, God will bless you. He will help you. God will lead you into all understanding.

The ninth commandment is "*Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness Against Thy Neighbor.*"

This commandment of caring for people is about the importance of protecting others' good reputations and befriending one another. He wants us to hold each other in good reputation and not in any way harm our brothers or sisters by demeaning their names or their reputations.

The first four commandments deal with loving God, one of which is not taking the name of the Lord thy God in vain. In the same way, we don't in any way want to hurt a brother or a sister by demeaning them.

Jesus says that the devil is a liar and the father of all lies. He is a murderer and wants to take away from the name of the Lord as well as demean God's people who are created in God's image.

A good reputation is a blessing from the Lord and needs to be upheld, but the devil is always trying to lie, betray, slander, or defame our neighbors. God wants us to defend them and speak well of them.

Jesus said, "*Judge righteous judgment, not by the appearance of things.*" Many times things don't appear in a right manner, and it is easy to think evil. Have you had false imaginations and evil surmisings? The Bible says the person who has them is wicked, but "*To the pure all things are pure.*" To the defiled all things are defiled.

You may have thought it was wisdom and discernment on your part when you thought evil of somebody. Did you find out later that you were wrong, and that you were really a participant of evil?

You may have spoken things that you shouldn't have spoken because they weren't true, but you heard them and passed them on. Even reports on the news aren't necessarily accurate. The Lord is saying not to pass on false information, which means we have to check it out.

I have a good rule. If I hear something negative about someone, I discount it. It doesn't need to go any further. Many times I will ask, "Why are you saying this to me? (What is the motive of your heart?) If it is not something I can do anything about, then why are you telling me?"

What Is Involved in the Ninth Commandment

In the ninth commandment, God first forbids us to make any untrue statement against our neighbor in court. This is bearing false witness. "*A false witness shall not go unpunished.*" (Proverbs 19:5) Jesus had false witnesses rise up against Him, but everything was shown for what it was.

Secondly, God forbids us to belie our neighbor, that is to lie about him or lie to him, or withhold the truth from him in order to harm him. To lie to your neighbor is giving false information. Decisions are all based on information, so if someone is lying to us they don't have our best interests at heart.

Quite often the truth is withheld in order to harm others. "*He that speaks lies shall not escape.*" (Proverbs 19:5) Put away lying. "*Speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*" (Ephesians 4:25)

You owe it to people to tell them the truth. Love owes it to them. In the same way, we don't want to spread lies. People in the flesh seem to feed on lies. Lies are told for various motives, such as fear, but it is usually to protect or make ourselves look good, or a fear that something could happen, so we try to cover up. Many wives do this for their husbands who are out drinking, and the wives will cover for them on the job, telling the employer they are sick. Lies never help anybody.

God always speaks the truth. "*Speak the truth in love*" (Ephesians 4) makes the difference. If the motivation isn't love, even though it may be the truth,

it is being wrongly spoken. You never speak to hurt or cause harm to people. If someone is cheating on his spouse, and you tell the spouse about it, it is not to hurt her. You are telling her to help her, but let it be made clear that you saw the activity. That doesn't mean you saw somebody riding in the car with another person. We're talking about fondling, kissing, etc.

Gehazi, Elisha's servant, lied *about* Elisha and then lied *to* him (2nd Kings 5:22 and 25). After Naham was healed of leprosy, he wanted to give gifts to Elisha, but Elisha said he didn't want them. He told him to take them back with him. He basically said, "What I did, the Lord actually did, and there is no charge for this." Afterward Gahazi ran up to Naham and said, "My master changed his mind, and he wants some clothing and talents," but Gahazi wanted them for himself. Naham was happy, and he gave it to him. When Gahazi returned, Elisha asked, "Where were you?", and Gahazi lied. Elisha stated, "I saw you at Naham's chariot. The leprosy that was on Naham is now on you." Lying doesn't pay off for any good in the end. It will come back and bite you.

Thirdly, God forbids us to betray our neighbor in revealing his secrets. I have found over the years that people seem to think they can tell what they know. It is not true. It is not appropriate. Even if God showed you something in prayer about somebody, He didn't show you so that you could blab all over town about the person.

You may say that you just told a couple people. There are a couple people I could tell, and it *would* be all over town. In fact, I tell them what I want spread all over town.

Knowledge is a trust, so if someone shares with you and reveals something, it isn't for you to tell. It is sometimes better not to know something than to know it and then have to keep your mouth shut.

A Talebearer vs. a Faithful Spirit

There are very few people who won't share what you say. Understand the importance of this commandment about not bearing false witness. Although the facts may be true, will it bless the people's reputations? Will it build them up? Will it help them and encourage them, or is this something that should be committed to prayer on their behalf? We should believe that God would help them and change them, and the issue would be dead in their lives.

Are we seeking to befriend? *“Faithful are the wounds of a friend”* means a friend tells someone a truth that needs to be said. They are not talking to people all over town about that person.

There are some prayer meetings that are nothing more than gossip sessions. – people listening to other people’s dirty laundry. Let’s keep it where it belongs. Let’s commit it to God. Let’s believe for God’s best for people and see good things happen.

To betray our neighbor is to reveal his secrets. *“A talebearer reveals secrets, but he that is of a faithful spirit conceals the matter.”* (Proverbs 11:12) If it is something that they can deal with, they will deal with it one on one, or they will commit it to prayer. I really believe that many times the best thing is to commit it to God and let Him work on people’s hearts, especially if He shows you something in prayer. You have to make sure that He showed it. People get things “from God” and they have said something to me about it, but I don’t know what they are talking about. I haven’t a clue. It must have been some other spirit showing them because it wasn’t true about myself or the people they were sharing about.

“The wisdom of a king is to search out a matter.” If it involves the king, he will search out the matter. If he checks it out and it isn’t true, then there is a talebearer spirit talking to people while they are praying. That is trouble, and it creates all kinds of problems.

Many people go to my wife, Diana, and start talking to her about things that I discussed with them in a counseling session, thinking that she knows about it. She will ask me, “What are they talking about? It made me feel like I should have known because they were talking to me like I knew.” I respond with, “Well, you know the rules in our house. What I talk with people about is for God, the wall, them, and me.” That is it. There is no pillow talk.

Diana and I have an understanding from way back since I deal with hundreds and hundreds of people about situations in their lives. The rule in our house is unless people tell Diana themselves, she has no clue. It is on a “need to know” basis.

My brother is a U.S. Marshal who goes on assignments in which nobody knows where he is or what he is doing. If you want to know about it, he

says, “Well, if you really want to know and I tell you, then I’ll have to shoot you.” It is God’s business, but people like to know what is going on.

We want to think the best about our brothers and sisters. We want to believe God for them. If they have a fault, “*If you see a brother sin a sin that’s not to death, pray for him and ask life.*” (1st John 5:16) It doesn’t say run around telling people, “Ooh, do you know what so and so did?”

One time years ago a lady tried to cozy up to Diana. They went shopping together, and Diana bought me some pajamas. The next thing I knew, the rumor was going around the church that pastor goes to bed naked. You know, and even if I did, so what? I mean, it is for my bride’s eyes only.

Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” Peter replied, “Yes,” and Jesus said, “Feed my sheep” etc. When Jesus finished telling Peter what he was supposed to do, Peter asked Jesus [instead of saying, “Oh, thank you, Lord”], “What is John going to be doing?” Jesus looked at Peter and said, “It’s none of your business what he will do. You do what you’re given to do, and if I choose that he lives until I come, then so be it.” The next thing you know, Peter spread the rumor among the disciples that John was never going to die.

It wasn’t a negative thing that he was sharing, but since it wasn’t true, it was a negative thing. I don’t always receive some praise reports about what God does through us because they get exaggerated. I don’t want to diminish what God does, by any means, but it is God doing everything. I have heard testimonies that were exaggerated, and the more they were told, the bigger the story got. The more they were spread, the more they changed. People have a tendency to talk too much.

Watch Your Words

Are your words edifying to the hearer? Do they build them up? There is a proverb that says a wife can undermine her household by her mouth (bad-mouthing her husband). No matter what people are doing, if you’re bad-mouthing them, you are undermining their life and cursing them.

If we would just speak encouraging, helpful, uplifting words to one another. It is amazing what would happen if the world would speak what is edifying to the hearer. We don’t need to discourage others in order to build ourselves up. God has given us a principle to love one another as we are loved. Look

to see what word you can say to somebody to enrich their lives and encourage them in even higher things in God.

The rule about tattling is if an action is causing hurt to the person or somebody else, it needs to be shared. How many children who have been molested and abused were told to be quiet? I taught our children if anybody touched them any place inappropriately, I wanted to know immediately. There was none of this secret stuff.

I have heard people say; “Promise me you won’t tell anybody about this.” I can’t promise until I know what it is. If something needs to be shared with an authority, or needs to be done, I will have to do that. The veil isn’t to protect wrong doers. On the other hand, you can share where it is appropriate, and the right person can deal with it. You don’t talk with everybody around town about the person. Remember to protect reputations. God forbids us to betray our neighbor in revealing his secrets.

If God is working with you in an area of your life that isn’t right, and you are working on it (trying to get it resolved), do you want everybody else to know? Will it help you to change? On the other hand, people have to admit they have a problem. You confess your faults one to another that you may be healed, but there needs to be an environment where no one is spreading anything except praise reports. There have been people who had something against me even though they didn’t know me, had never met me, nor had any contact with me whatsoever. They “know” things about me that are not even true. Where did they get the information?

How can you form an opinion about anybody you don’t know? Not that you even need to do this. If you don’t know them, and they don’t know you, is it your business to know their business?

What would cause somebody to want to do that? If you want to know the truth about somebody, ask God. However, you don’t use God for exposing them. It says, “*Do to others what you want done to you.*” This has to do with respect.

We need to honor and love people. You don’t want to do harm to anybody. I don’t care who they are or what they are doing. You want to be the believer in somebody’s life. You want the best for them.

God forbids us to slander or defame (speak evil of) our neighbor, for it would injure or destroy his good name. *“Speak not evil one of another, brethren.”* (James 4:11 KIV) *“Unto the wicked God saith... ‘Thou giveth thy mouth to evil and thy tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother. You slander your own mother’s son. These things have you done, and I kept silence. You thought that I was altogether such a one as yourself, but I will reprove you and set them in order before your eyes’.”* (Psalm 50:19-21 NKJV)

The Lord says He will reprove the person who is talking badly about others, and He will put the others in order. He will bless their lives before your eyes so you will be cursed for talking about what they’re doing and who they are. God said He would straighten them out.

- *“Now consider this, you that forget God lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.”* (Psalm 50:22)
- *“Judge not lest you be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned.”* (Luke 6:37)
- *“If your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.”* (Matthew 18:15)

In 2nd Samuel 15: 1-6, Absalom slandered his father. He had a problem with his dad because he hadn’t dealt with the rape of Absalom’s sister by the stepbrother. It was a horrible scene, but Absalom had no right to undermine David. Rebellion is never of God. He ended up being beheaded.

What is it in us that thinks we can judge another person? God is the judge. Our part is to believe the best for one another, to seek the best for each other, to encourage each other, and to get help if we need help. We should understand that we may need help just as much as they do. Have a heart of caring.

What God Requires

Another point in befriending our brother or sister is that God forbids us to have evil thoughts against our neighbor or to plot against him. *“Let none of you imagine evil in your heart against his neighbor.”* (Zachariah 8:17) You might have thought it was intuition or insight. No, we have to test everything and pray for one another. Some people don’t realize a suspicious

heart is a deceived heart. It is a wicked heart as Proverbs says, which looks through its own eyes based upon its own actions. In other words, we “project” on others what we have in our own heart. If we have lust in our heart, then we project lust on others. If we have deceit in our heart, we think that others are trying to cheat us or lie to us. We are projecting what is in us because that is what we see. “*Remove the log from your own eye*” so you can see clearly.

Suspicious and imaginations are based on one’s perception, what one wants to think of somebody else. It is demonic.

God calls things that be not as though they are so they can happen.

What does God require of us in the ninth commandment?

1) We should defend our neighbor, take his part and shield him against false accusations. Many times I have told people, “I really don’t believe what you’re saying because it doesn’t ring true. I know that person, and what you’re saying doesn’t seem to be their way of operating.” Then people look at me like, *oh, okay*. In fact, they didn’t know I knew the person they were talking about.

Let us defend our neighbor – take his part and shield him against false accusations. “*Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.*” (Proverbs 31:8, 9 KIV) That is, open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and the needy.

Let us step up and challenge what we say. Should we be talking about this? Should we be talking about this person? Is it any of our business? What is our motivation for talking about the person and the situation? Is it to help someone, or are we just talking?

2) We should speak well of our neighbor. That is, we should praise his good qualities and deeds so far as it can be done in keeping with the truth. We don’t exaggerate, and we don’t think up lies. “*Beware of the flattering tongue.*” Those are the people you have to watch. I watch anybody who speaks too highly of me, and I watch anybody who talks trash about me. There is something out of balance in their lives.

We need to speak well of our neighbors and praise their good qualities. Why do we have to talk about the negative things in a person? Will it help build them up? Let's talk about what God is doing in their lives. People have a tendency to speak negatively about others even though there are a hundred good things in their lives, and a couple bad things that are out of line. People always go to the two bad things, whether they are thinking about themselves, or they are talking about somebody else. It isn't edifying to the hearer. It isn't blessing anybody, and it isn't blessing you. It is negative thinking.

God does not live with His head buried in the sand. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows everything about us. *"If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared. I wait on the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope."* (Psalm 130:3-5) In other words, God is not running around finding fault with me. He is not finding fault with you. He realizes our faults, and now He is working to change us.

He is not telling us about all of our shortcomings because He isn't interested in that, and it isn't building us up. It isn't helping us to become what He would have us to be. It never has helped anybody, and it never will help anybody. Maybe you were awful, but the point is, you realized it and you wanted to change. You wanted help to change. You don't need to go back through past trash.

If you can judge me, then fine, go for it. That is, if you are perfect, then you can judge me. But until you are perfect, shut your mouth and tend to your own business. People might think, *Oh man, somebody's coming against Pastor.* No, nobody is coming against me. I am just saying the truth.

Don't allow yourself to get into talking about me or have a thought about it, and don't talk about anybody else. *"Judge not lest you be judged."* (Matthew 1:1) You have all you can do to take care of yourself! Make sure you get to be where God wants you to be and finish the course in order to live happily ever after.

What Is Your Business?

If we are going to help our brothers and sisters, we need to quit judging or pre-judging, and thinking about our opinions of how folks should be, and start living for God. He doesn't treat us that way. It is a people thing, and

God put this commandment in there to make sure that we are caring for each other and looking out for one another's reputations. We represent the Lord Jesus in the earth. We are not perfect.

I have read the bumper sticker that says, "Christians are just forgiven." No, we're not just forgiven; we are changed, and we are transformed. That means we should start to act differently than the folks in the world who have no problem talking about anybody at anytime or giving their two cents about people they don't know or care about.

I feel sorry for the celebrities who have to live under a microscope because people think they are a part of their lives. What the celebrities do is their business, not mine. You need to get out of other people's business, unless you are invited in. If you're invited in, it is a privilege and a confidence, which means you don't go blabbing around, "You know what I did with so-and-so the other day?" Name dropping. That is not of God.

Quite frankly, if you talk to me, don't tell anybody. It is none of their business. Take this principle. If you want to run around saying that Pastor sleeps with no clothes on, I don't care, that is your problem. When it's hot, it is more comfortable. So what.

Start to get real with yourself. You know, the celebrities constantly have camera men around them snapping shots because other pathetic people buy magazines. They don't have a life, and they are trying to live through somebody else, but it is really none of their business.

It is violating the ninth commandment of God. Why would you even buy those trashy magazines that sell quicker than hotcakes? You want to get some little tidbit about somebody, and you think, *Yeah, they're part of my life*. You don't even know who they are because if you did, you wouldn't be reading the trash about them. You wouldn't be condoning it or supporting groups and people who are living off of other people's trash, and making money by spreading garbage.

We should cover up their faults, explain in their favor whatever can be explained.

Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul (but Saul was imagining evil about David.) The people of Capernaum spoke well of the centurion. He had

done much to bless the community. “*Charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*” (1st Peter 4:8) “*Charity [love] believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*” (1st Corinthians 13:7) Love believes all things that are good, not negative.

Jesus didn’t die for just a few people. He died for everybody. “*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*” (Romans 3:23) “*There is none that doeth good, no not one.*” I didn’t write it. Since God wrote it, nobody has a right to talk about anybody in a negative way.

If we have been forgiven, then how much more should we *not* talk about somebody else? We want to protect our brothers and sisters. We want to love them, care for them, and care for their reputation. If we know something about somebody, will call things that be not as though they are.

God Can Change People

One time a fellow was sitting in the back of the auditorium while I was ministering, and after the service I was led to go up and speak with him. He said, “Pastor, I really don’t fit in here with all these people. They’re all so holy, and they’re all so good, and they’re all blessed and happy.” I answered, “That’s interesting. Do you see that woman over there? She used to be a prostitute. Do you see that man over there? He used to be a drug addict. And that person over there used to steal and cheat.”

I was showing the fellow that God changed those people. The man was a carouser and a drunkard, and I was saying if God did it for them, He could do it for him too.

God would change people if they would continue. The people I mentioned in the auditorium were so blessed because God had forgiven them of their wrongdoing and changed their lives. I wasn’t talking out of school because if I had asked each one, they would have stood up boldly and testified as to what they had been, what they had done, and what God did to change their lives. If you make a statement like, “This is how I was, and this is how I am now because of the grace, mercy, and love of God who has changed my life,” then you will really be free.

Any time you are in the public eye you can expect strife of words, but you learn to let it be like water off a duck’s back. Don’t take it personally. Just realize that people are people and they have to do whatever they have to do

to deal with whatever is in them. Whatever they think, they have to be or say. You don't let it bother you when people lie about you.

A little old lady, who was just as sweet as she could be, came up one time and wanted to have her picture taken with me. Diana took a picture of her standing with me. The next thing I knew this lady was purporting to be my mother, and she started her own ministry. I just laughed when I heard about it.

I could tell you story after story over the years, but my thought is always, *Who am I? I'm nobody. I'm just God's little servant running around. His little light blesses people as He would have it. I seek to do good and keep my nose clean so I can finish and end up with God.* People do whatever they are going to do. That is why I say not to drop my name because you don't know if people will love me or hate me.

Don't think you will get brownie points by association because it won't help you. What is of God, God will make happen. What is not of God, you don't need to do. The world and the flesh compare, compete, and strive. You don't need to get into any of that.

The ninth commandment is about a good reputation. All that matters in my heart is what my Father in heaven says about me. That is what should matter to you. You should know in your own life that you are doing the best you can and seeking to do the right thing the way God would have it. When the dust settles, God will judge everybody. Paul said, "I don't care about your opinion of me or what you think. (1st Corinthians 4) I don't even judge myself or my opinion. Even when I think I'm right, I may be wrong. That remains to be seen. God will determine and show everything for what it is when that day comes. He will judge for better or for worse."

In the meantime, you live your life and do the best you can under God. Seek to love God, yourself, others, and the work God is doing in you. Let the dust fall where it will.

Loving and Caring God's Way

If somebody needs and wants some help, we help. We pray for everybody. We believe God for everybody, and we want the best for them. Then we just go happily on our little way and let God sort it all out.

This is loving and caring for people God's way.

When I look at somebody, I see a finished product. It doesn't take long, but I see what God is doing, and that's the way we should move. We don't judge people. We don't criticize and get into negativity. We pray and believe God's best for one another. We are going to see God's best.

You have to live your life on the principles that God has set down. The Ten Commandments are solid principles. If you live your life on those, you won't go too far from the truth, and you will see the blessing of God.

In fact, it says in Proverbs, "*As you obey God's commands, you will receive blessing (favor) both from God and from man.*" So I encourage you to take to heart these commandments and how to care for God and one another. You will be blessed all of your days.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
The 10th Commandment
Chapter Nine

Thou Shalt Not Covet

The final commandment deals with not coveting your neighbor's house, wife, manservant, maidservant, cows, cars, clothes – anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What is really involved in this commandment is having a pure heart towards our brothers and sisters. Because we love God, we want to keep His commandments, and we want to have a pure heart towards one another. “*Thou shalt not covet...*” Coveting has to do with a poverty spirit. Love has no poverty and knows no poverty.

When you covet, you want something you don't have. “*From whence come wars and fightings amongst you? They come of your own lust. You want something, you can't have it, so you fight for it [or you connive for it and try to do things to get what you want].*” (James 4) With dishonest gain, you won't prosper, for a spirit of lack is working.

The Lord wants you to have a pure heart. A pure heart loves and fears God and wants to do the best for the brothers and sisters. You should protect what belongs to them, help and encourage them, for example, to keep their marriage and do the things that need to be done in the way God would have it to be. Be a blessing to them.

Have you ever heard someone say, “God told me you would give me your car.” I'm so tired of people saying, “God told me this, and God told me that.” I look at what is going on, and it is no more God telling people than the man in the moon. It is their own flesh and their own lusts, cravings, and desires. What they want is to get what you have for their own gain. That is not a pure heart.

I never see God working a con. He says, “*I am not a man...*” Men are subject to con, and whatever a man does is suspect. Whatever God does is true, and you can trust in it. If an activity is of God, it will serve somebody and do something good. You don't need much discernment to figure that out. “What's behind it?” I always ask. What is the benefit, not necessarily

just for me but for everyone? God always benefits the whole. A God-deal is where both the buyer and the seller come out blessed.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not yet seen.” (Hebrews 11:1) God has things for you that you don’t know He has, but when you are coveting what someone else has been given by God, you want what God blessed them with. If God blessed *them* with it, why are you wanting it?

If you have heard, “God told me you would give me your car,” understand this: if God told anybody that you would give your car away, He would tell you first because He gave it to you. You are the one entrusted with it. Everything you have is a trust from God. So, love would say if God wants you to have something, you need to ask Him for it. *“You have not because you ask not.”* (James 4) *“Be not covetous, for I will never leave you, nor forsake you; therefore, you can boldly say, ‘The Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man shall do to me’.”* (Hebrews 13:5, 6)

People fear what man will do to them or take away from them, even if it be their life. Abraham was afraid for his life. Isaac was afraid for his life too, but when he got rid of the fear, he was able to sow the seed. God blessed it a hundred-fold and prospered him.

Wanting What You Don’t Have

Covetousness is part of the wisdom of the devil. It says you don’t have, so you will go get it from somebody else. *“From whence come wars and fightings among you?”* They come because a nation doesn’t have. They look to see what other nations have. They figure they will take what the other has and add it to what they have.

David went after Bathsheba, Uriah’s only wife. He coveted her, and he wanted her, and he took her. He broke the Tenth Commandment. He wanted something that wasn’t his. Instead of protecting Uriah, Bathsheba, and his household, and doing what a king should do to protect the people under his care, he used and abused them.

King Ahab saw Naboth’s vineyard and wanted it. He couldn’t have it because Naboth said (paraphrased), “You know, king, I’d love to bless you and help you, but it’s in my family.” It was his family’s vineyard, and you don’t take the heritage and move it outside. Ahab pouted and went home to

Jezebel. She noticed he was depressed, so she asked, “What’s wrong?” He answered, “I wanted that vineyard out there, but Naboth won’t let me have it.” She answered, “I’ll fix it.” That day she went out and had Naboth killed and took the vineyard.

What a violation! Either by hook or by crook, coveting is always wrong, for it doesn’t have people’s best interest at heart, doesn’t care about them, and is only interested in self.

Later the curse on David continued in his house with other wives and children. He had a son and a daughter (Absalom and his sister, Tamar) from one wife, and he had another son, Ammon, by another wife. Ammon coveted Tamar. He laid a trap, and as soon as he ensnared her, wronged her, and defiled her, he wouldn’t have anything more to do with her.

Since you are not to have intercourse outside of marriage, it is better not to touch at all. Touching leads to another touch and another touch, and here a touch, there a touch. The next thing you know everything is touched, and you have a serious problem.

When Tamar, David’s daughter, was defiled, David wouldn’t do anything about the situation. Then Absalom coveted David’s throne. Anything that belongs to others is not yours. In love and care for a brother or a sister, we need to do everything in our power to enable them to be blessed with what they have.

We Never Lack

Were you thankful for somebody when they got a blessing? Have you wondered when your turn is? In itself there is nothing wrong with that question except that envy, jealousy, and coveting are right at your door. You shouldn’t even be thinking about it. You should be thinking, *I’m so happy that God has blessed them. I will rejoice with them for what God has done.* Really, if you understood the word of God and the concept of us all being the Body of Christ, then you would realize that when one part of the body benefits, we all benefit. We are all blessed. We should have the same heart and love one for another.

You never lack according to the word of God. Coveting involves lack. The Lord says in Hebrews 13:5, “*Be not covetous [Don’t go there] because I will never leave you or forsake you.*” Paul said, “*I’ve learned the secret to life.*”

No matter what state I'm in, whether I'm abounding in much or I have little, I am content.” “*Godliness with contentment is great gain.*” (1st Timothy 6:6)

To go after things that haven't been given to you is to say that you lack. What you have is yours, and you are to care for it in God. Whatever God gives to others is theirs to care for in God. Whether God gives you people, houses, or cars, they are your responsibility. You have to change the oil in the car. You have to take care of things that God has given.

If people are coveting something, they are stepping out of the bounds of love and committing an act of force in the spirit realm. What did Satan do? He coveted God's throne. He wanted God's position, he sought to undermine God and take it away. He fought for it. Well, you don't fight with God and win. Therefore, he lost.

When people are covetous, they lose. They step out of the abundant life that God has promised and provided. They say they lack, for they want something, and they will take it by hook or by crook. They don't care if you lose what you have; they will gain. Dishonest gain, Proverbs says, will not prosper. Whatever you acquire that way will come to nothing. What happens is the curse is on your head and on your life. In addition, if you do evil to somebody who has done nothing but good to you, the curse will not depart from your house.

God gave the commandments not only to show us the right way and the blessed way but to show us what is *not* right and blessed. They have consequences as a result. What we want to do is befriend our neighbor, our brother, our sister.

Note, “*Thou shalt not steal*” and “*Thou shalt not commit adultery*” sound like this commandment as well. (Don't take something that belongs to somebody else). “*Thou shalt not kill*” includes people's reputations, dreams, life, or what belongs to them. Again, they all have to do with a holy heart.

Be Content

“*Having food and raiment let us therewith be content.*” (1st Timothy 6:8)
Don't move out of the realm of contentment. Be thankful for what you have. Be appreciative of what you have. Thank God for it and take care of it. If you have one set of clothes, be thankful for them, and make sure they

are clean and pressed. If you have more, make use of them. People with a poverty mentality say if you have more, then you should share with them. That is how it works out there. (However, if they have more, it is theirs.) Be thankful and happy for those who have more. You shouldn't be thinking, *They shouldn't have that much.*

When people say that others shouldn't have that much, it really means they want some of what they have. You should be happy, joyful, and thankful that they are blessed like that. Moving out of contentment into discontentment brings confusion, and every evil is able to work – like envy, jealousy, and covetousness. At that point you are not trusting God and not realizing that He is with you. If you have one suit, be content because God is with you, or if you have one hundred suits, be content because God is with you. You might say it is easier to be content with a hundred than it is with one. Not so, because contentment is a blessing which comes from God.

Paul said it is the secret of life. *“Be not covetous, for I will never leave you,”* the Lord says, which means, “You've got Me; why are you looking around for other things and other people when you have Me?” Think about what you are really saying to God when you have your eye on somebody else's goods.

Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, didn't know anything about the affair between his wife and David. Can you imagine the curse that was on David? His first son with Bathsheba died as a consequence of the curse, and David couldn't fellowship with God. He couldn't even go to church, and he had no delight in God.

It says in Psalm 37, *“Delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart,”* but when you love something or somebody more than God, He isn't going to bless that. You just violated the first commandment, *“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me,”* when you put that person or thing before God, and you are saying God doesn't supply your needs.

The word of the Lord came through the prophet, Nathan, to David. He told David, “There were two men. One man had a thousand sheep, and the other one had one sheep. His one sheep was his companion and friend. The fellow who had a thousand sheep threw a big barbecue and took the one sheep from the man, and barbecued it.” Nathan asked David, “What ought

to be done with that man?” David was indignant, “He ought to be killed!” Nathan let a Holy Ghost pause go down and then said, “*You* are the man.”

At that point, David had a spiritual confrontation, and he realized what he had done. However, that wasn't the first time he had done something like that. He wooed Abigail away from her husband and played on what was in her heart, for she already viewed her husband as a fool. There she was with the new upstart, you know, king-to-be. It was easy to dump her husband, but that is another story. Unfortunately, in Christian circles, Abigail has been touted as a godly woman and a great woman of faith. She is anything but that, friends. If you look at the story, you will see she was a rebellious wife, looking out for herself and her own purposes. She coveted David, and she wanted a way out and a way to the throne. It happens every day in America. It happens every day all over the world.

You want to be very thankful for what you have today, you want to be thankful for what somebody else has, and you want to be a blessing to them in it. Don't cause them any grief. You don't want to be like the person who comes along, saying, “Oh, you don't like that guy, do you? He's such a jerk.” Maybe someone was happy with him but then thought, *Okay, maybe he is a jerk. Maybe I didn't see something.* She dumps him and goes to the next guy. Guess who got the first guy? The woman who was saying, “Oh, he's such a jerk. You don't want to go out with him.” It is a trick that has been used for years.

Another example is if you're happy about your new dress, and somebody makes a comment like, “That color looks awful on you,” or “Your dress doesn't do it for you.” Suddenly you're not happy with what you have. You can run out this scenario on a thousand other things. You were happy with what you had, but somebody came along and took away from it.

Sometimes it isn't necessarily that people want what you have, but they just don't want *you* to have it. This violates the tenth commandment. It is stepping out of bounds because they are taking away the joy of what you have and what God has blessed you with. You were happy until someone tried to steal your joy.

A Pure Heart

“To the pure all things are pure, to the defiled all things are defiled.”

Defiled people don't want any good to happen to anybody. They don't want

anybody else happy. Because they have had bad things happen to them, they are not believing for good things anymore. They haven't seen anything good happen to themselves. How sad.

Jesus would turn it around if they would ask His forgiveness and start to turn their heart. The way out for them is to be thankful for what they have and what others get blessed with. They are to be happy for others, and believe God that others will be blessed and prosper. Then they will enter into another place in the spirit realm which allows God to bless them beyond what they can imagine or think. It is the place of contentment, thankfulness, and peace.

Your delight in the Lord is where your joy is. It is not in people or in things, but in the Lord. Then He will give you the desires of your heart (His desires for you). God's desire for you and me far exceed anything that we can imagine, ask for, or think about. (Ephesians 3:20). God has for us what we haven't even dreamed of, and He wants to give it to us.

Coveting is stealing. It is taking something to yourself by your own power or manipulation. The other way is believing God. Think about sowing and reaping. As you sow with a pure heart and an attitude of generosity and blessing, and you are happy for people, then guess what will come back? The same thing. Favor is like a magnet which will draw the blessing from the north, south, east, and west. When you're thankful and content, and loving others to get blessed, while helping in that blessing promise, you will see all kinds of good things happen.

When you always covet, you are wanting the blessing for yourself. Instead, be a blessing, and the blessing will come to you. God doesn't want you to run out of being a blessing. He will keep filling you back up with blessing so that you can be a blessing the way He intended. This is how you keep it.

These commandments are so much fun. I just love the commandments of God. They were given out of His love, and they are intended to produce His love in the earth.

Do you need to ask God's forgiveness for coveting? The covetous person is a "have not" person. They are a "wanna be," and they will badmouth those who have, or they will seek to get what they have.

When you were a little kid playing with an old toy, maybe you told a playmate that his toy was nothing special. Then you offered your toy. You told him what a really good toy it was, so he started looking at it. Then you did a switch-er-roo. What you really wanted was his toy, and you gave him something you wanted to get rid of.

“The heart is deceitful beyond measure.” (Jeremiah 17:9) God wants you to have a pure heart. A pure hearted person doesn't try to con people out of what they have, for it puts discontent in their hearts about what they have. It is violating the tenth commandment of God. When you are putting anything in anybody's head to undermine their joy, you are violating God's commandment.

You can repent and change. You can turn around. It is really sad when people throw away what someone else had because they really weren't interested in it. They were only interested in the other person not having it.

This has caused divorce. What nasty, gruelly stuff has gone down. What fighting and fussing. *Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not of your own lusts? You want something, you can't have it, so you fight for it.* It is spiritual rape, an act of force. It is an act of violence to get something for oneself. It is dishonest gain, and it will lead to poverty. I have seen it many, many times over the years.

We need to encourage our brothers and sisters to appreciate and enjoy what they have. That is another working of the positive side of the tenth commandment. We need to appreciate our spouse and our lives. We need to thank God for the place we live, wherever it may be. One time a fellow told me, “Oh, Pastor, I'm living out of my car.” I said, “Thank God you've got a car.”

Be Thankful, Be Generous, Be Blessed

Start to thank God wherever you are and for whatever you have. I always like to remember the feeding of the five thousand where Jesus asked the disciples what they had. They said, “We just have this little boy's lunch.” Jesus received it and lifted it up to God, saying, “Thank you, Lord, for the lunch that you have provided,” which, by the way, the boy freely gave. Therefore, he was freely blessed. He was blessed by his act of generosity and love to this day, for it has been remembered and talked about. The little

boy loved the people more than himself, and God blessed him and the people as a result.

Over the years I have watched the generosity of God's people enable God to do amazing things to touch lives around the world. What Jesus did for us at the cross, that sacrificial gift of Himself, has enabled us all to be saved. Never forget what God did for us in that gift. If Jesus hadn't done it, we wouldn't be saved, and we might as well eat, drink, be merry, forget life, and go to hell.

How pathetic for people in the body of Christ to bad-mouth prosperity. After God prospers you, others think, *You shouldn't be prospering*. What is with that? It is a violation of the tenth commandment.

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant, nor to put their hope in wealth.” (1st Timothy 6:13-17) In the same way, it shouldn't be that we flaunt what we have in front of others. It is wrong too because it demeans the person who doesn't have much. This is the flip side. We don't want to be arrogant. We don't want to put our hope in wealth which is so uncertain, but we put our hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. God wants us to enjoy our lives and what He blesses us with, and He wants others to enjoy their lives with what He blesses them with.

“Command everybody to do good: to be rich in good deeds, to be generous and willing to share” (whether they have little, or they have much). In this way they will lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Take hold of the abundant life that Jesus is talking about. We are in a foreshadowing of what is to come in the new heaven and the new earth.

Here is the directive about how to apply the tenth commandment. Since it is right there for you, you might want to go over it a few times. Get it down inside of you, and once you do this, then everybody gets blessed. Everybody comes out fine. There is no jealousy, no envy, no discontent in our midst, and no division. There are no “haves and have nots” (that kind of thinking always brings you down).

We are seated with Christ in heavenly places. We are risen. We don't want to come back down to an old, demeaning life, and we don't have to.

Prayer:

Father, we thank you for all that you have supplied and provided for us in Jesus' name, and we give you praise. Lord, we are so excited for our brothers and sisters and what you're doing in their lives – spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, and in relationships. We are ecstatic about it. We give You praise with the people all over the world, Lord, for what You are doing with everyone in the earth. Thank you, Jesus, it will bring glory and honor to God.

We are believing God for the people in other nations of the earth, and we are believing for our nation. We are believers with a great God to believe in. How could we ever be down when we have such a great and wonderful Lord who loves us with an everlasting love that never fades away or changes? He says, *“Be not covetous, for I will never leave you. I will never forsake you.”* Just think on that for a moment and let the Spirit of the Lord minister to you. If you are not happy with your life, then ask God for forgiveness.

I tell the people who are in a hard place, “If you have got Jesus, you have everything.” Start to thank and praise God. He can see you through what is going on in your life.

The Apostle Paul said, *“I've found the secret to life and living. I've learned how to be content no matter what state I'm in, whether I'm abounding in much or I have little, for I have the Lord who will never leave me or forsake me. Therefore, I don't have to be covetous, for the Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man shall do to me.”* Friends, you are blessed through your faith in Jesus Christ your Lord.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
The Commandments Are for Our Good
Chapter 10

All Have Sinned

The Word of the Lord says, *“I, the Lord thy God am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.”* (Exodus 20:5,6)

The commandments of God are given out of the love of God. They were all given to bless us. They were given in order that we could learn how to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves, which is one of the functions of the law. Another function is to show us our sin. We are separated from God in our action, life, and thinking. Another function of the law is to convict us of our sin, which drives us to the cross for forgiveness and to our Lord Jesus.

People have thought that the commandments of God have been done away with because they don't understand the working of the law and the gospel. The fact is, in your old selfish nature you could not keep the law of God which is holy, just, and eternal. If you break one commandment, you break them all. *“All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”* (Romans 3:12) *“There is none that doeth good, no not one.”* (Romans 3:11)

Most people don't know they are sinners. They don't know they are separated from God. They say, “I don't know why I need God. I'm fine.” You can ask, “Do you gossip? Have you lied? Have you stolen from someone, or not returned something you borrowed? If so, then you are a sinner.”

If you have put other things before the Lord, you are a sinner. If you have done your own thing on God's holy day, then you are a sinner. The Lord says, “Do these commandments out of love for Me.” If you have spoken badly about somebody, then you are a murderer. Have you not told the truth? Did you ever want what belonged to somebody else?

We all have done these things.

You need the gospel, which is the good news of the love of God. You need God's forgiveness, and you need the Lord to come into your life and save you. *"Oh wretched man that I am. Who can save me from this body of death?"* Paul said in Romans 7. *"Thanks be to God who gives me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ."*

Your response to the commandments should be from love and thanks, wanting to do what God says. God will help you and enable you to will and to do His good purpose. (Philippians 2:12, 13) When Jesus is your Lord, you will live God's way and live by His commandments.

The Law of God vs. The World's Way

"The commandments of God are not grievous." (1st John 5:3) They are not grievous to somebody who wants to keep them. We should love to keep them. *"I delight in the law of God after my inner man (my spirit man),"* Paul said. We should want to do what God says. Jesus said, *"If you love me, you keep my commandments."* Those who have the testimony of Jesus (those who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior) and who keep the commandments of God will inherit the new heaven and the new earth. The commandments of God have not been done away with through faith. They have been increased through faith.

Their value has increased because now we can keep them as Romans 8:4 says. We can now fulfill them because of our faith in Jesus. God is helping us.

The bible says that evil will increase in our day and age. What is good will be spoken of as evil, and what is evil will be spoken of as good. People conform their thinking to the world's thinking and start to accept evil into their lives. We cannot accept the immorality that is in the world and the ways of the world. The law of God stands in direct opposition to that kind of thinking.

This spirit of lawlessness that came into the earth has been here since the fall of Satan from heaven. He didn't want to obey God or be under God's authority. He wanted to do his own thing, and he wanted to *be* God. He fought God and lost, and he was expelled from heaven. Jesus said, *"I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning."* He was kicked out because he rebelled against God, and then he came down to earth and destroyed the creation. He has been rebelling ever since. He wants to keep people away

from loving God and receiving the benefits of following and obeying God and being blessed as His children. He doesn't want anybody to have anything good from God; and therefore, he makes God out to be the bad guy.

He disguises himself through self, using the pride of man as the disguise for his activity in people. Then man thinks he doesn't need God. "I can do it myself" results in him being separated from God. When Adam and Eve fell away, all mankind became fallen. In His love God set a plan in motion to save man through a perfect man, Jesus. He was God Himself come in the flesh, and He lived for us. He put aside the quality of being God, humbled Himself and became full man, working just like we do, going through temptations, troubles, and problems, and facing everything as we do except that He did not sin. He obeyed the commandments of God perfectly.

What He did for us in dying on the cross was perfect. His blood was pure, for His blood was from the Father in heaven. Our blood came from man (Adam and Eve). We were under a curse, and only God could take that curse off. As we obey God's word, we honor what God has done for us in His great salvation.

These are principles of God. They will work for anybody who does them, believer or unbeliever alike.

Natural and Spiritual Laws

There is a difference between a law and an opinion. A law will set in motion something that will happen, and every time it will work the same way. A preference is something different. A law would say, "Every day thou shalt wear whatever you're wearing now." If you didn't wear that, then you would be breaking the law.

There are laws of nature. Throw something up in the air and it will come down. That demonstrates the law of gravity. There are many different laws in the earth.

"You reap what you sow." If you sow love, you will get back love. If you plant a grapefruit tree, you will get grapefruit. You won't get pomegranates. A law in the earth is "seed in like kind." Whatever the seed sown will be the fruit that comes up. That is the law in nature. In the same way, there are spiritual laws that cannot be broken. (By the way, you can't keep the

commandments of God without believing in them because they are against your selfish nature. You can't do it on your own apart from God. It is only in Christ that you can keep the commandments of God.)

The commandments will reap blessing when you do them. When you don't do them, you reap cursing and the wrath of God. Something we don't hear much about is the wrath of God. It isn't being taught in our day and age. All you hear about is the love of God.

The flip side to loving God is fearing God [honor, respect, and worship]. If you don't honor God, then you are honoring the devil, who is cursed. It will reap the wrath of God. I don't think people like hearing about it. On the other hand, if you violate the law of God, you're not doing what God says. Even when you think you will be okay, there is a problem you are not going to be okay. The Word is very clear. If we don't do what God says, then we will reap the wrath of God.

Nobody Can Stand Against the Lord

The Lord said, "*I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God.*" He is saying He won't give His people over to anything or anybody else. They are His. The Lord is the bridegroom and the church is the bride. He won't turn His bride over to any tramp that comes along. He will be looking out for His church. He will protect, defend, care for, and do everything that a godly man should be doing for His wife. He will do everything out of love to protect and bless, care for and nourish. He won't put up with anything that will try to tamper with, cause harm, or defile His bride.

The wrath of God comes against anything evil. (A definition of evil is anything outside of the purpose and will of God.) What does the thief intend to do? "*The thief has come to steal, to kill, and to destroy*" (John 10:10), which is not only about the physical but the eternal. He has come to keep people away from the living God and the life and union with God. He has come to defile people and destroy their lives spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, and in relationships. God says He is not going to put up with it.

Nobody is greater than the Lord. When the devil tried to fight God, he was kicked out of heaven with one third of the other angels. They lost because nobody can stand against the Lord.

The Lord loves us with an everlasting love. The commandments were set down to give us blessing from generation to generation to the third and fourth generation of those that love Him and keep His commandments. The blessing is to be passed down. Those who don't obey God will receive the cursing to the third and fourth generation, and it will be passed down.

People don't take the commandments of God seriously nowadays. In fact, they don't want to hear about them. They want them removed. It is happening right now in our nation. They don't want the commandments of God taught. They say it is a violation of the first amendment of the constitution, but if you read the amendment, you would see there is provision for freedom of religious expression. It wasn't written to take God out of the state, but that is what the interpretation has been.

Keeping the Commandments

The spirit of lawlessness doesn't want people keeping the commandments of God because it doesn't want them blessed. It wants their lives destroyed. The commandments are for our good. They are intended to prosper us and give us hope and a future God's way (with blessing). If we love God, we will keep His commandments. If we don't love God, we won't want them around.

I have asked people, "Are you a Christian? Do you love God?" If they say, "Oh yeah, I love God," then I ask, "Are you doing what He says? If not, how do you expect to be blessed? How do you expect to be called a child of God if you're not doing what He says?" Sons of God are led by the Spirit of God. They do what the Spirit of God says. They do the commandments of God.

This attitude of frivolousness towards obeying God has to stop. People with that attitude won't see God some day. "*Without holiness you will not see the Lord.*" (Hebrews 12:14) You can't be sexual impure. You can't lie, steal, and covet somebody else's goods and expect to end up with Him. That is presumption.

The wrath of God will be on people who disobey. God has the right to give them these commandments. He says, "*I, the Lord thy God.*" That means He has a right to do it. Have you said Jesus is your Lord? (A confession to salvation.) If you are ashamed to confess Him before men, then you're not His. If you are His, you will do what He says. When you say, "Jesus Christ

is my Lord,” you are actually saying “I vow to keep the commandments of God. I’m a doer of the Word. I vow to do it because God has a right to tell me what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. I yield all my stubbornness, independence, rebellion, and selfishness. It all died. It was crucified with me in Jesus at the cross, and now I receive the life of God.”

God insists on strict and perfect obedience. (He is a jealous God.) That means He won’t turn you over to someone else. “*I, the Lord your God, am holy.*” “*Be ye therefore, perfect (holy) even as I am holy.*” (Matthew 5:48) In other words, if you are Mine, then you will do what I say, and you will do it the way I say it.

God’s Children Do What He Says

When my children were little, I said to my son one day, “I don’t know who you are,” and he looked at me strangely. “Well, dad, I’m your child.” I continued, “My child doesn’t act like that.” He broke down, asking God’s forgiveness and asking my forgiveness because he understood what I was saying about not knowing his behavior. My children don’t act like that. I learned that from my heavenly Father.

“Love your enemies..., pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you that you may be children of your Father in heaven, ...for He sends the rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:43-45) In other words, if people aren’t doing the commandments of God, then they are not being children of our Father in heaven. That is His principle.

You can’t say you are God’s child, or Jesus is your Lord, and live like hell, violating the commandments of God, not thinking about them and doing your own thing, your own pleasures, wants, and desires.

“Jesus said, ‘They will say, ‘I did this in your name and that in your name’, He will say, ‘Depart from me, you workers of iniquity. I don’t know who you are’.” (Matthew 7:22-23)

He was using the principle that I used when talking with my son. He is my child. He learned God’s ways because I taught him God’s ways. My children do what God says. That is their blessing in life. “You are my joy, my crown of rejoicing as you do what God says.” That blesses me.

As I care for God's people, I am like a spiritual dad, and when you are doing what God says, it blesses me. You are God's child, and you are acting like the Father. He is well pleased.

We have to get back to a holy awareness of the presence of God. He knows when you stand up, He knows when you sit down. He knows everything you are going to do before you do it. We need to ask ourselves if Jesus wants us doing whatever we are doing. Is it acceptable to Him?

To Be Taken Seriously

I was raised with an awareness of the love of God and the fear of the Lord. If my own children did what was wrong, they had a fear of what was coming. There were going to be consequences. "*God disciplines those He loves.*" (Hebrews 12:6) Discipline was done for correction and instruction to break rebellion so that they would do the right thing. (Hebrews 12:10, 11)

There will be consequences for our behavior. "*God is not mocked. Whatever a person sows is what he will reap.*" (Galatians 6:7) If we sow unbelief or rebellion, we will reap problems. If we sow love and good will, we will reap blessing. That is how it works. God will bless to the third and fourth generation those who love Him and keep His commandments. He will show mercy, but those who don't want to do what God says and refuse to do it will reap the wrath of God.

"*Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*" (Galatians 3:10 KJV) Many people often don't understand. I have heard among Christians, "I'm not under the law anymore." They don't have a clue what that means. If I am fulfilling the law by walking in the Spirit (Romans 8), then I am not under the law anymore because I am *doing* the law. If I am doing the law, I am receiving the blessing. I am not under the cursing that comes with being under the law in disobedience. If I am disobedient, I come under the law of God (believer and unbeliever alike) because the law of God is eternal. It is good. It is for everyone. It is just and true. God will judge everyone, believer and unbeliever alike, by the law of God. If we have broken it, then we are destined to go to Gehenna, the place commonly called Hell – separated from God forever. A horrible, horrible place.

The devil will be there, all the fallen angels, all unbelievers, and all the people who are willfully, knowingly, continuing to violate the commandments of God and not asking forgiveness or turning to God for life.

To say this has to be taken seriously is an understatement. If I belong to God, I will keep His commandments. I will do what He says. That is the issue. Am I God's? Willful, knowing, continued practice means you're not of God, you are of the devil. (1st John 3) You shouldn't think that you are of God because you're not even wanting to do what He says. You're willfully, knowingly doing differently.

Your conscience is your spirit wherein God lives. Have you ever heard a little voice say, "This is wrong," and then you heard a bigger voice say, "Go ahead and do it anyway"?

The voice in your mind, your un-renewed mind, your undisciplined mind, which allows you to do anything, thinks, *God loves me just the way I am, and I'm going to be okay.* That was true before you received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, but now you are God's child. God loved all of us before because we were sinners. We needed Jesus Christ to die for us. We needed the blood of Jesus. We are not sinners anymore. No sinner will enter into life with God. We have to be washed in the blood of the Lamb, wearing the robe of righteousness, being in right standing with God. God's desire is that we not sin, but if we should break the commandments, we have an advocate with the Father, our Lord Jesus. (1st John 2) We ask for forgiveness, and we quit sinning. We turn from it, and we start doing what God says. That is what repenting is all about.

Holding bitterness more than a moment violates the will of God, and you open yourself to cursing. You open yourself to the wrath of God. If you think God has blinders on, you have to be deaf, dumb, stupid, deceived, and demonized. God knows everything. You cannot hide from Him.

Adam and Eve wanted to hide from God right after they sinned, but no one can hide from Him. Ask God's forgiveness and get back to doing what He says. "*The wages of sin is death.*" (Romans 6:23) That can't be any clearer. "*The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*" (Ezekiel 18:20)

Consequences of Sin

Wicked descendents of Ham bore the curse of their ancestor's sin. (Genesis 9:25) Jews bear the curse of their ancestors sin. (Matthew 27:25) The ancestors said, "*Let the curse be upon us and upon our children and our children's children* (we'll take the responsibility)," even as they yelled, "*Crucify Him, Crucify Him*." Pilate washed his hands of the whole deal. They didn't know what they were doing, did they? Now you can understand why Jesus said, "*Father, forgive them; they don't know what they are doing*." They took a curse upon themselves from generation to generation. Thank God that some day they all will have their eyes opened. They will receive their Messiah and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Some people wonder why something bad is happening to them. It may be that a curse was passed down. It is why Jesus proclaimed, "*You must be born again*." Others have come to me and said, "I was born this way," and I tell them that is why Jesus said you must be born again. Get rid of the sin nature (the separated-from-God nature), and then quit doing actual sins, which are the sins that we do every day. Ask God's forgiveness and turn from those things.

As stated in the bible, before the flood, every man walked his own way and did what was right in his own eyes. All people did evil towards the Lord, and He sent the flood (the consequence of their sin). Never think there aren't consequences for your actions. For good actions (God-like actions), such as keeping the commandments, there will be blessing. For not doing what God says, there will be cursing. Never be deceived into thinking you can do wrong, evil things (being outside of the will of God) and get right results. It will not happen. The end does not justify the means. Wrong actions lead to problems.

You might ask, "When people in the bible lied to protect others, were they wrong?" What does protecting others mean? Protecting life is good. It is of God. But when Abraham and Isaac passed their wives off as their sisters to save their lives, God didn't look on it with favor, nor did the kings who were put into a position of jeopardy. Fear was their motivation, which is evil. It is self. What is the motivation of your heart? Is it love for God or love for self? It will make a big difference in what happens to you.

Just like with Sodom and Gomorrah, there will be a time of reckoning. Sodomy laws in some states have been done away with, yet God set marriage up between a man and woman. Anything else is perversion.

Some want to get the Ten Commandments out of view. They want to remove them from our courts and not operate on principle anymore. Instead, they will operate on judges' feelings and wishes. We've got trouble, and it's ahead. There will come a great persecution for those who stand up for God because most people are in a place of compromise. You will have to know whom you believe and stand up for what you know is right and true.

The wickedness of the Jews brought about the destruction of Jerusalem. (Luke 19:43, 44) Solomon's temple is no more because the people didn't walk with God. The promise of God was that when they were in trouble and enemies were at their gates, if they went to the house of the Lord, God would rescue and save them. That was God's promise if they honored God, but they didn't honor Him, and everything was demolished. That was the consequence.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand these things. If you go out and have illicit sex, there is a good chance you will come back with a disease – maybe a life threatening problem. We live in an area that has the highest rate of syphilis in the country, let alone AIDS.

“The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy.” It goes with the lifestyle, but people try to make it out that good people get bad stuff. Let me tell you, if you are messing around, you are entering into trouble. You are outside of the blessing and protection of God. On the other hand, if you do what God says, you are inside the protection of God. Don't expect good things to happen if you are outside of the protection of God. Part of the problem is that people actually think that they can get away with sin.

Ananias and Sapphira said they were going to give a certain amount for an offering to the church when they sold their land. After the sale, they changed their minds. People have told me, “When I win the lottery, Pastor, you know, just whatever you need I'll get it for you.” First of all, you are violating a principle when you play the lottery. Secondly, I never see the money. Once they get it, it goes other places. It is one thing to say you will do something, and it is another thing to do it.

Ananias and Sapphira sold the land, and they worked up a little story together to tell the church leaders. (Acts 5:1-10) They went in to see Peter, and he asked, "Is this what you said you'd bring?" Ananias said, "Yes, this is it. This is all of it." And Peter asked him, "Before you sold, the property was it yours? Were the proceeds all yours? Were you free to do what you wanted to do with it?" You see, they had brought in just a portion of the sale. Peter said, "You're not lying to man; you're lying to God!" Ananias dropped dead right in front of them. Consequences.

(Those kind of consequences will make people take notice.) They carried Ananias out, and Sapphira came in. Peter asked her, "Was that what you got for the sale of the property?" When she answered, "Yes," he said, "We just carried out the body of your husband, and they will carry you out now," and she dropped dead. This took place in the New Testament, and it is the same God cover to cover from Genesis to Revelation. A spirit of lying had come in. God is a generous God, and they had the freedom to do whatever they wanted to do with their money, but they said they were going to do one thing, and they actually did something else. It would have been better for them to say, "We're just giving a portion of this," rather than "We're giving the whole thing." You might think that was extreme, but it wasn't extreme because if that spirit had gotten into the church, it would have destroyed the church.

Willful, Knowing Sin

In many places, because of mediocrity, no fear of God is present among the people. They are doing whatever they want to do, and they think their opinion is better than God's opinion. God doesn't have an opinion. He just speaks the truth, and that is the way it is.

The commandments are the commandments. The commandments will be around after you if you don't do them. They are eternal. They are honored of God. There is nothing wrong with them. What is wrong is the sinful nature of man that can't keep the commandments, and that is why Jesus died. It is an even greater offense now for people if they willfully, knowingly, violate the commandments of God after having received the blood of Jesus, received forgiveness and become a child of God. It will be a horrible scene.

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence... (Hebrews 4:16)
"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place

by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way open for us through the curtain, that is His body, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with the pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.”
(Hebrews 10:19-23)

“If we deliberately keep on sinning [violating the commandments of God], after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. (Hebrews 10:26, 27)

You don't hear much preaching about that anymore, and that bothers me. People need to hear this if they are thinking they can live their lives their own way – professing Jesus as Lord, but doing their own thing and not paying heed to God's commandments. We are to carefully follow them and pay great diligence to them. Don't turn to the left or to the right. This section comes right after the great section of coming boldly before the throne of grace.

If you are violating the commandments of God, if you have willful, knowing sin in your life, God does not hear your prayers, and you are out of fellowship with Him. You are separated from Him. Is God's arm too short that He cannot reach, and His ear deaf that he cannot hear? It is your sins and iniquities that have separated you from Him.

I deal with this all the time. People think, *God isn't hearing my prayers. He's not answering my prayers.* If He's isn't, it is because you have something in your life that is out of line with God, and you need to make a change. Shouldn't He just answer prayer anyway? No! He won't do it because He doesn't reward evil. He rewards good, obedient behavior. The bible says anyone who rejected the Law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think anyone deserves to be punished who has trampled underfoot the son of God? In other words, the blood of Jesus means nothing to them. The forgiveness of sins means nothing to them because they are willfully, knowingly going against God. *“Who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him [made holy], and who has insulted the Spirit of grace [who has spit on the Holy Ghost].”* (Hebrews 10:29)

What is grace? – the divine ability and favor of God to help us *do His will*. By willfully, knowingly going against what God says, you are spitting on the Holy Spirit and the ministry of God who gives you the grace, the ability, and the favor to do what He says. You are saying, “I refuse to do what you say, Lord. I’m going to do what I want.” “*The wages of sin is death.*” Will God let you die? 1st Corinthians 5 talks about how to bring church discipline on people who are doing willful, knowing, continued practice of sin. If they don’t listen to the person who goes to them, then bring a few witnesses. If they don’t listen to them, then bring it to the whole church. If they don’t listen to the church, then they are out of the church.

It doesn’t matter if they pay tithes and offerings, they are out of the church because they are not doing what God says to do. Church is not a country club. God wants His church holy. He wants us to ask for forgiveness if we are out of line. Then we are to get right with God because He wants us to be holy, chosen, and dearly loved. His heart is to show blessing to the second and third generation, the third and fourth generation, the eighteenth and twentieth generation of those who love Him and keep His commandments.

God’s System

“*For we know Him who said, ‘It is mine to avenge. I will repay,’*” and again, “*The Lord will judge His people.’ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*” (Hebrews 10:30-31) If we are not under the grace and mercy of God, it is a dreadful thing to fall into His hands.

Fear of God needs to come back into the church, for it is the beginning of wisdom. It is the beginning of understanding and knowing that God is God. We are His because He loves us, and He wants to do blessed things. The only system for blessing is God’s system.

The devil’s system is for cursing. Anyone who walks that way won’t see the life of God. Don’t be deceived. People live their happy little lives going about their little ways while ignoring the Lord, His commandments, and His principles. The only time they go to God is when something bad happens.

Just prior to the 9-11 attack on the New York towers, the government was saying, “Let’s take prayer out of our schools, take prayer out of our lives. Let’s get rid of it.” After 9-11 the whole nation, including congressmen and leaders, said, “Let’s all pray to God! Let’s call upon the Lord.”

A word of the Lord came to me at that time: “Would that they continue to seek My face.” Well, they didn’t. They are back to their old ways again. They are trying to get rid of the commandments of God, and they are not seeking His face.

It won’t go well for those who are doing it because judgment will come. Some day all people will be judged for their works, whether for good or for bad, believer and unbeliever alike. All of us will go before the great white throne judgment seat where God will separate the goats from the sheep. We will be taken with God, and unbelievers will go to the second death. All those who don’t obey and love God and keep His commandments will be gone, and then believers will be judged (2nd Corinthians 2) for the works they did, for good or for bad. I don’t believe that God remembers the bad, so all we will get is what we did for good.

Many people will get less than they thought they were going to get, but there will be rewards passed out because God rewards what is done to Him to His glory, by His Spirit, through us.

“...Remember those earlier days after you had received the light when you stood your ground in a great test in the face of suffering? Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution. Other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison, joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property.” This was persecution for the word of God. *“Because you knew that yourselves had better and lasting possessions.”* (Hebrews 10:32-34)

This really happened to people, and it is happening to people right now in other countries, so don’t throw away your confidence. It will be richly rewarded. *“You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God [kept the commandments of God], you will receive what He has promised. For in just a very little while ‘He who is coming will come and will not delay.’ [The Lord is coming back] ‘But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.’ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed.”* (Hebrews 10:36-39)
We are going to keep God’s commandments and do what He says.

We will not shrink back and be destroyed. Those who shrink back are destroyed. For example, God led Lot and his family out of Sodom and

Gomorrah. He told them, “Don’t look back.” Lot’s wife looked back, and she was destroyed.

God has better things for those who believe and are saved. If you believe, then you will be saved. If you believe, you will do what God says. If you don’t believe, you won’t do what God says because it takes faith to do what He says. As mentioned earlier, if we do what He says, we will reap the blessing. If we don’t, we reap the wrath of God. We reap the cursing.

People say, “I thought God isn’t wrath; He is love.” Yes, He is love, but if we are not doing what He says, we are not walking in His love. Therefore, we are walking in His wrath. God hates evil. He hates everything that has to do with evil, and He tells us to hate evil and love what is good. Evil will destroy God’s people and keep them separated from Him forever. He doesn’t want that to happen.

God will go after evil to save His people from their sins which is why Jesus came. If that doesn’t give us incentive to go forward in the commandments of God, I don’t know what will.

Do What God Says

If you love your life, then do what God says. You will be blessed forever. It isn’t selfish. It is wisdom, not only for yourself but it will save your household. If you believe this (you believe the commandments of God), you will pass them down to your children, and they will have the blessing. They will pass it down to their children, and they will have the blessing. If you don’t believe it, then you will pass cursing down to your children, and they will be cursed to the third and fourth generation.

That is how it works. If you love your children, you will teach them God’s ways. You will be an example for them in word and faith, and you will show them, “This is the only way.” Again, the commandments of God are not multiple choice. They are not options. They are the only way to life in God through Jesus Christ, through faith in Jesus Christ. Keeping the commandments is the saving work that follows saving faith. It is the only way to life. There is no other way.

Sometimes I’d just like to hogtie people. You know, put them in the trunk and carry them across the finish line. They kick and scream to get away from what? Blessing?

Why should you ever have to tell a Christian to love people, to be kind, to do good, to honor God with tithes and offerings, to encourage brothers and sisters? Why should you ever have to tell anybody, “Know the Lord”? If you know the Lord, you know Him. Then you will love people. You will do good. You will get “right on” a commandment of God.

If you are of God, you want to do what God says. If you are not of God, you don't want to do what He says. Take a good thought about that the next time you don't want to do what He says: *Am I of God or not?* If I'm of God, I will live life blessed here, and I will be blessed forever. If I'm not of God, then I live life cursed, and I'll be cursed forever. It is a reality I have to think about because the Day of the Lord is at hand. He is coming. It will be too late for people to suddenly decide they want to live for God. When that trumpet blasts, it is over and there is no more time. The reckoning has come and people will receive for better or for worse whatever they have done with Jesus in this life.

If He is your Lord, then you will keep His commandments. You will encourage others to do the same, and we will all be blessed together.

I have to put it out there because people don't think about judgment. They don't think about consequences. I have to put it that way to scare the hell out of some people who are going the wrong way. *“I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation, but to those that keep my commandments and love me, I bless and show mercy to them to the third and fourth generation.”* (Exodus 20:56) That is God's heart.

God can't help or bless people who don't want to do what He says. He can't do anything good for them. People ask, “How can a loving God send people to hell?” It has nothing to do with a loving God. The loving God has already done everything to save everybody. The fact is, people don't want the loving God or what He has done for them. They don't want to follow His instructions and His ways. They think they know better.

Will Calamity Come?

Wisdom laughs at such people when calamity comes upon them. (Proverbs 2) Bad things *will* start to happen. People don't realize that. They see that it didn't happen to them like it happened to Ananias and Sapphires. *If God*

hits me with a lighting bolt, then I know I'm doing wrong. Of course, they don't see any lighting bolts coming down.

Do you mean to tell me that AIDS is the consequence of homosexuality? Who are the victims of the most reoccurring cases of it? It isn't for me to judge anybody. God judges unbelievers. I don't judge them, but the Word will judge believers, and the church should be dealing with them.

There shouldn't be any nonsense occurring unchecked. Just look at the facts. Look at the figures. Let it speak for itself. Then what are they trying to do? Spread it. Africa is inflamed with AIDS. Some of them think if they have sex with a little girl they will be cured. Therefore, it is spreading like wildfire.

It is time to step up and believe God. Very sad and perilous times are happening on the earth. Don't be afraid, but understand what the will of the Lord is. It isn't time to play around with God or with your faith. You need to be believing God. You need to be seeking God with all your heart. If you have something in your life that isn't right, you need to ask God's forgiveness and quit it. Get it straightened out.

There is a false way of thinking about life: *I have plenty of time.* Friends, you don't know what will happen in the next moment. A man who had opposed the work of God stepped down one step and fell. He broke his neck and died. Another man in the prime of his life went against the work of God (he was being used by other people). God quickened his heart that he needed to ask for forgiveness. He came to me, "Pastor, I've been wrong; what do I need to do to make things right?" I replied, "Number one, you need to ask God's forgiveness; number two, you need to ask my forgiveness; number three, you need to ask my wife's forgiveness; and number four, you need to stand up in front of the congregation and tell them what you did was wrong, and then ask their forgiveness." He did the first three. He asked God's forgiveness, he asked my forgiveness, he went to Diana and asked her forgiveness. But on the day he was supposed to stand up in front of the congregation, he didn't show up. The other people (scorners who play the fools) had talked him out of it.

They set him up and used him, and then they cast him aside when they were done with him. That is how the devil works. He uses people, and then he casts them aside. On Monday morning, that man stepped out of his truck

and suffered a massive heart attack and died. Not a thing was wrong with his heart prior to that. You don't mess around and then expect to be blessed and live.

I could go on and on about people who willfully, knowingly were used of the devil and went against the things of God. I am not happy about it. I am not excited about it. It grieves my heart to no end that it should have to happen to anybody, but you know, that man didn't stand up and do what God told him, did he?

Cause and Effect

Things don't happen for no reason. The first question out of my mouth when the pipe came through my windshield as I was driving, "Father, am I out of your will?" Then I saw His hand. I knew, okay, I'm good. We're alright. He said, "Be patient, son; what was intended for evil, I will turn for good." The first question out of my heart and my mouth at that moment even though blood and glass were everywhere, "Am I out of your will?"

I thank God I was raised with a healthy fear of God. I know that if I am not under God's protection, then I am in trouble, and I want to get back to the right place. There is love and blessing and every good thing in the will of God, in the protection of God. When you do the right thing, you know you are, and God will stand up for you when you stand up for Him. God saw me through the entire incident, which is an incredible testimony. See it in the *Patience* mini-book.

When something bad is going down, the first question out of your heart, mind, and mouth had better be, "Am I out of your will?" even if you think you are okay. Things don't just happen. "*Who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?*" Jesus said, "*Neither.*" (John 9:2, 3) It had nothing to do with them. It was a condition in the world of evil. The man's condition was healed in order that God might be glorified, for Jesus had to work the work of God. He stepped in to change it. He turned what was intended for evil around for good.

Every time I disobey God's commandments, I'm stepping out into what is intended for evil, and the consequence is the wrath of God. It isn't God striking people down. It is because the protection is not there, and the people have moved out from under it. Then the devil can have a hey day with them. He can take everything they have, and it doesn't take long to

take it. I wouldn't want to go there because then the devil is against me and God is against me.

If I ask God to forgive me, then I have God for me. If God is for me, who can be against me? Some consequences don't change, but I remember what I did. It is better, Jesus said, to go into life with God having one eye rather than go into hell with two.

Many people only go back to God to get the consequence taken away, but that isn't always the way it works. It is only God's grace and mercy that takes away the consequence, and if God knows you're only going to Him to get the consequence shortened or lifted, it may not happen for a while. Your repentance is not sincere.

People who go out and do wrong get hauled in by the police and stand before the judge. Then they beg, "Oh, please, pray that I get off and that my sentence is shortened." Many people over the years have wanted me to pray that way. I say, "I can't pray that prayer. What I can pray is that God will talk through the judge so that you will get exactly what you are supposed to get as a consequence of your actions." Understand the difference? God is concerned about people not doing it again. Many children don't care about the discipline because it doesn't outweigh the joy of what they are doing. The severity of the discipline isn't a deterrent. They go right back doing what they were doing because they know all they will get is a "Oh, you shouldn't do that." Let me tell you, at my house, once the rod went down, the rod went down. They said, "I'll never do this again, Dad," and they didn't do it again.

When they cried, "Dad, just give me one," I would say, "That will just be one more. We will do this (the rod) until you know it isn't the way to go." I wasn't too strict. Folks go to hell because somebody didn't enforce the commandments of God. If you don't train them when they're young, you will have a more interesting time when they get older.

You either walk in God's way for life, or you don't walk in it and die. It is your choice. And not just die, eternally die. It won't be fun and games, and it isn't fun and games here in this life.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
Do Unto Others What You Want Done to You
Chapter 11

Go Beyond

We need to believe God will provide for us in creative ways. Don't just look to the natural. Supernatural is beyond the natural, and there is a flow outside of the normal way of doing things. That is what God is about.

Don't limit the Lord, or get into a ho-hum kind of existence, where you just look at getting your paycheck and giving your tithe. Start saying every day that the Lord is supernaturally making things happen and giving you increase from the north, south, east, and west, so that you can do even more. Don't get locked down. Walk supernaturally by thinking about God doing supernatural things in you and through you. In order for more to happen, we need to keep believing for more and expecting and anticipating events that are out of the ordinary.

The Lord gives us an opportunity for special offerings (they are out of the ordinary). Of course, we give our tithes and offerings when we get our paycheck, but it becomes extraordinary when the Lord gives us an amount over and above.

The unexpected can come from the Lord. *"Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think..."* (Ephesians 3:20) What we ask and think about, we are expecting and desiring. The Lord wants to go beyond that, and He can do it if we want it.

We are the ones who limit what God has for us. We limit it by not expecting and anticipating. If you don't invest, you won't get something, whether in the kingdom of God or out in the world.

Jesus reprimanded the man who buried the one talent (a measure of money). When the master came back, he asked, "Couldn't you at least have put it in a bank where it would get interest?" Burying the talent didn't multiply anything; it just sat there.

Many people's lives are in a sense just sitting there. For example, they don't invite or bring anyone to church. An invitation without an application won't accomplish anything. Getting into a rut will cause you to miss out.

Blessing and Increase

Distractions will come and try to get you to lose your focus, or other people's problems will make you lose your joy. Stay in the faith, hope, love, joy, and peace of God. We can believe God for people when we are in that good place, but if we are despairing and sorrowing over what is happening, it won't help them or us. It will take us out of a right place.

If somebody goes in the quicksand, we don't go there too. Jesus said, "*You will have the poor with you always.*" That is, there will always be people who are not producing any blessing, for they are not increasing in anything good or worthwhile. The thief is not after them because he already has them, but he goes after the people who are bringing increase, welcoming God's word, and receiving the 30/60/100 return. He wants to stop those people from producing and bringing the increase because that brings glory to God, and it increases the kingdom.

He wants to stop the mouths of the people who are witnessing about what God is doing and who are actively about the kingdom work. Those who don't have anything going for them always have their hand out, looking for something to be given to them. They are takers, not givers, and that is why they are poor. They are poor spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, and in relationships. Takers don't get blessed because they are not causing any good increase to happen. They are just increasing woes.

The devil uses those people to take the time, treasures, and talents away from where God wants them to go. Then there is no return or increase.

We need to die to ourselves and no longer be takers. Then we will become profitable for the kingdom, "a vessel fit for honor," as Paul said to Timothy.

Your life builds one thing upon another over the years. You want to have something to show for it, something that is profitable to others as well.

How Will You Be a Blessing?

I love to bless my children, and I love to bless the people in the ministry, but I found that you don't sow everything you have into your children or into others. You need to hold on to some things in order to be able to walk in the fullness too.

Many people scrimp and save for their children when they should be benefiting themselves. They are being strapped now because they are setting aside the money and trying to help the children with their future. They can't give the increase that could really be there. If they are strapped, how are they going to be a blessing to others? They are limiting what they have to invest or appropriate. After all, the parents are the multipliers, not the children. If they don't have something, they can't multiply it. If they've locked it up so that it can't be touched, then they can't be the blessing they want to be to others – or to the kingdom.

God has blessed you to be a blessing, and, yes, the godly will leave an inheritance for their children to bless them. Still, if the children don't work for it, why should they get that blessing?

I don't want to ask my parents for anything. I want to be able to give to my parents. I want to be able to give to my children. I want to be able to give to the ministry of God. I want to be able to give *as the Lord directs on the earth*.

After many parents have put money up for their children's education, some children don't even finish college. I have seen children who didn't do anything except "party hardy" while they were there, and that was the extent of it. However, if they had worked for it, and if they earned it, they would have cherished it. It would mean something to them if they invested their time, talents, and treasures to make it happen. Let them earn their own way, watch their time, and manage their money. They need to do something to get the blessing; otherwise their heart is not in it. They are burying it.

The pharaohs of Egypt buried everything they had with them, including their living wives and servants. It wasn't a blessing to be part of that family! They buried them alive, believing they would come back later and take all they had. The tomb-raiders found a bunch of mummified people, skeletons, and riches, which they stole. So goes the moral of the story "You only do what you do here to leave it to the next guy, whether a wise man or a fool."

Solomon was looking back at his life when he wrote Ecclesiastes because he had been very foolish in not using the wisdom he had been given. It caused him great sorrow. As he looked back on his life, he saw that all of his children were a mess. It was a very sad thing.

The Lord says to take the gift that He has given to you (the increase) and talk to Him about what He wants done with it, not what somebody else wants done with it, and not what you think you need to do with it. If you don't have anything to invest, you know, it isn't going to multiply or increase. It is yours to manage, not theirs.

Why put it in the hands of somebody who won't manage it properly? You have to eat sparsely while you're taking care of their stuff. They may not even appreciate it.

If you want to do something for your children, that is fine; that is your business, but I have seen many people who had broken lives because they were trying to do so much for their children or others. The other people never appreciated what was done, and that is a serious waste.

The Definition of Love

I have learned it is one thing to help people but another thing for them to be accountable and responsible for what they have been helped with. Without commitment, accountability, and responsibility (God gave me this as a definition of love), there is no love and care.

God has a commitment, accountability, and responsibility towards us, as His people. He told us to have the same towards Him.

A lawyer came to Jesus and asked Him what the greatest commandment was, and Jesus broke down the Ten Commandments into two. He summarized the first four with "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your mind, and your soul,*" and the second six with "*Love your neighbor as yourself.*" Many people think that if you don't love yourself, then you can't love others. That may be true, but love and appreciate what God is doing in your life anyway. You are God's good workmanship, created by God for good works.

Faith-works proceed from saving faith. Because God loves us and gave Himself for us, we respond to Him, and we respond to ourselves in love, for we know how greatly God loves us. Paul prayed this blessing in Ephesians 3, and I seek to pass it on to others.

Loving your neighbor is described in *Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou*

shalt not covet your neighbor's wife, husband, servants, [cars, or houses]. It goes beyond: *"Do to others what you want done to you."*

I think Jesus clarified the meaning of loving your neighbor as yourself when He said, *"Do to others what you want done to you."* Then you are able to move out of the self realm and into a practical application of loving people. You won't want to do anything to anybody that you wouldn't want done to me. You won't talk badly about someone because you don't want anyone talking badly about you.

Early in my marriage, the Lord taught me how it works. He said, "Son, if you talk badly about your wife, you stab yourself in the back." He didn't say, "Stab yourself in the front." When you stab someone in the back, it is an act of betrayal, and you are actually betraying yourself. You are doing harm to yourself as a saboteur, and you are undermining your life. No matter what my spouse is doing, it isn't for me to say bad things about her. (James 4) If we are going to care for others and honor God and ourselves, we need to live in this way of thinking: *Whatever I do to somebody else will come back to me. That's why I'm not going to judge other people. "Judge not lest you be judged."* (Matthew 7:1) When I find that I'm judging, condemning, or criticizing somebody, I know that will come back to me, and it usually comes back more than what I put out there.

Give and It Will Be Given

Things multiply in the spirit realm for better or for worse. We need to be giving because it will cause giving to come back, but we are not giving just to get back. It is a spiritual principle. It will happen *"pressed down, shaken together, running over (shall people give to you),"* for comes from God. All good things that come come from God.

Live in an awareness of that. Then your life will change. You will see the blessing. If you tell the truth, the truth will come back to you. If you lie, then a lie will come back to you. Has a lie come back to haunt you because people found out the truth? That will cause your reputation harm, won't it?

There are people who try to find dirt on others. Eventually their dirt will be exposed. You see it happen in the political realm. When it comes election time, people are digging out dirt, and the next thing you know, their dirt is brought out. Nobody wants it done to them. They can dish it out, but they can't take it.

Many people are like that. We have an expression ‘What’s good for the goose is good for the gander.’”

I will never forget my first grade teacher. She was as precious as they come. She had been teaching for many years, and her opening words to us were, “You will make me be the way I will be towards you.” In other words, if we messed around and caused trouble, then she would be our worst nightmare. If we did our homework, participated, helped, and were a blessing in class, then she would be our greatest blessing. She was saying, “I will be a reflection. It will come back to you the way you are.” I have never forgotten that after all these years. It set the tone for my life as far as the classroom is concerned.

She was emanating what the Lord said in Galatians 6, “*God is not mocked; whatever a man sows is what he will reap.*” It will come back for blessing or for cursing.

Do you want magnified blessings coming back to you? I have never seen anyone who didn’t want good things done to them. The funny thing is, some of the same people who want good things coming to them don’t do good things to others. They are not nice, and then they wonder why they have problems.

“*Do to others what you want done to you.*” This spiritual principle unlocks everything in the spiritual realm, mental realm, physical realm, financial realm, and relationship realm. It unleashes blessing or cursing.

A Conscious Awareness

Cultivate an awareness of what you are doing, what you are saying, what you are thinking, and why you are doing it. Catch the motivation.

Many people do what they do out of fear. For example, they might fear that their children aren’t going to love them. If you love your children, and you do good to them, they will respond to that.

Children will not love you when you don’t discipline them and when there are no boundaries. When they are around you, they won’t know what is right or wrong. They won’t know what is acceptable or not acceptable, so it would be like walking on egg shells. You don’t play mind games with

children either. Tell them the truth because they need to know whether they can believe you or not. They will grow up to see the phoniness, and they will become phony.

Have you seen how people become what they hate? “*Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.*” Live in a constant, conscious awareness that you are not doing what you’re doing for fear of punishment but for conscience sake. Because I belong to God and God loves me, He has done this good work in me, and I now want to love others.

It is better to say something good rather than something negative, critical, or judgmental. Sometimes statements that are true don’t need to be said. However, you want the truth, not just what you want to hear. It is like the guy who complained, “Oh, man, I’ve got this serious problem, you know. I’m such a failure with my relationships, and I’m really a mess up.” A person standing there watching says, “Yeah, you know, you’re right.” Then the guy whines, “Why are you saying that about me?”

In other words, it was okay for him to talk about himself that way, but it wasn’t okay for the other guy. If he really meant what he said, then the man agreeing with him wouldn’t be a problem. He would just be agreeing with the truth. The guy said what he said because he really wanted pity, or he wanted somebody to give him some attention, he wanted somebody to give him some affection. When someone agrees that he is a miserable mess, that wasn’t the attention he wanted.

It Will Come Back

Most people can’t handle the truth. As stated before, they can dish it out, but they can’t take it when it comes back to them. Understand, it will come back to them. Whatever they are putting out will come back to them whether they like it or not. It is a spiritual principle. If you don’t want your life exposed, don’t run around exposing others or trying to find fault.

I often say, “God doesn’t find fault with us.” (James, chapter 1:5) That is good news. “*If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared. I wait on the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope.*” (Psalm 130:3-5)

A man was having a problem because the people close to him weren’t giving him any attention. I asked, “Why are you acting like this? You weren’t

giving out any attention either. If you'd start doing what you're supposed to do, others would start doing what they're supposed to do. You can't find fault when you do the same thing." That is not love.

If I abuse people, what will they do? They will abuse me, or somebody else will. The abuse will open up all hell to me, and it will come back to me somewhere sometime someplace. "*You reap what you sow.* (for blessing or for cursing)." "*Do to others what you want done to you.*" It doesn't say who will do it.

In the natural realm people will do something nice for someone, and that person will do something nice back. Many people in the world only do good for the ones who can give back to them. God's way is if you do something nice for someone, He can cause blessing to come back from a thousand people.

When you call for a banquet, invite the people who can't repay you. Jesus said, "*What you do to the least of these, you do to Me.*" God will repay.

If people were really afraid of retribution, they wouldn't do many of things they do. However, people aren't thinking about what they say or do. They aren't thinking that if they say something bad about someone that they could have a thousand people saying bad things about them.

It may be an isolated incident, or it may be that they have people saying bad things about them for life. Don't think it can't work like that because it can. It says in Proverbs, "*If you've done something wrong to someone who has done nothing but good to you, the curse will not depart from your house.*" It is for life, and, unfortunately, it could go down to the third and fourth generation.

Are you willing to be committed to the kind of behavior that will cause so much harm?

Some people have been feuding for years (even generations), and nobody even knows what the feud is about. They have just taken up someone else's offense. Now they are worse off than the person who was initially offended.

"*He who meddles in another man's strife takes a dog by the ears.*" If you want trouble, meddle in somebody else's strife. When the people make up,

you will be left on the outside, and you will be worse off than they were because you meddled where you had no business.

I always tell people, “I’m not a referee.” I’m certainly not a meddler, and I don’t take sides. If I take sides, it is God’s side, but God doesn’t even need that.

What You Do or Say Affects Somebody

We help people to see themselves and what they are doing, and to be committed, accountable, and responsible for their own actions. That is all we can do because it is between each person and God. We are committed, accountable, and responsible for this sphere: each person, the people we affect, and God.

Never think that what you do and say doesn’t affect somebody some place. *“Do not revile the king even in your thoughts..., because a bird of the air may carry your words, and a bird on the wing may report what you say.”* (Ecclesiastes 10:20)

The devil wants to make sure such a negative word gets to where it goes, and then it will be hard on you. It will be serious. I tell wives and husbands, “What you thought in your heart towards your spouse will come back at you, even if you didn’t tell anybody.” Even if you didn’t speak it, you thought it in your heart, and the seed was sown.

Ask God’s forgiveness and pull it back. Cancel it and get right. You have done something to someone who has never done anything but good to you, so you need to get it straightened out and make it right. Break the curse and loose the blessing. Being accountable for your life and actions is being mature.

“Even a child is known by his ways.” Even a child should be held to commitment, accountability, and responsibility. Many parents have been remiss in what they have done with their children, not making them “committed to their commitment.”

Christians should not be lying, stealing, cheating, or badmouthing themselves. When you badmouth yourself, you are badmouthing God’s work and cursing yourself. You are saying, “God, you’re not doing a good work in me.” It is a lie; it is a deception.

The Word is working in you too. When you read it, it will make you committed to your commitment. Do you believe the word of God is really the word of God? Do you believe the commandments are really commandments? Do you believe they are God's will for your life?

Are you committed to that? Then why aren't you doing them? If you are committed to your spouse, why aren't you doing good to your spouse? We make people committed to their commitment. Who chose to marry that person?

We are making a people accountable and responsible for that commitment. Is Jesus your Lord? If you are not doing what Jesus says, then you need to change. We will remind you of that. Get accountable and responsible for it. You can't blame anybody else. If you blame others, what will come back to you? Blame.

Have you ever played the blame game? There are never any winners in that game.

In Summary

Start to live in that constant conscious awareness of what you are saying and doing. Do to others what you want done to you. If you want to abuse somebody, then abuse will come back. If you want to hate somebody, hate will come back. If you want to do something good to somebody, good will come back. It will come back multiplied.

When you give your tithes and offerings, what are you expecting? You should expect multiplied blessings. God will multiply what you put into the ministry of God and the kingdom.

Would you like some attention? Give some attention. What about forgiveness and mercy? Give forgiveness and mercy. It is simple. Just remember it.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
Be Willing to Let Them Go
Chapter 12

Your Labor in the Lord

Were you believing for people and wanted to see them get help, but they didn't seem to respond? Realize that God is believing with you. He will put people on your heart to believe for. The Lord says, "*Grow not weary in well doing, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not.*"

Perhaps you fainted while you were believing for people because they were always coming with their hands out, looking for something.

At one time I was ministering to a man who didn't seem to "get it." I couldn't figure out why. I asked the Lord, and He showed me a cup which we would fill it up, but the liquid would escape through a hole in the bottom. Many people are like that. They can't hold the blessing; it runs in and runs out. You have heard the expression "in one ear and out the other." It is that kind of working. The Lord showed me some things to help people like that.

The word says, "*If you refresh others, you will be refreshed.*" (Proverbs 11:25) If you help others and bless them, God will cause whatever you need to come to you. When you try to get it by yourself, and you are not involving the Lord in it, it becomes a hard road.

Jesus said, "*What you do to the least of these [people], you do to me.*" When you do it to Him, then He will cause whatever you need to come back to you. "*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything else will be added to you.*" (Matthew 6:33) When you bless somebody else, God's blessing will come to you because you are doing it as to the Lord.

God wants every one of the people on earth to be blessed. He wants them to be happy and prosperous because He is a good God who loves people. He doesn't want them to lack for any good thing that He has prepared. Accordingly, when evil happens, it is not happening by God's hand. What God will do, though, is turn what was intended for evil around to good. As people call upon His name and seek His face, then blessing comes.

A few weeks ago, I was filling my Jacuzzi. In the past, I would get distracted, and the next thing I knew, the water would overflow and get into the motor. I was filling up the Jacuzzi again, and the phone rang. As it happened, I had to tend to some business while the water was running. When I got back to it about half an hour later, I thought, *Oh, no, I did it again.* Have you ever anticipated that something bad just happened, or is about to happen? I got over there, and I almost didn't want to look. To my delight I saw the tub perfectly filled to the correct spot. The hose had flipped out, gone onto the patio and washed the patio clean, which was another thing I needed to do. I stood looking at all of it and said, "Thank you, Lord." I heard a quiet voice say to me, "Son, you take care of my business, and I'll take care of yours." I stood out there in the yard crying because I was so thankful to God.

Think of a time the Lord helped you or took care of your stuff when you were doing something He wanted you to do, like working with people. Your labor in the Lord is not in vain. God's labor is not in vain. He loves everybody, but sometimes people can't see the forest for the trees. They know God is there, they know the right thing to do, but they are not doing it. With man it is impossible to change people, but God can change them.

Let's look at some principles about doing good.

Reaping the Consequences

Many people think they are doing good by helping those who are doing wrong. A loving parent doesn't reward bad behavior, like rebellious, independent, and selfish behavior. How much more so will God not reward bad behavior. "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows is what he will reap.*" If people sow good, they will get good back. If they sow evil and cause harm to people, then harm will come to them.

When people are reaping the consequences of their behavior, yes, we are believing God to help them, but we have to come to the point where we let them go. That doesn't mean we stop praying and believing God for them, but we have to quit giving them money, for example, because they have to change their ways.

Have you been around those on alcohol or drugs who can't handle money? They are always at your door, especially since you are a Christian. We love

God, we love God's people, we love each other, but if we're going to really help somebody, we have to be able to let them go.

I have always felt in my heart that God never lets anybody go. He never gives up on them. What I'm saying here is that we have to let people experience the consequences of their choices, just like we will experience the consequences of what we are doing in life. There will be consequences for blessing or for cursing, depending on what we choose to do.

Nobody wants to see anything bad happen to anybody. If you don't want something good to happen to someone, you have a problem.

If you don't want good to happen to someone, you have to let that go. Get rid of it because good won't happen for you. It's just the way it works.

Job was afraid that his children were going to do wrong. If you are a permissive parent, your children will do bad things. You hear this comment all the time: "I will let my children decide for themselves what they will believe and what they will have." In the bible, the Lord says that foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. A child will do foolish things because they don't know any better. Unfortunately, many parents don't know any better, and so the problem continues from generation to generation. Nobody steps in and wants to get some help to change. The cursing goes from generation to generation as expressed in the word of God.

Somewhere along the line somebody has to say, "In the name of Jesus, God has better things for us than this. We will make some changes in our lives so we can see good things happen. We don't have to go through what our parents or grandparents did. God has something better than what we've had."

A young woman come up to me one day and said, "Pastor, I never knew how dysfunctional my family was until I came to church and started learning God's ways. Now I see that I don't have to have all the problems my parents and I had before I came to the Lord."

Get Understanding to Change

People have to want to change. They have to come to that place.

I asked a fellow who came up in the prayer line, “What do you want, sir?” He replied, “I want to stop smoking’.” I looked at him and disagreed, “No, you don’t.” Then he started laughing, “Yeah, you’re right. I don’t. My wife had me come up here because she wants me to stop smoking.” I went on, “Well, sir, the Lord can do this. He can take that away from you when you want it taken away. In the meantime, sit down, but keep coming back to church, and when you are ready, the Lord will help you.” And he did. About three or four weeks later, he came up on his own, and he got rid of his smoking and hasn’t smoked since.

From the point where a person doesn’t want to change to the point where he wants to change is where those who are believing for him can get messed up. Would that change happened overnight! The sooner the better.

Changing is a process. It takes time. Are you still not changed? I like to say, “We’re in process. We haven’t arrived yet, but we’re in process. We’re coming into what God has.” The more we find out what God has, the more He has for us. “*My people perish from lack of knowledge.*” The more we are able to implement it and work it, the better the results. Like anything else in life, the more you work it, the better you get at it, for “Practice makes perfect.”

Job offered sacrifices daily for his family perchance they committed sin. (Job 1:5), but he wasn’t doing anything to deal with them about their sin. He would just offer sacrifices for them. He was saying prayers for them, out of fear, not out of faith. Sometimes people are believing for others, even though they are not really doing it out of faith but out of self-preservation. “God, change them so they’re not such a pain to me, so they’re not always on my doorstep with their hands out, looking for something.”

There is no love in that prayer. It is what I call self-preservation, trying to make your little environment comfortable and your world a little bit easier. It is wanting God to zap everybody around you and make them all kind, loving, considerate, generous people, and we’ll live happily ever after. That is not good motivation. We have to have a genuine love and commitment to them, a caring for them that involves the kind of love that Jesus has for us. “*God so loved the world that He gave His Son that whoever believes in Jesus won’t perish, but will have everlasting life.*”

People need to see that love involves self-sacrifice. They will see that God's loving kindness changes people. (Romans 2:4) His tolerance, His goodness, and His patience is what changes them, not beating them over the head and saying, "Come on, when are you gonna get with it?"

I find myself doing that every now and then. I want to carry people across the finish line so we can all end up happily ever after with God. However, the Lord told me I couldn't do that.

It is kidnapping or adult napping; in any case, somebody's napping.

Do What God Says

The Lord said, "*Awake, O sleeper. Arise from the dead and the Spirit of God will come upon you and bless your life.*" In other words, come to your senses. HELLO, wake up. What you're doing isn't working! God has something better for you.

Let us not be sleeping. God has so much more for us than what we are looking for, but sometimes we just go along, dut-da-dut-da-dut. "*Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.*"

I am a child of God. I have been to church all my life, but that doesn't mean anything. (Just because a mouse is in the cookie jar doesn't mean he is a cookie.) I was raised in church. So what. If I am not doing what God says, it means nothing.

You can't go in on your parents' blessing. However, I expect my children are in a better place than I was. The blessing is passed down so the children naturally should be in a better place of blessing. Nevertheless, if they're not walking in the blessing, they're not going to have it.

Job was believing for his children. He was doing what he knew to do, but he didn't really know what to do. He was just trying to do something. When all else fails, pray!

I have watched people scramble. After they'd done everything they could think of to do (and what everybody had told them to do), they were more messed up than before. Go to God and ask Him what to do. Get to the place where you will call upon the Lord and ask Him to help you and show you what to do..., and He will.

Job's family was lost because God's people perish for lack of knowledge, and the children were all involved in sin. They were not doing the will of God. (The definition of sin is not doing the will of God.) When you are not doing what God wants you to do, it opens you up to a thief who wants to steal, kill, and destroy. Jesus said, *"I've come that you might have life and have it more abundantly."*

Job came back to a place where he humbled himself and sought God, and he got over his self-righteous thinking. *"Though you kill me, God, I'll still praise you"* was an ignorant statement. He didn't know who God was, but when he came to know who He was, God showed him his ignorance. God basically said, *"Where were you when I made the heavens and the earth?"* and *"Since when have you become my counselor?"* In other words, let's get it right. "I am God, and you are you." I always live in a healthy awareness of that. The Lord is the Lord, and I am me, and you are you, and none of us are God.

God resists the proud and gives grace and ability to those who humble themselves before Him, acknowledge He is the Lord, and humble themselves to do things the way God says to do them in His word, rather than what they think and what other people think. We want to see blessed days, and we want to be a blessing to others by helping them and seeing good things happen for them.

Because you have that desire to bless people and do good, you may try to help people who don't receive help, nor are they wanting any. They don't think they need it. You may have thought you didn't need help either, and yet you were sitting in church getting angrier by the moment with what was being preached. When you are not doing what God says, you get frustrated, angry, and upset. Your way isn't working, but you won't humble yourself to do it God's way. God is saying "Come on, change. What's so hard about it? Just do it the way I have for you to do it."

God's Heart

I dealt with a gentleman who was trying to help a man out on the streets. The man was doing drugs and alcohol, not wanting to work, doing everything in rebellion and independence. The gentleman was trying to feed him, but then he became sick and broken down. The guy took what the gentleman gave him and used it on other stuff, not on food, not on things to

help. We call what the gentleman did “enabling.” He was enabling a person to continue in a wrong condition. That was not helping anybody, but his heart was to help others. He didn’t want to see anybody hungry, starving, penniless, going through problems. Nobody who has God’s heart wants to see anybody like that.

God in His great love looked at the people of the earth, and He saw them all suffering. He saw them empty and with meaningless lives. There was selfishness, using and abusing, and everybody going to hell. God, in His great love, said, “I have to do something about this,” so He came Himself. He got Himself a body, named Himself Jesus, and came to live, suffer, and die for us that we might be saved and that we might have His life and love. That is real love. Yet, He never forced anybody to believe on Him. “*‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ saith the Lord.*” He knows that everybody has a choice. Everybody has a free will. You can make a choice whether to receive blessing or cursing. God enabled us through His love to be able to make a choice for blessing and to make a choice for Him.

How would it be if you hogtied a wife, dragged her by the hair, put her in the car, and drove off with her? Would that marriage last? No, because it was your will, not hers. It might last as long as she stays tied up and gagged, but it is not going to last any longer. It is something you want, but it isn’t something she wants.

God in His love gave us a free will. He said, “I love My people. I care for My people. I want everything good for them, but I want them to love Me freely. I am not coercing them or throwing lightning bolts at them to get them to love Me.” “... *but by my Spirit.*” God’s Spirit is the Spirit of love. He says, “I am love,” for that is His heart. He is wooing people to Himself.

You want to do nice things for the ones you love, and once you get married, and you “have them,” you want to keep doing nice things for them. It isn’t like they are an old pair of shoes that you throw away after awhile. No, you want to cherish them the rest of your life, and they will always be a blessing to you in turn. That is God’s way, and that is what God wants to do.

Don’t Take on a Care

I could never really understand the dad in the Prodigal Son story. The son came up to him and demanded his inheritance. (There is something to that. Why is it that when we get older, we’ve got “stuff,” but when we’re

younger, we have more energy. Diana has said, “I want to go and see the world and do some things now rather than have to be wheeled around someday.”) The point is, it was rather rude of the son to put a demand on his dad. His dad went ahead and gave him his inheritance, and the son went out and did just what everybody expected. He squandered it. He lived riotously (the drugs, the alcohol, the prostitutes), and he prostituted himself. He just threw his life away, and finally, he was out there feeding the hogs. To a Jew, that was the lowest of the low because pigs are unclean. The son thought, *Even the pigs have something to eat, and I’m sitting here with nothing.*

The Lord says, “*Apart from me you can do nothing,*” and you will have nothing. The Prodigal Son squandered it all, but one day he came to his senses. He thought, *Even the servants at my father’s house have it better than I have it out here. I will humble myself and go back and ask my dad if I can just serve at his house.*

Your heavenly Father’s house is a very good place.

Look at the father’s heart. When you are caring for and loving people, you can’t take on a care about them, which means you are not to worry about them. Give them to God, and believe for God’s best. You can teach what the Lord says in His word, but it is up to them whether they will have a blessing or not. It is what they do that makes the difference. If they don’t do what God says, then it is their life. If they want to have a nasty marriage, and they want to have bitterness towards their spouse, that’s their sorrow.

We had a great move of God in our service one night. There was healing with comfort. The Holy Spirit had me ask someone after the service, “What did you get out of this?”, and the man said, “Nothing.” My response was, “Oh, that’s too bad,” meaning, it’s *really* too bad. Am I going to lose sleep over it? No. Why not? It’s too bad.

When I am caring for someone, do I love that person? Yes. It may be the first time I have ever seen him, but I love him, and I give him God’s best. If people would stick with me, I would be able to love them more. “*Today I set before you blessing or cursing, life or death; choose life.*” If they would choose life, they would be blessed. They would have good things all their days. The Lord’s word can cause people to have blessings all their lives. I

am a living example of it. There are all kinds of people over the earth who have turned to the Lord and are seeing good days.

If you have the kind of heart that wants to help people and do good, would you have been upset when the guy said he didn't get anything out of the service? Mercy is a good thing, but, unfortunately, many times people are being enablers instead. They are not helping people to change. They don't hold people to commitment, accountability, and responsibility, which is God's definition of love.

You have no relationship with somebody if there isn't commitment, accountability, and responsibility.

You don't see the dad in the story losing sleep over his son. You don't see him even taking a thought about it. I know he probably had some thoughts about it. It probably grieved his heart at first, it caused him some pain, but he got over it.

Get on with your life. You can't let your life shut down because people are not doing what they need to do. There comes a point where you have to stay in faith, hope, and love towards them. You can get into bitterness because of what they're doing, and you can take on the care about what they're doing, but the Lord says, "*Cast all your cares upon Me.*" He says, "*Humble yourself, and I will exalt you in due season. Cast all your cares on Me, for I affectionately care for you and watch over you.*" (I Peter 5:6,7) He is saying that you are not God.

If you continue to give people food and help them, what is really happening? They are not changing. They are just going about their ways. They haven't hit the bottom.

About the time you think they've hit bottom, they haven't. Some people have to hit it 20 times before they stay there because they keep thinking, *I'm okay doing it my way.* How sad. We have helped all kinds of people over the years through the Spirit of God, but we have to help God's way.

The dad was he overjoyed when his son came back. He accepted him like nothing had ever happened. He gave him the ring of sonship, and he forgave him. The son asked for forgiveness, and it was a real reconciliation. Good things happened. See, the dad let him go, didn't he? He gave him to God,

and he let him go. 1st Corinthians, chapter 5 says that you have to turn some people over to the devil so that their bodies will be harmed in this earth, but their souls will be saved.

Deal with Sin

A young man was living with his dad's wife. (He wasn't renting a room.) He was sleeping with his dad's wife, and Paul told the church that even the unbelievers don't do that kind of thing. Unbelievers don't do it because there is something wrong with it. Paul told the church that God's judgment was on them because they weren't dealing with the sin. They were letting the young man come to church, fellowship, and participate like nothing was wrong with his behavior. Paul said, "*A little leaven leavens the whole loaf* [a rotten apple spoils the whole barrel]."

Paul said they had to deal with that brother and remove him from the church because he didn't want to change. To deal with such a situation, you go to the person first and talk to him alone. If he doesn't change, then you bring some of the people who are leaders in the church, and they talk to him about it. If he doesn't want to change, then you bring it to the whole congregation. If the man still doesn't want to change, then you have to remove him. (Matthew 18:15-17) God loves such people so much He wants them saved, but if they continue in their actions, they won't be saved. They are living like they are *not* one of God's people. They are trampling underfoot the blood of Jesus as if it is of no value. They are spitting on the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Your willful, knowing, continued practice of sin indicates you are not a Christian. You are not a child of God. You are not born again. You are not saved. If you love somebody, you want them saved, so sometimes you have to get people to wake up and come to their senses. They can't be doing wrong things before God and think they are okay. It isn't "I'm okay, you're okay, everybody's okay." What they need to do is ask God's forgiveness and turn from those ways in order to see the blessing of God in their lives.

The angels are dancing and shouting when somebody comes back to God and quits doing what is wrong. God rejoices, and the people of God rejoice.

The church at Corinth removed the young man in adultery, and it says in 2nd Corinthians that he asked for God's forgiveness. He quit living with his dad's wife. He came back and asked the church's forgiveness, and the

church forgave him. God forgave him, and they received him back as if nothing had ever happened. That is how God's people need to be. We don't judge people about what they have done, but it is what they're doing now that makes the difference. We are believing God for everybody to have God's best. We are not judging people when they go away from God, or judging their condition because that isn't helping anybody. Believing God in faith (holding the line) to help people is what will change people's condition.

The church let him go so that he could be saved. There may be some people in your life that you have to let go. That is, you are not carrying the care for them, and you are not enabling them anymore.

Believe God

The Lord was dealing with me one day when He said, "Tell the people they are not whiners or crybabies. They are not weak, helpless, or stupid." He continued, "They are My children. Tell them they are My children, and they need to shape up and knock it off."

If you want direction, the Lord will give it to you, but talk to Him first. Learn to hear His voice. We will help you in that process, and we will stand with you.

I always told my children, "Your crying isn't causing any good to happen here. We've got to believe God." You may ask, "Can't you believe God for me?" I will believe with you but not for you. There is a big difference. Two in agreement is a great thing.

A guy came to me one time with a gnarled hand that had been caught in a machine. When he came up for prayer, I started to pray over him, but the Lord said, "Stop. Don't pray, Son." I stopped and asked him the question, "What are you believing for?" And he answered, "I'm believing that I'll be able to use my hand again." I said, "That isn't what I'm believing. I'm believing that your hand will be better than it was before the accident." I was believing he would be able to use his hand and it would be perfect. He looked at me a minute, and then he confirmed, "That's what I want." I said, "Okay, we'll be in agreement on it." The way he was believing he would have been able to use his hand, but what I was believing was a whole lot better.

He came back about three or four weeks later, and he was so excited. He exclaimed, "Pastor, I've just got to tell you what's been happening in my life. That night in church I gave a tithe and an offering. I didn't have much, but I heard the word and I gave it. Well, I got a new job, a new place to live, a new car, and all my family is liking me again!" In three weeks time his life had completely turned around. I asked, "What about your hand?" He replied, "Oh, I forgot about that! Look. It's as good as new."

It is exciting what the Lord can do when we allow Him to do it. Unfortunately, this isn't a Cinderella-type story with a happily ever after. The guy went back to his old ways, even though everything was going so incredibly well for him. He went back to the drugs and the style of living that caused him to have all the problems that he had. He probably was under the influence of something when his hand was injured.

I would like to see everybody live happily ever after, but many people don't continue with God, and they don't continue with the promises of God. They don't continue to do what God says. Jesus said to one man, "*Go and sin no more lest a worse thing come upon you.*" This was just after the man had been healed. He had come to the Lord and been healed, and then the Lord told him not to sin any more. Don't go back to your old ways unless a worse thing come upon you.

Continue to help people. It isn't enough to get born again, healed, and saved (and play the country western song backwards – get back your house, your wife, your car, and you know, your mother-in-law).

It is necessary to continue with God, staying with Him, walking with Him, and you will see the blessing (happily ever after). You have forever with the Lord to look forward to, in a place where there is no more pain, sorrow, suffering, sickness, disease, pestilence, storms, travail, poverty, confusion, fear, terror, or anxiety. The Lord has promised it. He is coming someday, but in the meantime, until He comes back, we are here and He says we can have the blessing right now, within us. We can have peace because of God's presence in our lives, even though there is nonsense going on around us. The word of God will help us, but we have to continue in it.

Some Ways to Help People

If we are really going to help people, we have to be willing to let them go. Quit trying to make a blessing happen in their lives. God is the one who

does that. If they are still doing evil things, we can't be enabling them and contributing to them because it isn't going to help them. On the other hand, we will be there for them as far as spiritual support. We will pray for them, believe God for them, and encourage them. We won't get bitter when they don't respond. We will be kind, patient, and tolerant because we want every good thing for them. "*Do to others what you want done to you.*" I know I don't want anyone casting me away if I should get squirrely.

I had to laugh when Diana (my bride) said, "If I left Randy, I would still come to Glory to God Ministries." She would still come here to church. You have got to understand, she is a funny one. She has a sense of humor, but she was saying that God is in the house, and even if she got a little crazy, she would still want to be where God is. God will help us to get back on the right track. We have seen thousands and thousands of people over the years and helped them in their time of need, as they went through situations. Some stay, some go, but we are there for them in that moment.

What we are is "a God squad." Many times we see people when they are at their worst. As we do what God has given us to do God does something to turn them around. I can guarantee you, clubbing somebody over the head or saying, "You filthy sinner," isn't going to help anybody. It is God's love and kindness that will help people, not judging them. In fact, they will avoid you.

However, you want to be there when they are ready to change. You want them to know that you're there for them, and you love and care about them. You won't contribute to their cause when they're doing wrong, but you are there for them. You will encourage right actions.

Don't play God by trying to be their source. The Lord is the source of life and blessing. It is hard when it is your children, and they are going off the track. You want to jump in and do everything for them, but don't make it easy for them.

They may say, "You don't love me," but you say, "I love you with a passion, but I don't participate in what you're doing because God isn't participating in what you're doing. I'll be there for you when you want to come back to what will help you. When you come back to your senses, I'll be like the daddy in the Prodigal Son story, and I will welcome you back like nothing ever happened."

You didn't see the dad in that story out every night, running down and giving the boy food or money. You don't see the dad losing sleep. You don't see him messing up his household over the son who went amiss. You don't see him losing his health over the whole scene.

When the younger son came back, the eldest son was a upset about receiving him. That is how many people are. They have a hard time when somebody does turn around because they are still judging them and thinking, *They haven't changed*. Have you been guilty of that? Time will prove everything out, but in the meantime it doesn't help anyone to deny what you've been praying for (that they change). When they change, you shouldn't say, "I don't know if they've really changed."

It reminds me of the time the people of the church were all praying for Peter. He had been locked up behind bars for his faith in Jesus, and God sent an angel to deliver him out of the prison. Then Peter knocked on the door of the house while they were inside praying for his deliverance. A girl went to the door, and he said, "Hello, I'm Peter, I'm here," and she ran back in to say, "Peter's at the door!" They told her, "No, he isn't; you're out of your mind." Many people pray that way, "Oh, God, change them," and then when God changes them, they counter with, "It's a lie; it didn't happen," and they aren't even happy about the change.

I have seen people go home after getting healed, and the people at home weren't happy that they were healed. I have thought, *Oh, my, God, help us all. There is something sick and wrong about this. Something perverted about that kind of faith.*

It isn't the God-kind of faith. It is devil-faith, wanting bad things for people and not being happy when they receive something good.

The older son wasn't happy about his brother, and he was thinking about himself. "I slaved for you all these years and you didn't give me anything," he said to his father.

There are some people who do what is right because they are afraid of reaping the consequences of doing wrong. There are others who just flat out sin boldly. Both are wrong. They need to ask God's forgiveness and say, "Lord, help me to do what is right. I believe. Help me to get rid of my

unbelief. Help me to do what is right and be blessed, and help others to be blessed as well.”

CARING FOR PEOPLE
The Lord is My Helper
Chapter 13

Deal With the Issues

If you are ever in the doldrums of life, praise is the word for the day. Not only will praise keep you out of the doldrums, you will want to praise God all the time. “I praise You in the evening, praise You in the morning, praise You in the summer time.” Especially in the summer time. God doesn’t want us out of sorts, even for a second, and we have to refuse to go there.

He has abundant life for all of us. If somebody says, “Pastor, my wife left me,” or “My husband left.” I say, “So what? You are probably better off.” On the other hand, God wants marriages saved.

It is important that we deal with our issues. Many times there are issues that people haven’t resolved.

If there is a problem in my house, it is my problem. I am the head of the house, and I need to deal with it and take the steps that need to be done. If I’m shirking my responsibility and not defending, protecting, and caring for my wife, looking out for her and the children, then I’m to blame. It isn’t her.

We teach the ladies about being under the husband’s covering, but many of these coverings are torn-up tarps. The guys are total screw ups, not being responsible with love or finances, and they put their responsibilities on their wives. A wife should never have to think about finances in caring for the children or anything else related to that. If the husband were doing his job the way he is supposed to be doing it, his wife wouldn’t have to deal with so many other things. She should be caring for her husband and caring for the children: Little Suzie Homemaker.

In the meantime, many women are having to step up. God is so good in that He gave an incredible promise in Isaiah 54 that says “*I will be the husband of the woman who has been set aside. I will be the husband of the widow.*” If you have been set aside, or your spouse went on to be with the Lord, you have the finest of the finest in your house. You won’t lack for any good thing.

God is Our Source

I remember a time back in the seventies when Diana was wishing I would be home a little more often. She thought I needed to be around the house because I was out working on many things here and there. Then there was a change after she prayed, and the Lord brought me home. I had my office there. (After awhile she prayed, “Lord, send him out.”)

One night she heard some clanging around in the garage, and she nudged me to get up. Well, when I’m sleeping, I’m like a rock, and I don’t wake up too easily.

She kept trying to get me up by banging on my arm. She couldn’t wake me up, so she went out with a broom or something to the garage. She checked around and saw that some things had fallen off the shelf. There was no violator on the premises, so she came back in and went to sleep. (When I got up the next morning, I had a big bruise on my arm.) The Lord spoke to her as she came out of the garage, “See, he’s no good to you even when he’s home.”

The Lord wasn’t demeaning or dishonoring me. He wouldn’t do that. He was just talking in terms that she could relate to. He was pointing out that He was there with her, and He is her source. Whether I’m home or not, God is the protector, provider, and caregiver, and everything else that goes with it.

People who think they have a love problem don’t realize how much God loves them. They look for love from people, or they look for a good self image. That has nothing to do with anything. God is their source, not themselves, and not other people. The Lord is their source, and they should put their trust in Him.

You have to develop that because you have been dependent on others or yourself for many years. Some say, “I don’t need anybody.” If you get that thought, it is usually because you wanted somebody around, and you needed people, but they weren’t there. Then you said, “To hell with them. I’m going to do what I want. I don’t need them. I’ll take care of things myself.” Did you find out it didn’t work either?

He Is There for You

Realize that the Lord is your helper. He means it when He says, "I am your helper." Another name for the Holy Spirit is the paraclete. He is One who will come beside you no matter what you are dealing with in life, and He will help you to succeed in the plans that He has given. He is the One who fulfills the dreams and hopes that you have in your life. He is the One who will do everything needed for abundant life, health, and blessing in Him. He is there for you.

When Jesus was getting ready to leave this earth, the disciples were upset. Jesus said, "If I don't go, the Holy Spirit can't come. He is coming and He will help you. He is the Comforter and the Spirit of truth. He will lead you into all truth. He will call into remembrance the things that I have taught you. He will help you to overcome, live the abundant life, and see the victory."

We need to acquire an awareness of the Holy Spirit of God who is right here, and put our admiration on Him. He doesn't draw any attention to Himself. He always draws attention to Jesus, but He is the Spirit of Christ, and they are one. He is now working here in the earth. As Jesus said, "*I go to the Father and the Holy Spirit comes.*" At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the people, and as the church was birthed, God's kingdom was birthed in the earth. The Lord said, "*I will not leave you. I will not forsake you.*" (Hebrews 13:5) The previous sentence is, "*Be not covetous.*" Covetousness is part of the working of a poverty spirit because it says, "I'm empty, and I covet what you have."

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him. They that would come to Him must first know that He is [that He exists]." (Hebrews 11:6)

For all these years, we have been running to people. We've been running to medicines. We've been running around trying to figure out how we will get money, and how we will do what we want to do.

Most people work first for needs, and then for what they want to do. Others sacrifice needs to get what they want. They will go without a few meals to have that car, piece of jewelry, or clothes.

The Lord says, "I am. I am here. I am here in your midst." Where two or three are gathered, He is there. What does that mean for you if you are by yourself? He says, "I won't leave you or forsake you," which means He is

with you. When you realize that, you will see why there are no emergencies with God. If He is present, which He is, there are no emergencies and there are no problems. “No problem, Mon.”

The Lord says, “Who is like unto Me? I set the heavens in the heavens. I set the earth in place. I separated the water from the mountains. I created everything there is.”

He set it all in order so it will continue to run. He asks, “Is there anything too difficult for me?” He can do anything and everything. The Lord of the universe can take care of you.

In relation to physical healing, He told me, “Son, if I can’t do it, nobody can.” He taught me to go to Him rather than to medicine. Is there anything wrong with medicine? No. But it doesn’t heal. Only God can heal. The medicine makes you comfortable, and some of it can kill bugs in you, but every medicine has an effect on something else in your body. God asks, “Is there anybody like Me?” Since there is nothing too difficult for Him, He says, “I can work this out,” and He says, “I am.” Therefore you can boldly say, “The Lord is with me, He is for me, He is not against me.” (Romans 8:31)

Faith is What Moves God

Stop and think about it. The Lord doesn’t want you spending time whining or complaining. If you are doing so, don’t talk to me because I don’t need it around me. Besides, it won’t do anything. Faith is what moves God, and faith is what moves us.

Many people have been sitting in church for years, yet they don’t have a clue about how to believe God. They don’t even know if He is there. This is the prayer coming out of some people who sit in church year after year: “If you be there, God...” Think, Is He in your church or not? Quite frankly I don’t go to a church if God is not there.

Maybe God is there, but you are not. If you are not believing and standing in awe of His presence, you’re not there. God is always with you, but if you’re not praising Him and thanking Him, then you’re not there. You have checked out. You are out to lunch, and what you’re eating is crap.

Do you want to eat sorrow and misery?

- *“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”*
- *“Life and death is in the power of the tongue.”*
- *“You will eat the fruit of what comes out of your mouth, for better or for worse.”*

The bottom line is that we need to believe God. “The Lord is,” and because He is, I “is,” and I “is” doing well. I am doing very well because I know Him and He knows me.

Job believed in God, but he didn’t know who God was. Even so, God honored him. When trouble came into his life (trouble shows what is in your heart), he acted like God wasn’t for him. *“Though you kill me, God, I’ll still praise you.”* Ignorance really shows up when trouble happens. He knew that God existed, but he didn’t know God was a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. He didn’t know God was a good God who loved him and cared about him. He thought God gave the good and God gave the bad. *“The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord,”* said Job.

When God showed up and demonstrated who He really was, Job repented. *“I heard about you with the hearing of the ear.”* Praise God, at least he took a step in the right direction.

Then God revealed Himself to Job, and he was open to hear. People who aren’t open to hear what the Spirit of the Lord has to say are caught up in their whining and complaining. The children of Israel are classic cases. God delivered them with mighty signs and wonder – spectacular miracles – as He set them free. God gave a demonstration because they didn’t know Him.

God Shows Himself Mighty

Four hundred years before the Exodus, God told Abraham that his people would go into slavery and a house of bondage, but God would raise up a deliverer (Moses) to lead them out and establish them as His chosen people. He would bring them out with mighty signs and wonders so that everyone would know that the Lord, He is good, and He is God, and that there is none like unto Him.

Pharaoh's magicians could duplicate some of Moses' initial acts. For example, when he threw his staff down, it turned into a serpent, and the magicians were able to do the same thing. However, Moses' staff ate up their snakes.

Then it was all God's show. There was to be no more duplicating of what the Lord had done. He wanted to show Himself mighty. "*Call unto Me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things, things that you know not of.*" People often settle for second and eighteenth best. They run to people, or they lean to their own understanding when God says to trust Him. You can't trust Him if you don't know Him.

Many people want to do what I do. They want the anointing. They want the power of God, and they want to be made well. They want to live in their marriages happily ever after. Let me tell you, friends, when the anointing goes home with you, then you have to work it.

Are you still having the same problems because you never did what you were told? When the cycle was broken, you went to the next cycle.

What I know is "*The Lord reigns,*" and He is good. He loves me with an everlasting love that can set me on a course for the rest of my days with everything I need for life, health, and blessing. The promises of God will give me what I need for abundant living in Christ Jesus. (2nd Peter 1)

That is why the Lord says, "*Be not covetous,*" which means don't think you lack. God has everything for you, and He is there. As stated earlier, there are no emergencies with God. Without God there are emergencies, crises, chaos, and incredible commotion, but with God there is the spirit of liberty and peace.

"*In His presence is fullness of joy,*" (Psalm 16:11) which causes you to know He is there. God led the children of Israel by day with a pillar of cloud that went out ahead of them, leading them as they walked. He was there in that big puffy cloud and in the pillar of fire at night.

He wanted them to know He was there because they didn't know it. They came out of slavery, bondage, and poverty. They complained, grumbled, and griped. These people were the most whining, unappreciative bunch you ever saw. If people would step up and be thankful, and live a life of

thankfulness, their level of life would grow and increase. There would be no end to it. You may be thinking, *It's just too good to be true*. No, the problem is it is true, and it is too good. You have puny thinking and a slave mentality.

God stepped out when they needed water even though they complained. They could have just asked for water. Jesus said, "Your Father knows your needs before you ask. He is just waiting for you to ask, and you shall receive." He wants you to put your faith and trust in Him.

Going across the desert was like going out on the other side of Indio between Blythe and our eastern border. That will give you a little glimpse of what they were going through. God supernaturally supplied a substance called "manna," and to-date they have not figured out exactly what it was. There has never been a substance like it since, but it was a perfect food source. Every morning they gleaned it off the ground. What was God trying to do? Help them to see that He was there.

After awhile there were those who tried to hoard the manna, but God said it would be there each day. "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" Some tried to store it up, but it rotted overnight. Because of a horrible, putrid smell, they learned not to be "little piggies."

It is one thing to save up, but it is another thing to hoard out of fear that you won't have anything. You should save so you have more to give to somebody else, for you can use only so much. The Lord taught the people of Israel every day to be dependent upon Him. A definition of faith is a confident reliance upon God, daily. He tried to instill this in the people to help them to learn who He is and how He works.

Know Who God Is

God is "no nonsense." You can't manipulate and control Him into doing anything. He does what He wants when He wants. He does what He takes pleasure in doing, and He won't do anything for anybody unless He wants to do it. He has set down principles to show how to approach Him.

If you aren't doing these principles, He is not going to do anything for you. In other words, if you're not believing Him, He isn't doing anything. He will pass over a thousand people to get to the person who is believing.

Everybody has needs. *“The poor you will have with you always.”* You see, they are always around, but there is a difference between staying in poverty and getting out of it. If people aren’t willing to follow God’s principles to get out of it, then they will stay there. This murmuring and complaining went on for the whole journey. *“We had it better off in Egypt in the house of bondage. We had leeks there.”*

People tend to forget what was really going on in the past. The Israelites forgot how the Egyptians cut their food supply in half and made them do double the work. *“God has brought us out here that we die in the wilderness. He brought us out here to kill us.”*

“Though you kill me God, I’ll still praise you.” Job said, but he repented in chapter 42. He said, “I spoke out of ignorance about you, Lord. I didn’t know who you were and who you are. I spoke my own thoughts, and I repent. I heard about you with the hearing of the ear, but now I know who you are.” An awareness of God came up.

God blessed Job in chapter 42 more than any man on the face of the earth. Then he lived a long life and got a whole new family. His relatives brought him jewelry. Before that time they came to him for things, and that is the way it always works. If you have something, then everybody is at your door with their hands out. God reversed it so they came and brought gifts to him.

It happened when Job started to know who God was. We need to start to know who God is. Have you said, “I give up on God. He isn’t doing anything for me”? Maybe you’re not believing. Maybe you don’t know who He is because, I can guarantee you, He won’t do anything for you until you do.

Outside of already saving you and doing everything that needed to be done, God expects you to receive it. You have to believe it, accept Jesus into your heart as your Lord and Savior, give up your old selfish ways, and start to live for God.

“Be not covetous, for I will never leave you or forsake you. Therefore, you can boldly say, ‘the Lord is my helper’.”

In the Old Testament the Lord said, *“I Am who I Am.”* In the New Testament in the book of John, Jesus said, *“I Am the Way, the Truth, the Life. I Am the Bread of Life.”* *“I Am,”* and he filled in provisions we need.

Jesus said, *“Father, I know you hear me always.”* Many Christians don’t even know if God hears them. The Lord says, *“Don’t be covetous”* (Don’t go to anyone else but Me), *“For I will never leave you. I will never forsake you.”* The abandonment issues and all the excuses are gone. The Lord says, *“I am here. What do you want? Let’s deal with it.”*

Bring Faith, Hope, and Love to the Table

When I ask the people in the prayer line what they want, they often say, “I don’t know.” I say, “What are you here for? Sit down, and when you figure out what you need or want, come on back.”

Have you ever had the Lord ask you, “What do you want??” Make up your mind. Do you want blessing or cursing? Do you want life or death? Choose life.

To people who ask me to pray for them, I say, “I love praying for you because I care about you, but are my prayers any better than yours?” They are if I am believing God. Two people believing God is even better. Bring something to the table. In other words, we have faith, God gave it, we have it, we know it, we have seen it, and it is proven. There is a track record. In the world they say, “Put your money where your mouth is.” Likewise, bring some faith, hope, and love to the table, even if it is a grain of mustard seed so tiny and insignificant it hardly looks as if there is anything there.

Jesus asked the disciples before they fed the 5,000 people, “What do we have?” Most people can’t get over the problem. That is all they talk about, which doesn’t help anybody.

The children of Israel complained about this and that, and then they said, “We’re tired of the manna. Give us meat.” God dropped the quail from the heavens so that they were about three feet deep and a mile and a half long. The people went out there and ate it raw.

Yes, there are calamities and problems, but then you can really see what is in people’s hearts and what kind of people they are, whether they are like animals or they are children of God.

A plague broke out among the Israelites, and thousands of people died, because they ate raw quail meat, just like some people won't leave the premises in a sewage, disease-infested area. There is something wrong someplace. Katrina means purifier. Where evil is, the purifier comes.

The children of Israel were given lots of meat, more than they could deal with, but they abused the provision. The story goes on and on. Finally they didn't get to go into the Promised Land because of their unbelief. They received the evil report of the spies that there were giants in the land, and they basically said, "We can't take it," even though God said, "I'm with you." God showed them that He was with them every day through miraculous signs and wonders, but they still didn't believe Him.

When People say, "Give me a sign, and I'll believe," it isn't true. God doesn't just give signs to people because He says, "*Let them who have ears to hear hear what the Spirit of the Lord has to say.*" Those who would come to Him must first know He exists and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. Seek Him how? With faith, hope, and love.

"*I can boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper'*" because I have a relationship with Him. God says, "Don't come to the table with nothing." He says, "*Call unto Me.*" Do it in faith, nothing wavering (which is your part), and God will answer you and show you great and mighty things. The word "show" doesn't mean a picture of something. When He says, "show," He means He will demonstrate it in front of you. He will show you things that you know not of, and He will give you answers that you haven't thought about. He will show you that He is the Lord who did it. He will get all the glory for it, so don't start thinking you did it, or anybody else did it. God says, "I will show Myself mighty in your midst."

If we don't do our part, then He won't do His part. If you sit there and wallow, you will have a miserable life the rest of your days. "*The Lord is my helper.*" The wife is the helper of the husband. The husband is the helper of the wife. They are a team. Think about what an honor and privilege it is. The Lord of the universe who created everything says, "I am your helper" when you're not covetous, when you're not going after other people and trying to make something happen.

The Lord won't help people until they step up and say, "Your way, Lord. That's it. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, not my way."

The Lord is right here with me and we are together. Many people want God to do it all, but we are co-laborers together with Christ. Jesus said, "*Come to me, you who are weary and heavy laden.*" Those are the people who are trying to do it themselves. He says, "*Yoke up with Me* and be part of a team." His burden is easy and light.

Have you thought life was hard? To those who say how hard it is to be a Christian, I say, "It is because you're trying to do it yourself. You're not yoked up." "*Abide in Me,*" Jesus said, and "*My word abides in you. Ask whatever you will and it will be done to you by your Father in heaven.*" He will get the glory, everybody will be happy, and you will produce much fruit.

The children of Israel who had been raised in Egypt never did enter into the Promised Land because they had a slave mentality and were always murmuring. "*Be not like that*" (Philippians 2:14), "*So that you may become blameless and pure children of God without fault in a perverse and crooked generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe, holding forth the word of life.*" (Philippians 2:15) That is how God wants us to be. We need to stop complaining and turn up the praise.

Tell the grumbling, griping, whimpy spirit to shut up in Jesus' name. (I don't want to hear such negative talk coming out of anyone's mouth.) You have the Lord of the universe right there with you, who is willing and able to do whatever is needed to be done. Line your thoughts up with Him, repent, and ask His forgiveness so you can enter into the Promised Land. Start to take the steps of faith, hope, and love.

How strange that the children of Israel wanted to go back to Egypt and return to bondage and not go ahead with God to the Promised Land.

Do Not Fear

I want to see mighty things happen. I want to participate with God in the ongoing saga and adventure of life with the Holy Spirit. Let's put away weakness. In Christ we are strong.

- "*Let the weak say, 'I am strong'.*"

- *“My grace is sufficient for you. In your weakness, My strength is perfected.”*

I say, “God, perfect your strength in me.” Praise perfects God’s strength, so start praising and thanking Him.

Whatever we are dealing with, we will break through in Jesus’ name. We won’t let a spirit of defeat come over us. “Ain’t no grave gonna hold this body down,” for we are going to win.

- *“We are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus who loves us.”* Believe it.
- *“For I know whom I have believed, and I’m fully persuaded and convinced He’s able to keep that which I have committed to Him.”* (2nd Timothy 1:12)

The people of the church mentioned in 2nd Timothy were going through a great persecution when Paul wrote to Timothy. Fear was so prevalent that people were turning in their brothers, parents were turning in their children, and children were turning in their parents. Paul told Timothy, *“You are not born of a spirit of timidity.”* (2nd Timothy 1:6) (You are not to back down.) *“You are born [of a spirit] of power and love and a sound, well-balanced, disciplined mind.”* (Amplified Bible) Remember who you are and who is with you, *“For I know whom I have believed...”* (2nd Timothy 1:12)

There isn’t anything in life that can separate you from the love of God that is yours in Christ Jesus, and there isn’t anything coming into your life that God isn’t a thousand times bigger. He laughs from the heavens at the so-called mountains you deal with because they are nothing to Him. From His perspective they look like a little hump in the ground. He says, *“Call unto Me, and I will answer you. I will show you what to do and how to do it, and we will deal with this.”* Don’t be double-minded. *“A double-minded person is unstable in all his ways and cannot expect to receive anything from God.”* (James 1) God says He won’t find fault with us, so let’s just get on with this. Let’s get a solution, move on, and quit rehearsing the problem.

The children of Israel kept rehearsing their problems. God gets tired of listening to it. In fact, I believe He doesn’t even hear it because He shuts it off. Then people wonder, *Why didn’t He hear me?* It says in Isaiah 59 that your sins and iniquities have separated you from Him. (*“His ear isn’t deaf, and His arm isn’t too short.”*) Unbelief is evil. It is sin and wickedness. God won’t help anybody who is in that. *“Call unto Me in the day of trouble*

and I will be there” because He is already there. He is just waiting for you to call Him or acknowledge Him. Then He will help.

Give God the override in your life. I say, “Lord, if I’ve screwed up, just override me. Get me out of the way.” And He does. Of course, I don’t go too far out there because I don’t want to leave the fortress of God. There are lions and tigers and bears out there, oh my.

“I can boldly say, ‘The Lord is my helper.’ Therefore, I will not fear what man [or animal or devil] shall do to me.” I won’t fear what I do to myself. God’s perfect love casts out all fear because fear has torment. People complain and murmur because they are tormented, they have problems, they have issues.

You will never really know God until you have what I call the “God-experience” which is where you become totally helpless and hopeless. Everything you have ever relied upon as your support system is removed from you, and it is just you. *“I will lift up my eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord.”* You can’t do anything, and nobody else can do anything. In fact, you wonder, *Where did they all go?* Then you get upset and bitter because they left you. You think nobody cares.

After you get out of that, you come to a point where you settle down, and you find out that getting upset didn’t motivate anybody to help you. In fact, they stayed away more! It is just you and God, and at that point you have a God-experience. You have a reckoning moment, a time where you die to yourself, and God lays out your life for you. You repent and ask God’s forgiveness like Job did after everybody left him. His friends didn’t help anything. Even his wife said, “Why don’t you give up God and die?” Then there was just Job and God. That is the time, but folks don’t want that time. What do they do? They keep complaining, murmuring, and grumbling even though God is right there. They don’t go to Him, so they continue in their problems and wonder why they have them. They can’t figure out any solutions because they are not looking for any. They are into rehearsing the problems. “Everybody is after my life, and there is nobody left in Israel who is serving God except me,” complained Elijah.

Elijah was a great man of God, a man of faith, but he got caught up in some moments of desperation. Fear grabbed him, and held him, and wouldn’t let

him go. However, God sent an angel along as he ran away to the mountain. An angel even cooked for him, but Elijah still kept rehearsing his problem. Finally he went in to a cave and hid. One of our brothers here, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, said that God wasn't in the cave, and I got so excited when I heard that because it's the truth. God told Elijah, "Get out of the cave." ["Get out of the depression."] He said, "Come out." He didn't go into the cave, and He isn't going into your depression. He isn't going into your problem because there are no problems for Him.

People need to do a lot of repenting and asking God's forgiveness to get their lives cleaned up. They wonder why calamity comes on them when they are involved in all kinds of demonic activity, robbing, stealing, cheating and lying. The scripture also says, "*If you don't work, you don't eat.*"

Still, the Lord says, "*I'll never leave you. Be not covetous because I am here.*" You don't need anybody, but they can still be a blessing to you. In other words, you are filled, and you have everything you need. "*I will not fear what man shall do to me.*" You will not fear any devil, animal, person, or yourself. Though the mountains be crashing into the sea, you will be still and know that God is God. He is your helper. "*He is my very present help in time of trouble.*" (Psalm 46) I need to let God be very present in my life. He says, "*Draw near to Me, and I'll draw near to you.*" When He is very present, you will never even see the problem anymore. He will help you through whatever it is.

Time to Grow Up

You may ask, "Can't God just do it?" No, the Bible says, "He is my helper."

God doesn't carry you. It is time to grow up and come into what God has for you. After a weaning time, we will become more effective together and much more can get done. God wants and desires that we not always carry people, and God is doing that in His church around the world as well.

Thank you, Jesus, we are co-laborers with You and joint heirs of salvation.

Submit to the Lord and do what He directs you to do. "*If any lacks wisdom, let him ask God, and God will give it.*" He will show you what to do and how to do it. "*It is God who works in us and enables us to will and do His good pleasure,*" not "God helps those who help themselves." We are to

cooperate with God. A husband and a wife have to work together as a team. Remember, the enemy is the thief, not the spouse. We don't fight against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers of darkness. It is time we quit letting the devil separate us from one another, stop fussing and fighting with one another, and team up, pull together, and tell the devil to go to hell.

How awesome the Lord's presence is in our lives! When we look to Him and not to ourselves, and we lean not to our own understanding, the Lord is able to show Himself mighty in our behalf. I thank God every day that He will not leave us and He will not forsake us. He is our helper, and we are not alone. We can go through this life with every good thing and know that God's best is happening.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
Dealing with Grief
Chapter 14

Grief Comes from Loss

This chapter will present how to deal with grief God's way. Grief can happen and is experienced anytime you have lost something or someone.

When people move from place to place, changing jobs and going from school to school, there is always something that is left behind. People who were there for you also leave through divorce or death. Life is full of moments of grief.

It isn't abnormal to grieve. Many people have been taught not to grieve or cry. When I told my children, "Tears don't move God. Faith moves God," I wasn't telling them not to cry. I was telling them that crying isn't what moves God to action. Faith in God moves Him to action. I cry often, but it is not tears of sorrow; it is emotion or passion.

There is joy, there is sorrow, but with Christ there is no loss.

Yes, there are losses, but they are not permanent, so let's make some adjustments. Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who lives and believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and he who lives and believes in Me will never die.*"

A loved one who dies passes through the veil of death, going from life to life. From our perspective it is loss – we won't have them here with us anymore.

Compare going on a holiday with going on to be with the Lord. When you go on vacation, does everybody go along, or do you leave some of them at home? Those who have gone on before us are still there with the Lord.

"We as believers don't grieve as those who have no hope." (1st Thessalonians 4:13) Extreme grieving happens when people have no hope.

They don't have the Lord, so there is no hope, and there is nothing to look forward to. Even losing the use of a hand or broken toy affects lives. It always affects lives.

As a child, I hit a whiffle ball through my neighbor's front window (it wasn't the little window; it was the big window), and it cost me almost three months of my earnings to replace it. There will be loss, but how do you look at it? I consider the fact that I got a lesson in responsibility. Those kind of things help you in life.

The Grieving Process

Let's look at what is involved in the process of grieving. These stages occur in everyone to varying degrees.

1. Shock. Trauma happens in people's lives when they get the news, for example, that their heart isn't working correctly. When someone dies, there is an initial shock, or there is a denial of what is happening. They may have gone into denial, and it was like they were walking into the fog. They couldn't see the forest for the trees.

When we are helping people, we have to understand that shock is normal. Some believers try to get people out of it, but you shouldn't. They are in it. It has just happened, and it is very real. It is not a figment of their imagination, for their life has been upset. The thief came to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

One of the first things we do for people who have been in a car accident is rebuke the trauma off of their bodies and emotions. There is a grieving process that happens, for there has been a loss of peace in their lives. An aggressive act has happened against them and it is creating loss. They could have done without that, but something broke into their happy little secure world and created trauma. It has to be dealt with in the spirit realm. It comes to everyone. There isn't any exception on this.

In another example, there is a grieving when a child is raised and goes away to get married. Your world becomes different.

There is a process when dealing with the shock of something that happened. The thief intends for you to react and be overwhelmed by it. It is intended as a blow to get you to give up your faith, to give up your trust, to be moved.

When Jairus asked Jesus to heal his daughter who was seriously ill, what happened? On the way a servant came to him and said, “*Don’t trouble the Master anymore; your daughter is dead.*” Then trauma set in.

A death just occurred in Jairus’ family, and the thief wanted to immediately take him out where he couldn’t hear something that would help and bless him.

Don’t let the thief rip you off. You must deal with the issue. You must face it, and you have to come against it. Be aware of what is going on while it is happening so that you don’t go crazy.

The thief sends the shock waves, and he tries to get you to think, *It’s all going down; it’s all over*, and then he tries to get you to think, *Where’s God? Why isn’t God stepping in?* The shock is the initial event.

2. The second thing that happens to people when they are grieving is emotions seem to surge up in them. They have crying jags. Then confusion sets in, for the emotion is overwhelming. They don’t know what will happen in the future, and their thoughts go crazy, a mile a minute. *What if this, what if that?* They start to prepare for a negative future rather than a positive future in God. (What the thief intends for evil, God will turn around for good.)
3. The third thing that happens to people is depression. A feeling of isolation and loneliness comes on them, and they think, *I’m going to have to deal with this all by myself.* Then they wonder, *Where is God, what’s going on here? Why is all this happening to me?*

The emotion and depression will try to cause them to be stolen from (to kill, and to steal, and to destroy), but God is with them. If you have the Lord in your life, He will help you through it, but this happens to believer and unbeliever alike. Without the Lord, who would be able to make it? Who would be able to handle it? There are people who have been living all their lives with a sense of failure and in a state of loss because they don’t have a hope, and they don’t have a future in their eyes.

The Lord says, “*For I know the plans that I have for you, plans for good, not for evil. Plans to prosper you, to give you hope and a future.*” (Jeremiah 29:11, 12)

Use that verse to encourage people, even though you can't talk anybody out of depression. "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul. Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him.*" (Psalm 42). David caught himself and said, "No, I won't be overwhelmed by all this. I won't be cast down."

When sheep are flipped upside down (cast down), it is sure death to them because they don't have the ability to right themselves. Sheep can't just turn over, get up, and get going again. When a person is in depression, they can't get going except the Good Shepherd come along and put them right.

Have you tried to encourage people who were in depression, and you couldn't figure out why they couldn't get it? They were caught up in the emotion, and in the moment their life went through shock and trauma. In such a case everything is blown out of proportion, and they can't think. The thoughts they think aren't the kind of thoughts they want to be thinking, and they don't even know *why* they're thinking like that. It is all emotion, and it is always negative. Therefore, thoughts like, *What am I going to do? My life is over. I can't deal with things. I can't get things back. I can't go back to the good old days. I can't, I can't*, comes as well as an overwhelming sense of being out-of-control, and alone.

These stages of grief have been proven clinically. If we are going to help people go through these, we have to understand that we can't just click on the light. The people have to work it through. We have to be patient with them and let them talk. They go through emotion, they cry, and they can't control themselves. Don't say, "Shut up, sit down, cut the tears, and be strong in God." It won't work. If you have ever said that to someone, I'm sure they responded by asking you leave. Then you thought they were lost; they would never get out of it because they were not standing up in God. No. God is there with them. "*I won't leave you, I won't forsake you.*"

Just be there for people. Even though everybody shows up for the funeral, many times no one is around after the funeral. I quit going to funerals because I know it isn't there that the people need you. They are still in trauma. They are still caught up in it. They will need you a little farther down the road when everybody else is gone. They won't need you to do any great ministering and preaching the word; they just need somebody there who cares. They need to know that somebody is available (able to avail), which means you are able to help them when they ask.

4. The fourth stage in the grieving process is physical symptoms come upon them.

These stages happen in the order given, but they may flow back and forth. You can't say, "Now we are going to come to the physical symptoms" because everything may come at once.

Recently a lady went through the loss of her husband, and the next thing you know, she was having chest pains just like her husband had. Physical symptoms occur in people's bodies when they are grieving.

A book entitled *Good Grief* by Wesburg is very helpful regarding this process. He is a Christian clinical counselor, who put together God's word about this subject. As I was reviewing the physical symptoms, I realized that what happened to me in high school was right along those lines. When my parents started to have a serious breakdown at that time, physical symptoms came on me. No one knew the cause of the horrible pain in my stomach and colon. Every test showed I had a perfect bill of health. I cried as my body was completely racked with pain, and yet they couldn't find a thing wrong with me.

I know about psychosomatic and I know about demonic. I wasn't making up that I needed to have a problem in my body, but because of all the trauma in the household with my parents, there was a grieving process in my heart about what they were doing to each other. I would isolate myself because I couldn't stand the fighting. I couldn't stand the strife. I couldn't stand the commotion, and I just had to deal with that. I had those physical symptoms in my body because I was grieving over what was happening. A death was happening in my family. Nobody was dying physically, but a relationship was.

For 13 years I had a really happy childhood. Everything in my life had been wonderful. Suddenly, all hell broke loose. It was a shock, and I went on a different course. I told them, "What you're doing isn't what God says. It's not what you taught me. It's not anything I want to have anything to do with." I isolated myself from them because of what they were doing, and I had my other life. I didn't say, "I'm going to isolate myself from you and go do other things." I just did other things. I poured myself into my studies, poured myself into my school, played ball, and worked so I was never

around. The next thing you know, I had headaches, digestive tract problems, heart and nervous system problems. I didn't continuously think I wanted to have colitis or an ulcer, but since my body and my mind were caught up in the commotion, my body broke down. This is part of grieving.

Have you seen people get sick just to give themselves a legitimate excuse not to do something?

Years ago a lady came to our church who was sick all the time. Every time I would pray over her, she would get well, just like that. I started to pray over her again one day, but the Lord said, "Don't pray."

I asked, "Father, why not?"

He said, "She wants to be sick."

I inquired, "Why does she want to be sick?"

He answered, "Because when she's sick, her husband stays home and cares for her."

Understand, her husband was one of the most loving and caring people on earth. He prayed and helped people, but she was a very selfish, controlling, rebellious, and independent person, and she didn't like him going out and helping others. She didn't want him home either. She just wanted to make his life hell. The spirit that was working in her wanted to control him in order to keep him from going out and doing good. So, I didn't pray over her that day.

As I began talking to her, it was as if somebody else began to talk through her about me. I didn't know too much about demonic activity back then. I was a young pastor with the Lutheran church, and there I was seeing a demonic manifestation right before my eyes.

When many people are grieving, they allow sickness to come into their bodies so that they don't have to do other things or see people. They have a good excuse to stay by themselves, to isolate themselves, to be lonely and depressed, or to bring circumstances back under control.

5. Panic is the next step. This is where they think they are losing their mind. As they try to deal with life, the fear of losing their mind starts to come in, and they can't remember anything. Grief will do that. Once they know it is normal, they will begin to realize that it will pass and they will work it through.

Don't say to the grieving person, "Man, you're losing your mind. What's wrong with you?" That isn't what people need! The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, the Counselor, the Paraclete, and the Helper, the One who comes beside them to help them in their time of need. Just be available. Don't step in and start doing everything for them. Let them still carry on with their own lives. You may think you are helping by doing everything, but you actually make them think that they are a basket case or a cripple who can't do anything. Just be there, be praying, caring, and let God work out how to help them.

6. Guilt comes on people when they are grieving. Have you ever heard somebody say, "I wish I would have done this, or I should have done that. I wasn't there" ? There is normal guilt, and then there is inordinate guilt. Deal with the wrong guilt. You are not God, and you can't be there all the time for everybody. You can't do everything. The guilt you feel when you know you should have done something and didn't do it is normal. Ask God's forgiveness; there is forgiveness with the Lord, and He will help you. Rebuke and renounce the other guilt which is not of God.

People are sometimes haunted later in life about what they should have done for their dear one that died. They need to get beyond that, move out of it, and go onto the next thing. What they can do is say, "Lord, forgive me and help me," and then dump it out. They need to have a reality check. There are things we can do and things we can't do. The things we can't do are out of our control, and we can't do anything about it. If we are wondering if we made the right decision, ultimately we have to give it to God and let Him work things out.

7. Anger and resentment are another part of the process. People are angry with God, you, and themselves. They are resentful. They blame everybody. You can't succumb to them.

Remember Job's counselors. (The book of Job is all about grieving and dealing with pain and sorrow). While he experienced loss and was grieving, his three friends weren't much help. In fact, God said they were wrong. If you want a classic example of what *not* to do when somebody is grieving, look at them. Job's wife was grieving too. When she told Job, "Why don't you give up God and die?", she was experiencing anger and resentment in

the grief. She was angry at his God. She was angry at life. She was upset and resentful. When people are in the grieving process, many times they will “vent,” and you can’t sit there and tell them they shouldn’t be doing it. Their whole world (in their eyes) has come down.

It is easy to preach to somebody when you are not in the situation. If you are going to help somebody, you need to put yourself in their situation and understand what is happening. It isn’t that Job’s wife hated God or that she hated her husband. It is just that she was angry and resentful about what had happened, and in her way she was trying to cope with it. God was there for her too, even though she isn’t mentioned in the rest of the book. Chapter 42 doesn’t mention her, but she was the one who bore those other children. She was the one who got in on all the extra blessings that happened to Job. God can turn circumstances around that way.

Since people will experience this, be like a wall with them. You don’t have to input. You don’t have to react. Pray that God will help them to get through it and work it out. The key is to be there and be available.

In a church community we can absorb and deal with much grief. People need to know that somebody cares about them and is enabling them to deal with a physical death, or death to a vision, dream, or marriage, a loss through sickness or disease, mental problems, or torment. They all involve a loss of peace and joy. It may be a loss of a body part or a loss of a child, or a child who has gone off the course and is back out in the world. You will see that your life is full of grief, but God says that we don’t grieve as those who have no hope.

8. People will resist returning to the world. Don’t try to get the grieving ones back to doing normal things when they don’t want to. They don’t feel like they have a world to return to. Give people a little space. You have to understand that they are withdrawn, not lost; they are just going through something. Only God can get through to them, sometimes through your presence. So pray. If they want to talk, let them talk, and you just listen. Let them get it out.

Time is our friend. People go through the stages of grief differently – some quicker than others, but there is no set time. Even years later they may still be grieving over what has happened.

9. When they start to reach out, they are entering into hope, and hope is working in them. They will begin to restructure their lives.

I have been watching my mom and my dad over the last couple of years. They each have gone through loss, but little by little they are coming back. Your life is never the same after a loss, but you have to go on in a new working, another working. *Yea, my life is here, it's going on, and what does God want for me in this new life?* Be available to the Comforter. It isn't as much what you do or say as just being present – but not all the time. Give people space to work things out.

Don't be the enabler who fixes everything. It is between them and God. The Lord said, *"I'll never leave you, I'll never forsake you."*

10. The last step is reality awareness. They begin to realize things have changed and they have to get on with their lives. They will begin to ask, "Lord, what do I want to start to do with it?"

Faith makes a big difference. If people have faith in God, they will be able to restructure much faster. If not, they sorrow and grieve as those who have no hope, and there is no coming out of it. Then the thief steals, kills, and destroys. People who don't have faith in God will have a hard time ever coming out of it, but with God we don't grieve as those who have no hope. (1st Thessalonians 4:13) Always keep your hope up when you are experiencing strong emotions.

There are places in the country where you see no sun for days. There seems to be no life. However, take an airplane up above the clouds, and you see the sun. It's up there, it's just that the clouds are blocking it.

The church community is such a beautiful thing. People can come together with God's people, and they feel they're not out there by themselves anymore. I tell people to call somebody, and many times they have to call people who are grieving. They aren't necessarily going to call you. The thief wants people to withdraw, he wants them to be out there by themselves so he can keep bombarding them with negative thoughts. That is why you have to reach out. Reach out to people and tell them, "Hi, here we are. Do you need anything today?" They may say, "No, I'm fine," but it's just the fact that somebody is there.

Getting Back to Normal

These stages of grief become abnormal when people stay in them. You, however, don't determine when they will get out of the stages. It is between them and God. Many people are really inconsiderate, unkind, and cruel because they hammer on others not to cry. ("What do you mean 'Don't cry?' I just lost my puppy. What do you mean 'Don't cry'? My dad just had a problem, we moved again and changed schools, my parents divorced.")

I wasn't home when my parents broke up. It happened when I was in college, but I basically insulated myself from the situation. (It is how many people deal with things). The rest of my brothers and sisters had to go through all the nonsense. It is even worse when people know about what is going on.

The Lord will help us. He is the Paraclete, the Comforter, the One who says, "*I'll never leave you or forsake you.* I'll be there for you. I'll help you go through whatever you are dealing with in life." He is always there.

I try to help people to see that. I'm not always there, but God is, and He is our Helper. At the moment we have to work it through.

Shock and trauma will blow people right out of their happy little life and cause them to think everything is going down. It is an attack. The thief tries to numb them so they can't think. "*With confusion is every evil work.*" The thief uses the emotions too. An uncontrollable flood of emotions is hard to deal with. Depression and loneliness are other tools or tactics of the devil.

There are physical symptoms, where the health breaks down on top of everything else. Mentally there is panic or the fear of losing their mind. Then the guilt. Guilt is used by the devil to bury people and make them unfruitful. They think, *I'm unworthy*, or *I've done wrong in my life*, and it makes them unprofitable. Faith can't rise up because they have guilt about what has been going on in their life.

Many people say and do things in anger that they never intended to say or do, but someone may hear it and think, *So that's what they think of me.* Then they go into self pity and stay away, or they lash back. When somebody is angry and resentful and speaking negatively, don't take it

personally. It isn't about you. In this case they are grieving. They have a loss. There is something they are unhappy about.

The thief wants to separate people, but people need you there with them. Something hateful is said, but you don't need to say, "The hell with them. I don't want to be there with them either. Let them sit there." It doesn't help anybody, does it?

Grieving people resist a normal world and getting back to a normal life. Maybe there is a fear of another loss. There are many factors involved, and so we just have to help them gradually get back to normal. The thief wants to neutralize them and ruin their witness. He wants them to do nothing, withdraw from the world, withdraw from being about God's purpose for their lives, and sit there feeling sorry for themselves. During that time they rehearse the negative events.

Working It out

The beginning of hope and an awareness of reality comes from God. When the servant of Elijah was out getting water one day, an army came against the city to take Elijah away (to get the man of God out of there). The servant was afraid and ran back home to tell Elijah about the army. What was he afraid of? Loss. Grieving had already begun because he knew they were going to lose. The prophet stopped and said, "*Lord, open his eyes so he might see the reality.*" (That is a prayer I pray for people and for myself.) God did, and the servant's eyes were open. He saw the army of God surrounding the other army, and the Lord had everything under control. That was the reality of the situation.

What people say, what people do or don't do is not the reality. The reality is that the Lord reigns. God has everything under control in spite of what we see or hear. Lock your faith, hope, and love into the Lord who will turn it around. Something was intended for evil, but God will turn it around for good. This is what Joseph said after many years of hardship caused by what his brothers did to him. Joseph told them this after God promoted him to be the second in charge of Egypt.

The reality is that God is able to turn things around somehow. He will give beauty instead of ashes. We don't know how, but He will do something, and out of it something wonderful will happen. When people are in the trauma phase, they won't hear that word, but we can pray that God would comfort

and minister to them, give them what they need, and help them work it through.

When people move away or change jobs, they go through a grieving process. There is a grieving process involved to varying degrees with any change in a person's life.

What about death? Even in death I win. Whether I live or I die, I win. I am a Christian. I believe in God, God loves me, and He has all kinds of promises. We go from life to life. Besides, I won't go until I am finished with what God has given me to do. The Lord says, "*My people perish for lack of knowledge.*" I want to gain wisdom and understanding, getting the knowledge I need to finish what God has given. When I am finished, I will be "out of here." Don't try to hold me back.

How do you know when it is the time? If you're supposed to be here, you will be here. If you're not supposed to be here, you will be gone. Nothing in heaven or hell can stop you because you have done what you have been given to do.

Don't grieve as those who have no hope. Some grief is about self more than another person or the loss. This is inordinate grief, not the good kind. With inordinate grief, people can't let go. They just hang on, and they're not moving on with their life. There comes a point where they've got to move on. Again, let God and the people work it out for themselves. Don't you be the one trying to move them along.

If the mama bird kicks the baby bird out of the nest before it is ready to fly, the baby will hit the deck. However, when the mama bird kicks it out, she knows that it can fly. Since the baby doesn't know yet, it is traumatic to get kicked out of the nest. (There is grief.) It is a process for both the mother and her offspring. Mama bird says, "Dad, he's gone; he's flying around someplace."

That works in nature, but, men, it doesn't work with you. God has given dads to be a very important part of their children's lives.

If you are ever going to help someone, you have to understand that the most important thing is the presence of faith, prayer, listening, and your presence. Still, you can't be there all the time, and you don't need to be there all the

time. You're not helping people by being there every minute. They may want you to, but it isn't healthy for you or them. What they're doing is trying to control your life at that point. They may be the kind of people that you want around all the time, which is not healthy either.

The Holy Spirit will help you. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what to do and what not to do. Ask Him to give you wisdom and insight. *"If any lack wisdom let him ask God,"* and He will help you. He helps you to understand what is going on inside of you. When panic comes (the fear that you are going out of your mind), you really are not because *"You have the mind of Christ."*

Enter into the mind of Christ and settle down. Let the peace of Christ come upon you. You can't do it *for* somebody else, but you can be an encouragement. You shouldn't get upset because they're not doing it. *"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth that they might recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."* (2nd Timothy 2:24-26 KJV) That verse will work well for helping people in the grieving process too. It is not for us to push, coerce, and quarrel with them, trying to get them out of the house because they need to get on with their life. Let them do what they want to do and be what they want to be. When they are finished with the process, they will say, "Where are we going?" You can invite them, but let them make the decision and don't beat them up because they don't go.

Final Thoughts with a Prayer

The Body of Christ is so important. You always want to be in touch with God's people because you can share with each other and encourage in times of sorrow, in good times and hard times.

God gives us a hope and a future. It doesn't matter what has happened. God can put Humpty Dumpty back together again, and He can make things better than they ever were before. Just let Him have a chance at it. He wants to do it.

Jesus said, *"Come to me you who are weary and heavy laden,"* you who are burdened down, you who are grieving, you who have lost things. "Come to me and yoke up with me and I will make your life easy. I'll help you. I'll

turn what was intended for evil around for good. I'll cause blessing to come back to you. The years of the locust that the thief has taken will all be restored. I'll make everything new and fresh, with a whole new start."

Lord, we thank you for the confidence that you give us in your holy name. In that name, Jesus, you won't leave us or forsake us. You will help us. Father, right now we want to thank you for the privilege of bringing your people the comfort that only you can bring. When we are going through times of loss and separation, Lord, only you can fill the emptiness and the void in our lives. Father, touch your people today in the name of Jesus. Love them, encourage them, bless them, and give them strength.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
A New Day with Faith, Hope & Love
Chapter 15

Being Committed

Sometimes you have to go around the mountain. Sometimes you go through the mountain. Other times the mountain just goes away (usually not until you do something to it). Jesus said, "Speak to the mountain; tell it to move and it will move."

People don't see miracles because they are not committed to seeing them. When Moses went to the edge of the sea with all those people, they were committed, once they left Egypt. Then God made a way.

No matter what the doctor's report says. *"I know whom I have believed, and I'm fully persuaded and convinced He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him."* There is no backing out.

You are either committed to marriage, or you're not. If you aren't, you'd better get committed because when you said, "I do" that should have meant something. You should be true to your word. We don't have time to mess around, for life and death is in the balance.

One of our church members went through 10 months of chemotherapy. We never heard a whimper out of him one time. I see other people with blessed lives, but there is nothing happening. They say they are Christians, but they act like they are a bunch of wimps. I visited this man when his flesh was laid open, and it smelled like death. (Burning flesh is one of the most hideous things you can smell.) Other people prance around, saying, "I'm a Christian. I love God," but they have no commitment in their marriage, and life is all about them. I'm tired of it. You either believe God or you don't.

If you keep thinking and saying that you don't have money, of course you don't have it. You will never see it. It is time to stand up and believe God.

We are on a crusade to spread the gospel to the nations of the earth. We are on a crusade to see the Spirit of God receive the praise that He deserves. We want to see miracles, changed lives, and people set free. When the Spirit of

God rises up, whatever is not of God has to go. It has to bow to the name of Jesus. You either permit devils in your life, or you permit the Holy Spirit.

Thankfulness is what I heard from this man, not a whimper, because he was believing God. Other people get a hangnail and start worrying what they will do about it. If you can't believe for a hangnail, you will never believe for anything else that comes against you. The evil day will come, and it is not the time for giving up.

People do what they want to do, but some of them are looking for excuses to do what they want to do. They don't want to do what God says. They don't want to believe, so they look for an excuse, or they blame somebody else. Their track record will show a lot. What kind of track record do you want to have?

Be committed to God if you want to see miracles, and have all your eggs in His basket. As stated earlier, in regard to physical healing, He told me, "Son, if I can't do it, nobody can." I know it is true in regard to finances and relationships too. You need to have a commitment.

The only thing that held Diana and me together in our first year of marriage was commitment. It wasn't feelings, and it certainly wasn't her likes or my likes. Thirty-one years later, we are still together.

If I am going to be committed to God and to you, nonsense has to stop, and there is no more room for wimps and babies. There *is* room for conviction, commitment, accountability, and responsibility. There is room for miracles.

No Compromise

Why would people want to be where the Spirit of God is compromised? Maybe they are compromised, not wanting to do what God wants them to do. If so, they are not welcome here.

I don't want the place full; I want the place holy and under the conviction of the Holy Spirit of God. I want no compromise. I want to see miracles and changed lives. I want to see people on fire for the Holy Spirit of God.

I am not afraid of confronting devils. My prayer is that people get set free from them, but it is their choice whether they want to keep a devil or not. Let's act like we are in Jesus and not go back to old patterns. *"Therefore if*

any is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is passed away the new has come.”

When you turn up the fire, then the devils will manifest, and that is when the freedom starts to happen, things start to change, and you will see miracles.

I am a well-educated, eloquent person. I am a gentlemen. I serve the Most High God, and I am a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. I serve God’s people with all my heart. However, I can’t do this while being compromised. If I start to compromise, I lose the anointing of God. If I permit things in the house that are not of God, God says the place is under judgment.

Many churches are under judgment. Many places in the country are under judgment. Places in the world are under judgment right now. It is a time for people to stand up and be counted. This is the hour. Your life can go to the devil if you let it go. Choose to receive the love and faith of God in Jesus. Choose to receive the promises from on high, and then you will see results.

I am not going away without the blessing. We have had our backs to the wall over many issues. *“Having done all to stand, stand. Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.”* The only way you are ever going to get there is to stand up. *“...and having done all to stand, stand”* some more... as long as it takes.

Even if you have another way out, there is only one way to do it, and it is God’s way. There are no other options.

The children of Israel wanted to go back to Egypt where there were leeks to eat (some crummy onions). In reality they hadn’t been eating leeks for a long time because the Egyptians had cut back their portion of food and given them double the work.

Leeks in the house of bondage and slavery is not enough to take care of everything as far as I’m concerned. I can’t live that way.

Be Set Free

Getting on our faces and asking God’s forgiveness is what makes the difference. That is how people get set free. Stay with them through hell and high water, in good times or hard times. Understand, we are not going into

the pot with them, nor are we going to eat the bitter stew. (One day the people came to the man of God and said there was bitterness in the pot, which meant there was death in it. [Bitterness is death.] In other words, there was something wrong with the stew.

If there is something wrong with your kind of life, the end of it will be death. It is better to get shook up and get out of it than to go to hell with it.

“Beware lest a root of bitterness spring up amongst you and many get defiled.” If you get rid of a root of bitterness, then you don’t defile everybody else. In reality, people are not the problem. What is in and around people is the problem. Thank God for hope.

Depression, fear, worry, anxiety... If I have made you anxious, praise God, for the Spirit of God is stirring up something in you that needs to come out of you. It is not the time for compromise. It is time to stand up in the Spirit of the Lord. These are the days we are in.

Some people lost everything they owned, twice, in the same area of the country. In a period of three weeks they were hit with the same kind of devastation. Tell me there wasn’t something going on there.

What if it were you?

We can say, “ ‘*A thousand will fall at my left, ten thousand at my right, but it won’t come near me,*’ (Psalm 91:7) ... ‘*because He set His love upon me,*’ *saith the Lord.*” (Psalm 91:14) I am just asking, what will you do in the evil day if you have compromised faith, hope, or love? You will be compromised. There comes a point where you will have to get over the feelings that have entrenched you in a cycle of death.

“Open rebuke is better than secret love.” Your own flesh as well as devils don’t like open rebuke because the cover comes off and sins are exposed. A wise man or woman should love instruction and correction.

We Have to Have Hope

The key to overcoming grief is hope. “*We sorrow not as those who have no hope.*” Grief, fear, worry, depression, anxiety all deal with loss. “*Hope deferred makes the heart grow sick.*” We have to have hope. As soon as you lose hope, you give up, you faint, you get discouraged, you become

helpless. You can't do a thing about the situation to stop the loss from happening, or to deal with the loss that has happened, or to have hope for a restoration, a renewal, and a revival to come.

Without hope people perish. "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*" (Psalm 42) David dealt with this and said, "*Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him.*"

Some purport to be godly, but aren't. The test comes when they go through troubled situations. Then they find out what is in them. "*If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.*" God is in us, so get more strength. Go to the One who has Living Waters that never run out. Let Him fill you back up. Let Him energize you. Let Him deal with it. He is our Helper, the Paraclete.

Faith, hope, and love are what remain in a believer. "*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things; love never fails.*" (1st Corinthians 13) "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not yet seen.*" (Hebrews 11:1)

Faith, hope and love are what will see us through everything. When you are helping people, you need to look at what is happening in them.

The Effects of Anxiety and Confusion

Another term for anxiety is fear. People may be anxious, for example, that they will lose a relationship or a business deal. Jesus said in Matthew 6, "*Be anxious for nothing.*" Anything that God has for you will be there when it's supposed to be there.

Every day we can choose to do what we want to do or choose to do what God wants us to do, which involves commitment, accountability, and responsibility. You can't have your cake and eat it too. That is, you can't do your own way and God's way unless your way is God's way.

Anxiety, panic, or confusion... When confusion comes in and you shut down, its effects are just like a hurricane. It comes in and clouds your vision, and you can't see the forest for the trees. You can't think straight because of what is going on in the mind realm. Then your mind affects your body, which is why there are so many different psychosomatic illnesses. The illnesses become real, but they are the result of psychosomatic causes. "Psycho" means mind. "Somo" is body. You have a spirit, a mind, and a

body, and they are interrelated. If you have a spiritual problem, it affects the mind and the body as a result. When mental or physical breakdowns occur, everything shuts down. If you don't have hope in those moments, you will become prey to a devil to use and abuse you until you stand up and call to God. Ask God to forgive you and help you.

Don't ever think you don't need forgiveness. That should be the first thing you do. "Father, forgive me. Show me what I need." "*Submit yourself to God; resist the devil, and he will flee.*" (James 4:7) When you submit to God, forgiveness comes in. Get under the blood of Jesus, and help other people to do that. Ask for God's forgiveness and help, and He will help you. The confusion (double mindedness) will stop. "*If any lack wisdom, let him ask God.*" We need wisdom. We need God's insight when anxiety, panic, or fears come. They have the same kind of working as uncertainty. What does God supply? Certainty.

I don't know how life will work out, but in the end I know I will still be standing with God.

- "*For I know whom I have believed. I am fully persuaded and convinced that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.*"
- "*Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.*"
- "*...for thou art with me, O Lord.*"

(See Psalm 34, 46, and 91) These are passages to combat fear. Get them inside of you, and you will be able to help people to work those.

"*Be still and know that I am God.*" Get quiet even if everything in you is screaming. You will want to react to the situation, but God says, "*Be not overcome of evil; overcome evil with good.*" Don't resist evil. You have to get back into the place of peace. You don't have to react.

All fear is based on the unknown. How do you know it will turn out badly? If you are a believer, you need to believe God. "*For I know the plans that I have for you, plans for good, not for evil. Plans to prosper you, to give you hope and a future.*" (Jeremiah 29:11-12)

What are you believing for in your marriage? What are you believing for in your relationships? What are you believing for in your finances? What are

you believing for in your health? What are you believing for in your psyche (soul). What are you believing for in your spirit? When the dust settles, what do you see at the end of the road? That is where your faith is. If you see yourself destitute, desperate, and dead, I think you should make a change. God is a God of hope. He is a God of life. He is not a God of death, division, or destruction. He is a God of life and blessing.

“I set before you blessing or cursing, life or death; choose life.”
(Deuteronomy 30:19) What do you see?

When you are working with people, ask them what they see at the end of the situation. If you hear them say, “I see termination. I see death. I see destruction,” then try to help them to see what God has for them. They have to make another choice. Help them get out of the confusion and double mindedness. *“A double minded person is unstable in all his ways and cannot expect to receive anything from God.”* (James 1)

When Diana and I got married, we didn’t consider this: “If it works, then great, if it doesn’t, okay. We’ll just go our own ways.” That kind of marriage is destined to fail. It invites destruction. It is double mindedness.

God Can Change You

Does God say it’s the end of the matter? No, you can change. God can change you.

David prayed Psalm 51 after his unfaithfulness with Bathsheba and after lying and covering up. Uriah was killed, and David’s first child with Bathsheba died as a consequence of David’s sin. There was probably sickness involved in the situation too. David said, “My bones rotted within me while I was hiding my sin.” Many blood diseases, heart problems, and arthritis are caused by guilt, unforgiveness, and bitterness in people’s hearts. The body will break down as a result. Because David had been defiled by his actions, he probably picked up a few influences that were not of God — and it wasn’t just a momentary thing. It went on for at least nine months. Undoubtedly, there were demonic factors that had surrounded him because he talked about it in other psalms.

As a result, he prayed for something: *“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”* (Psalm 51:10) In other words, “I lost my steadfast spirit, and I need my steadfast spirit back — one that is not

double minded and unstable.” You need consistency in your life to do what God wants you to do. David said, *“Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation.”*

You can always tell when somebody is not walking in the fullness of God because they have no joy. They just go through the motions, live it out, waiting for something to happen so that they don’t have to continue in their commitments. It is easy to bail out, but only losers bail out. We have to come to our senses about that.

David hadn’t been willing to do what God wanted him to do to make things right. Sooner or later, if you are unwilling in one area of your life, it will carry over to other areas of your life. *“The little foxes spoil the vine.”* A little compromise here and a little compromise there, and the next thing you know you are compromised. David was saying *“Restore to me the joy of your salvation. Grant me a willing spirit to sustain me,”* to keep me in there, to hold me in place so I won’t be moved from my position as a child of God, as a blessed child of God. *“Then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will turn back to you.”*

I have seen people witness, pray, and do different things “in the name of the Lord,” but their lives weren’t right. Some get religious when they are out of the will of God in order to prove to themselves and everybody else that they are children of God and that they are in a right place. God will determine what is what, and He will show what they really are. It is not His joy to expose them, except that they respond.

God had to work through Nathan the prophet to get David’s attention because David wasn’t listening to God. God sent one of His men to expose David so he would “get the drift.”

“Today when you hear His voice, harden not your heart.” As you are helping people, you can see what happens when they move into fear, anxiety, depression, panic, or any other modes that operate in loss. We need to help people to come to a place where they realize their thinking will lead to loss and poverty.

“That which I feared the most is that which came upon me.” It will happen. What do you see at the end of the road? If you see things breaking down and going bad, you have to change that. See what is really working in you.

See what you are believing, and thank God when it is exposed because God doesn't want to see anybody perish. It has to be dealt with, and we have to get over it, which means overcome it.

Getting Out of Fear and Anxiety

“*There is no fear in love.*” (1st John 4:18) The King James version says, “*Perfect love casts out all fear.*” Perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment. People don't realize that fear, anxiety, depression, and panic have to do with loss, and loss has to do with punishment. What is the wrath of God upon? Disobedience. All those things are disobedience to God. God is trying to create faith, hope, and love in us.

We have to notice what we do out of anxiety or worry. What is really going on? Why are we thinking that way? It hasn't even happened. Most fears and anxieties never do happen. People got into the “what if.”

What if, we got blessed beyond measure financially?
What if, we were never sick a day in our lives?
What if, everybody around us got happy and blessed?

Whose voice are you listening to? When you are helping people to overcome, you have to challenge their thinking. You have to confront their thinking. Lay out the facts.

The Lord taught me years ago to get all the facts. The facts might point to a fear of something, and it might look bad, but God can change it. He can do anything. He can turn what was intended for evil around to good if we would believe Him, but we have to believe Him with all our hearts. We can't be double minded. A little instability makes the whole thing unstable, and there will be an explosion. We have to get rid of the instability.

The ability to be stable is mine in Christ Jesus who does not change, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God is stable and consistent. When fear and anxiety come, remember what Jesus said: “*Be anxious for nothing.*” He said to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything else would be added to you. Help people to seek and believe God. He can turn things around, but we have to believe Him.

He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. We can't do it half heartedly. When fear, anxiety, panic, or depression come, "*Faith worketh by love.*" (Galatians 5:6)

God loves us with an everlasting love that never fades away or changes. We need to humble ourselves under His mighty hand. The problem with many people is they are not submitted to God. They want to do what they want and have God bless what they have done.

Esau went to his dad, saying, "Don't you have another blessing for me?" after Isaac had given the precious blessing away to Jacob. Esau tried to get another blessing, and his dad gave him another blessing, but it wasn't the one God had for him. Yes, he became a great person (a great nation came from him), but the nation was eventually wiped out. His reputation was that of a profane (unholy) man because he did not consider his holy birthright something to be sought after. He didn't appreciate it. He sold it off for a bowl of vegetable mush.

Bring your thoughts captive to the mind of Christ and help people to settle down. "*Be still and know that I am God.*" (Psalm 46) Knock off the panic, anxiety, fear, and depression that come with it – the hopelessness and helplessness that come at that point – and come to your senses. You might have to pray to bind any influences that are not of God, but it won't work until you submit yourself to God.

"*Submit yourself to God; then resist the devil.*" The first thing I seek to do with people who are out of line with God is tell them they need to ask God's forgiveness. Anxiety, fear, worry, and depression are not of Him. Don't ever think they are of God. They all have to do with unbelief. Lack of belief will lead to lack. A lack of faith in God will lead to poverty, destruction, and devastation, and those things lead to punishment.

God Will Rescue You

On the other hand, "*Because he loves me, says the Lord; I will rescue him.*" (Psalm 91:14) Faith and hope is associated with love (commitment, accountability, and responsibility). "*Because he loves me, because he believes in me, because he hopes in me, I will rescue him,*" says the Lord. "*I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name [believes in My name].*"

“In you, O Lord, do I trust. You are my refuge, my strength, my very present help in time of trouble, my fortress, my God in whom I trust.”

The Lord says if we call upon Him, He will answer. *“I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”*

This is the word the Lord gave me after I came away from a life threatening car crash. (He taught me about “The Safe Place”). I had gone into an intersection, and a guy ran the red light. Bam, instantly, I was in a quiet, joyful, very peaceful place. Around me there was nothing but commotion and noise and glass everywhere. Crashing, metal on metal. The sounds were horrendous, but I didn’t hear any of it. The Lord gave me this verse, *“Because you set your love upon me, I will rescue you.”* (“Because you believe Me, because you hope in Me.”) He will do that for you too.

Share testimonies with people when you are helping them. You can use my testimony as an example. Give them a *Safe Place* book; It will help people to see reality.

As stated before, Elijah’s servant became fearful when he went out one morning for water at the well and saw a huge army surrounding the city. The man of God asked the Lord to show the servant the truth. He asked with confidence and assurance in his God in whom he trusted. The Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he saw the heavenly army of God because he saw into the spirit realm. (There is nothing to fear; God is here.) When you help people who are dealing with fear, anxiety, worry, and depression, help them to grasp the reality of God’s presence. God is in the house. He is here. All you need to do is believe in Him and trust Him and ask for forgiveness for fear, worry, anxiety, or depression. *“In the presence of the Lord is fullness of joy.”* (Psalm 16:11)

“The joy of the Lord is my strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10) Strength will come up spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally within me because if God is here, then I have nothing to fear, which is a thought of loss. Where God is there is no loss. In His presence are His presents. There is no loss or lack in God’s presence. When the Lord orders the steps, even though we may lose some things along the way, more things and better things will come. That is hope.

Our hope is in God. Therefore we don't fear because God loves us with an everlasting love. *"Only good and perfect gifts come down from the Father of Lights."* My life is in the palm of the Lord's hand, and I trust in Him. He will never let me down. I go about my business with an awareness of His presence. With it comes the peace of God which surpasses all understanding that will guard and keep my heart and mind in faith in Christ Jesus. *"Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice."* (Philippians 4:4) Don't worry, don't panic, don't get anxious, and don't get depressed. Give it to God in prayer. *"With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard and keep your heart and mind in faith in Christ Jesus until life everlasting."*

Then if you want to keep your peace, think on the things that are true, just, beautiful, things of virtue, things worthy of praise. Those are God thoughts. Those are the thoughts about God, who He is, and what He is doing; and you won't be afraid anymore.

The Lord is here. He is present. He is in our midst. When we fear, we have forgotten He is around. When we doubt, that is another issue, even though doubt is a part of fear. It is a part of the whole anxiety working: not believing that God is with us. As soon as people acknowledge Him, He is on the scene and He is present. Then it's all taken care of. It is all under control.

What are the thief's tools? Fear, worry, anxiety, and panic. He wants to get people confused so they can't think. Every evil work comes from confusion. (James 3).

The devil has to set up an event to happen, and he uses fear and anxiety. He sets up what he is about to do. *"That which I feared the most is that which came upon me."* (Job 3:25)

Again, when Job went out to offer up sacrifices in behalf of his children, per chance they had sinned, he was not doing it out of faith, love, and hope in God. He was doing it out of fear. Many people's prayers are nothing more than fear prayers. They are anxious prayers. They are not in confidence that God has everything under control.

Faith Moves God

Job was saying that everything he did out of fear was what made the tragedy happen. The way to counter it is with faith. Jesus said, *“The thief has come but to steal, kill, and to destroy.”* (John 10:10) That is all he comes for.

Jairus had come to believe God and asked Jesus to heal his daughter, but then his servant arrived, *“Don’t trouble the Master; your daughter is dead.”* Jesus said, *“Fear not; only believe.”* Only believe. In other words, don’t you dare move off of what you expected to happen. You came to see her get well. There is no room for anything else. *“Only believe, and she shall be made whole.”*

I know a woman whose daughter was in a serious car crash. Three of the young people died, and her daughter was in a deep coma. They didn’t know what would happen with her, but the Lord gave us a word. He said, *“She is sleeping, but she is going to wake up, and she will be whole.”* It happened just that way. She was sleeping (in the coma), she woke up, and she was whole.

The word of the Lord brings confidence and deliverance because it is the word of faith. A word from the Lord will come to pass. It will happen just like He says. *“He is not a man that he should lie.”* (Numbers 23:19)

When Jesus said, *“But I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly”* that is what you need to be hoping. However, hoping isn’t getting it, even though it sets the climate for faith to do something. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. If you don’t have hope, you don’t have any good for God to do. If you are believing for bad, then that is what you will have. God is not doing it. He only does good things for people.

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not yet seen.” Faith is the opposite of fear. Fear is a thought about the unknown, about what negative will happen. Faith is about the unknown, but it is positive. One is of God, the other is of the devil. Faith will produce life, and life abundantly. What is of the devil will produce loss, lack, and death, as well as destruction in relationship, finances, health, and eternity.

The obvious question is what do you want? God says, *“Choose life.”* Choose to believe it but don’t be double minded about it.

Share with others how much God loves them and that He doesn't want them anxious even for a moment. He doesn't want them having one fearful thought. Thoughts will come, but whether we dwell on them is another thing. When a fear thought comes, cast it down and say, "Get out of me in Jesus' name. You are not my thought. I'm not going to believe this. I'm going to believe God." "*Hope in God for I will yet praise Him,*" not just in action or word, but there is heart behind it.

"For I know whom I have believed, and I'm fully persuaded and convinced that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him. (2nd Timothy 1:12) He will work everything out.

God Is There With You

When Moses arrived at the sea, and Pharaoh's army was behind him, there was nowhere else to go. He asked, "Lord, what are we going to do? And the Lord told him what to do. (*"If any lack wisdom, let him ask God,"* and He will give you what you need to do.)

We help people know what to do when they are in fear. They need to quiet down, and they need to believe God. If they have submitted themselves to God, asked His forgiveness, and then resisted the devil, then the devil is out of the picture. The Lord will give them wisdom about what to do and how they need to do it. They will be in a place to receive it because they have peace at that moment, even though they don't know what will happen. Nobody knows what will happen, which is why fortune telling is such big business. People always want to know what their future holds.

I don't know what my future holds, but I know it will be marvelous because God said so. (Jeremiah 29:11-12) Even if I die for Christ, I'm going to live. I can't lose as one of God's people. Once you get that inside of you, you start working it.

We want to help people get the wisdom of God so we use James 1, "*Is any lacking wisdom?*" Ask God and He won't find fault with you. He won't beat you up because you feared or because you were anxious or because you didn't know what to do, but he will give you what you need to know.

We don't need to know everything. We just need to know what God shows us. Many people are not happy with what God shows them because they want more, and they get nervous when they don't have the whole plan. Life

is a walk of faith. Every day I learn to walk by faith with God. I don't know what tomorrow holds. I don't know what next month holds. I don't know what next year holds. I can look backwards but what is the sense of that? Today is the day of the Lord. He will do things today. You can't live off of yesterday's testimonies, but you can be encouraged by them.

Today is a new day of faith, hope, and love.

Fear, worry, doubt, depression, or anxiety disappear when you start thanking and praising God. Then you forget you even had a problem.

The key to overcoming fear, worry, and anxiety is realizing the Lord is with you. The Lord is with you so you can be strong and very courageous no matter what you have to face, no matter what giants are out there, no matter what obstacle you have to deal with. God loves you and He is with you. He won't leave you. He won't forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5-6 and Joshua 1:6-9) He will help you, so you won't be afraid or discouraged. Just keep going and give glory to God along the way.

You can't deal with something that isn't even happening. However, the devil sets up things to happen. If you start believing that negative will happen, it will. It is called suggestion. It is used in the world, and it is used by the devil.

What if your health never broke down as long as you lived? What if you had all the finances you needed every day to deal with whatever you needed to do and didn't have to take a thought about it?

It can happen. It is happening. "Can happen" is hope. "Is happening" is faith. See the difference? Many people are wishing and hoping, which isn't faith. It is the carrot in front of the donkey. It will keep us going, but when we are in the time of trial and trouble, we need faith in God. We can't live on hope abundantly.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for." I believe in substance. I am not into empty promises or empty dreams. God says, *"Be being filled with the Holy Spirit"* and with every good thing that comes from Him. Being filled to overflowing is better. Help people see this.

Name three benefits of worrying. In Matthew 6, Jesus said, “*Can worry add one cubit to your stature?*”, which means can it make you grow any higher, can it do anything good for you? There is absolutely no benefit to worry, fear, depression, or anxiety.

People need to realize that when they worry they’re saying that God is not here and they have to take care of the situation. They don’t know if they can take care of it, but they try. Have you tried to work out your fear and anxiety? You felt you had to do something, or somebody else has to do something, and if they didn’t do it, you got mad at them. That is being out of your mind.

God is right here. How about asking Him to do something? “*Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and in due season He will exalt you.*” Cast all your cares, fears, worries, anxieties, depression on Him for He affectionately cares for you and watches over you. (1st Peter 5:7)

Stay In There

We take it by faith. “*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* [to action and obedience].” When we obey, faith is realized. Tell people that they have to obey, and they have to stay with it. They can’t waiver, for the double minded person is unstable in all his ways and cannot expect to receive anything from God. It is a promise.

David prayed for willingness and a sustaining spirit in Psalm 51. This would be the one that stays in there through hell and high water and will see the benefit and blessing of God at the end. God wants to stay in there with people all over the world who are going through times of crises and trouble.

If you can’t handle a hangnail, how are you ever going to handle a cancer? What are you going to do if you can’t even be nice to people when there isn’t any pressure on you? Don’t give an opportunity to the devil.

Fear, anxiety, panic, or depression gives an opportunity to the devil. Anger gives the devil an opportunity to come in and steal. What happens to you when you are afraid, depressed, and anxious? You start acting angry, confused, bitter, afraid, or insecure, and it is all about yourself.

In the first year of my marriage I had to make a choice whether I was going to be in it or not. I discovered it is all about abandoning myself and

protecting my spouse. We are to care, prefer, love, and look out for others more than ourselves. Forget about ourselves and say, “This person is worth more to me than my own life.” That is the love of Christ Jesus who hung on the tree for us. We were more important to Him than His own life. He sacrificed and gave Himself for us that whoever believes in Him and looks to Him won’t perish but will have everlasting life.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. Turn your life over to God, and He will take care of troubles, sorrow, or panic attacks over circumstances. He will give peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Prayer:

Jesus, I need your peace, I need your life, come into me and fill me with your presence. Help me to be aware that you are right here with me always. You are not leaving me, you are not forsaking me, you are not abandoning me, and you are my helper. I don’t need to be afraid of people, circumstances, devils, or what I do to myself because you are with me. Because you are with me, I will stay with the people and help them too.

Love the people, but hate the devils, hate the working of the flesh, hate the evil. God says, “*Hate evil. Love what is good.*”

CARING FOR PEOPLE
How to Resolve Guilt
Chapter 16

Sin, Separation and God's Solution

Have you kept feeling guilt about something you did? Many times the guilt people are carrying is ruining their lives.

There is a time when we are wrong and need to realize that we are guilty so as not to sear our conscience. We need to humble ourselves before the Lord and others. We need to deal with the guilt because we want to be at peace with God, with ourselves, and with others.

This word was spoken about Jesus' coming: "*You shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.*" Another translation reads, "*He brings forgiveness of sins.*" Sin involves separation which causes guilt, but Jesus removes it. The Greek word for sin means to shoot the arrow and fall short of the target, to miss the mark. Wherever there is sin, people are separated from God, themselves, and others. Sin steals, kills, and divides, and the guilt of it will rot the bones. (Psalm 32) David said his bones rotted within him until he acknowledged what he had done wrong. Then he asked for God's forgiveness, and God was faithful to forgive and cleanse him.

When you do something wrong, there is a separation between yourself and God, within yourself, and between yourself and others. The separation needs to be removed, but you can't remove it on your own. Only God can make that completion come together.

Jesus said, "You must be born again" because people are born separated from God. That is why Jesus came. He was God come in the flesh to save us and love us. He came so that we wouldn't be separated from God anymore. When we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we receive what He did for us on the cross. He gave His life, and His blood paid the penalty for the separation that had occurred between man and God. The devil, a fallen angel, tries to steal, kill, and destroy, "*But I have come that you might have life more abundantly,*" Jesus said. Whoever receives Jesus and believes in Him, and looks to Him for life, God will give life and forgiveness of sins.

People don't use the word sin much anymore, so let's use the word offense. Think about when you have either been offended or given an offense. Offense is intended to separate – to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

Many people don't recognize their guilt, and they don't realize they need Jesus, but He is the only way to life with God. He is the only way that they can have forgiveness of offenses. Everyone has fallen short of the glory of God. Everyone has caused offense and is separated from God. However, God in His love said, "I don't want to leave people separated from Me. I want to heal the offense. I want to remove the offense. I want to take it away like it never happened. I want people to be my family." In His great love He Himself came, gave Himself the name Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary. There was no human interaction resulting in Jesus being conceived. It was a miracle.

The blood type is determined by the dad. Man's blood was tainted when Adam went against God and fell away. Therefore, people are born with what is called original sin, which means they are born with that nature. You never have to teach anybody to do wrong.

People are born selfish. Watch those cute little babies, how lovely and wonderful they are and how happy we are that they are here, but they are totally about themselves. They don't care one bit about mom, dad, or anybody else. It's, "Feed me. Take care of me. I'm here and you need to help me." Also realize that there may be a serious power struggle going on in the house when they reach age two.

Receive Forgiveness

People need to realize that they need a new nature, like God's loving, kind nature, which gives rather than takes. Being concerned about self has got to go so the new can come, and God in His great love has provided it. It is an underserved gift to whosoever shall receive Jesus. Call upon the name of the Lord to be saved, and you will not be ashamed. You will not go away empty. Salvation was underserved, and it was God's love that overlooked our offense.

It cost Him. He gave Himself for us, and He is not counting that trespass against us. He is not counting that offense against us. He is saying, "I forgive." Those words going forth are the greatest words that have ever been spoken by God or by man. The power of God was loosed in that.

The devil knows no forgiveness, and he wants people feeling bad. He wants their lives destroyed. He doesn't want them in unity and harmony. He doesn't want anybody happy and at peace in their lives. He wants everybody's life to be a mess because his is.

You see, the devil won't ever acknowledge that he was wrong, and he won't ever go back to God. He won't humble himself and say, "I was wrong." Saying you are wrong is to repent, according to the bible. I turn away from my doings and my deeds, and I turn to the Lord, and I come to Him. When that happens, God is faithful and just to forgive.

"If we are faithful to acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us of all unrighteousness." (1st John 1:9) As far as your sin is concerned, He will remember your sin no more. He will remove it as far as the east is from the west. *"Though your sins be as scarlet (indelibly etched in you)"*, though you are stained and scarred by it (no matter how bad it is, no matter what you've done), the Lord says, *"I will make you white as snow."* He will remove it. He will cleanse it; He will deliver you from it like it never happened. That is what God wants to do.

An Awareness of Right and Wrong

There is a guilt that comes on people from the Holy Spirit when they do wrong. When you are helping people with the issue of guilt, realize that there are some people who need to feel guilty.

Trying to make somebody feel guilty is not the way to help them feel guilty, though. The prophets may have done it in the bible, but God was prompting them. There is a right time to say something. Things have to be said, but the Lord deals with people's hearts before you come along and deal with their hearts.

All people have a conscience. They have an awareness of what is right and wrong, whether they realize it or not. God never did away with the Ten Commandments even though there are many Christians who think so. In Hebrews it says He wrote them on your heart when you were born again.

The knowledge of the law of God will keep us in the care of God because it sets boundaries. A child without boundaries is an unloved child. He is an abused child because he doesn't know what is right or wrong. He doesn't

know what is permissible. As a result, he becomes like an animal – totally selfish and self-centered. He can't live in community with anybody else because all he thinks about is what he wants to do.

God Set Down the Law

Here are three reasons why God made the law:

- 1) The law of God shows us our sin, our transgression, and our trespass. It shows us what is pleasing to God and what is not pleasing to Him. If what I'm doing and what God says I should be doing don't match up, there is a problem. When you do what God says, you will be blessed. When you don't do what He says, you are cursed.

To receive blessing we need to realize that God in His love has a way to bless our lives. He will change us spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, and in relationships, which are the areas that Jesus died to give us blessing in. When we stop doing our way and start doing what God says to do, we enter into the blessing. Jesus made it all possible.

When you say you are a believer in Jesus Christ, and you say you love God, then you will keep His commandments. The two go together.

- 2) The second function of the law is like a curb on the street. It deters us from going out of bounds. The problem with the law and why it isn't functional for people is that nobody can keep it perfectly. If you break one, you break them all, according to the bible, because the nature of man is sinful. He is separated from God, and that's why Jesus came. It is the good news, the gospel. *“God so loved the world that He gave His only son [our Lord Jesus], that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but will have everlasting life.*

Nobody could live a life without offense. We were either giving offense, or we were receiving offense. In any case, our lives were messed up. If man doesn't know what is right, then there is no guilt, and so, there can be no change. If you don't know what God says, then you do whatever you're going to do.

If children don't know what's right or wrong, they live their lives without blessing. They are doing their own thing, thinking it is alright.

- 3) The third function of the law is to help us know how to love God, ourselves, and others (as God understands love). It shows us what to do and what is pleasing and acceptable, and what is a blessing. We need to know what is right and we need to know what is wrong.

We should teach our children not only what is right and wrong but also what the consequences are. Then blessing and every good thing is able to happen for their lives. Peace, joy, prosperity, and blessing come because God loves to give good and perfect gifts to His children who are doing what He says to do.

When we are disobedient and don't know what God wants, then there is a cursing. We need to know them so we can teach our children what curse goes with certain kinds of behavior. If you are nasty to people, they will be nasty to you. If you steal, you will go to jail. If you hurt somebody, the bible says the curse will stay on your life. If someone has never done anything wrong to you, but you continue to do bad to them, the curse will never depart from your house. You can't be blessed in any area. If you hate people, you will be hated because God is not mocked. (Galatians 6:7) Whatever a person does is what will come back to him for better or for worse, for blessing or for cursing, for life or for death.

I thank God for the law of God because it shows me my sin. It shows me my separation from God. What an awful thing when believers are doing something that isn't acceptable to God. Then the Holy Spirit brings the law of God back to them, and they feel condemned in their heart. It is actually a good thing. (The book titled *The Law and the Gospel* will help you to more fully understand the function of the law of God. The good news of God and the gospel work together.)

Conscience and Conviction

When we help people to get rid of guilt, we need to help them first see that there is such a thing as guilt. The Holy Spirit does produce guilt, and there is a reason for it. Sometimes it is because people have an area of their lives that is out of line with God, and by the Holy Spirit He is loving them. Guilt in your conscience is God prompting you to realize you have a problem, and you need to correct it and get it right.

Have you not had any peace in yourself? After you said or did something you shouldn't have, the Holy Spirit convicted you about dealing with it. Then somebody came along and said you were okay, that it was alright to feel like that towards those people because, after all, look what they did to you. The thief came right away to steal what was going on in your life. God works with you and deals with you so that you see you have a problem and you need to forgive. You needed to let go of your attitude, but the devil sent someone to tell you that you were justified. Then you thought you didn't need to forgive that person.

The guilt that was working in you by the Holy Spirit was softening your heart to get you to ask God's forgiveness and deal with the issue, go to those people, and love them. It got washed away because you began thinking you were right about what you said and did when God said you were wrong. Then you tried not to listen to His voice. In your wrong thinking you want to be around people who say you are right.

I tell ladies not to go around rebellious housewives. They are often desperate. What is desperate? Eating despair. You eat despair by not listening to your conscience and by letting it take you down the wrong road. There aren't many godly voices out there, even in the churches. People will tell you anything to make you feel good. God is not concerned about us feeling good. He is concerned about us being saved, and if we are saved, then we will really feel good.

There is a time when the Holy Spirit will bring conviction to our hearts. David, a godly man, denied the voice of the Holy Spirit for over nine months. He denied the voice that was telling him he was wrong in committing adultery with Bathsheba, setting up Uriah to have him killed (because he wouldn't do things the way David wanted him to do it), and covering up his sin. David tried to lie to people, but it is pretty hard to lie about a baby. (Babies should not be a consequence of sin. God intended them to be a blessing.) David denied the whole thing. He wouldn't hear about it or do anything with it. As he later reflected in Psalm 32, "My bones rotted within me until I repented."

Why did it take him so long when he was a godly man? He loved the house of God, but he didn't have joy to go there during that time. He loved to go into the temple of the Lord to worship God, but he lost all his joy. Guilt will

do that for it is intended to do that. God was talking to him, but David wasn't listening. Finally, in God's love, He sent Nathan, a man of God, a servant of the Lord, a prophet of God who told David a little story.

He said, "There were two men. One had thousands of sheep, and the other had one sheep. That sheep was his dear friend, his beloved animal. The fellow who had a thousand sheep decided he was going to have a party, and so he took the one sheep and barbecued it." The prophet asked David "What do you think should be done with this man?" David exclaimed, "He ought to be killed for what he did!" Nathan without hesitation by the Holy Spirit looked at David and said, "You are the man." Boom, the power of God came on David at that point, and he acknowledged his sin.

Psalms 51 and 32, written by David, deal with guilt, and they help people to get out of guilt. Until they are faithful to acknowledge their sin to God, He can't be faithful to forgive them and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness.

Inevitable Consequences

People think if others haven't acknowledged their sin, they don't have to forgive them. God forbid. Jesus died for us while we were still sinners – unrepentant, rebellious, and independent. God loved us so that we would be able to repent and turn. The love precedes the repentance.

It is God's loving kindness, gentleness, patience, and tolerance that leads people to change, not His judgment. "*If God should mark iniquity, who shall stand?*" (Psalm 130) We would all be burnt offerings.

Judgment is happening in the world, but it is not at the hand of God. God simply takes His blessing off people, and when that blessing is gone, the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. The blessing is taken off because people aren't doing what God says, and they aren't turning to Him for help.

King David's first child with Bathsheba died as a consequence of his actions. Yes, God loved that little child. It was in God's hands. There is nothing I'd rather do than to be in God's hands. In another instance, David was given a choice about what should be done to him after he had counted the soldiers (when God told him not to). Consequently, judgment came on the nation. He was given three choices, two of which involved people.

David said, “Don’t put me in people’s hands. Lord, I’ll take your discipline. I’ll deal with your justice.”

Many years ago my bride said, “Thank God, I’m not God.” She said this because she had a sense of “if you do wrong, you deserve to die.” Have you ever made excuses for yourself but held others accountable for the same thing?

When people repent and want to change and do the right thing, God will help them. Guilt, by the Holy Spirit, will actually drive a person to the cross, to the Lord Jesus, for forgiveness. From there God will deliver them spiritually. They won’t be separated from God anymore, for He will stand there and help them. In their mental condition, He will give peace, and joy will come back into their lives. There will be no more separation. They won’t be torn inside themselves, betwixed and between. Then God will bless their health.

David was saying that when he was in a place of guilt, his health broke down. Unforgiveness and guilt affect the bone marrow and the blood. It is also a source of heart problems, nerve conditions, some forms of arthritis, and bone problems. It affects the digestive tract. Colitis, colon problems, ulcers and migraines happen because you are separated from God and out of His will, and you are not dealing with the issues at hand.

A lady came to our church who was completely blind. Both optic nerves were dead. When the Spirit of God ministered to her in the prayer line, she went down under the power of the Lord. When she got up, we asked her what was going on, and she said she felt something evil leave her body. I asked her some questions about how it happened that she went blind.

Four years earlier, she went to bed seeing and woke up the next morning completely blind. What was the problem? She had been involved in a serious law suit with one of her best friends. It resulted in unforgiveness, bitterness, hurt, betrayal – the whole strife scene. People don’t know what they are doing when they allow it. (If Diana and I start arguing, I get on my face before God and ask Him to forgive us both and have mercy on us.) Submit to God because you don’t want a moment of strife coming into your house. The devil will steal you blind, and that is what happened to that lady. She went completely blind, with never a chance to see again.

She came to church to help another friend who had back problems caused by a serious accident, and God healed the friend. (Some of the friend's paraphernalia is displayed up on our church wall.) The blind lady had come to pray and encourage her friend. She was up in the prayer line, but God went after *her* stuff. Isn't that just like God? He loves us.

For four years she was unrepentant about what she had done. God had her ask for forgiveness for her attitude towards her friend in the lawsuit. God says, *"If your enemy hungers, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. Thereby you are heaping coals of fire upon him."* (Romans 12:20). People who say they like that one should realize it is not cursing, though; it is blessing.

Help people to see that when they have problems, it is because they are separated from God. People should have some guilt about it, not, "Why is this happening to me? Look at what they did to me." (The blame game) No, it takes two to tango. You can't for a moment think, *They haven't acknowledged their wrong in it, so why should I acknowledge my wrong in it?* The thief doesn't play favorites. He doesn't care about anybody concerned, and he wants to destroy everybody's life.

That day the lady forgave her friend, and the next thing you know her eyesight began to return. You have to understand something about nerves. When they are dead, they don't come back. There was absolutely no possibility of that woman ever seeing anything again. She forgave, and her eyesight started coming back. It was a miracle from God.

People don't like to look at the fact that their actions can cause such consequences. For example, they wonder why they don't have a marriage anymore. It is because they are nasty. They never spend any time with their spouse, or they are always picking on them, being abusive. You don't have to punch somebody to be abusive. Neglect is abuse. *"You reap what you sow."* There is always a cause and an effect, and yes, there is a thief out there who comes to steal, kill, and destroy.

"Who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" The disciples came to Jesus and asked Him the question, and Jesus answered, *"Neither, but that the work of God might be done. I need to work the work of God."* He proceeded to heal the fellow by the power of God.

Many sicknesses, though, are caused by what people have done. Have you ever felt completely innocent? Justified? You rationalized, didn't you? I deal with this every day of my life. It is amazing what rationalizations, justifications, and spiritualizations we do. *I'm on God's side and that means you're not. If I'm right, you're wrong.* (The blame game, the "he said/she said, who said what game." You round up the people who believe what you are doing.) That is not of God. Even if you're right, you're wrong because you are creating division. You are not seeking reconciliation. You are not seeking to put things together the way God would have them put together.

Freedom through Forgiveness

You can help people who have guilt if they realize they are guilty. God can't help anybody until they say, "Lord, I've sinned. I've trespassed. I've caused offense. Forgive me." If we are faithful to acknowledge our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse from all unrighteousness. Even if other people had the problem, and they did wrong to you, you are still wrong if you are holding a grudge against them. "Father, forgive me as I forgive others." I thank God for forgiveness.

Peter said, "*How many times should I forgive my brother? Seven times?*" Jesus answered, "*No, I say unto you seventy times seven.*" (Matthew 18:21-22) Seventy times seven equals four hundred and ninety.

There aren't 490 sins on the record, though, because we never get to 490. If someone sins against you, there is one sin, trespass, or offense on the record. Then you forgive, and there are none on the record and so on.

Do you keep a record of your wrongs or anybody else's? Love keeps no record of wrongs. (1st Corinthians 13)

When you feel guilty, the first step is to go to God and ask for forgiveness. The next step is to forgive yourself. Then forgive others, or ask for forgiveness and make right whatever has been wronged. That is where the blessing comes. It is wrong to stay in guilt once you have recognized your guilt. Move on to forgiveness. We need to move people on to see that God has forgiveness for them.

God is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Jesus is in us. He is going to forgive.

When I was still a Lutheran pastor, I encountered a fellow who stopped the church one day in an agitated state. I asked him what was wrong. I didn't need any great spiritual discernment to see something was wrong because I could see he was upset. He answered, "I drove by the school across the street and something told me to come in and see you. Normally I would go to a bar, but something told me to come in." I asked, "What is the problem?" And he continued, "I was in World War II where I worked with the bomber squad. There was a dense fog as we were flying over Europe. We had finished our run, and we still had some bombs left. We dropped them on what we thought was a factory, but we killed 480 children." They had dropped it on a school. He said every time he went by a school he just couldn't stand it. He had to go and drink. I wanted to know if he had asked God's forgiveness, and he said he had, so I asked if he had *received* His forgiveness. He replied, "Yes, I know that God has forgiven me." Then I inquired, "Why do you think you still have this guilt? Have you forgiven yourself?" And he said, "No, I've never forgiven myself for what I did."

It was proper for this man to ask forgiveness from God, but since I was a witness, I had him talk to God, and he forgave himself that day. He received the cleansing of the Lord. If you don't forgive yourself, you can't receive God's forgiveness. On the other hand, you may forgive yourself, but if you don't ever ask God's forgiveness you are justifying, rationalizing, and making excuses. When you stand before God, you can't make excuses for your actions.

There used to be a song that went like this: "Love is never having to say you're sorry." Whoever came up with that was out of his mind. I mean, do you mutilate people's lives and then make excuses for it, expecting them to forgive you while you keep doing wrong? That isn't love. You shouldn't be leaving a wake of broken lives and debris behind you. The bible says, "*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life...*" It shouldn't be that I've ruined life after life after life. No, it should be that blessing has come. If God has forgiven me, then I need to change my ways. By God's strength I need to start to do the right thing and change.

You know, the man walked out of the church that day just beaming. He was so happy and excited. You can tell something about people by how they walk. He was skipping. You could see he received freedom through the

forgiveness of God. The guilt was taken away, and he was released from bondage.

Guilt puts people in bondage if they don't move from the guilt to the forgiveness. *"Now therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus who walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh."* If we are doing the right thing, then there is no guilt. 1st John says that if your heart doesn't condemn you, then you are in a right place with God.

Acknowledge Sin

Unfortunately, many people's hearts aren't condemning them because they have seared their consciences. They have done the wrong thing for so long that they think it is right. God has to give us a new heart, and we have to change our way of thinking that wrong is never right.

In situation ethics classes taught in college, a wrong thing may be considered a right thing, and a right thing may be a wrong thing depending on the situation. Let's get back to what God's word says, and then we can learn right is right and wrong is wrong, and we won't be confused about it.

If you have asked God's forgiveness and you are still feeling guilty, there is a thief working. People who still have guilt, even though they have asked God's forgiveness, have changed their ways, and have forgiven themselves, are dealing with a devil. The bible says in the book of Revelation that the devil is the accuser of the brethren. He is always condemning, being negative, finding your faults, and bringing up dirt from the last 20 years.

Have you ever noticed in conversing with people who are angry that they can't remember anything good? All they can do is bring up dirt because a devil is helping them. They are bringing up all the wrong things that someone has done. If you went to God and talked to Him about what you did wrong, after you had asked His forgiveness, He'd say, "I don't know what you're talking about. I don't remember your sin anymore." He would tell you, "Forget it, and do the right thing. Continue to do the right thing and don't keep bringing it up to mess up your life," because it has torment. *"God's perfect love casts out all fear."*

The guilt that keeps coming back up is what somebody will find out about. If you are really free you can tell anybody that needs to know (but nobody really needs to know about it). The devil always tries to accuse the brethren

and make up lies about you and me. If he can't find that we did something, he will make up something. What are you going to do about that? Tell him to go to hell! Tell the devil to clear out when he's saying, "You did this, you didn't do this, you should have done this," or "if only you had done that."

Diana told me one time when I came back from a game of golf, "No 'should've's, 'would've's, 'could've's, or 'oh, no's." In other words, you played the game, you did the best you could, if you messed up, you messed up, if you did good, you did good. It doesn't really matter one way or the other. Be happy you played the game.

Have you ever had a perfection isn't spirit working on you? God says, "*There is none that doeth good, no not one,*" and the good that we do is only because of Him. So lighten up. There is a time to be heavy. There is a time to weep and to cry. There is a time to repent and ask God's forgiveness, and then there is a time to rejoice and receive that forgiveness. Thank God and move on with your life and help others move on with their lives. As long as people are holding things against others, they are not allowing them to get on with their lives. They can be locked into what happened 10 years ago. They keep bringing up the offense and talking about it, and the devil keeps bringing it up and talking about it in their head. Their lives stopped when the situation happened.

Four years ago the blind lady's life stopped. One day she could see, the next day she woke up totally blind. For four years she never acknowledged her sin while walking and living in the consequence of it. She never humbled herself and asked God's forgiveness until that day.

Many people are not attributing a consequence to their offense or to what they did or didn't do. God is not mocked. Did God put blindness on her? No. The devil did, and he intended to steal, kill, and destroy. That day at church the Lord got rid of the unforgiveness and got rid of the devil. Oh, I love that. Hallelujah.

Don't Live in Guilt Anymore

What was intended for evil, God turned around for good. The most exciting thing that could ever happen to somebody is to get rid of the guilt, get rid of the burden, get back into forgiveness, love, freedom, and joy.

I told her to go back to her friend and ask her forgiveness and tell her what great and wonderful things God did.

It doesn't matter how bad a sinner you have been. It doesn't matter how perfect you thought you were, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. *"There is none that doeth good, no not one."*

Thank God for the grace and mercy of the Lord who forgives us, who loves us, who gives us hope and a future. His plans for us are for good, not for evil, plans to prosper us, give us hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11-12)

You don't have to live in guilt anymore. Yes, you did it, you messed up, but you asked God's forgiveness, you let Him forgive you, you accepted that forgiveness and you changed. Now go on and make a difference. Never forget what Jesus did in giving His life for you on the cross. What did He say on the cross? *"Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing."*

Some people have stolen, some have lied, some have cheated, some have been abusive in relationships, some have doubted God. Worry and fear is sin too.

When I am helping people, the first place I go to is the cross.

Have you had financial problems? Have you not given your tithe or your offering at different times? Some people mismanage their money, which will cause financial problems. There is always a cause and an effect.

People have come to me and said, "Pastor, I give my tithes and offerings, but it's not working." So I say, "Let's sit down and look at a budget." They say, "A what?" They are not managing their money and wondering why it isn't working. God will give management, stewardship, understanding, and wisdom about it.

Lord, forgive me for the times that I've mismanaged what is yours. Help me to get back on the right track and do the right thing in Jesus' name.

You made mistakes; now quit kicking yourself. Let's move on and see God's best.

When I look back on my life, I have no regrets. When a few regrets start to come up, I say, “Nope, you’re dead, I dance on your head.” Sometimes you did something and at the time you didn’t think you were messed up. You were messed up, though, and now you’re kicking yourself about it. Granted, you needed to ask for forgiveness, and you needed to change and do the right things, but understand this, God can make good out of our biggest mess-ups.

A New Day

God put Joseph in a position to lead Egypt and to save the world of his day after all he went through. When his brothers came before him, he said to them, “*What you intended for evil, God intended for good that the whole world might be saved.*”

Don’t ever think that the whole world is going down because you messed up. Ask God’s forgiveness, change, do the right thing, and whatever happened, God can turn it around. This is a good promise for children. This is a good business promise. This is a good relationship promise.

Start to see that God has a new day, God has a new hope. His mercy is fresh and new every day. Whatever happened yesterday is gone, it is over and done as far as God is concerned. We are in this day, so let’s live it to the fullest as God would have it by the power of God. The thief knows if you are living in condemnation and guilt, then you are not believing God, and you are suppressed. That is what condemnation does, and you can’t live to the fullness of God, you can’t enjoy the day, and God can’t use you in that day when you’re thinking, *I’m unworthy, I’m unusable, I messed up, I don’t want to try anything else because I might do it wrong.* Those days are over. This is a day of a new hope, in Jesus’ name, and you need to walk in it.

The word of faith should be on the tip of your tongue. God wants to speak it, and He wants to speak it through you. No more negativity. No more bondage of the past holding you. You are free in Jesus’ name. “*He or she whom the son has set free is free indeed.*”

There can’t be any more guilt. When the thief or others bring up the past, you say, “Hey, that’s past. (*This one thing I do, I forget the things behind...*)” I’ve asked God’s forgiveness. I’ve asked forgiveness for myself.

I've asked forgiveness of you, and I'm free." Then change and do the right thing.

When you are helping people get rid of guilt, there has to be a resolve. There has to come a point where they understand that they can choose either to let the devil hurt them or let God bless them. What do they want?

I want to hear, "*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.*" God is working to restore the years the locust have stolen because of my actions, my lack of faith, my unbelief, or whatever went on in the past.

Whatever somebody did to offend me, so what? That was yesterday.

We need to believe the Lord so we can have an abundant life. We don't need to go by our feelings, what people or the devil is accusing us of, or what our old flesh is accusing us of. God has come that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

When you get up in the morning, the day is fresh and new, and God's mercy is fresh and new. Look at people and yourself as fresh and new. Thank Jesus you are alive. He is alive in you and you are alive in Him. God's blessings come from the north, south, east, and west. Realize you are in the favor of God, you are in the hand of God, and you are in the blessing of God. It is not because of anything you have done, but because of Him. You are just receiving and participating in what He has done and what He is doing.

We don't know what is ahead, but we know it is going to be good because God says, "*I know the plans I have for you, plans for good not for evil, plans to prosper you, to give you hope and a future.*"

Don't turn around and look at the past. We are in this moment right now in the Spirit of God. Today is the day. This is the magic moment, so precious and so new.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
Overcoming Oppression
Chapter 17

What Are Your Priorities?

Many times I lay hands on myself and say to the devil, “Get off my body in Jesus’ name. Get off my mind in Jesus’ name. Get off my property. Get off my grounds.” There is a “no trespassing” sign that goes up. I love this scripture: “*And the evil one touches him not,*” so I say, “Don’t touch me, devil.” God can touch me all He wants.

I believe that God wants us all to prosper and be in good health, but I will have what I am believing for. I have to take a step of faith because nobody can take it for me.

I am always of the thought that we need to do what Hebrews 12 says and get rid of the sin that so easily besets us, and get rid of distractions and weights. Otherwise there is a heaviness on our lives that slows us down and keeps us from coming into every good thing that God has for our lives. We need to set that aside.

Oppression is sent by the devil, and distractions occupy our time (wrong priorities). They take our time and zap our energy, use our resources, and keep us from really doing what God wants us to do.

Have you had a willing heart to do something God wanted, but then something else came up? We have to come to a point in our lives where we will say, “No, I’m going to do what God wants me to do and this can wait,” not, “What God wants me to do can wait.” Were you on your way to church when you suddenly thought something else needed to be attended to? You should ignore it, go to church, and/or do what God says to do. Other things will be there when you get back (or maybe not). It’s been known to happen. If you honor God, He takes care of your stuff.

He says, “*I am the Lord and there is none like unto Me.*” So remember, “First things first.” Love God first with all your heart, your mind, and your soul. Then love your neighbor as yourself.

Many times people put their relationships, finances, jobs, or health ahead of the Lord. Honor God first and let Him take care of everything else.

One time a guy came to me, “Pastor, I can’t go to Tuesday night services anymore. I need to spend time with my family.” I have always thought that the family can worship God together, but I let people do whatever they will do, even though I know God has something better. (I had to learn that one the hard way. I have a lot of marks on my body. People will beat you up when you try to make them do the right thing, so I quit doing that about 20 years ago.)

People will do whatever they want to do anyway, so I just figured, okay, as a good shepherd of God I thought I would research the matter. The guy said he was going to spend time with his family and do some things which he needed to do. By the way, because his marriage was very fragile at the time, he needed to do it. So, I said, “That’s fine.” One day I asked his wife, “How’s it going? Is he spending more time with you?” She looked at me and asked, “What?” I said, “Your husband told me he wasn’t going to come on Tuesday nights because he felt he needed to spend more time with the family.”

I think that on during the week we should bring the whole family and praise the Lord, but I take people at what they say and we will work it out. I checked him out, and what was he doing? He was playing basketball on Tuesday nights. The family never saw him. So, being the kind, good loving shepherd of God that I am, I asked him the question, “How’s it going on Tuesday nights with the family?” Thank God, at least some of what we taught got into him, and he told me the truth. He admitted, “Pastor, I’m not with the family on Tuesday nights. I’m playing basketball.” I said, “Well, how things change. How did that come about?” He replied, “I never really intended to spend time with the family. I wanted to play basketball.” I said, “Maybe you need to look at your priorities.”

I can live with family time, but I can’t live with lying. It tells me somebody’s heart is out of line with God. However, I also understand this, our church doesn’t meet that often. There is plenty of time to be with the family if you want to make the time. I think the best place that families can be is in church with God. However, when the kids get older, some parents don’t even bring them to youth group. What do we have on Tuesday night? Youth group. Then they wonder why their kids are having problems. The

children see that the parents don't have their priorities right, and so they go with the priorities that their parents have.

Is going to church a priority to you? If it is, then you will be setting an example for your children that it is a priority. Honoring God is the most important thing we can do. Doing things together in God. There is plenty of time for all the other stuff.

I told the guy, "Bro, I believe you need to be in church on Tuesday." I was just talking like a good, loving, God-kind of shepherd.

Consequences to Your Behavior

The Lord gave me a diet for people to keep them healthy in God: One worship service a week, one teaching service a week, and one opportunity for ministry a week. That will keep you healthy in God. When people miss Saturday service, I think, *Gosh, we're here on Sunday and Tuesday nights.* If you are working, are you wondering why you are tired or frustrated, why you are having a hard time? Maybe you aren't putting God first. God can make work easy, and He can give you plenty of it if you honor Him first.

People will do what they will do, but when the dike breaks and the flood comes in, just remember God will remember what is done for Him. He will be there to help you if you have honored Him. If you haven't honored Him, you'd better grab a log and hang on because you will be cast adrift.

People ask, "Does God really remember that stuff?" Yes, He really does. "*He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.*" Who is doing the refreshing? The Lord will do the refreshing. There are many ways that He does it.

People don't realize that there are consequences to their behavior. "*God is not mocked; whatever a man sows is what he will reap.*" (Galatians 6:7) If you sow to the spirit, you will reap blessing. If you sow to the flesh, you will reap cursing.

By the way, I don't know where that fellow is in God today. I don't even know if he is attending church. His wife left him, and His business went down. That was the last I heard. I haven't seen hide nor hair of him since.

Would that I could hogtie people, stick them in the trunk, and drive them across the finish line to be with God, but I can't do that. However, God wants everyone to be saved. He doesn't want anyone to perish but come to the knowledge of the truth. He doesn't want people sick, and in poverty, confusion, or depression in their minds. He doesn't like broken homes and families. It isn't God's will and heart. It happens because people listen to the thief rather than to God, and they don't look at the consequences of their choices.

“Today I set before you blessing or cursing, life or death; choose life.”
(Deuteronomy 30:19) Choose to do something of God that will bless you.

Read in Acts chapter 10 to see how the Lord remembers: *“There was a man named Cornelius, a centurion, in what was known as the Italian regiment. He and all his family were devout and God fearing, and he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God who came to him and said, ‘Cornelius’ [called him by name]. Cornelius stared at him in fear. ‘What is it, Lord?’ he asked. The angel answered, ‘Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. [A remembrance] Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter’.”* Cornelius, his household, and all his friends got saved when Peter came and talked to them about the good news of Jesus and the life that God had for them.

God remembers what is done for Him. Understand, Cornelius didn't even know who the Lord really was because he wasn't saved yet. He wasn't born again, but he was serving the God that he knew. God said, “Okay, you're seeking me, and you will find me. I will reveal myself” because the man was seeking to do what was right, moral, good, and of God. God remembered that. That ought to blow out many people's theology, doctrine, or religious thinking. Let me tell you, I don't care what religion people are seeking, as long as they are seeking God. They will find God, and they will end up coming to Him. He will make sure that they know Him and who He really is. *“No man comes to the Father but by Me,”* Jesus said.

God puts a spiritual draw on people. Many times they start going towards what they know and what is around them, but if it is off the track, God will get them on the track. He will remember.

I love it that the thief on the cross told the other thief to shut his mouth because Jesus has done nothing wrong. “We’re up here because we deserve it, but this man is innocent.” Then he said to Jesus, “*Remember me, Lord, when you enter into your kingdom.*” Jesus remembered, for He said, “*Today you will be with me in paradise.*”

There isn’t any good done that God doesn’t remember. He will bless and reward it. Those who walk around depressed in a life that is meaningless and negative will lose the blessing. The thief came to steal, kill, and destroy. (John 10:10) Jesus said, “*I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly,*” and that is what God wants for you.

Lifting Oppression

Oppression is the opponent pressing, pressuring, and trying to beat us down, push us down, and keep us from what God has. Jesus said, “*I’ve come to destroy the work of the devil.*” “*I’ve come to set the captives free.*” “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.* (The anointing of God was upon Him to release the captives and set the oppressed free.)

The anointing is what breaks the yoke and the burden; it is what lifts the oppression and sets the captives free. “*How Jesus came to do good and to destroy the work of the devil, for God was with Him.*” (Acts 10:38) He set free those who were oppressed by the thief.

Prayer:

Father, we thank you for the ministry of the Holy Spirit that helps us to be free of oppression and to set others free as well in Jesus’ name. Bless the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, Lord, and the anointing that you have placed in my life. Let me be able to communicate it clearly and properly that others might be able to do what I do as I do what you do. “To them who believe the works that I do,” Jesus says, “You will do, and even greater works than these you will do because I go to the Father,” and “Whatever you ask in My name, I will do to the glory of the Father.”

The anointing that is on us is the glory of God, and the presence of God is where the anointing is. Christ isn’t Jesus’ last name. It means the Anointed One, the Messiah, the deliverer of God who has come to save His people from their sins. He has come to lift the oppression off the people and set the captives free, to break the shackles and chains in order that we be free to come into what God has.

When my family and I first came out to the desert, I was ministering in a little house one night a week. The house held about 30 people, and there would usually be that many there every week. We never announced the meetings. It was just “word of mouth.” As I was praying over a lady, I saw her sitting on a bench in a prison cell. I had already spoken the name of Jesus over her, and then I saw the cell. In the prison cell she was looking at the walls, she was looking at the ceiling, she was looking at the floor, but she wasn’t looking at the door. The Lord showed me that He took the door completely off. He didn’t just open it. I saw the door flying and flipping down the hallway. I was watching this, but nobody else had a clue about what was going on. When I looked at the lady, I don’t see any liberty (in the physical realm I didn’t see any freedom). In the vision I saw her still sitting there moping, feeling depressed, lonely, empty, with no hope and no future, no joy, no life, no spark. She was feeling sorry for herself, looking at the floor.

Have you ever noticed that when you are depressed, your head drops down and you have no hope. The Lord says, “*Lift up your eyes to the hills from whence cometh your help. Your help cometh from the Lord.*” Raise your head high and bask in the glory of the Lord upon you.

God was trying to do all this but that lady kept looking at the floor, looking at the walls, looking at the ceiling, not looking to God, just looking at the circumstance. She was boxed in. When people are oppressed, they are boxed in. The Lord says, “I will put you in a spacious place.” That means you will have liberty. You are out of that box. You are free to romp and joyfully praise God and do whatever He wants you to do.

I said, “Ma’am, look at the door.” All these people questioned why I said to look at the door. They weren’t in what I was in with her (They were, but they weren’t). I told this lady a couple times “Look at the door” with fervency. Usually I’m a soft spoken person, but if you ever see me change, it is for a reason. I got emphatic with her, “Ma’am, look at the door!” It was a command. (Thou shalt look at the door.) The next thing I knew, her eyes lit up. (Before they had been dull and heavy). Her countenance changed like the lights went on. She lit up like a Christmas bulb and let out a squeal. Boom, she went down on the floor under the power of God. A great joy and laughter began bubbling up, and she exclaimed, “I’m free, I’m free!”

You see, when she looked at the door, she saw that it was open. The Lord says, “*Behold, I set an open door before you that nobody can shut.*” It is the door of freedom. And she received it. She went out, and she was free. Oppression broke off of her like the morning sun coming up, and the joy of the Lord came upon her. She was giggling and laughing, and everybody was watching to see what was going on. This incident is described in my *Dominion* booklet.

God has given us liberty and freedom in Jesus, but we have to get off the bench, and we have to walk out of the cell. There isn't anybody on the face of the earth who hasn't been in that cell. You are born in it, which is why Jesus said, “*You must be born again*” of the Spirit of the Lord in liberty and freedom. Jesus said, “*Behold, I give to you authority over serpents and scorpions, over all the power of the devil and nothing shall in any ways harm you.*” That means no more oppression for us or for anybody else around us. You have the power in Jesus' name to set the captives free. (Luke 4:18, 19) It comes with the Holy Spirit of God.

The lady enjoyed that night and went on to enjoy her life. (We are setting the captives free and lifting the yoke of oppression.) Jesus came to bring freedom from the yoke of oppression and bondage. He says, “*Yoke up with Me.*” It isn't hard to serve God if He is in charge. You can't be a Christian on your own, but with Jesus it is easy.

Types of Oppression

When we are helping people to get free from oppression, we need to understand that oppression comes in many ways. There is spiritual oppression which is demonic, there is mental oppression which comes as a result of circumstances around us, and there are family curses that are passed down. For example, grandpa was depressed, dad was depressed, you are depressed, and, God forbid, you son is depressed. There are whole families who are under oppression. There are cities, nations and a whole world that are under oppression until the good news of Jesus and the light of God comes into the darkness to break it.

Wherever there is the law of life and liberty, you see iron curtains fall, walls of Berlin fall, and things that have divided people fall. Wherever the Spirit of God is working in revival, the oppression lifts off of people. The sick get healthy. The broke get wealthy. The dumb and ignorant get smart and wise. There are no more lies because the truth of the Spirit of the living God

begins to be poured out on the earth. As God is doing that, there is no song of dearth; there is a song of joy. Life and blessing spring forth and the desert becomes an oasis. The Living Water of God flows out, and you can see clearly. The oppression lifts and the power of God comes in to transform and change.

Poverty and sickness (which causes the oppression) disappear when you financially honor God with tithes and offerings and give rather than hoard, self-seek, and abuse people. The liberty of giving happens, the oppression of poverty is removed, and you start doing things God's way. You are never free of poverty until you become a giver and put your trust in God.

Oppression in relationships happens when you are serving self. It is a lie of the thief that you have to take care of yourself. Whenever somebody has that kind of thinking, they are under oppression.

We have to identify what the oppression is in a person's life and why it is happening.

Many times it is obvious there is oppression in the form of disease. Then there is the oppression of family and relationships through strife. Something is trying to steal, kill, and destroy. In that case, it is obvious that there is oppression in the house.

Some people don't have peace in their minds. They're agitated or driven, and they can't sit still. When they are never content, or they think nothing is ever good enough, there is oppression. If they are in fear, terror, panic, condemnation or unworthiness, there is an oppression trying to push them down.

The devil uses many ways to work his work: the flesh, the world, demonic activity, and circumstances. You can listen to the news and oppression will suddenly come on you. You were happy until you listened to a negative report.

One time I was worshipping and thanking God. He blessed me with a house back in the 70's, and I was really happy in my little home that day. All of a sudden I heard a voice say to me, "You know, there are a lot of suffering, hurting people in the world who don't have as much as you have." Then I

wasn't happy anymore. I started thinking about that. Was God speaking? (I have since learned a few things about the voice of the Holy Spirit.)

I was thanking God for what He had provided for me when the thought came that there are many people out there who don't have anything. They are starving, they are hungry, they are hurting, they are in pain, they don't even have a home. Because of that, I became oppressed (pressed down). The joy left me. The thankfulness left me. I thought, *Oh, God, all those people out there have so much going on.* The Spirit of the Lord spoke to me. (You have to learn which voice is which.) He said, "Son, you have what you have because of My blessing upon your life. I have blessed you with every good thing, and you should be thankful and rejoicing about it. You should tell people about my provision because you have done what I have said and that is why I blessed you."

The curse mentioned in Deuteronomy 28 is upon people who don't do what God says. That is why they don't have anything, that is why they are torn up with all kinds of problems. They have sin in their lives, which means they are disobedient to God and separated from Him.

Other times there is an attack. "*Who sinned? – this man or his parents that he was born crippled?*" Jesus answered, "*Neither, but that the glory of God might come. I must work the works of God.*" God will turn what was intended for evil around to good. But you have to understand what is causing the oppression. Is it something in your life?

In my case it was an attack. I had been praising God, everything was going fine, and then the thought came. Right away I wondered, *Okay, how can we help the poor? What can we do?* It is a good idea, but it wasn't the time.

One can move a thousand and two can move ten thousand to break the yoke of oppression and bondage. However, oppression has to lift before anybody can get to that point.

David is the classic example of how a man dealt with oppression in the form of depression (Psalm 42). Our opponent presses down, never up. Only God can lift you up, higher and higher. The devil wants you to be worldly or earthly minded; he wants you earthbound. He doesn't want you experiencing the glory of God which God has caused to be yours in Jesus Christ.

“Since you then be risen with Christ set your mind (affections) on the things above, not on the things beneath.” (Colossians 3:1-2)

God Sees Our Suffering

When people are oppressed, they are not thinking about God or heavenly things. Maybe they are blaming God, or they are ignorant of Him, like Job who said, *“Though you kill me, I will yet praise you.”* God took away Job’s oppression in chapter 42 when Job acknowledged that God was a good God who didn’t cause his oppression or suffering. This is very important to understand because a major teaching in some denominational churches today is that God causes the suffering you are going through.

Let me tell you, if that is God, I don’t want anything to do with Him. Jesus said a simple verse that clarifies every thing. *“The thief has come to steal, to kill, and to destroy (to oppress, to maim, to confuse, to separate people from God), but I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)* In a nutshell that tells me who God is and what Jesus was all about when He came to set the captives free.

The cross is about liberty and oneness with God. The veil that separated God and man was torn in two from the top down, which means God stood up there and ripped it apart. Enter into the holy of holies with God because of the blood of Jesus with full confident assurance of faith. (Hebrews 10) That is what He has provided.

When the opponent is pressing us down, depression comes with it. A mild depression descended upon me that day after I was thanking God, and then the negative thought came. The Lord countered with, *“They don’t have as much as you because they don’t do what I say. You do what I say and that is why I blessed you.”* This is scriptural. (Always test the spirits.) God knows our heart to help people get out of the mess they are in, but they have to understand why they are in the mess. Many times it is what they are doing and what they are believing that has caused them to be there.

Remember the lady who sat in the cell looking at the floor, the walls, the ceiling, and refused to look to the door? The Lord says, *“Look unto Me.”* He says, *“Fix your eyes upon Me.”* He says, *“Call unto Me and I will answer you and help you.”* Many people aren’t calling upon God. During disasters on the earth, some are calling on God, but the majority aren’t.

They believe in false gods that are deaf, dumb and stupid. Elijah asked the people who worshipped idols, *“Is your god so deaf that he can’t hear you? He can’t see how you are suffering?”* (1st Kings 18:27-29)

The God I love and serve sees our suffering. He sees the things we are going through. Jesus came to set us free from those things and to give us authority, power, and dominion over them. We have to help people to understand what is going on and to realize what David did in Psalm 42.

Saul hunted David down, trying to kill him because he was jealous of the anointing of God on David’s life. People don’t realize this situation continued for years, not just a few days. David had to live in caves and run every day, looking over his shoulder because Saul was trying to kill him. It got to him one day, and he started thinking about his sorry state. He had been in the palace with every good thing, but then he was out on the run, a fugitive, considered an evil man, and being hunted like an animal. He started to get depressed, letting that oppression push him down. We don’t have to let that happen to us. David caught himself and said, *“Why are thou cast down, O my soul?”* In other words, why am I depressed? *“I will hope in God, for I will yet praise Him.”*

Put Your Hope, Faith, and Love in God

When oppression comes, it goes after people’s hope, faith, and love – the three things of God that remain. The enemy goes after the hope in God, the faith in God, and the love for God. He tries to take it away and then separate us from the Lord who is our refuge, our strength, our very present help in time of trouble. David said, *“I will hope in God, and I will praise Him.”* So he started praising God. What happens to oppression when you praise the Lord?

Help people to see that God is still there, and He still reigns on the throne. He hasn’t been dethroned, nor can He ever be dethroned. He is high and lifted up, and He lifts us up in Him. He takes us out of the miry clay, out of the pit. Being in the miry clay means you’re stuck, and when the clay hardens, it’s like concrete (weights). People under oppression don’t have any joy. They don’t have any peace. They don’t have any love. They don’t have a life the way God intends it. They exist and go through the motions every day, not knowing what tomorrow holds. We need to help people to see the plans that God has for them are for good, not for evil. Plans to give hope and a future. Plans to prosper.

People who are under oppression don't think about prosperity. They think negatively. We need to help them to lift up their eyes to the hills from whence cometh their help. God still reigns. He still rules. He is still on the throne. He is here, and He will help them. He is willing and able. After we help people to see the power of God, then they need to thank God. Let's praise Him. Let's worship Him. Let's put our hope in Him, our faith in Him, our love for Him. Let it rise up again in Jesus' name.

As people do that, the oppression on their lives will lift because they are not looking at themselves or their situations any longer. They are not listening to the devil who says, "God is not with you, He has abandoned you. You're all alone." We help people to know that the Lord says, "*I'll never leave you, I'll never forsake you; therefore, you can boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper'.*"

I am not in this life by myself. Look at the door. Jesus says, "I am the door. I am the way, the truth, and the life. Look to Me." When people do that, then the liberty of God begins. They behold Him in glory, and they see that they don't need to be oppressed anymore. They shake it off in Jesus' name and submit to God. When they ask the Lord to forgive them and help them, oppression cannot stay. Whatever is not of God has to leave. As people continue to thank and praise God, the glory of God comes down from without and rises up from within.

If they don't know Jesus is Lord and Savior, we need to lead them to the Lord. We need to tell them that Jesus has an abundant life for them. They need to invite Him into their hearts to be their Lord and Savior. They need to put away their selfish ways and start to do things God's way. They need to open the word of God, and God will help them to understand it.

Lord, help me to understand the word of God so I can have life and have it abundantly, as Jesus comes in.

Then we want to get people filled with the Holy Ghost, where they receive the power of God. Jesus brings life, and the Holy Spirit brings the power of God to help others get free. "*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and He went around doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil for God was with him.*" (Acts 10:38)

Submit to God

Everyone who came to Jesus (and believed) received deliverance from oppression. There were many who didn't receive freedom because they didn't believe and they didn't come to Jesus for it. People have a choice. Today the Lord says, *"I set before you blessing and cursing, life and death; choose life."*

I don't know anybody under oppression who really likes his life. In fact, many people would rather end their lives when they're under oppression. They want to leave their marriage. They want to leave the children. They want to leave this world. They want to run to Tahiti, thinking that a change of environment will make things better. You can run, but you can't hide. Running will not make things better. There is an issue to be dealt with, which is a thief wanting to steal, kill, and destroy. He wants to ruin your life, but Jesus says He wants to save your life. We need to make the Lord number one. We need to receive His provision and receive Him for life. Then we do what He says.

Many people come to Jesus, but they still want to live their lives the way they want to. They live a life of oppression, though. How many people sitting in church call themselves Christians but do not have abundant life and living? They are still under oppression spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, or in relationships.

When I say Jesus is my Lord, that means that I'm going to step down and do things the way God says to do them in His word. How did Jesus overcome? How do we overcome? He overcame with the word of God. We overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony. The word of our testimony is that Jesus Christ is my Lord. That means every devil has to bow to the name of Jesus. Everything in heaven and earth and under the earth has to bow to the name of Jesus. No oppression can have any power or place over me anymore, as I am in the name of Jesus, hid with Christ in God. A thousand will fall at my left and ten thousand at my right, but it won't come near me when I'm doing what God says.

If you are doing what God says but are still oppressed, submit to God and then tell it to get out in Jesus' name. *"Put on the whole armor of God, and having done all to stand, stand and overcome in the name of the Lord."* (Ephesians 6)

Paul prayed three times that the messenger of Satan which was sent to buffet him would leave him, but Jesus didn't say, "I'll take it away." He said, "*My grace is sufficient for you. For in your weakness my strength is perfected.*" In other words, grace is the divine favor and ability of God which is yours in Jesus Christ. The power of heaven is ours in Jesus Christ. God says in Luke 10:19 "*Behold I give to you authority over serpents and scorpions, over all the power of the devil and nothing shall in any ways harm you.*" That means power over oppression, stealing, killing, or destroying.

God Is Greater

As you help people, they can start to rise up in the Spirit of God and realize "I'm hid with Christ in God." "*Under the shadow of the Almighty*" (Psalm 91), which means when the devil looks at them he doesn't see them, he sees God, He sees the Almighty One. Realize that the oppression isn't over us, the Glory of God is over us. "*His banner over me is love.*"

I tell people if they would just slick down with the oil of the Holy Ghost, no devil could touch them. It would just slide right off. How can a devil grab hold of you to bring you down and hurt you if he can't hold on to you?

The shepherds put oil on the sheep to keep the bugs off. They oil them down and the bugs can't deal with that.

When people are depressed, the furthest thing from their heart and mind is gladness and joy. However, if they start to praise God, laugh and rejoice in the Lord, then that oppression can't stay. It isn't just frivolous laughter, joking, and jesting. It is the joy of the Lord that is our strength. (Nehemiah 8:10) I praise a risen God, and I laugh because there is nothing the devil can throw at me. There is nothing else out there in the world that can come at me that God isn't greater. "*Count it all joy when various trials and temptations and pressures from the opponent come upon you because God reigns. He rules. He is developing patience in you that you might become mature in God. Through faith and patience you will inherit all the promises of God if you don't faint and give up.*" (James 1)

Oppression is intended to make you weak, helpless, faint. You give up because you just don't know how you will make it with a giant in the land. God laughs and asks, "What giant?" "Can't you see it, God? There's a problem. Why can't you see it? It's so big."

He looks at it and laughs, “What mountain? What problem? Is there anything too hard for Me? Is there anything that I can’t handle? Is there anything so big that I can’t deal with it?”

Help people to fall on their faces and ask God’s forgiveness for their unbelief. The only way I can be oppressed, and the devil knows it, is if I stop believing in God. That is why he goes after your hope, your faith in God, and your love for God. But you have to help people. Romans 8 says nothing can separate us from the love of God that is ours in Christ Jesus. Neither height, depth, breadth, width, angels, devils, storms, hurricanes, pestilence, famine, or poverty. *“If God be for you who can be against you?”*

No matter what accusation comes against you, God has died for you. Jesus, God come in the flesh, came to save you. God can’t stay in the flesh. He is risen.

There was a time back in the sixties when people said, “God is dead.” That was the big thing. Let me tell you, I am here today to proclaim that He is alive and risen, and He reigns forevermore. Not only that, He is not finished. He is coming back to save us, to put an end to all the nonsense in the earth, and to establish a new kingdom where there will be no more pain, sorrow, suffering, sickness, or death. No broke, confused, fearful, worried, or anxious people.

Who Will You Serve?

Get rid of double mindedness. Either we serve God or we serve the devil. If you serve the devil, you are going to hell. If you go with God, you are going for life forevermore. Which one do you want?

Help people to see that they can’t serve God and serve themselves. They can’t serve God and serve the devil. They have got to make up their minds. Part of the oppression on the earth is that people can’t make up their minds who they’re going to serve. I am talking about church people. *“I forget the things behind,”* Paul said, *“and I press ahead to the mark of the high calling of God that’s mine in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 3) Get people moving in God’s direction. We have to help, and while we are doing all of this we pray in the Holy Ghost and we believe that they will be able to do this. We have to get those blinders off of people’s minds. It says in 2nd Corinthians 4:3 *“If our gospel be hid [not understood], it is hid to them who are lost: in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, the*

light of the glorious gospel of Christ... should shine unto them,” and have the oppression lift.

If we are going to help people, we have to come against what is blinding their minds from receiving the good news of God. Yes, there is hope. Yes, there is a reason to have faith in God. Yes, there is love in the earth. Yes, we are not alone anymore. We are not forsaken. God is our helper. We get the thief off of them by simply saying, “In the name of Jesus, get off their minds,” which is where the oppression is. We have authority over it. We can help people, but then they have to choose what they will do. It is very simple to me. I just ask, “Do you like being sick? Do you like being broke? Do you like having your family and relationships messed up? Does it thrill you to be tormented in your mind?” Maybe 80 percent of America is on drugs (pharmacia) of some sort because they can’t sleep. Do you like having that? If you don’t like it, then God has something for you. He wants to change things. He would love to do it for you.” *“Call unto me and I will answer and help you,”* the Lord says. “Call and I will help you. I’ll show you things you know not of. I will show you how to get out of the oppression.”

Until the Spirit of God in me told the lady in the cell, “Look at the door,” she wasn’t looking. People in oppression aren’t looking where they can get help. They are not thinking they can get help, but if they are, they are running around going to everybody they know. Let me tell you, they can’t get help because only the Lord can help us. He is the only who can break the oppression of the thief and give new life.

If they would simply say, “Jesus, help me. Come into my life.” He would, and He would start a whole new working.

Ministry Examples

Many people sit in church for years, but they don’t do what God says and they don’t take authority over the thief. Therefore, they stay in oppression. Other people aren’t the problem. You are not the problem. In your weakness, God’s strength will rise up mightily. For His grace is sufficient for you and for everybody.

I remember when God taught me about many of these principles for ministry. I had just received a call from a fellow who said his wife was

dying of cancer. They had only given her a couple days to live, and she was at home in bed. Somehow the man had heard about what God does through us so he called. (As I was talking to him on the phone, I had a minivision. I saw the fellow and me sitting on a couch, and he was asking me what it meant to be born again.) He wanted us to come over. This was back in the 70's when the Lord was teaching me much about healing and the power in the Spirit.

I haven't been sick more than a couple of times in the last 30 years since I learned these principles of God that we are talking about. The times when something did come upon me, I can tell you why. I was burning both ends of the candle, working night and day and just exhausting myself.

I talked to the man about his wife, but in the vision I had only seen him asking me what it meant to be born again, being filled with the Holy Ghost, and getting water baptized. I hung up the phone and got another fellow to go over to the house with me that night. The man asked me to go in and see his wife, and she was waiting for us back in her bedroom. The man came in with us, and we prayed over her, but it was like praying over a rock. Nothing was being received, but we prayed anyway. We believed anyway. The anointing went out, but it came back to me, and I asked her as an act of faith, "Ma'am, would you just get up out of bed and wash your face or do something, some little act of faith?" She said, "No, I can't do it. I'm too sick." I encouraged her that the Lord was with her and went into the other room with her husband.

I was thinking about leaving, but he said, "Sir, would you mind just sitting a moment and talking with me?" I said, "Oh, sure, I'd be happy to." So we sat down on the couch and he looked right at me and asked, "What does it mean to be born again?" I said, "That's a great question." (That question is a witness' dream. I love it when somebody asks me.) I asked him where he got that question, and he said his neighbor had been talking to him about being born again. I explained about how all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There is no one that does good in God's sight, and all are perishing, but God in His great love came for us in Jesus to save us, give us a new life, and remove the separation that was between us. It is a gift of God. We need to ask God's forgiveness for our self-life, receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior and invite Him into our heart. I said, "All you need to do, sir, is say, 'Lord, remove what separates me from you. I receive Jesus as my Lord and my Savior' and say that with your mouth." "*Confession is*

made to salvation.” Sitting there, he received Jesus as his Lord and Savior that night.

The life of God came into him, and we water baptized him. It isn't the amount of water, but it is the presence of faith that makes a valid baptism. He got baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost, speaking in new tongues.

After I went home, a sickness came on me a day or so later. I got so sick; it was oppression. The thief said to me, “Physician, you've healed others. Why can't you heal yourself?” At that moment, the power of God came into me, and I became strong. In our weakness, God's strength and grace will come and make us whole. I rose up in Jesus' name, and we dealt with the situation in the power of God.

Afterwards, I found out the lady had died. The thief tried to tell me my faith was not good and God didn't hear my prayers. At that time (30 years ago) I was getting serious about praying and believing God, and I realized that when the oppression comes, it doesn't just come in one form. There was a mental, spiritual, and physical attack coming against me. I got out of bed, and I prayed. (You do what you know to do.) “*Having done all to stand, stand,*” because we will overcome. You may have to stand a while. I was doing the best I could, but when I heard that voice, “Physician, you've healed others; why can't you heal yourself?” I exclaimed, “Enough is enough!” He just pushed the oppression too far.

When you are helping people with oppression, you want to see them get so oppressed that they get tired of it and they look for a change. They look for some help. Let them get to the bottom of the bottom of the bottom because then they will look to God. They will look for some help. They have tried everything and done everything. They couldn't get any help, but they are going to get some help.

The devil will push it too far. He will go for the jugular vein. He wants to steal and kill, and then he wants to destroy. He was trying to kill and destroy my faith. There would be thousands of people missing out if I had dropped my faith right there.

The Spirit of God rose up inside of me. (The Physician who actually does all the healing.) It isn't me, I know that. Praise God. The One who casts out the devils. The Mighty One, El Shaddai, the Almighty rose up and

spoke to me, “Son, get all the facts. Get all the facts about what happened with this woman – why she died.” Was my faith good or not good? Was my prayer good or not good? Did I do what God said, or did I not do what God said? Remember what God showed me when the man called? He didn’t show me anything about healing the lady. I just saw the man asking me what it meant to be born again. I saw him getting water baptized, filled with the Holy Ghost, and speaking in new tongues. I didn’t see anything about the lady even though that is what the husband called about. God showed me what He was going to do.

I went down the hill and I found out some facts. (You have to go back down the hill. Spend time with God, and then get back into it.) I went over to the gentleman’s house and knocked on the door. He was so happy to see me. He invited me in and we sat down, “Pastor, my wife went to the Lord, and I want to tell you what happened. The day after you left my wife called in the family. She had me contact all of them, and they all came together. She told them that she was going to die and that she was going to be with the Lord and she wanted to love each of them before she went.” “*Be it done to you according to your faith.*” That was what was in her heart.

I had gotten the facts: her husband wanted her to live, but she wanted to go. His faith wasn’t going to override hers, and my faith wasn’t going to override hers. Now there was such a peace in the place. He wasn’t tormented; he was comforted. He knew his wife got what she wanted, and he got what he wanted. He was born again.

Needless to say, there was no more oppression on me. I wasn’t sick anymore. I was back to normal because the attack was intended to steal, kill, and destroy my faith. When you are dealing with oppression in people’s lives, realize that they are seeing, but they are not seeing. Help them get all the facts. Many times it isn’t as bad as it’s being made out to be. Other times it is as bad as it’s made out to be. Who is greater? God can turn what was intended for evil around for good to His glory and our good. In any case, God wants us to have peace and joy, hope, faith, and love.

Free from Oppression

If you are free from oppression, then you can help others a little better. Every day of your life you are going to have to operate in this.

A guy came to me one time. “Pastor, what can I do to get rid of the devil?” In other words, he wanted to break the bondage and all the evil tactics of the devil. I said, “We can pray that you die.” (By the way, the prayer of release has been known to happen in seven to ten days. We release people to God, and they go.) He answered, “That isn’t what I would like, Pastor.”

I said, “Then you will have to learn how to take authority over the devil. You will have to learn how to take dominion in the name of Jesus over that oppression. He said, “Okay, how do I do that? I want to learn how.”

You have learned some things about how to do that in this chapter.

This I know, it is an every day thing. As long as you have life and breath, you will praise the Lord and you will have the shield of faith in one hand and the sword of the Spirit in the other. The shield of faith says, “I believe God.” So you have to hold up the shield of faith to quench the fiery darts of the devil.

The Lord ministered to me about the armor of God. I was being oppressed at the time, and I didn’t know what was happening. I asked, “Holy Spirit, show me what is going on because I don’t understand what this oppression is.” There was a heaviness on me, and there was no reason for it that I was aware of.

Then I had a dream, and in the dream I was running. I saw myself running fast, away from something. I was scared, for I had fear in me. In the dream there were little two-foot tall creatures with big teeth. They had little knives, but there must have been a million of them. They came in a wave like the ground was moving. I was running as fast as I could when suddenly I turned 180 degrees so that I was facing these opponents. As I stood there, a huge shield, eight or nine feet high, flashed up. It consisted of water. (The next day the Lord gave me understanding about this through Ephesians 6:16... *“The shield of faith which is able to quench the fiery darts of the devil.”*)

The shield of faith flashed up and in my other hand appeared a huge sword. There I stood ready for action. These little creatures were running just as fast as they could until they looked at me. They skidded to a stop. I just stood there. *“Having done all to stand, stand.”* I was ready with the big shield of faith and the flashing sword. (It was like a glory sword, with lightning coming out of it, the sword of the Spirit.) The next thing I knew,

they turned and ran away. Then I ran after them. (That is liberty in Jesus' name.)

God told me to teach His people to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. "*And having done all to stand,*" put on the armor of God and stand.

The shield of faith will stop oppression, for the shield is not just a defensive weapon. It is offensive. You use it to butt oppression.

In the old days when the Romans and the Spartans were in battle, their shields would go up and the enemy couldn't see them anymore. All they saw were the shields. They could fire all the arrows they wanted, but they couldn't touch them because they were all standing together with their shields.

The sword of the Spirit is offensive, for it is the word of God. (Hebrews 4:12) It is a two edged sword; it cuts both ways.

In Matthew 4 when Jesus was tempted He said to the devil, "...It is written..." God says, "It is written." In other words, I don't care what I see, I don't care what I feel, I don't care what is going on around me, God reigns.

- *"The just shall live by faith."*
- *"Nothing shall separate me from the love of God which is mine in Christ Jesus."*
- *"I'm more than a conqueror through Christ Jesus who loves me."*

This is no time for the weak or the faint of heart. The victory is already won. We are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus. All we are doing is occupying until He returns.

Faith in God

When we worship and praise the Lord, when we give him thanks, what happens? Jehoshaphat and the nation were facing an enemy far greater than they, and they did not have a chance. They cried out to the Lord because oppression came when they saw what was happening. "*Be not afraid of the sudden fear... for the Lord shall be your confidence.*" (Proverbs 3:25, 26)

They called out to the Lord, and the Lord told them, *“The battle isn’t yours; it belongs to Me.”* He said, *“Send the singers and the praisers out ahead of the army.”* They sang and praised God, blowing horns and beating drums, and having a good old time. That is, they were “rejoicing in the Lord.” Then God routed the enemy. How ever long it takes.

“Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you might be able to stand in the evil day.” There are evil days. Sometimes there are evil months, sometimes there are evil years, but understand this: the Lord is for us, He is not against us, and He is going to turn everything around. We will see His glory. *“I know the plans that I have for you.”*

I don’t know what my future holds, but I know it will be wonderful because God says so. I don’t know what the next day holds, I don’t even know what the rest of this day holds, but God does. He has already been ahead of me in it. He goes ahead of us (Joshua 1:5) to prepare the way. Don’t be afraid, don’t get discouraged, don’t quit. Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God. Put up the shields. Then butt with the shield and slice with the sword (the word of God).

The thief doesn’t like the shield of faith going up, but it isn’t bothering him yet. It is when you butt with the shield that you are pushing him back with it. Baam, and he is set back. He was on the offensive with oppression – trying to set you back and get you to fall down. He was trying to batter you and beat you up, which is what oppression is intended to do.

The thief might hit me once, but he isn’t going to hit me twice. He might take a shot of me and get something, but let me tell you, he isn’t backing over me. We will get up in Jesus’ name. We will dust off and put up the shield of faith. We will get on the offensive in Jesus’ name, and then we will use the word of God to come through. *“And having done all to stand, stand in the name of the Lord.”*

How do we overcome? We overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony, “Jesus is my Lord, and the Lord reigns.” He has helped me here and here and here, and He can certainly do it again. *“For I know whom I have believed.” He is able [and willing] to keep that which I have committed to Him.”* It is time that we get aggressive.

- *“The kingdom of heaven is forcefully advancing, and the forceful take hold of it.”*
- *“ ‘Not by might nor by power but by My Spirit,’ saith the Lord.”*

These are spiritual weapons, not fleshly weapons. We are not going out there with a shield, punching people and cutting them up with a sword. We are dealing with principalities and powers of darkness which motivate, influence, and oppress people. The devil is trying to use people to destroy the work of God.

I don't think you have ever seen a devil, but you have seen people who are being used by a devil. You have been used by the devil yourself in your unbelief, rebellion, independence, and selfishness. We belong to God, and should not be used of the devil. Catch yourself the next time you get into strife, bitterness, or anger.

- *“Let the weak say, ‘I am strong’,”* (Joel 3:10)
- *“For my grace is sufficient for you.”*
- *“In your weakness my strength is perfected.”*

At that cross, it looked like weakness, but let me tell you, the power of heaven came down the day Jesus died to save us all. The tombs opened up, and people who had been dead a long time came out. Lepers were healed and the glory of God came down. After His resurrection, nothing in hell could hold Him down.

Glory to God, that is what we are about, the Glory of God.

Once a lady with a 16 pound tumor in her womb came to us. The doctors were going to operate on it and get it out of there, but she came for prayer and wanted to believe for the Lord to do something with it. We prayed in the name of Jesus; “Whatever is not of God, get off, and whatever is of God come in.” We demanded, “Shrink down and dry up from the roots! You can't spread, you can't do anything else; you just have to go.”

The lady went in for the surgery, and when they got in there, they found what looked like a dried up plum, and it was in a cellophane-like wrapping. They snipped it, took it out, and threw it away. The beauty of it is that not only did God shrink a 16 pound tumor down to a little dried up plum, but He also bagged it. They simply had to cut it and throw it away.

When oppression comes, it comes spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, or in relationships. Many times it comes in multiples, combinations, and sometimes, if you're really blessed, you get them all. I say when you're getting it all, God must be doing something incredibly awesome (to His glory) in your life. What is intended for evil, God will turn around for good to His glory.

Always get the facts. There are reasons why things happen – cause and effect. Things don't just happen.

Not understanding who the Lord is and how He works, many people might think God makes you ill in order to get you to come to Him. No, it is the thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy. People ask, then why did God allow it? God allowed it because it was your choice. You have a free will. He is a Sovereign God, but you have a free will.

When the lady with the two dead optic nerves came to us, God showed her it was her unforgiveness and bitterness towards her friend during the lawsuit that opened the door to her blindness. One day she went to bed seeing, and she woke up the next day totally blind. After four years, God brought her to us, and she said, "I felt something evil leave me when your hand was on me." She asked for forgiveness for her unforgiveness and bitterness towards the other lady, and she forgave. Then God proceeded to heal her. He opened her eyes and she started to see. This has happened so many times I can't even count how God has done these things because He loves us and He doesn't want us out there away from Him. He wants us with Him.

Going to church is a sign that you want to fellowship with people (and you need to), but it is not the cure-all. There are many people sitting in churches who are oppressed, and some churches are oppressing. People are hearing the word of faith, but they are not hearing a word of hope and faith and love and life. How many times can you get saved? We need to grow up and experience the abundant life in God. We need to hear the word of faith. We need to hear the word of hope. We need to hear a word of repentance. We need God to show us our sin. We need to get rid of the weights and sins that so easily beset us that are keeping us back from the abundant life that God has. (Hebrews 12)

The Lord says if we are faithful to acknowledge our sin to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, just like the first day that we came to God and received Jesus as our Lord and Savior. God wants you to remember all the joy that you had and how happy and excited you were about life and living, and how He delivered you.

This is another day, another time. Every day we have to be faithful to the Lord. We have to stay in there with God.

Diana, my wife, says “a different level, a different devil.” She heard that someplace, but it is true.

The thief can't have your life; you belong to God. When the thief presses it too far, people cry out for help from the Lord. God will rush from the heavens to help us because He loves us, but He can't help us until we call out.

I always thank God when folks come back to Him and get back on the track.

If you have some oppression in your life today, the Lord has just touched it with His glory, and we will see it reversed in Jesus' name.

If you have something in your life to ask God's forgiveness for, do it.

We want to see the liberty continue.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
Faith, Hope & Love Overcome Oppression
Chapter 18

God is the Solution

The Lord loves thankfulness, and there is liberty and freedom in being thankful. I find it interesting that the world celebrates Thanksgiving but once a year. Every day we should celebrate that we have the life and breath to praise the Lord. There is liberty and freedom in thanksgiving.

Many people cry about their problems and even pray problems to God. The Lord taught me years ago that He is a solution God and is not interested in hearing about the problems. The truth is, people are not interested in your problems either because they are not the solution.

God wants us to believe Him and step up to receive Him. If you receive Him, He is the solution, He is the answer. *“I Am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the Lord that healeth thee. I am Jehovah Jireh, the Lord who supplies an offering, Jehovah Nissi, the Spirit of Praise. I am your praise. I Am the Bread of life, the Light of the world. I Am the answer. Whoever comes to Me,”* the Lord says, *“will never go away empty and will never be ashamed.”*

If you have been in a mode of constantly talking about your problems, then you have been listening to the devil or you have been spending time with the wrong people. Be around those who will get you to praise God and rejoice, and quit thinking and talking about yourself. Quit leaning to your own understanding because you don't have any. Go to a mighty God who has solutions and answers, and praise Him and thank Him. *“If any lack wisdom, let him ask God who doesn't hold back anything from us and doesn't find fault with us.”* God will give it, and He will help us.

“Since you then be risen with Christ, set your mind [heart, affection] on the things above, not on the things beneath.” What is beneath? The problems. They are beneath your feet, according to the bible.

This chapter is about how to help people overcome discouragement, deal with life and win. I don't know defeat, and you don't know defeat. You just thought you knew it, but if you really knew it, you would know that all problems are under defeat (“de feet”).

God intends for us to proclaim, “You’re dead: I dance on your head” to the flesh, the world, the devil, and all that pertains to that nonsense. We must refuse to be oppressed and depressed anymore in Jesus’ name.

Certainly you have problems. Jesus said, “*In the world you will have tribulation*” (You will have problems), but “*Fear not, I have overcome the world.*” The Lord says, “*Greater is He who is in you than they that are in the world.*” (1st John 4) You either believe it or you don’t. There comes a time where you need to ask God’s forgiveness for not believing it and start to believe. Confess it, speak it, thank Him for it, start to do something with it.

Here is a testimony letter we received from a television station:

I watched your program a couple of months ago. You were ministering to a woman with red hair. She shared that her father had anger and moved them from town to town. I grew up with a father that had anger and was always moving us around. He was rarely at home. Thank you for airing that program because it helped me to understand that I wasn’t the only one. I gave my heart to the Lord and He healed me. I am still struggling, but I’m not quitting. God bless you and your program.

Put Your Heart on God

When you are helping people to get over disappointment, oppression, and depression, you have to help them to understand they aren’t the only ones who have had it. They aren’t the first, and they won’t be the last. What is common to one is common to all in varying degrees. At times you think the whole world is caving in; other times you look and wonder “Why isn’t the world caving down on us?” People get oppressed when they expect wrong things.

It isn’t about your life; it isn’t about you. “*I lift up my eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord.*” We have got to help people to get their minds off of themselves and get them on to the Lord, for many disappointments happen because they have put their hearts on the wrong things. If we put our hearts on God, we won’t ever be disappointed. “*Have I not said it, will I not do it, have I not promised, and will I not fulfill?*” (Numbers 23:19)

He never says you will get any freedom through whining, crying, fussing, and bawling. Before the Reformation, people would whip themselves to get into submission to God. People do similar things today in many ways, or they look for others to do it for them. They don't want to do it for them so they blame them. "Nobody likes me, nobody wants me. Guess I'll go eat worms," and they get upset. That is no life.

It doesn't take much to show a person they have no life. In most cases they already know it and they are oppressed and disappointed, discouraged, hopeless, and helpless. We serve a God who is not hopeless and helpless. He is here to give faith, hope, and love to the hopeless and to help the discouraged, the oppressed, and the depressed to overcome and get out of it, to talk about faith in God, hope in God and love for God. God first had faith in Himself for us, hope in Himself for us, and love in Himself for us. God so loved the world that He gave Himself. He gave faith, hope, and love that we might be saved and have a reason to rejoice. People who are oppressed don't have any faith, hope, or love. They ran out, or they never had it to begin with.

We need to help them to get faith. "*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" That is the only way that faith comes to people, so we have to share the word of God with them and help them to see that God is for them, not against them. "*Who is like unto Me?*" the Lord says. "*There isn't anything I can't do.*" We have to help people get beyond themselves when what they are doing isn't working. Their efforts toward getting others to get involved hasn't worked. All the king's men and horses couldn't put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

What do people think they can do apart from God? Jesus says you can do nothing. You can never get disappointed, depressed, or discouraged if you know that you can do nothing on your own. Maybe you thought you had to do it, or you didn't think you had to do anything, and everybody else would do it for you. Because you are oppressed, disappointed, and upset, you need to get delivered.

The Problem is Self

People can get overwhelmed in themselves, and the thief just keeps bringing it on. He keeps pouring on disappointment, depression, oppression, and discouragement. Folks rehearse their problems, and most of the time they don't even know what the problem is because the problem is "self."

People who don't think they are the problem, that it is somebody else, set themselves up to be disappointed. In every case they are wanting or desiring something that God doesn't have for them, or they are looking to themselves to accomplish something that God has for them. They do like Abraham and Sarah. God told them, "Yes, you are going to have a promised child; it's coming." God had been talking about it for years, but they got impatient and tried to make it happen in their own strength. Sarah had the bright idea to take Hagar, her handmaid, and let her have relations with Abraham. They would get a son out of it just like God promised.

The problem is that man tries to do things that God wants to do, but he does it in his own way. This is disobedience. We have to rise up. There is a lethargy that comes on people at one point and they say, "I'm just going to give up. I'll crawl under a rock and die." There is no hope, no faith, and no love. Have you noticed that people in that position are nasty towards everybody around them? They are a pain. Because they have pain, they are going to share the pain. There is no love, no faith, and no hope coming out of them.

That filthy devil you have been listening to has to leave in Jesus' name, but it won't leave until you want it to leave and until you see that you have a problem. However, believing you have a problem enables that problem to stay. Not looking to God, just looking at the problem, causes it to stay, for it is there in front of you every day. "*God is working in us enabling us to will and do His good pleasure.*" (Philippians 2:13)

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God in you, enabling you to will and do His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:12) If you are going to help people, you have to help them to see that there is absolutely no help for them until they turn their lives over to God. Many Christians think they have turned their lives over to God, but they are still living their own way, trying to be a Christian in their own strength, rather than believing God and doing it His way.

Christians should not bring lawsuits against other Christians. See it in the word of God. Why do people do it? Money or self. They want what they want, but they won't ask God for it. Man's ways are not God's ways. Can we expect anything good to come out of it? No, except we will be disappointed, oppressed, depressed, discouraged and upset.

Is that the abundant life Jesus said He would bring? Absolutely not. Help people get faith in God, hope in God, and love of God back into the picture. *“Faith, hope, and love; these three remain.”* With those three comes the peace of God. It is the cure to what ails people. People who have been disappointed, discouraged, and depressed get obsessed. The devil wants them obsessed so that all they think about is themselves and their problem, not a solution. Confusion comes in, and with confusion, every evil work. Then it contributes more to the hopelessness, the helplessness, and the anxiety. It can attack in the physical realm and start to break down the functioning of the body. Consequently, people are not only oppressed in their minds but in their bodies. The result is they can’t go out and work, don’t feel like going out with people, don’t want to be around them, and, quite frankly, at that point they don’t like anybody.

“Lord, Help Me”

We have to help them to get out of that. David asked himself why he was so upset and oppressed. *“Why am I cast down, O my soul?”* The soul is the realm of the mind (the intellect, emotions, and the will of the person), which is where the devil tries to confuse and blind people so they can’t see to get out and get help. When we are helping people, we have to bind the thief off their minds. Get it off of them so they can start to see what is going on. Apart from God, they have nothing, but with God, they have everything. God wants to help them out of that stinking, miry clay and get them up on the rock.

If you know anything about miry clay, it sucks you down and holds you in. Then it hardens like concrete, and you can’t get out of it. That is the type of thing that goes through people’s minds. They feel trapped and held in. David said, *“Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him.”* He was in the recovery process at that point. He was starting to say that his life wasn’t over. God had more for him than that, which is what helped him get out of the hole.

“Through faith and patience we inherit all the promises of God.” Now add to the hope, faith. *“Faith is the substance of things hoped for.”* (Hebrews 11:1) If people don’t have any hope, they don’t have anything for faith to hang onto. By the time we get to many people, their lives are messed up. Humpty Dumpty has fallen off the wall and he is a cracked omelet lying all

over the pavement. We have got to help them to see that with God nothing is impossible.

No matter how messed up your life is, no matter what you have done to yourself or others have done to you, no matter what the thief has stolen, no matter if you are destroyed, God is a God of the living, not of the dead, so He's going to have to raise you from the dead.

Step up and say, "Lord, help me," but not out of fear or thinking *if all else fails, pray*. I've heard that pious statement so many times. I have thought *My God, my God, that should be the first place they go once they learn a few things*. Why put up with "all else," which will fail, when you can go to God? God will do something about it. You will save yourself a lot of disappointment, embarrassment, disgrace, shame, oppression, and depression. It is because you went to places other than the Lord.

A pill is not going to help you. All it will do is mask the problem, which hasn't changed, and you haven't changed. A pill is an opiate at that point, to make you happy. When you take away the opiate, all you have is what was there all the time. You are allowing something else to mask the truth, and you're allowing a devil to continue to oppress you. You don't get any help when you keep going to the opiate, but that is what happens when people are discouraged, oppressed, or depressed.

We need to say, "Lord, forgive me for going to places other than to you." The Lord knows our pain. He knows what we are going through. "*My people perish for lack of knowledge...*" the Lord says, "*but you would not.*" (Hosea 4:6) People continue in their same patterns. They go around without help or hope. Many times they just don't know what to say, they don't know what to do. Then they start thinking that they don't have any friends to help them and stand with them. Misery loves company, but company certainly doesn't love misery. They are wanting others, but the others can't handle it. Then they say, "Man, how unloving and uncaring."

Many times when folks are in the pit, they still don't want help. If they really wanted it, they would hear the word of faith and hope, and they would respond to it. We have to bind that devil off, and then the people can say, "Lord, I humble myself and hear you. Forgive me."

Likewise Job in chapter 42 got to the point where he humbled himself before the Lord and asked for forgiveness. Then God turned his captivity around.

Jabez prayed a great prayer. He asked the Lord to help him not to cause pain and not to receive pain, for he wanted to receive blessing. People make their own pain many times. It doesn't matter what a person does or doesn't do to us; it is how we respond that makes the difference.

People can say anything they want to me, but if I don't receive it, it doesn't have any power over me. The devil can come with whatever he has, but it won't have any power over me. It didn't have any power over Jesus. "*To him who believes, the works I do you will do,*" meaning, it won't have any power over you. When you are in a place of helplessness and hopelessness, you're not looking for help; you are just wallowing in your problem. People have to recognize this before they will ever get out of the hole.

Out of Captivity

We prayed for a lady who was in a depressed, oppressed, disappointed kind of mode, having given up on life and everybody. We prayed over her, and the Lord showed me in the spirit that she was sitting on a bench in a jail cell. She was looking at the floor, at the walls, at the ceiling. I saw Jesus come and rip the door off the cell. (It wasn't swinging on its hinges.) He took it off and threw it down the block. The lady sat on the bench and looked at the floor, at the walls, and at the ceiling. I called out to her, "Lady, look at the door." I was shouting it. She was still looking everywhere else while I was shouting. As I stood there and she stood there, she suddenly let out a whoop and hit the floor.

What happened? She looked at the door and saw that it was no more. She got off the bench and walked out. Discouragement, disappointment, oppression and depression can put you in a jail where you are trapped. You are there, and you are hopeless, helpless, and there is nothing you can do.

This is where faith comes in. "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for.*" We get people to start to think there is a way out of their situation. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life.* I am the way out of this captivity. I am the way out of this oppression." God never disappoints anybody. As we work faith with someone, we tell them that God says, "*I'll never leave you or forsake you.* I'm here. I've been here all along. I'm for you, I'm not

against you.” In other words, He is saying He is not the source of your problem.

We talk about faith promises with people, and we help them to see that God not only has a way, He is going to walk with them on that way and help them to get out of there.

- *“The thief has come to steal, kill, and destroy, but I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.”* (John 10:10)
- *“So humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and in due season He will exalt you.”* (James 4:7)
- *“Submit yourself to God, resist, the devil, and he will flee in terror.”*

God can put Humpty Dumpty back together again. Better. Smarter. Stronger than before. And Humpty Dumpty isn't going to go back on the wall where an egg doesn't belong.

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,” so we share a testimony, we encourage people and say, “Yes, God did some things.” Many people who have gotten themselves into an oppressed syndrome have had victories in their life. There were things that God did for them, but they got their eyes off of those things.

When you are deceived, you forget all the good that God did for you. You become unthankful and ungrateful. You get bitter, hard, and weak, and you don't want to hope anymore, you don't want to reach out anymore. You want to give up and die. Bottom line. There are many “dead” folks walking around, for they have no life.

The Goodness of God

What did Jesus come to bring? Abundant life. Joy, peace, laughter, good memories. When a person is thinking wrong he isn't thinking about good memories. We want to help people to think about good things. What has the Lord done for them in the past? What are the good memories in their lives? If there aren't any, God will start some. You can always share your testimonies or those of people around you – what you have seen, or heard and know are true. Talk about them, and it will encourage others to see, yes, there is hope, yes, there is a reason to rejoice. The Lord reigns.

The answer to “How is the world treating you?” is “Not good, but God treats me very well.”

Think on the goodness of God and help people to get there. You have to help them to break faith with what is *not* of God and stop listening to garbage. They shouldn't receive anything that is not telling them what God says (the report of the Lord). We have to break faith with all the negative thinking. When people are bound up in oppression, they've put faith in the wrong things. They are believing the devil rather than God. Then they are going to be stolen from, killed, or destroyed. Jesus said the thief has come to bring destruction, and it's all he brings. He wants to take all the good that God wants for your life: Blessed relationships, finances, health, peace in your mind, joy, goodness and lovely things. The negative person thinks about the negative and is oppressed and depressed. “Nothing's good, nothing's right, nothing ever can be. This is my lot in life.” Do you want to believe such a lie, or do you want to believe God who says, “*I've come that you might have life and have it more abundantly*”?

I put it out there for people because if they don't want to move on to the next step, I will leave them right where they are. “*Be it done to you according to your faith.*” It is not unloving or uncaring to do so. Let them sit there by themselves and wallow in their problems, and they will come to the point where they say, “Man, I have had enough of this.”

Throw Them a Line

I have learned that I can't believe for them, and as much as I would like to, I can't do it for them either. I would like to knock people in the head, haul them off, and gag them because they are speaking unbelief, negativity, bitterness and hatred. The bible says you will have the fruit of your mouth. I ask people what they want. I tell them to listen to what they are saying. Is it what they really want to have? They will have the fruit of what is coming out of their mouths.

We have to get them to look at what they are confessing. Look at what they are speaking. God says to speak faith and life. Call things that be not as though they are, and they will happen, they will become. Speak what you want to have. If you want to get out of something, speak freedom in Jesus' name. “*He or she whom the Son has set free is free indeed.*” (John 8:36)

We have to get faith to rise up because there is nothing too hard for the Lord. There isn't anything He can't do. *"If you abide in Me and My word abides in you, ask whatever you will, and it will be done for you that the Father be glorified in the Son."* (John 15) He loves for us to produce good fruit, but there is no good fruit coming out of a disappointed, discouraged, oppressed and depressed people. If you hang around them awhile you will become like them. I am not saying to isolate yourself, but I'm telling you this: if they're in the quicksand, don't jump in with them. You may be thinking I sound hard-hearted. That is right. Hallelujah. There is no way I will jump into the quicksand and start wallowing with people. Somebody has to be sane, believe God, and have hope, faith, and love, to stand on the rock and throw a line out to them. We are not saying to turn your back and leave them out there. No, throw them a line.

They will have to humble themselves, start obeying God and doing what He says on His terms, and they will get some help. Until they are ready to do that, they will just be that cracked omelet on the concrete.

You have in your life what you choose. *"Be it done to you according to your faith."* We have to help people to start to make some different choices, and we have to get love into their situation because *"Faith works by love."* (Galatians 5:6) *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not yet seen."* (Hebrews 11:1) The people who are oppressed are going by what they have seen and what has happened. Understand this, they are not only living there, they are forecasting it into the future. It isn't going to change, but they will continue to be oppressed and depressed – not having anything to look forward to.

We come in with a faith punch. I love smacking that one. God says, *"I know the plans that I have for you."* (Jeremiah 29:11, 12) The problem for the people in the oppressed state is that they think they are the only ones going through the problem. God knows the plans that He has for their lives. Plans for good, not for evil. Plans to prosper them, and give them hope and a future.

Desire to Make Changes

As you share with people, you will help them to realize that God has already been in their future. People think, *Why wasn't he in my past?* He was, but they weren't recognizing Him or looking to Him. Yes, they may have been calling to Him, but they weren't calling to Him to help them, they were just

looking for a quick fix. People go from one quick fix to the next quick fix. They are no different than junkies. They are not changing their lives or their attitudes. They are just going to God to bail them out, but their heart and faith isn't in God. Their hope isn't in Him, and their love isn't in Him. They're looking for something to resolve the pain or the discomfort they are in. They will go right back to it.

"A dog returns to his own vomit." (2nd Peter 2:22) They go back to it because they are not believing God to change them. They are believing God to fix things and make them more comfortable so they can go on with their lives. *"Were there not ten healed but only one came back to give thanks to God?"*

We have to help people to see that they have to make some changes. God is working in them enabling them to will and to change, but they have to want it, and they have to want to stay with it. They have to make the change.

Work out your salvation and make sure you don't go back to the old ways and the old thinking. 2nd Corinthians 10:5 says you have the mind of Christ, and you have to bring thoughts captive to the mind of Christ, not just watch your mouth. *"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.* Watch your thoughts and cast down the lies that come into your head.

Do something with the fact that God loves you with an everlasting love that never fades away and never changes. God is for you, not against you. (Romans 8) *"Call unto me and I'll answer you and show you great and mighty things, things you know not of.* (Jeremiah 31:3 and 33:3) That's the love relationship. *"I won't leave you. I won't forsake you. Therefore you can boldly say, 'the Lord is my helper'."* (Hebrews 13:5, 6) I won't fear what man or woman shall do to me, or what I will do to myself, or some devil trying to party isn't going to have any party with me.

Devils look for somebody they can use, abuse, and cast aside, but

- *"God is looking for somebody through whom and to whom He can show Himself mighty."*
- *"As I was with Moses so I'll be with you"* (Joshua 1:5)
- *"Be strong and of great courage. Don't be afraid, don't get discouraged."* (Joshua 1:9)

Don't allow yourself to go there, and if you are there, ask God's forgiveness and get out of it. You learn not to stay where you don't belong.

Think On Good Things

If your whole life has been like that, then you have never found where you belong. You have been looking in the wrong places. God has a plan for you, and He has a hope. Believe Him, and He will start to unfold it. However, you have to quit giving power to the thief and start giving power to God. Give God the power, give Him the dominion, give Him the praise. Give up wrong thinking and talking. If you think you don't feel any different, cast down those feelings (that are not of God). If you have bitterness in your life, ask God to forgive you and then forgive the people.

Jesus at the cross is our prime example of anybody who had the opportunity to be disappointed, to be discouraged, to be oppressed and depressed. (Hebrews 12:2) Look at what Jesus did and said. It is a good word for us.

Help people to rehearse blessings, start to see good and think on good things. (Philippians 4:4-8) Look at Hebrews 11 for examples of how God helped people through perilous times.

Jesus could have been tempted with disappointment. How many times did the disciples not "get it"? The people didn't understand, and there He was trying to get them ready to take over. He would be leaving, and they didn't have it. They didn't even have it after He ascended. It wasn't until after they received the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8) that the power from on high came on them to enable them.

If anybody had an opportunity to be disappointed and discouraged, Jesus did. Everybody left Him and rejected Him. No matter what you are dealing with, not everybody has rejected you, not everybody in your life has disappointed you. You haven't failed in everything in your life. At some point or another, even an unbeliever has to say, "God helped me even when I didn't know He was there to help me." There is something we can look at and focus on in order to get off the problem.

People may have 99 good things in their lives, but they think about the one thing that is off, and that is where they spend their time and energy.

I was encouraging a pastor in the Lord one day, “You have so many faithful people. Why are you putting all your attention on a couple disgruntled ones who don’t believe in God and don’t believe in your vision? You’re never going to convince them of your vision. Go on with the 99 that are believing God.”

What about the one you are supposed to go after? Yes, you can go after him, but if he doesn’t want you to go after him, then leave him alone. (Adios. I wish you well.) You can’t tear yourself up over it. You will get disappointed and discouraged. It’s amazing how that comes on ministers of God who are trying to bring the faith, hope, and love of God to the people. The thief tries to take them out. You wouldn’t believe the pressure I have gone through, but, hey, I have the victory. I don’t dwell on the oppression, the disappointment, or the discouragement. I don’t have to. What do you want? to be down or up?

God Is Bigger Than Your Problem

“Be strong and of great courage.” Just before Jesus went into the final week called “The Passion” in His life, He had a time of exaltation. All the crowds were following Him, and everybody was believing. People got healed. But in the end nobody was standing with Him. He even had to go to the disciples in Gethsemane and say, “Can’t you stay up one hour and pray with me?”

People say they are for you, but they are really about their own business. A testing time and trial really shows what is in people. They have come to me saying they would follow me anywhere, and they would stand with me, but I don’t bother to look around for them. If they are there, great, if they are not, God is. You have to get on with your life. Some people’s lives stopped 20 years ago when they got into a problem with someone. Life stops because people got disappointed and discouraged. If you go through life and you don’t have some of that trying to get you, there is something wrong with you. It will try to get you, but it can’t have you. You can’t allow it to have you. You will have what you allow.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses (all the faith people)...” (Hebrews 12:1) When you look at their stories, you will see they had a hard go of it too, but in the end they did what God wanted. Abraham finally had a promised son through Sarah.

God wants to do miracles. Basically, what is intended for evil, God will turn around for good if people would turn to Him. Solved problems are intended to give God praise, for He is the solution God.

You want to surround people with a cloud of witnesses. Get them into a place like this. There are places like this all over the earth where God is working in faith, hope, and love. Get around believers. Believers won't spend any time on the person who is oppressed, depressed, disappointed, and discouraged. We're not going to have little group sessions where they can spew out devil stuff. We will put them where they will hear faith, hope, and love. They will get so tired of hearing about faith, hope, and love that they can't stand it. Depression can't stand it.

We want to hear praise going from your lips to God who is bigger than your problem. The Lord of the universe can do anything, and He is high and lifted up. If we are smart, we will get high and lifted up with Him. Not on drugs, not on alcohol, not on pills, not on food, not on attention. People want to go where others care about them and love them. No, you want to go to a place where people will speak the truth to you in love and stand with you, overcoming, and not go into the pit with you.

The people who are going to help you are the ones believing God for you. God won't sit there and listen to your negativity, abuse, unbelief, or disobedience, so why should any of His believers do so?

“Let Us Throw Of Everything That Hinders...”

(Hebrews 12:1) We have to tell people who are disappointed and discouraged to get over it in Jesus' name. God is out ahead preparing the way. He has already been in our future, He knows where we've been, and He knows where we're going. He knows what will be in the end. I ask people, “What do you see at the end?” If they say, “It's all going down,” I say, “That's what you're going to have.”

However, if you choose to go a different course and believe God, I see a great life for you. I see amazing things ahead. It is all in the path you want to take.

“...throw off... the sin that so easily entangles.” Disappointment is sin because it is an appointment with despair. Discouragement is sin because it is the absence of courage. The Lord says to be strong and very courageous.

Oppression is sin if you receive it. It is being pressed down. Depression is sin because it is unbelief. It is all about self. *“Hope thou in God, for I will yet praise Him.”* Hope and joyful thanksgiving is the key to getting out of depression.

Still, people want what they want. I have seen meek looking people who seemed really humble but inwardly were ravenous lions. If I “go off” on them in the prayer line, people look at me like “Pastor, how could you treat such a meek and mild person like that?” No, they are raging maniacs inside because they have listened to a devil and gotten that thing in there. You may think, *You can’t treat people like that*, but I say yes, you can if you want them to get help.

The problem is some people have taken what I do and tried to do it, but they were not doing it in the same spirit. You have to do it in love. *“Speak the truth in love.”* You don’t stand in front of people for ten minutes and rail on them about how they’ve messed up. You help them to understand the problem (what is going on) and why they have what they have. Then help them to move over to the next place.

We have to get rid of what hinder us. (Hebrews 12:1) People often don’t even know what is hindering them. They are confused and caught up in sin, the sin that so easily entangles. Let me tell you, there is always pride when sin is involved. If somebody has messed up, you know they “climbed up on the wall” like Humpty Dumpty and either jumped off or fell off. An egg has no business on the wall, and pride comes before the fall. About the time you think you’re so wonderful and can do so many things, you’re in for it.

Get On With Life

- *“Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”*
(Hebrews 12:16)
- *“Through faith and patience we inherit all the promises of God.”*
- *“Count it all joy when various trials, problems, temptations, pressures come upon you.”*

If people aren’t counting it joy, they need to start counting it joy, not because of the problem or the situation, but because God is greater than what is going on. Once we see that, there is hope, faith rises up, and love is right behind it. Love is actually what is working it all. God is trying to love us

and help us out of the problem in whatever way He is doing it, through whomever He is using.

Many times a veterinarian gets bit by dogs while he is trying to help them because the animals only know their pain. They know their problem. They don't care about anybody or anything else and will bite the vet who is trying to help. When you are trying to help people, understand, you will get bit because when folks are in that mode, they bite and devour. It is all about them. However, you should never do things on their terms. Don't feed that animal. Don't feed that negativity. Don't feed the devil that may be oppressing and working in the people. Take a hard faith, hope, and love stand, where it isn't going to be on their terms. It is on God's terms, or they won't get help. If they are not willing to submit to God's terms, then you have to let them go. That is the bottom line. We hold the faith for them, but they have to find their way and figure it out because at that point they think they know more than you do.

I have told people, "What are you doing here? You think you already know what you need. Why are you coming to me for anything?" Other times I have "put a mirror up," and they saw themselves. Hopefully they saw how ugly their life was and wanted to change.

Everybody has to run his own race, but the race is marked out for us. Why would God put obstacles in our path? Understand, He didn't. There is a thief who has come to steal, kill, and destroy, but God is helping us run the race. You don't fight the good fight of faith by yourself. There is a tendency for people to think, *I'm the only one left in Israel who hasn't bowed my knee. Everybody else has bowed the knee to devils and devil gods. I'm the only one with these problems.* When people are oppressed, they think they are the only ones having such a problem, and their whole world is about themselves. They try to get other disappointed people together in group sessions where all these disappointed people get together, sharing their disappointment. They call it a "care group" or a "share group." If you get a bunch of desperate housewives together, what do you get? You get a bunch of "wanna bes." It is someplace I don't want to be.

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus." It is the cure for everybody. Get our eyes off ourselves, get them off of other people and other things. *"The author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

Jesus did it all for us. He went through disappointment, despair, rejection, oppression, and depression without sin. He did not separate Himself from His Father. (Sin is a separation from God.) He didn't give in to it. This is so exciting.

At the cross He cried out, "*My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me?*" but He was quoting the first verse of one of the most triumphant psalms in the Bible — the up-from-the-grave kind of message. If you were hanging on the cross for hours, you wouldn't be able to speak but only a few words either. Jesus could only get out the first verse. (Psalm 22:1) God didn't forsake the one who was doing His perfect will to save all of us!

People have said, "Sin separated Jesus from God, and God couldn't look on Him." Let me tell you, the Father was up in heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." He never changed His thought about His Son.

While we were yet enemies of God, Christ died for us, the godly for the ungodly. The godly died for the ungodly that the ungodly might become godly. "*While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" If God was looking away, then He wouldn't have sent His Son for us. He could have said, "Forget them all. Let them all go to hell. I'll start with a new batch." But thank God, He didn't do it.

If you are oppressed, you need to know: God is not finished with you yet. Shake yourself. Ask for God's forgiveness and come out of that place. God took the door off the prison cell, and He put you in the spacious place where you can run and romp in the field, praising and thanking God forevermore. Get on with the life He has for you. Give up the old life and get on with the new. Clean yourself up. Arise from the dead.

Grow Not Weary in Well Doing

Jesus went to the cross and died for the joy that was set before Him. What was that joy? — that we would all get saved and blessed. That is your motivation for helping people. When you are dealing with those who give up and become rejected, oppressed, and depressed, it is the same dynamic. They all need faith, hope, and love to get out of there, and your motivation has to be the joy that is set before you. Otherwise, you will get disgusted and give up on the people you are trying to help.

The tendency is to give up on people. Thank God He never gave up on any of us. *“Grow not weary in well doing for in due season you shall reap if you faint not.”* You may have come to a point where you said, “Okay, I’ve told you what you need. Now you need to do it. I encourage you to. I’ll pray for you, but you have to do it. No more discussing the problem.”

I have a discussion for about 30 seconds because I don’t need to hear the problem. I need to get them focused on submitting to God and getting over the problem. You don’t need to spend years in therapy rehearsing it.

If you have been going to therapy for years, ask yourself where you are. If you still have the problem, you have never let go of it or given it to the Lord.

“Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” The next time you feel sorry for yourself (poor me, I’m disappointed, in despair, rejected. I have such a horrible life), just think about what Jesus did for you. Think about that, and you will forget about all your problems. Jesus didn’t deserve any punishment.

If you had a choice either to walk in a garden full of beautiful flowers with clear running water, sit under the cool shade of a tree, and feel a soft breeze or to be in a cesspool, which would you choose?

Think about this: God was enjoying Himself in heaven, but He came down here into this cesspool for us. The difference is, He is not in the cesspool. He says, *“You are not of this world. You are in the world but not of the world.”* The problem is people are still of the world. They are still thinking man’s thoughts rather than God’s thoughts. Jesus always operated in God’s ways. He was on the Rock, and He is the Rock. He has thrown a line to us and given His life to whoever looks to Him. They won’t perish but will have everlasting life. Now consider Jesus. *“In your struggle against sin, you have not resisted yet to the point of shedding your blood, and you have forgotten the word of encouragement that addresses you as sons.”*

God’s Discipline

God’s discipline will help us get out of trouble. He loves those whom He disciplines, and He will help us get out of our problem. Endure hardship as discipline.

Did you find out how selfish you were when you got into a relationship? Learn the motivation of your heart. We help people to discover it.

Here is a good “why” question: Why am I depressed? David asked himself this question in Psalm 42: “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* A shepherd knows that for a sheep to be cast down it is lying belly up. Sheep cannot get up from that position. They need the shepherd to pick them up and right them or they will die. David said, “*Hope in God.*” Hope in the Good Shepherd. The Lord is our Shepherd. Hope in Him, and He will come to help you get back up and running.

Faith, hope, and love. The greatest is love. God’s love for us is greater than anything else. It gives us a reason to have hope and faith and love. Help people to see that God loves them with an everlasting love that never fades away or changes.

I talk to people about that, and what do they often do? They go right back to their problem because they didn’t want to hear what I said. They wanted to stay in their sorry state because they like negative attention. If you want attention, you will get it, but it will be negative. Negative attention gets the rod of correction.

When my children were little, I would tell them, “Why don’t you get smart? Then we won’t have to discipline you.” One day my daughter ran to Diana and said, “You know, Mom, I must be getting really smart.” Diana asked, “How so?” and Erin answered, “I haven’t been spanked for a long time.”

We don’t need discipline unless we are out of line. However, there is a discipline that goes with being in line and doing what is right. We want to continue doing what is right. We need to get disciplined, thinking and speaking the right, good way of God. Some people say, “It’s hard. It’s impossible. I can’t do it.” It is true if you’re on your own, but you are supposed to be a believer.

If you are not a believer, God will help you to become one and He has a better life than what you can imagine or have experienced to this point. Do some God-like discipline. Don’t just let your mind wander. Challenge your thoughts. Why art thou depressed? Why are you disgruntled and upset? Check the motivation of your heart. Usually you will find it is all about you

not getting your way, not getting what you wanted, or thinking you needed some attention.

There are many things that are simply attacks of the devil. The disciples asked Jesus, “*Who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?*” Jesus said, “*Neither, but that the work of God might be accomplished to God’s glory. I must work the work of God that He get glory.*” If you are under attack, so what. Help people to respond the right way. Go to God and He will help you. He will give you wisdom and insight (James 1). He will develop patience and maturity in you. You will get through it, but you will have to do it on God’s terms. It is not your way or the highway.

The devil may hit me with a cheap shot. I might miss something and get run over, but God forbid I ever get backed over. We need to get up and go at it again. Forgiveness is a good thing. It is a cleansing thing. Don’t dwell on any situation once it is under the blood of Jesus.

The Work of the Ministry

This is a little crash course about how to help the discouraged, disappointed, oppressed, and depressed person get some freedom. If you’re feeling down in the dumps, do you find it helpful to go shopping? (You really get freedom if you are shopping for someone else.) In the same way, God has given a principle that breaks the back of disappointment, discouragement, oppression, and depression. It is called giving – giving praise and honor to God and helping somebody else. Those other things are inwardly-focused, and that is what the devil intends for us – to be focused in on ourselves rather than on God. The solution is to give, and then God gives back. Then you’re not thinking about yourself, you’re thinking about honoring God, giving to God, giving to people, and helping. The next thing you know, your problem has left. Don’t look for it. Don’t bring it back. Just go about God’s business.

We want to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. People like myself whom God has called, like apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, are here to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. The saints (you) can do the work of the ministry out there, for God will do it through you. There should be no glory to you, so don’t start your own ministry and do your own thing. You’re part of the body of Christ to honor God. Just because somebody prophesies doesn’t mean he is a prophet. People who pray for others who get well shouldn’t get puffed up, thinking they have the

gift of healing because any believer has the gift of healing. It comes *with* God. You will lay hands on the sick and they will recover if you believe. In reality, I don't have any of the gifts; I have God. God gives the gifts as He apportions them, to whom He wants to, through whom He wants to. Still, He always wants to give them to help people in their need.

That means you could run across a disappointed, discouraged, upset, depressed, oppressed person, but you can't get on the phone to call 911. You can call God, though. He says, "*Call unto Me, and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things.*" You are the one in the spot. You are there, and you can't wait for somebody to get there to help you; you are it. God and you are the majority, so just pray a simple prayer. "Jesus, help this person. In Jesus' name."

The joy of the Lord is my strength. That is what I do when oppression tries to sit on me. I say, "The blood of Jesus covers me. In Jesus' name clear off," and I start to praise God in the Spirit. The oppression has to break, it has to lift, and it has to go. I just keep praying, praising, and thanking the Lord.

God wants you to put your faith, hope, and love in Him so He can do it to His glory.

Jesus already saved everybody. He is not going to the cross again. He isn't dying again. He has already died to provide salvation, and He rose from the dead to confirm it. We simply pray, "Lord, enable people to receive salvation, receive their healing, or receive whatever they need. They've already got it; it's there." God already has it for everybody. He is telling us to receive.

Over the years I have seen people ask God for help when they didn't have anything, and then they started to do what God said. Their help "*cometh from the Lord,*" and the blessing was there. However, they got so wrapped up in all the work and the blessing that they forgot the Lord who gave it to them.

You always want to honor the One who blessed you and gave you all that you have. Don't worship the creation; worship the Creator.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
Jesus, the Cure for Loneliness & Rejection
Chapter 19

Reflect on Jesus

I have been pondering and thinking about Jesus. Be thinking about Jesus all the time. Something good happens in thinking about Him for He becomes really big inside you and around you. *“God so loved the world that He gave His only son, that whoever believes on Him won’t perish but will have everlasting life.”*

The book of Revelation talks about Jesus being our First Love. We don’t ever want to leave Him. When we think about Him, we are thinking about the risen Jesus. He is not hanging on the cross anymore or walking the earth as a man. He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. At the name of Jesus, every knee in heaven and earth will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord. Now He is the risen Lord in all glory and honor. Some day the trumpet will blast, and He will come. We will rise to meet Him in the air, and forever be with Him. We will behold Him face to face. As He knows us, we will know Him.

It is thrilling to have the privilege of being a child of the Most High God and to have the love of the Father lavished on us through our Lord Jesus. God wants to pour out His blessing upon us daily.

Thinking about Jesus has to do with relationship. Relationship is primary and foremost in God’s thoughts. Since He thinks about us, we don’t need to think about ourselves.

As I reflect on Jesus, I think about Him as the Creator of the universe. (See the of Colossians) He isn’t just a fine prophet of God. He is not just a fine teacher. He is God come in the flesh. He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. The Father and the Holy Spirit are the Creator, the Lord of the universe and one God. When He made the creation, He made something different every day, and after it was done He said it was good. (Genesis 1) When He made man in His own image, He wanted to fellowship with him. He wanted to have someone to love, for God is love, and love needs an

expression. A gift is intended to be given to a recipient. With no recipient, a gift is not achieving its goal.

I was thinking about that and about helping people and how to minister to people and looking at what they go through.

For example, people feel loneliness and rejection. It happens. There is a truth that God has for us that we need to know within ourselves.

The Creator vs. Created Things

I have been thinking about how God made all of creation, the lions and tigers and bears, how He separated the heavens from the earth, and how He made all the little critters that run around. He said each day, "This is good." Man was made to fellowship with God and when God made man, it was good. He was good. Then God said it wasn't good that man be alone, and so He made the woman, taken out of the man, so that He and man and woman could have fellowship. As much as God loves the creation, He loves mankind more. People nowadays think it is important to fix the environment, but God is into fixing man since he is what affects the environment. If men and women are in right standing with God, then their environment will be in a good way. God looked out there and said, "Everybody is doing their own thing, they're all separated from Me. There's none that doeth good, no not one; they are all lost. I need to do something to save My people."

After being created, Adam and Eve went away from the Lord and lost their First Love, but God immediately put a plan of salvation in place to help mankind them and to save them. God doesn't want anybody perishing. He doesn't want anybody separated from Him.

The grief of the second death which is commonly called hell, or Gehenna, the place of fire, is where people who are separated from God will be. The torment of hell or Gehenna isn't fire. The torment is being separated from God forever. The thief, Satan, used to be called Lucifer, a son of light, but he became a son of darkness. He was removed from heaven because he hated God and refused to receive God's best and blessing. He thought he did it himself. When created beings think that they are more important than the One that created them, they have a problem.

Satan was estranged from God and actually fought against Him. Of course you lose when you fight against the Lord. Jesus said in Luke 10:18, "*I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning.*" He was removed from heaven because of his rebellion against God, not wanting a relationship with Him. He came down and wreaked havoc, destroying everything around him. Genesis 1:1 shows that God created the heavens and earth, but verse 2 says, "*and the earth was without form and void.*" Something happened between verse one and two because God doesn't create without form and void.

The thief was kicked out of the heavens, coming down and throwing a tantrum. In his hatred towards God, he destroyed everything. He is known, as Jesus says, as the thief who has come to steal, to kill, and to destroy. (John 10:10) What is he trying to steal, kill, and destroy? Ultimately he wants to destroy us, and he wants to destroy our relationship with God. He wants to perpetrate the lie that God is not a good God, and that He is not loving and caring, when Satan is the one who has the issues and the problems. God is a good God who loves us. Since God has created man for fellowship with Him, the thief tries to cause strife and division between God and his people.

God Sought to Re-establish Relationship

In the Garden of Eden the temptation went out to Eve, and she disobeyed God. Adam went along with Eve's lead (that's where the problem was), and they were removed from the garden. The thief had come to steal, kill, and destroy, but Jesus says, "*I've come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.*" (John 10:10)

Because of God's great love He sought to re-establish everything. Still, man estranged from God messes up the environment as well as everything in his own life.

Before you were in the Lord, you did what you wanted, you lived your selfish ways. That doesn't work very well in a relationship. On one hand, there are people who are rejected, and on the other hand there are people who reject. There are people who are lonely because of choice and others who are lonely because they have been hurt. Others are lonely because they have been set aside by people and estranged. The thief uses loneliness and rejection to try to ruin their lives and separate them ultimately from their First Love. You will always be lonely without the Lord.

God created people with a space that belongs to Him. In the bible, it is called the heart, or the spirit, and it belongs to God. It is where He lives in us. You can have all the people in the world around you and still be lonely. The Lord said, "I am your First Love. I am the One you were created for. You weren't created for yourself. You weren't created for somebody else. You were created for Me."

God is a jealous God. He is jealous of us because we belong to Him and we don't belong to the devil. We don't belong to ourselves or anybody else. *"Thou shall have no other gods before Me."* A god is one you love and serve, and everything about you goes toward it. God says, "I am the One who loves you with an everlasting love that never fades away or changes. I am the Lord who will be there for you." *"Call unto Me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things, things that you know not of."* (Jeremiah 33:3)

When the Lord established the children of Israel as His people, He looked to a people whom He could love and bless, and so that all the people of the world would become jealous of how He blessed and cared for this chosen people. They rejected Him, and so Jesus came (God come in the flesh). *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believes in Jesus won't perish but will have everlasting life"* because He wanted to have relationship with us. He wanted us to be His children so that we would not be doing our own thing and about our own purpose.

God Has Not Rejected Us

Have you been abused, hurt, rejected, or let down by un-kept promises? The Lord never makes a promise that He doesn't intend to keep. He wants us to do the same in relationship with others. As we have been loved and not lied to, God wants us to love others and not lie to them, and to walk in integrity with each other. It was the plan of God to love His people, to care for them and to do good things for them all along. That is his heart. *"Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of Lights."* (James 1)

When rejection came into the world it was birthed in hatred. The devil rejected God. God never rejected the devil. God never rejected man. Even while we were sinners separated from Him, in His great love He sent Jesus in order to bless us and give us life.

We become what the bible calls ‘born again,’ and our spirits are made alive to God. When God made Adam and Eve and they separated from Him and rejected Him, He didn’t reject them. The separation was the consequence of their rejection, and their spirits became dead to God. When we are born again and receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are receiving the love of God in Jesus who came for us. God came, the Righteous for the unrighteous, the Right standing for the ones not in right standing, the One who is whole for the ones who are separated. God came to heal, to deliver, to save. *“You shall call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins.”*

Sin is a state of separation from God. Our nature was separated from God, which is why Jesus says you must be born again. It is not an option. You cannot be saved and be with God forever without being born again. You must receive Jesus as God’s provision for life and love, and for son-ship and daughter-ship.

Everybody says God is their Father, but no, Jesus made it very clear in the gospel of John: *“Your father is not God, but your father is the devil because you don’t receive Me. If you receive Me, then you receive the one the Father has sent because I and the Father are one.”* (John 14) Jesus said that He and the Father are one, so when you reject Jesus, you reject the Father. God is only the father of those who have received Jesus as Lord and Savior. People might say, “What a narrow, separatist thought.” No. It is God’s thought.

God is the only one who can restore man to Himself. We can’t do it on our own. That is why people have such a hard time with relationships. Their number one problem in relationships is where there is no peace within. The only way you can have peace is through Jesus, *“My peace I give to you, a peace that the world cannot give.”* It cannot give it because it doesn’t have it. Look around the world, and you see nothing but strife, hatred, and bitterness or “as long as you get along with me, then I like you” kind of attitude. As long as you agree with me, then we will do wonderfully. Otherwise, it is every man for himself. That is the bottom line. When push comes to shove, that’s what happens, and the next thing you know, we are rejected and lonely. We are out there by ourselves.

We need to understand that when we are born again, and we receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, God comes into our hearts and we become one with Him

again. We become His children, heirs to all the promises He has supplied. The bible lays out what God's word and promise is for all of His children.

Don't be ashamed to confess Him as your Lord and Savior, because it is the power of God to salvation, which is the power of God to oneness. Jesus prayed that the people might be one as He and the Father are one (John 17) that we might all be one together even as they are one together. There is talk about unity in the earth. There is much talk about fellowship and oneness, but there is no oneness without being one with the Father through faith in Jesus Christ. That is God's way, but people want to do it another way. They think there must be another way. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by Me.*"

As long as people are seeking spiritual things, they are eventually going to find Jesus as their Lord and Savior. When the dust settles, everything filters down to Jesus. He is the Gate and the Doorway. Only the people who go through the Gate will have life with God.

The bottom line is you never need to be alone again because Jesus is the only solution and cure to loneliness. He is the only cure for rejection. He is the only cure for abuse. He is the only cure for sickness and disease, poverty, and confusion. It all filters down to Jesus. As I was thinking about Jesus, I was thinking about the full salvation and love of God that He has for us. If we are ever going to help anyone deal with the issues in life, which are here because a thief has come to steal and kill and destroy, we've got to lead them to Jesus. We have got to help them to see that Jesus is their hope. He is their salvation. He is their life. I am not talking about the man Jesus. I'm talking about God who came in the flesh to save us.

One day at a restaurant I had a waiter named Jesus, and I said, "Oh, great name." But obviously salvation isn't through him; it is through God and faith in Jesus Christ, God come in the flesh. God didn't want us to be alone. He came as a man to save us because there had to be a perfect man in God's system of justice. Angels can't save you. Other people can't save you. Only God can save you. "*There is none that doeth good, no not one*" "*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,*" which says that I couldn't save myself. Many people try to do good deeds and make themselves good people.

Have you ever taken the bad boy, good boy route? It doesn't matter, either way, you're separate from God if God's not in it. It was all about you trying to be a good person and doing good things so others would like you. "I'll just do what I want to do." Many people have such attitudes. "I do it my way." My way or the highway, and you're out, and I'm in, and I'm right and you're wrong. The blame game, or I am conqueror. People love to play the "I am conqueror game" because it's all about power.

All the power and dominion belong to the Lord, and you have none without Him. Man is always trying to see whoever has the biggest stick, and if you don't have it, then buy, borrow, steal, you know, do something to get it (manipulation and control). That's how people get hurt. You don't have to play any games anymore because God loves you.

God's love is about being loved and accepted, not being rejected. People live their lives in fear of what others will do or not do to them. The Lord says, "*Be not covetous.*" (Hebrews 13:5) In other words, don't put any other people or things before the Lord. He says, "*I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. Therefore, you can boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man shall do to me.'*"

Rejected by Man

The greatest fear in everyone's heart is of being alone. When you get down to the bottom of it, it is being unloved and by yourself. Apart from God, your greatest fear will be realized. The devil knows what his fate is – separated from God forever, and he wants to bring down as many people with him as he can. He works actively trying to separate people from God. "*If this gospel (the good news about Jesus) is hid, it is hid from those who are lost, in whom the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the glorious gospel.*" The good news is that salvation is in Jesus, and God wants you to be His child who lives happily ever after with Him. Not a bad thing, and the devil can't promise you that. In fact, he is doing his best to steal, kill, and destroy right now, which is why many people think hell is on earth.

They haven't begun to see what hell will be like, separated from God forever, but if we are with God we are no longer separated. The thief tries to keep people away from knowing and hearing that. When I come to Jesus, God has a good plan for my life. (Jeremiah 29:11, 12) "*For I know the plans that I have for you, ' the Lord says. 'Plans for good, not for evil.*

Plans to prosper you and give you hope and a future'." The devil can't promise you that. Since one of the greatest fears people have is being alone, they quickly try to get into relationships. They try to make things happen. They compromise everything to have a relationship with somebody, and it ends broken up. But God is the mender of the broken-hearted.

Jesus was rejected by everybody, even His disciples, even the ones following Him, but He was not rejected by His Father in heaven. Didn't Jesus say at the cross, "*My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" Let me tell you, friends, it is the first verse of one of the greatest psalms in the bible. A resurrection psalm by the way. It begins with, "*My God, My God...*" As He was hanging on a cross, he couldn't speak out very well. The psalm goes on to say that Jesus knew the hope that was in Him and that God was not going to leave Him in the grave. His Father said this was His Son in whom He was well pleased. People need to listen to Him. They need to hear Him because God wasn't going to leave Him in the grave. He raised Him up so that we could be saved. If God had left Jesus in the grave, then our faith would be in vain. We might as well forget everything here.

If God had forsaken Him, we would be done for, and our life wouldn't be worth anything. We might as well just end it. "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die," and that would be the end of it, which is how many people live their lives. They figure they don't have any future, they don't have any hope, they don't have anything or anybody to live for. One of the most horrible things for a person is to be alone at the end of his life. People may have all the "stuff" but nobody to give it to and nobody to share it with, nobody to care for, and nobody who cares for them. It's a horrible, horrible thing. It's the fate of a person separated from God.

God has a better plan, a good plan, a forever plan, which is what He is trying to bring to His people. He tells us, "*I'll never leave you, I'll never forsake you.*" Jesus said, "*To them who believe, the works I do you will do.* (John 14:12)

Jesus was completely rejected by people. Even His own mother, brothers and sisters thought He had gone crazy and were trying to take Him away and put Him away privately. Then He said, "*Who are my mother, my brothers, and my sisters? They that do the will of Him who sent me are my mother, my brothers, and my sisters.*" When it came down to everybody's life being on the line, and every man for himself, they all left Him. Three times Peter

denied Jesus, and the last time he said he didn't even know who the man was. Peter wanted to save his own life.

Jesus was not alone. Rejected, yes. Crucified, yes. Alone, never. God went with Him to the grave and raised Him up.

Rejection vs. Acceptance

Isaiah described Jesus 400 years before He walked the earth. Isaiah 53 told that Jesus took our loneliness, and He took our rejection. *“Who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? “He grew up before us like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him.”*

Many people's lives are all about attraction and being loved. They try to make themselves look good on the outside so that somebody will like them. Sometimes they succeed, sometimes they don't. They do cosmetics or nip this and tuck that, wanting to get back to how they were when they were young. Remember when you were a teenager, and you had those things all over your face, and you were going through an identity crisis every day of your life? You wondered whether people liked you or if they wanted you around, whether you were doing or saying the right thing.

The fear of man is a snare, the bible says, but God's perfect love casts out all fear. Then you don't have to prove anything to anybody. It's not about how much money you have. If you have money, you have many friends, Proverbs says. They're not really your friends because when you don't have any money to give them, they all go away.

Many people think they don't look good, and nobody wants them, nobody likes them. If they don't look or act like others want them to, they walk on egg shells all the time. *Am I acting the right way? Am I saying the right thing? Am I doing the right thing?* “She loves me, she loves me not.”

Perhaps Dad and Mom told you you were a mistake. We deal with people all the time who have been rejected by their parents. I mean, if you are rejected by your parents, you are off to a bad start. It isn't going to get better because you have been marked. All your life you look for somebody to accept you. You marry somebody to try to get some attention, but you can't marry your dad or mom. It doesn't work. You just want to be loved and accepted, not rejected, abused or used.

Have you been abused and used? That is what the devil does. He woos you and sucks you in. He makes empty promises, and uses and abuses you. Then he casts you aside, leaving you out there by yourself. Nonetheless, God can put Humpty Dumpty back together again. What was it that got the person into a place of vulnerability like that? Wanting to be loved and accepted.

I tell the young women, “Just because guys say they love you means nothing. All they want to do is get in your pants, which is not love; it is abuse. Then they cast you aside once they have accomplished their little mission, and you’re rejected. Consequently, you feel like your life is just a piece of toilet paper about to be used the next time.” Some people spend their whole lives in that vicious cycle.

Who Is Faithful?

What the devil wants you to do is worship him. He wants you to love him. He wants you to love his ways, so of course he doesn’t present himself as the real thief and ugly thing that he is. He will make something look good and get you to go against God. God says, “*Mark those who cause division amongst you.*” They are not about God’s purpose. They are only about their own selfish motives, trying to get you away from God and everything that stands for God (like the authorities). The devil hates authority because all authority is from God.

The devil hates Dad, Mom, preachers, government officials, and employers. How far will you go in life if you have “an attitude” towards them? The thief doesn’t tell you that. He says you should be your own person. In other words, you should be independent of the authorities in your life. What that really means is you will be alone and rejected, an outcast, separated from everything good, which is there to bless your life.

God never intended you to be independent. That is the devil’s plan. God intended us to be dependent on Him as our source. He is the One who loves us and cares about us. Who is faithful day in and day out, even when we are not? Who loves us with an everlasting love that never fades away or changes? He says to give up the thief and forget about that. “Come with Me,” He says, “I’m your daddy.”

People are wondering who their daddy is. I know who He is, praise His holy name. Blessed be the name of the Lord now and forevermore.

As an earthly dad, I try to be like my Father in heaven: Benevolent, kind, and strict because the road to life and blessing is narrow. The road to Gehenna and the fire is wide. I want to know the right way. I want to walk in it in discipline. I won't look to the left or to the right. I will look for the blessing that God has. I do what He says because I know He loves me with an everlasting love. I don't even ask questions because I know that He has the right way to go.

Faith is a good thing when it is in God. "In God we trust; all others pay cash." Paul prayed that people would come to know the height and depth and breadth and width of the love of God that is ours in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 3) We will never be rejected or unloved again because God heals our abuse, and He delivers us from every evil.

Marriage Qualifications

Jesus had nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him. I ask those who are getting married, "What drew you to this person?" and they often said, "I like the way they look." (Shallow Hal) Little do they know in 20 years something happens, to their looks and in 30 years it's happening more. In 50 years, who is this person?

The first thing you want to ask somebody is this, "Do you have Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Is He the Lord of your life?" If they say, "Yes," then you take a good look. You ask, "When was the last time you fellowshiped with believers? What do you think about God's word and promise? Can you quote anything more than, 'The Lord is my shepherd.' Or 'God so loved the world'? What do you know about the Word of God?" Even more important is, "Do you do what it says?" but don't ask them. Watch them. Watch how they live. Watch what their priorities are. Are they doing it just to please you, just something that will be what *you* want? You might think there is nothing wrong with that, but it is a start. There comes a point where they have to do good because they love to do it.

Don't marry until they have their priorities in place, and they love God more than they love you. If they don't love God more than you, then there will be a problem in the relationship. I can say that because I know it. I have seen it, and I have watched it too many times. Here is a principle of God: "*If you*

love father, mother, son, daughter, husband, or wife more than me, you're not worthy of me," Jesus said. (Matthew 10)

Jesus was "*despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering.*" (Isaiah 53:6) The greatest suffering isn't physical, though; it is being alone. It is being rejected. Being used and abused is worse than cancer. In fact, the bitterness, hurt, hatred, and everything that rises up in people who are lonely and bitter is what causes cancer, heart disease, and all kinds of other hideous problems in their physical being.

God made you, and you can't improve on God, but if the barn needs some paint, paint it.

Diana gave our son some information in order to know if women have had cosmetic breast surgery. She said if they're lying face up at the beach, and everything on their body is still facing up, then it isn't real. Real has to go in some direction. You don't want to find out "the other way" before marriage. Besides, if your eyes go below their eyes, you have a problem. Look at their eyes.

How many women have sacrificed themselves to be loved, accepted, needed, and wanted? How many guys have done the same thing? Basically they have prostituted themselves for a little bit of attention, a little bit of love and recognition. Are you still with the person that you had sex with? I'm not talking about being married. I mean just out there. You can't tell me you were thrilled after they went their way and you went your way. Something happened in you. Something died.

Overcoming Rejection

Death works in us apart from Jesus Christ, but life works in Jesus Christ. "*[Jesus] was despised and rejected by men... like one from whom men hid their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities...*" (Isaiah 53:3, 4)

On the cross Jesus took all of our rejection, loneliness, pain, sorrow (mentally and physically), and everything that separated us from God forever. He died for us so we might have life with God and not be separated, rejected, or abused anymore.

God set his love upon us. *“How great is the love the Father has lavished upon us that we should be called children of God.”* (1st John 3:1)

Something happens when you are helping people to overcome rejection and loneliness. You need to help them to see what God did for them so that they wouldn't be alone, they wouldn't be lonely and rejected. There are times when we are alone in God because the rest of the world doesn't want to go with God, but we are never alone. In that place God will show Himself mighty.

His glory will come upon you, and you will be full of joy when everybody rejects or abandons you for the Lord's sake. God will stand up for you, so you are never alone, and you know you are loved. This is the key to helping people overcome rejection. If God loves you, which He does (it isn't an if), then you are loved, so you don't have to run around playing games and trying to be loved, accepted, or worthy.

Who determines what is worthy? Man surely can't because he doesn't have a clue what is worthy. Only God can determine that. The devil is perverted so He doesn't know what is worthy. *“Worthy is the Lamb to receive praise and glory, power and dominion now and forevermore.”* Worthy is the Lord. The Lord is worthy, and He makes me worthy. God loves me. He won't leave me or forsake me, and that is all that matters.

Some people have made their marriage an idol. They have made their spouse an idol. They don't serve God first because they try to serve a person. The next thing you know, the person casts them aside and their life is devastated. “Can't live if living is without you,” they sing. You know, I look at people and say, “Man, you can live very well. Probably better, if you have Jesus in your heart as your Lord and Savior, and you have the life of God because this isn't all there is.”

Before Diana and I got married I said, “Love, you're the second love of my life.” She just looked at me, and I could see a look of devastation. I caught it and said, “Next to God that isn't a bad thing.” Then she understood what I was talking about. God is my first love. My wife is my second love. We set priorities and perimeters. I also told her, “I don't ever want to put you in a position where you will have to choose between God and me because I know you will go with God. I don't ever want you to put me in a position

where I have to choose between God and you because I will choose God.” You stand to be alone when you do that.

Alone with God is a good thing. Alone by yourself is a horrible thing. Many times when relationships fall out, the Father loves people and draws them to Himself saying, “Hey, I’m here, child. Come to me you who are weary, heavy laden, lonely, rejected, oppressed, sick, burdened, broke, or confused, and I will help you.” “Come to me,” the Lord says.

People want to hear some good news. They want to know that someone loves them and cares about me, and the Lord says, “Here I am. I’ve been here all along. I’ve been waiting for you to receive My love. I’ve been waiting for you to come to Me.” They come to him, and the Lord fills their life with joy and peace. The rejection, bitterness, hatred, hurt and pain all start to go away. Only God can take them away. Only God can enable people to forgive somebody else, and to receive forgiveness for themselves. Then He tells us to do what He did with others.

People are a blessing God gives us, but they are not our primary love. We ourselves are not our primary love, but we should love what God is doing in our lives. You should love the good work God has done in you. When I walk by the mirror, I say, “Oh, hello, Lord! What a good work you’re doing in me.” It isn’t about me; it’s about Him. I know I am loved, and once people know they are loved, they’re not going to receive any rejection.

I like to say, “Everybody loves me. There isn’t anybody that doesn’t love me.” People have told me, “I just heard somebody talking about you; they don’t love you.” That isn’t my issue, though, and that isn’t my problem. I love them, and I would be happy to tell them and show them if they would give me a chance.

That is how God is. God would accept the devil back, if the devil would come back. That is God’s heart. But the devil won’t ever come back because he doesn’t have God’s heart. He doesn’t have the heart of love and mercy and compassion. He is a thief who has come to steal, kill, and destroy. It is all about him. He doesn’t care about God and never will, and he wants everybody to go down the path of destruction with him.

Persecution vs. the World’s Way

“He who would have friends must show himself friendly.” (Proverbs) That’s why I tell people “Get out of your cave. You’ve been hurt, yeah, you’ve been abused, but what about Jesus? What did He go through for us? Stricken, smitten, separated, He took all of the wrong that we did upon Himself and gave us what is good, right, and of God. He is not bitter and upset about it either.”

“He endured the contradiction of the cross for the joy that was set before Him” (Hebrews 12) because He knew we were all going to get saved. All of us were to become God’s children and live with Him forever and ever.

Those who are being persecuted for their faith – what a glorious joy. What a privilege it is when others speak badly about you and do bad things to you because of your faith in Jesus. Then the heart of God is in you and on you. Jesus said if you are godly you will undergo persecution, but don’t get bummed out about it. The thief wants to persecute you to steal your faith.

People think if they make compromises, they will be accepted and loved. They want to be liked and wanted by people. God forbid. I want God to love me and have me around with Him, and my witness is going to help somebody else come to God.

Jesus on the cross said, *“Father, forgive them; they don’t know what they’re doing.”* A Roman soldier came to God right there. *“Surely He must be the Son of God.”* He witnessed that Jesus was not moved by the praise of man or the criticism of man. He wasn’t held in bondage by the fear of what they thought of Him. He lived to do the will of His Father in heaven. That was good for the people and good for Him.

When people are looking to be loved and accepted, they give, but they are looking for their gift to make a way for a friendship or a relationship. God isn’t that kind of a giver. He gives out of His heart of love whether I respond or not. A right heart would say, “Thank you,” and respond to it.

We already have relationship with God. He is not doing something to get a relationship. That is how the abusive system of the world works. They try to get an entrance, but we don’t have to do that. We don’t have to play those games anymore because we are loved. When we are loved, we are free. When we know that we are free, then no one can say or do anything to hurt

us. The world's system is about control or manipulation, having to do something or be somebody.

Have you ever noticed how people drop other's names in order to be associated with them? I tell people not to drop my name because some people love me and some don't. It all depends on who you are talking to. If you're trying to get in with that person by using my name, you may be in for trouble. Besides, how pathetic. How sick to have to use somebody else's name for an entrance. I've never done that in my life, and I don't intend to.

Paul said he didn't have to build his ministry on someone else's ministry. He did it through the Holy Spirit and through the works of God under the call and anointing of the Lord. The world's way is not what you know, but who you know. Forget that. You know God, and that is good; that is truth. When people want to buddy up to you so they can get something, they think maybe something will rub off on them. What I have learned about the human body is that when you rub your skin, the old cells come off, not the new ones. (Oh, just a thought.)

God's Love for Us

So when your helping people, you have got to get them to know God loves them. The thief doesn't love them. He wants to steal, kill, and destroy. God wants to bless them spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, and in relationship, but that isn't why they should come to Him.

Come to God because He is the only one in the entire universe who loves you with an everlasting love. He has nothing but good plans for your life. He will never hurt you, use you, or abuse you, but that is not the issue. The issue is that He is faithful. I do what He says because I know everything He says is for my good, whether I realize it or not. Whether anybody else follows Him or not doesn't matter. He is the only one in my life who is totally true.

Day by day we will finish this life that God has set before us, and I thank Him for it every day. It is a good life in God. No matter what happens, come hell or high water, God is with me, He is for me, He is not against me. Romans 8 says that nothing can separate me from the love of God that is mine in Christ Jesus.

If you help people to come to the point where they have that down inside of them, they won't be moved by anything that comes into their life, and whatever happened in the past is past. *"I forget those things behind and I press ahead to the mark of the high calling of God that is mine in Christ Jesus."* That is what God has for me, and along the way, I get the opportunity to meet a bunch of people and love them with the love of God, as well as see others come to know the love of God through what He is doing in me. When you know the love of God, you can share His love. When you have the peace of God, you know it and you can share it. When you have the joy of the Lord, everybody around you will light up like Christmas bulbs because joy is contagious. Love and peace are contagious because of God. It has nothing to do with me. It has nothing to do with you. It is God's love in us and through us. All we've done is receive it, believe it, and know it is true. Then we can share it. We may not do everything right yet, but we are pressing in.

Sometimes we think about ourselves and then we start to ache. It isn't my job to think about myself. God is thinking about me. Whom do you want thinking about you? Just do what the Lord wants you to do. He wants you to love Him, love what He is doing in you, and love others.

Love in Action

You have keys to life here, and the Lord wants you to share them with others. This is equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. God has called me to do that. Go out in the love of God, and watch what He will do. Be faithful and have integrity and truth. Try to do things the best you can as to the Lord.

The bible says whatever you do, do it with all your heart in the name of Jesus to the glory of God. Husbands and wives, submit yourselves one to another as to the Lord. God loves us, and that is why we now do what we do to others. What great changes can happen! If people would just realize how much God loves them, they would fall on their faces and be thankful every day. *"To whom much has been forgiven the same loves much."* I don't have to run around crying, "Love me, love me," or "Hey, look at me." I am already loveable. (People, we are so funny.) We don't have to beg or demand love. We are loved.

If you have been dealing with issues related to loneliness, hurt and pain, abuse, or rejection, don't feel sorry for yourself. The Holy Spirit doesn't

want any attention on yourself. That died when you received Jesus as your Lord and Savior. That was the old, pathetic you. Abused. Abusers abuse, and abused people become abusers.

That may have been the old you, but the Lord can deliver you and heal you in Jesus' name.

We are to destroy the work of the devil. "*Jesus went around doing good and destroying the work of the devil.*" The work of the devil is to trash people's lives and keep them away from the good life that God has. You are loved by the Lord, and don't ever let that thought leave you.

When people are in Christ, they love. You have a choice whether you want to walk out of the cell of loneliness and rejection, self-pity and unworthiness, the fear of man or woman, or you can stay there. But you cannot have abundant life in that spot.

I have encountered people who don't ever want to love again. "*A wounded person is like a fortified city.*" It is difficult to reach them, but God can reach them. He can do it because many people have been so damaged in their lives, they don't know what love is. When people want to get married, I ask them, "Why do you want to get married?" They answer, "Well, because I love the person." I just shake my head and say, "No, that's not the answer. You don't love a person until you've been together for 20 or 30 years – through hell and high water, through good times and hard times, through thick and thin, through sickness and health, poverty and wealth. Love is commitment, accountability, and responsibility. That's it." "Until natural death do us part," Diana adds. That's my bride.

"*Many profess unfailing love, but a faithful servant who can find?*" It is all about faithfulness. Whether I'm acting crazy or acting sane, whether I'm acting in the Spirit of God (to some, that's crazy), I won't go the other place, because I don't want to. You never want to see somebody at their worst. You only want to see people in the best light. That is God's way. That is love. You never want to see somebody fail or fall, or come to ruin. Even for a moment your heart shouldn't take pleasure or joy in that. It should break your heart. Then you have God's heart.

God's heart bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and never fails, never thinks about self. It is always giving, caring, sharing, and

believing for others. God's heart is to be willing to give one's own life that others be saved.

You have it. You just need to express it again. Love needs to be put into action... *"Faith which works by love."* (Galatians 5:6)

I told the Lord years ago, "I'm never going to permit anybody or anything to separate me from the people you have put in my life." I will not tolerate it. I will go after the thief with a vengeance, and my Father in heaven will come with a vengeance after that thief. I'm not talking about people, I'm talking about those stinking devils that try to separate and steal, kill and destroy relationships that God holds very precious and dear. The people God holds very precious and dear. That's not just the ones you get along with and do good to you. God holds each person precious and dear in His heart, and I refuse to let the thief separate us anymore.

Love God First

If you are sensing a militant kind of response coming up inside you, we're on war turf, and for peace there has to be a battle. If you want a relationship to last, you have to hold 1) God first, and 2) everybody and everything that God has given so that no thief can steal. You have got to love God first or the thief can come and take everything. God won't let anything separate you from Him. He is for you, not against you.

Is it easier to say your sins be forgiven, or take up your bed and walk? Being in a relationship with God and one with God enables His power to flow. If you're doing something out of line, like having bitterness towards somebody, lying, or cheating, it will cause physical problems.

Worry is also sin. It is a separation. I have a Father who loves me. No little child should ever have a worry, a fear, or a concern. My children didn't know what fear and worry were when they were little.

I was really excited with what my daughter said the other day. She said, "You know, dad's not always around anymore, and I'm going to have to work my own faith that God has given me." I said, "Oh, hallelujah!" Let me tell you, that girl is mighty in the faith. Her baby boy had open heart surgery, and she wasn't moved. That was God. He did a beautiful work out of it to His glory. The doctors ran another test the other day, and her son's heart is perfect. They said to come back in two years, and they would take

another picture. They were not concerned because God has done something very good.

Let us think about the Lord. Let us praise Him. Let us live our lives to the fullest. When we are finished, we're out of here, and God will take us to be with Him forever.

Deny yourself, deny your own life. Give it up to follow Christ. You have to leave everything and everybody to follow Him. Many times that means you are by yourself, but the Lord never leaves you alone. He comes in many ways. He will send people to encourage you, to stand with you, to love you. He will talk to you in a still voice and tell you He is there for you.

The Lord is the husband of the widow. (Isaiah 54) Even if your husband walks out on you, you are not alone. God says He is the husband of the estranged woman.

The Lord taught Diana a long time ago that whether I'm home or not, it is really about Him being there. I am just frosting on the cake. I say, "Thank you, God, because she's not looking to me as the source." I am not the one who meets her needs; the Lord is.

Still, it is no excuse for me to do nothing. I am committed, accountable, responsible and I do what I need to do, including clean up the dishes after myself.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
Out of Confusion, Distraction, & Emptiness
Chapter 20

Open Yourself Up To God

“Obedience is better than sacrifice.” If I say I love God but don’t do what He says, then I’m not giving Him glory, and everything else is just a waste of time, a bunch of hot air, or a puff in the wind. We are children of God, the real thing. We don’t go to church and look good and then go home and stink.

Someone told me one time, “Pastor, I can’t come to church because I stink,” and I said, “If you come to church at least you’ll get a bath.” He wasn’t talking about the physical; he was saying his life was all messed up.

Have you ever been in a situation where you felt unworthy, unloved, nothing was ever good enough, or you couldn’t do anything right? Aren’t you tired of that lie? God loves us with an everlasting love that never fades away or changes.

I’ve learned that if you expect, you will receive. No one who came to Jesus expecting went away empty. In other words, everyone who came expecting received.

If you go around thinking you are unworthy and unloved, you won’t receive much of what the bible says because the bible is all about telling us how God loves us, receives us, and wants us to have His plan. In Ephesians 3, Paul prayed for the church that they might know the height, depth, breadth and width of the love of God that is theirs in Christ Jesus.

You would think Christians would understand that, but they won’t unless God reveals it by His Spirit. Others have told them, and the devil has told them, or they have thought it up themselves that they are unloved and unworthy. When God says, “I love you with an everlasting love that never fades away or changes,” let God be true and let everyone else be a liar.

It is wonderful when people receive what the Lord says. Something has to happen. However, you have to give before you can receive. Many aren’t willing to give up their pride and humble themselves under the mighty hand

of God so that God can do something, but they have to give up the old ways to receive the new ways.

Jesus said you can't follow Him except you deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Him. You have to give up your life and take on His. Once you are willing to do that, then God has limitless things that He would like to do for you. He is just waiting and wanting you to open yourself up to Him so that He can love you and bless you. And when you do, then the Lord will come in. He says, "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone opens the door I will come in and fellowship with him, and we will have blessing together.*"

It thrills my heart when people open themselves up to God's word and truth and allow the Spirit of the living God to come in and do something. Until we hear the trumpet blast (when the dead in Christ will rise to meet the Lord in the air, and we that remain will be changed and will meet Him in the air. Then we will be together forever), we might as well get along together now.

Results of God's Blessing

One night I was thinking on the Lord, and an overwhelming sense of Jesus came over me. The Lord talked to me about how He took people from where they had been to where they are in their lives today as a result of His blessing. People stayed with it, they obeyed the word of God, and they become disciplined by the word of God. How far folks have come because of God's mighty hand, His good hand of blessing! Thankfulness rose up in me because it brings great joy to a minister of God. Like Paul said, "You're the crown of my rejoicing." When people do what God says, and they are seeing the blessing and reaping the harvest, that brings a minister of God joy in his heart and mind. I was thankful to the Lord because He was doing it all.

I am in awe of how the Holy Spirit of God can do such amazing things. The Lord does what a human counselor couldn't do in a lifetime. Since I am a counselor, I understand those things. I mean, there have been deep seated issues tormenting people since childhood, which came to steal, kill, and destroy them. The Holy Spirit can take it out of them and deal with it, but He isn't going to do it all at once. He puts the ax to the root and gets the rest "down the road."

Sometimes you don't get out of your problem; you just learn how to deal with it. That isn't coping; it is overcoming in the name of Jesus. You can't just zap other people to change them, but you can work on yourself and allow God to work. Always believe God's best for everybody.

God's Kind of Love

"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things; it never fails." (1st Corinthians 13:7, 8)

Selfish love is all about me: Bless me, look out for me, care for me, do everything for me. God's kind of love goes beyond and understands others, helps others, bears burdens and carries people to the cross, believing all things. In Jesus you have God's love. What kind do you want to operate in? The other never helped us before and it certainly isn't going to help us now.

People have to come to a realization that their selfish, self-motivated, and self-centered life is not good or of God. It never helps anybody, never blesses anybody, and ultimately it is only about "I'll help you, and you help me." God is not in it, and if He is not in it, it can't be good. It is a sorry lifestyle.

How do you help to get people out of confusion, distraction and emptiness? I don't mean loneliness, I mean emptiness (no fulfillment in life). When you are helping people, look at what God wants for them. He is trying to create them in His image. That is His goal. That is His desire.

Every false religion tries to make us equal with God by working toward that. In God's way, God wants us to be like Him, and He did everything in Jesus Christ so that we could come into His image. God created man in His image, but man lost it. Ever since then, man has been trying to make himself to be god or make up other gods to fill the void. There is a place in every person that is God's place, and if He is not in it, then life is empty and meaningless. They run here and there, trying to fulfill themselves and get that place of emptiness filled. They run to people. They run to money. They want things. They spend their life of meaningfulness, trying to fill the spot, when the only One who can fill it is God.

In their search for God, people take different routes, even though Jesus says, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me."* The only way that people can come into the destiny that God has

prepared for them before the foundation of the world is to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. When that happens, God's fulfillment for their life can take place, which removes the emptiness, confusion, and distractions.

Jesus says, "*If you love father, mother, son, daughter more than me, you're not worthy of me.*" These are people that we love and care about, but God is the one who gave them to us. Our focus always has to be toward Him. I have what I have only because of His goodness and blessing. What kind of life I will have is determined by God's goodness and blessing as I seek Him. Jesus says, "*The thief has come to steal, kill, and destroy, but I've come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.*"

Order and Purpose with God

God did not create that which was without form and void, or empty. He created with order and with purpose. He created everything... and it was good. The thief came down after being kicked out of heaven and destroyed it. Then God started over in Genesis 1, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*"

When we are helping people, we have to show them that God is not a God of disorder, He is not a God of chaos, He is not a God of confusion. "*Where there is confusion there is every evil work.*" (James 3) It is the wisdom that doesn't come from God; it comes from the devil who has come to steal, to kill, and destroy. When people are in a state of emptiness or confusion, they will be distracted from their source (where their focus needs to be), and they won't have any purpose. They get up in the morning and live life, brush their teeth, eat breakfast, say hello to somebody and go to work, come home, watch television, go to bed. Day in and day out it's the same old mundane routine, and there is no spark and no life. They are living with people, but they are just co-inhabiting. Nothing vital is happening. Vitality is good. Revival is good. Many people don't have purpose; they just have meaninglessness, confusion, and don't care to live because it's no fun. Those who have no fun in their lives don't know what they are here for.

They could come to church for no other reason than it at least blesses me that they came. I have ministered to the chairs before, but it's a whole lot better when there is somebody I can love and let God's Spirit loose on. The Lord is the same way. He created man for fellowship with Him. God is love, and He wants somebody to love. If you have all this love and you have nobody to give it to, what good is it?

The Lord had a plan and a purpose, but He had a purpose before He had a plan.

When God originally created the heavens and the earth, it was not without form and void. The thief came to steal, kill, and destroy. That is the same thing he tries to do in people's lives. When they are confused, they don't know which way to go, they don't have a focus, they don't have a purpose, there is an emptiness. We have to help them to come into God's purpose and plan. We need to help them to understand who they are, why they are here and what God has for them.

You learn something about God when you look at creation. Every day He did something. He started from nothing because creation was all messed up. The thief had come and stolen, killed and destroyed, so God started over. He can do that in your life too. You may have been living for a long time before God came into your life, but it doesn't take long for Him to take up the years the locust have stolen and to heal you, and get things back on track.

Every day God made something. Tell people to look closely at each day of creation, and show them that God is a God of order. There is no confusion or chaos with Him. There is focus, purpose, and a plan. God has goals that He wants to see accomplished, and He will accomplish them because with Him nothing is impossible. Everything He wants He gets, He only does what He wants to do, and He only does what He takes pleasure in doing.

People who are confused don't like what they are doing because they don't know what they're doing. They don't have any pleasure because they are tormented. Because they are double minded, they are unstable in all their ways. They don't have a focus, they don't have any purpose, they don't have any goals, and as a result, they don't have any plans.

The Spirit of the Lord hovered over the water. He was forming plans, for He had a vision and a purpose. He was seeing what He wanted to do like artists do when they go to the canvas. He knew what He was going to put down on that canvas and what was going to come from the spiritual realm in to the physical realm. Each day He did a little bit. There is some wisdom there. (Sure, slow, steady steps equals success.)

Sure – based on God's principles.

Slow – meaning just take your time. Be patient.
Steady – means stay with it.

This helps people who are confused, unsettled, and empty in their lives because it is the process to get them help, which gets them on to God's principles. Be sure and slow. God is working with us, He is helping us. We don't need to get in a hurry.

You lay concrete before building a house, but you shouldn't start framing the day after you poured it. There is process to use. Some get in too big a hurry. We need to help people to see that God is in control.

Every day God created, and He looked at what He did and said, "It is good." Only good comes from God. "*Only good and perfect gifts come down from the Father of Lights.*" (James 1)

Focus on God and His Goals

We have to help people to get to know who God is. God is not confused. He doesn't make empty promises, and He is certainly not distracted. You are the one who got off track. God says, "*Fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith.*" (Hebrews 12:2) "*He will keep them in perfect peace whose mind is stayed [fixed, anchored] on Him.*"

We have to help people let God fill the void, and then to focus on Him and allow Him to give them a vision and a purpose. Before the foundation of the world, God gave a plan, a purpose, and a vision for all His people that we should be holy and blameless in His sight and heirs to all His glory and promises. We are His children, dearly loved, whom He has lavished His love upon.

Most people have a hard time doing anything for themselves or for others, and usually if they are going to lavish anything, they are going to lavish it on themselves. "*Refresh others and you will be refreshed.*"

If you are empty, confused, and distracted, you need refreshing. When you're worn down from beating the wind and trying to make things happen. you need to be filled up again. You need to get a plan and a purpose. "*Without a vision, My people perish.*" Without knowledge, my people perish. (Hosea 4:6) We need a vision, and we need some goals.

God has set down goals in the Word and we want to help people to find them out. The first goal is that God wants us saved. He has already done everything to save us, and so we need to receive His salvation. When we receive it, we are not empty anymore because God came to live within us. Second, we have a purpose: *“to be to the praise of His glory,”* to live our lives with His presence in us, and to love the people around us.

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and He went around doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38)

Help people to realize that not only is God in them, He has given them a purpose on this earth, wherever they are, to love the people around them with His love. As God has loved them, so now they love others. As God has cared for them, so now they care for others. As God has supplied for them, so now they supply for others, and who takes care of them? God does.

After we have a purpose and a focus, then we need a plan. God had a plan when He made the creation. Everything was done in an orderly way, and God carried it out, with man as the high point of the creation. After He created man in His image, He blessed man and woman together in Him. He intended to love them happily ever after, but they went after emptiness, they went after distraction, and they became confused.

When people are confused, they compromise. What are they compromising? The promise of God. The Lord says, *“I’ll never leave you. I’ll never forsake you.”* Just before that He says, *“Don’t be covetous,”* which is wanting something other than God. When people are confused, they want something other than God, and they are distracted. When people are empty, they are wanting something other than God. If they had Him, they would be fulfilled.

“Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.” “Be filled” means “be being filled” with the Holy Spirit, which is a constant kind of action. Think about God, and then God fills you, enriches you, provides, supplies, and you have a purpose. Then you need a plan.

In Relationships

This works for business, this works for life, this works for family.

Marriages go stale because they don’t have any vision, any plan, any

purpose. The simple vision and purpose for a marriage is to give glory to God in the relationship and to bring godly offspring who will give glory to God and will beget other godly offspring who will give glory to God.

When people are confused, they get distracted, and they think only about themselves. As soon as they do, the relationship goes down the hole because they have lost their focus. They have lost the purpose, they have lost the meaning and the significance. If you would look at your spouse every day and say, “What a wonderful day to love God and to love you,” you would be off and running. We’ve stated the purpose, we’ve stated the goal, and that is a testimony to others to the glory of God.

You have to know you are loved, and that is what we help people to see. You are loved by a God who has you as His focus, and that is why God says, “*Be not covetous, for I will never leave you or forsake you.*” (Hebrews 13:5, 6)

God says, “I love you, and I’m caring for you, and I’m looking out for you. You don’t need to do that for yourself. You just need to keep focused on Me, and I will take care of you and all that pertains to your life.”

Did you ever get into “He loves me, he loves me not?” That is confusion, emptiness, and distraction. Just say, “God loves me” and then “*Trust in the Lord, lean not to your own understanding, acknowledge Him in all your ways; and He will direct your path.*” (Proverbs 3:5-6) Live your life on principle because God lives His life on principle. He has set down principles in the heavens from which He never varies: “*I am the Lord who does not change.*” (Malachi 3) His Ten Commandments are forever. They will be in the new heaven and the new earth. They were birthed in the love of God.

Man’s life is temporary. God’s life is eternal. God says to step up and start to live eternally. “*Set your mind [affections] and heart on the things above, not on the things beneath.*” Focus, on purpose. Those are the sure steps we want to help people to get into. God didn’t do everything overnight when He created. It took six days to do it all, and then on the seventh He rested and declared it holy to Himself. He sat back and enjoyed His creation. That is order.

High Life vs. Low Life

Those who are confused, empty, and distracted are just trying this, trying that, running here, running there, and wanting some sensation. Going from one thrill to the next, even though a lot of the things they go to aren't thrilling. They are looking for a high of some kind.

People that look for a high must live in a low. God told me years ago, "Son, help the people to get from the low life to the high life." The high life is in God. "*Since you then be risen with Christ*" is the high life. The low life is down here. Some folks don't have purpose, or their purpose is not God's purpose, and it will come to nothing. It will come to futility, emptiness, and meaninglessness.

It will bless you to read the book of Ecclesiastes. You will get a perspective on life and what is important to God. Let me tell you, Solomon did it all, he had it all, and he came to one conclusion at the end of the book. "*All that remains is to fear God and keep His commandments. Everything else is meaninglessness.*" Fearing God means there is honor, respect, and worship of God. Then keep His commandments. That is the bottom line. Everything else in life is meaningless. Solomon had more wisdom than any man who ever walked the earth outside of Jesus Christ.

What Does God Want?

Taking sure-slow-steady steps means we have to keep going. Many people give up. Confused people have started to look in another direction so they are divided. It says in Deuteronomy and other places "*Look not to the left or right.*" Don't get distracted, and keep your focus where it needs to be. What does God want you to do in this life? Ask Him, James 1 says. "*If any lacks wisdom, let him ask God.*" So we have to help people 1) to know that God exists 2) that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, and 3) He has a purpose and a plan for their lives. They just need to ask Him what it is.

What is it, Lord, what do you want me to do? Start with the obvious. This is where folks miss it. They are thinking that they need to go to Hong Kong, Africa, or anywhere but home. God starts at home, and that is where everything starts. From there we go on. If you purpose in your heart that today you will love the people around you, and you will share God's faith, hope, and love with others, God will take it from there. He will order the steps, and He will direct the path.

Stay with it day in and day out. There is going to be a blessing there. Folks are empty because they got distracted and confused. The ones that have purpose are full.

If you have ever had purpose but got distracted and confused, did you come to your senses, ask God's forgiveness and get back? God didn't find fault with you, and you probably kicked yourself more than He did. With that kind of lifestyle, there is a guilt that will also occur because people realize, "What have I done with my life? What has been accomplished?"

I was really blessed one day when my wife Diana came up with something out of the clear blue. She thinks about the God kind of stuff. She said, "If I've done nothing else in my life, or if I've accomplished anything, I have two children that I've raised that love God. They have their act together and are seeking to serve and love God. I find fulfillment in that." She was not talking about saving the world. She was talking about what the bible says – a wife and mother is to make sure her children are saved and walking with God. I said, "I'm going to add another one to this. You're the greatest blessing of a wife that I could ever have." God's will and purpose for her wasn't out there saving the world. I told her early in our marriage, "You're responsible to God first, me second, and then the children and family, and then out there to all the other folks."

Some people will confuse you. They will make you feel like your life is empty and meaningless. They will want you to do something that God hasn't given you to do, and they will distract you to no end. In fact, they will distract heaven out of you.

When you are helping people, get them focused back on the Lord and what God has for them and their life. What you have been given isn't what somebody else has been given, and you are not alone in it.

God's Order

There are people who try to work alone, but the Body of Christ should work together. It is not fragmented or confused. There is one head. (Two heads is a freak. Three heads is a monster.)

I had to set down that there is only one head in our household because there were four gifted people who were very strong in their ways. I realize the real head is the Lord, but I am next in line. You have to learn to follow

authority if you are going to be blessed in life. God first, then the authorities in your life, then comes you and everything else.

When my son was a little guy, he had this figured out: “God comes first. Then comes dad, then comes mom, and then comes Erin. God tells dad what to do, dad tells mom what to do, mom tells Erin what to do, Erin tells me what to do, and I tell the dog what to do.” He was just three or four years old, and he was thinking about this.

Sure-slow-steady steps. When folks are empty, they are not taking God’s steps. They may not take *any* steps. They may be sitting down doing nothing and have given up. None of us can give up, so we have to help them to realize that God is still in them, and He is still working even when they don’t feel it, even when they’re not thinking about it, even when they’re distracted and confused. God is still with them and He is trying to help them realize Joshua 1:5, 7, 9: “*As I was with Moses, so I’ll be with you... Be strong and very courageous. Don’t be afraid, don’t get discouraged, for I, the Lord your God, will be with you wherever you go.*” In other words, “I have a way prepared. Just get up, find it, and walk in it.”

What are you supposed to do? Love God, love people, and do what the Lord says, and God will have you on the path. He will order the steps, He will direct the path, and He will put people together.

Don’t run around looking for a spouse, or as far as that goes, don’t go looking for friends. Just be friendly to everybody, be loving, be kind, be nice, and let God order out your relationships.

If you have been disappointed in relationships, it is because you were ordering them rather than the Lord. You were wanting more than what was there. Maybe you have been on the other side where folks wanted more of you than you were able to give. In both examples the emptiness comes. Then comes the sorrow, the regrets, and all the nonsense that goes with it.

Sure-slow-steady steps. Steps of faith. When people are feeling empty and confused, help them to focus, help them with a purpose and a plan. Then stay with the plan.

Sure – based on God’s principles. Slow – meaning we are going to take our time, be patient, and let God form the plan. I had plans in my spirit 20 years

ago that are happening today. It wasn't the right time back then, but we at least started to get things in place. Besides, we are more important than what we accomplish.

Some live their lives like shooting stars because they don't have the character to hold the success. In other words, when the blessing of God comes, they are not able to hold it and maintain because they're looking at things and people rather than God. They lose their focus and get distracted.

The seed is sown and the word is put out there, but the people get distracted. *"The cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things"* is where the "be not covetous" comes in. *"For I will never leave you or forsake you"* the Lord says. Help people get their focus on the Lord. The Lord is the source and the answer for everything in life. The thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy is trying to separate people from God and keep them from knowing God. *"Without faith it is impossible to please God, for those that would come to Him must know He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."* (Hebrews 11:6) So the thief wants people not to know there is a God. If he can't stop that, then he gets them distracted, confused, double minded, and unstable. They are not receiving anything from God, yet He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (the ones who stay in there, who persevere, who stay with the plan).

Have a Plan

Years ago I allowed myself to get overweight. (There were two of me in the same body.) I kept the better half and lost the other one. What happened was I started to have a desire to change. I had a vision and a goal. Change doesn't happen without goals. No purpose is ever accomplished without a plan. It is one thing to want to change, but it's another thing to have a plan to change. Realizing this, I asked the Lord, "Father, I need a plan for how to do this." In the meantime, some other folks in the fellowship were doing some things to lose weight, and I was watching what they were doing. What works for one won't necessarily work for another, but what works for a bunch has a greater potential. That isn't the reason you select a plan, though. Everybody is different.

I asked the Lord, "Father, what do you want for me as a plan?" because there are a thousand and one kinds of plans out there as far as losing and gaining weight. I never knew anybody ever needed a plan to gain weight, but some

people do. Well, I watched the people, knowing it had worked for them, and I knew in my heart that was what God wanted me to do. Don't ever do something that didn't work for anybody. You have to take those steps, and those are the steps of faith. Once you get the plan, you have got to do it and stay with it.

People who are confused don't stay with anything. We have to bind that thief off of them in Jesus' name. We have to bind the spirit of confusion and tell it to get off. We have to say to the spirit that is working meaninglessness and emptiness, "Get off of them in Jesus' name," so they are able to receive the word of God and make some changes. Something helped you to get where you were, and you need to get rid of whatever it was helping you to get fat. You can curse the devil all day, but I found out that a few push ups does a lot along the way as well as avoiding the second plate. Start to do some exercise. I was talking to the Father about it, and He said, "Son, what do you expect? You haven't exercised in 13 years."

I looked back, and I can tell you the exact point where I stopped exercising. I'd go for the proverbial walk, but that isn't exercise. Get your heart going. If you sit around helping people and doing things on the telephone and whatnot, before long you'd better make some changes.

One day I was talking to someone in the hospital who was hungry and wanted food to eat. I asked, "How much exercise are you doing?" If you're not doing anything, you don't need a lot of food (while you're sitting there). You just need to rest and get better. You have to do what you have to do.

I really needed to determine what was important for me to do.

"Martha, Martha, you are troubled about many things," Jesus said. Confused and distracted people are troubled about many things. Everything is a trouble in their lives. They need to settle down and focus on what is really important for them to do. When He said, *"Mary is doing the one thing needful,"* Jesus brought Martha into focus.

Necessary Discipline

I needed to concentrate on several things regarding this weight issue. Weight issues are no different than anything else in life. They all need discipline. We have to stay with the plan and not modify it. Modifying it is cheating. If you cheat on the plan, how is it going to work?

I examined what I was doing. I found I needed to increase my exercise daily, and I needed to consume more water. It isn't drinking a lot of water that retains it. I needed a little education and understanding about it. Diana had been telling me for years, but I hadn't been listening. You only listen to what you want to listen to, and if you don't think you need to change, you won't change until you have a revelation. I started to bring the flesh under control.

Do you go to the refrigerator after you have just eaten a big meal? When I put my head in the refrigerator, I hear this little voice, "Son, what are you doing?" "I was going to get a little more of that, Lord." He says, "Son, you just ate a full meal," and I say, "You're right."

One day as I was reading the word of God, a great hunger came upon me. (Distraction and emptiness works in the physical realm too.) I had just had a big meal, and my belly felt empty and was growling at me. Most folks feed the monster. Why should my stomach be growling after I was just 20 minutes from the dinner table (with a full meal)? Confusion sets in whether to have that extra piece or not. You have to make a disciplined decision, a God decision. God will help you. He was basically saying, "You don't need that," and I said, "You're right, I don't need that." "*Man does not live by bread alone* [or a pork chop, steak, baked potato or bag of carrots]."

"Well, Lord, I was just going to get some healthy food," you might say. Confused people rationalize, justify, and make every abundant excuse to do whatever they want to do. They choose to be confused. We have to help people to focus. They can ask themselves, "Is this something I really need? Is this something God wants for me?" I can't tell you how many times I've heard people say, "God wants me to do this," or "God wants me to have it" when it's nothing more than the flesh saying, "Go for it."

If it is God, give it a test; don't go right out and do it. It is amazing how many desires will disappear because it isn't God's purpose or plan. It isn't something that God wants, and it will just go away. There are other things you have to tell, "Get out of here in Jesus' name," which is what I did at the refrigerator that day. I didn't need food, and I left. I wasn't hungry anymore.

“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. I will not allow myself to be brought under the power of anything.” Therefore I take those faith steps. I will get results, and I will see the results. At that time I lost 37 pounds in one month. I leveled off for a couple weeks, and then lost another 20 pounds, leveled out three years later and gained about 10-12 pounds back. Now I am working on bringing that back down. (Let your body adjust.)

The Process

The point is, we have a purpose, and this temple is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We want the spirit, the mind, and the body lined up with God’s purpose in order to give glory to Him. We want the finances lined up to give glory to Him.

When you are helping people, that is what you look at, but you can’t work on all the areas at once. Start to focus, and let God be your source. We are here to be to the praise of His glory. Get what is spiritual in place, and then peace will come to the mind, and confusion will break. The double mindedness will break. Get some scriptures in your mind to help people. I don’t give out a ton of scriptures. I give one or two. I say, “This is your verse. This is the one. All you have to do is hang on to it.” One verse will set you free. It will blow that devil running down the block. Off he goes. You start to believe on it. When you get it down inside of you, and as you think on God and pray in the Holy Ghost, speaking in tongues. It is amazing what God can do to break out and clear up things in the mind.

- *“Build up [energize] your most holy faith praying in the Holy Ghost.”*
- *“Be being filled with the Holy Spirit.”* As you pray in the Spirit, the emptiness disappears, and God’s fullness comes. It shoves the emptiness out. The next thing you know, you have a full life. You get perspective. Things start to fall into place. You have purpose, and a plan is able to come. As it comes, then the discipline also will come to take sure-slow-steady steps (equals God’s success, His purpose and will accomplished to His glory).

That is what has to start to happen, but it won’t happen overnight. Sure-slow-steady steps is the process for this to happen in people’s lives. Let me tell you, emptiness has got to go, and God will fill the house with His glory.

There are many things that aren't evil; they're just not good, which means they are not what God wants you to be doing at that moment in time, and if you are doing it, you will feel unfulfilled. You are not living a bad life, but it's like you're on the treadmill going no place, just going and going. That will be loosed, and you will start to see that God is ordering your steps. You will start to see you are taking the steps and you are going someplace. Something is happening.

When you are waiting for the big wave to come in, there is a time when no more sets of waves are coming. Since everybody likes action, you may think you are really doing something, but it is the same water out there when it goes flat and you are waiting for it. In that moment many folks start thinking, *I'm unfulfilled. My life is empty. There's nothing happening.* You've heard of the empty nest syndrome. When the kids move out, the husband looks at the wife, and the wife looks at the husband thinking, *Who are you?*, for their whole purpose and meaning for life was centered around the children. When the children move out, the parents don't have a clue what to do.

People can be married for 30 years or more and suddenly break up because the emptiness, confusion, and distractions came in. We call it crisis of life. There are times when a person thinks, *I have no meaning, I have no purpose. I'll get a little red sports car and that will do something for me. I'll get a little chickadee on the side, and that will put a little skip into my step.* It is a distraction, it is confusion, it is every evil work, and it is meaninglessness and emptiness. Only God can fill that void. We need to help people to see it. We can't do it for ourselves, and we can't have somebody do it for us.

Did you lose the glamour of having a new car when you got your first ding in the parking lot? Did you lose the sparkle in a relationship when you didn't get your way? All of a sudden it wasn't the same. When we are working and caring for people, we have to be patient because the changes won't happen overnight. About the time you think you have taken three giant steps, you're going two steps backward, but you are still one step ahead. We can't give up on people.

You Can't Do It for Them

Caring for people takes sure-slow-steady steps as God and you walk with them through it. Many times people will want you to take it all for them. They will want you to fill their emptiness. They will want you to think

soundly for them. And what is their purpose? You doing it for them. That is not your purpose.

Because I know I serve an Almighty God, one of my greatest challenges was having to say to a certain person, “There isn’t anything more I can do for you.” I see miracles everywhere I go and whatever I do, and I have seen some of the most hardheaded, hardhearted, impossible people turn to be the most raving-for-God on-fire people. I have seen impossible relationships become better than ever before. I have seen God do miracle after miracle in the physical realm beyond understanding or expression. I’ve seen everything that needed to be healed get healed, including six people raised from the dead. God is able.

I asked the Lord about this person, and He said, “Son, there’s nothing more we can do here at this time,” meaning, the man had come to a place where he didn’t want to receive. (Don’t ever let yourself get in that place. *“Today when you hear His voice, harden not your heart.”* You don’t want to harden your heart to the Holy Spirit.) I had to tell the man, “I can’t fill your emptiness. I can’t be your fulfillment. If you are going to be distracted, you are going to be distracted. I can’t do anything to keep you from being distracted. If you don’t want to continue, I can’t do anything to make you continue. You will just stay confused as long as you are thinking the way you are thinking.”

“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, it never fails.” I had not dropped my love for the person, and God had not dropped His love for him, but the Lord said, “At this time you can’t do anything more.” So I had to tell him I couldn’t do anything more. Some people get offended at those kinds of statements. Then comes the venom, the hate, and the slander. There has to come a point of realization where the person has to stand before God. When you are caring for people, you bring them to the Lord, and you leave them on God’s doorstep.

Some of the most difficult people to work with and to help are those who are empty, confused, and distracted. It is difficult because they are not working with God in it, even though they may say they are Christians. They are not believing God, and they are not doing what God says to do. Secondly, they are distracted, meaning they are not looking to God. Whatever their flesh wants is what they are looking for. Then they get confused because God is saying, “Go this way,” and everything else in them is saying “Go that way.”

They have to make a decision which way they will go. You can't help people until they make a decision to go with God because until they do, they are going to keep doing whatever they are doing.

The Lord has taught me over the years that I have to let people go. I have to let them do whatever they are going to do, just like the daddy did with the prodigal son, yet still be believing, hoping, wishing, and thanking God that they will come to their senses someday and acknowledge the truth, ask God's forgiveness and come into His plan. Many times I have seen people come into His plan.

Time is our friend. When you are caring for people, you have to be patient and know that God has everything under control, just like you are telling them, and believe what you're sharing, believe what you're doing, and you'll see the result. *"For I know whom I have believed, and I'm fully persuaded and convinced that He is able to keep that which I've committed to Him.* (2nd Timothy 1:12)

If you bring them to God, leave them at His doorstep. Then it is between them and the Lord, and you can go about your business, about God's business.

These principles work. I have come to the conclusion that when the dust settles, it is between each person and God. From a church perspective, I used to try to do things that people would like to do and want to do. They would say what they wanted to do, but then they wouldn't show up when we'd do it, so I learned a long time ago I don't do anything that way. I told my children, "This family is not a democracy. It's a benevolent dictatorship." I got that from my Loving Heavenly Father.

Sure, people can do whatever they want to do, but if they want to do that, then they are not part of the blessing, and they are not part of the family. You still love them and give yourself for them, but if they don't want to receive the blessing and the love, then they have separated themselves from the family. It isn't that you don't love and care about them and want God's best for them, it is that they have separated themselves and cut themselves off from what God has.

Jesus says in John 3 *"I did not come to condemn the world but to save the world."* If people should be condemned, it is because they condemn

themselves, loving the darkness more than the light, wanting the world more than God. What always comes upon caregivers is, "I didn't do enough. I should have stood in there more." No, you stand accountable to God for what you do and how much you do. I stand accountable to God for how I minister and care for God's people. Understand, people will always say you didn't do enough. You have to know in your own heart between you and God whether you did what God wanted you to do, and that's the bottom line.

One of the greatest temptations coming against caregivers is discouragement. *My labor is in vain.* The Lord says your labor in the Lord is not in vain. Whatever you did in the Lord towards somebody for good under the direction of the Holy Spirit will accomplish God's purpose. A seed has been sown, and it will grow.

Trust in God

You may never see the full realization of the harvest. The Lord told me years ago, "Son, you'll not see the full harvest that I'll do through you." That doesn't mean it wasn't good. How many lives God has touched and changed is amazing, but I will never see it all, nor do I have a desire to see it all.

I do love to see and hear testimonies. What matters to me is that I be faithful to do what God wants me to do to the people. God is doing it all; it isn't about me, and it's not about you. God is concerned about us. Take care of yourself spiritually because empty, confused, and distracted people will suck the spiritual life out of you. They will wear you down unless you stay built up in God.

They are empty. They are like a cup with a hole in the bottom. The Lord showed me that concept. I ministered to a fellow, but I couldn't figure out why he would only keep what we'd shared for a little while. It would be all gone, and he'd come back for more. I asked the Lord what was going on, and the Lord showed me a cup with a hole in the bottom. It was just a little crack. The liquid slowly leaked out because it couldn't hold it. I started praying, "Lord, help him to be able to hold it, and hold it long enough so he can get something out of it."

Whatever plan the Lord gives you, stick with it. Don't keep changing plans. The more options there are, the more opportunity for failure because you won't follow through on anything to get to the Promised Land.

A Word from the Lord:

For I say unto you this day, "Walk by My hand," saith the Lord, " and I will direct the steps. I will order the path and you will succeed in whatsoever you do, for you will put your trust in Me and not in you. Understand, I will order the steps, and I will direct the path, but be not confused, empty, or distracted or you will lack. Those who do such things will not see the blessing until they desire to be filled and to be full and to walk in My plan, seek My purpose, and walk in my ways," saith the Lord.

Amen.

If the Lord puts a spread on the table and you are still hungry, empty, confused and distracted, it's too bad you didn't go and get anything He had for you.

You will last a little longer as a caregiver if you understand what I just said.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
A Fresh New Day
Chapter 21

Each Part Does Its Part

We need to be reaching out to our communities, our neighborhoods, our family, friends, and enemies. It is the heart of God and the love of God, and this is the time. We want to eliminate suicide and get people to really become a part of a community. Unity is in the heart of community. One heart, one mind, one spirit. We will honor God, love people, do good and destroy the work of the devil because God is with us. We are going to get the job done.

I always thank the Lord for my congregation. I went to a prayer meeting for two days with about 40 pastors in the area, and one pastor and I were talking about giving care. He was saying that he couldn't get people to participate. I said, "That's odd. All I have to do is say the word, and we get the job done. Our people are trained to love and care, and are equipped to do good. The whole church does. We don't have to have 10 people do the work for a thousand." If we had a thousand doing the work together, then we would really get things done!

I used to tell my children when we were going on an outing, "We've got to get this yard work done before we go. If Dad only does it, we may be here all day, and we may not even get to go, but if we all pitch in, then we can knock this out and get it done. Everybody will get blessed, and we can go have fun."

That is how it works. Each part does its part. (Ephesians 4) When people grow up in God, each part does its part and everything gets done through the people's prayers, giving, attendance, encouragement and involvement. There are no "loose cannons," and we don't want firing at will. We have to do things in order, and we will get things done the way God would have it to be.

We have focused on care throughout these chapters. Are you believing God for salvation for people? We have to do some care to follow up on the prayer to get those people to receive the Lord. You can't just pray in secret that they receive the Lord. No, it helps to talk with them. It helps to share

and care for them, to work with them, and then to introduce them to Jesus. That is how things get done.

Did you ever have a secret love when you were growing up? You never told them, and then they married somebody else? You may have thought that they should have known that you loved them. No, people don't know you love them unless you show it and you tell them. Telling isn't enough. It needs to be demonstrated.

God so loved the world that He gave Himself, His only son, our Lord Jesus (God come in the flesh.) He gave Himself to save us, lived for us, died for us, rose from the dead for us. He demonstrated His love. Love has to be demonstrated, it has to be shown. It isn't just a fine thought, *Oh, it's so nice to be in love*. No, because God loves me, I now love you with the love of Jesus.

One woman was really blessed in church on Sunday, and she brought a friend the following Tuesday, and the friend got blessed on Tuesday because God was moving. She said to me, "I just really want to hug you. There's something about you that I just want to hug you." I said, "It must be Jesus in me." It is Jesus in me, and He is loveable and huggable. Always make it clear that it isn't you; it's Jesus in you. It is actually the love of God being shown through you to people.

Staying Thankful

Do you have something you are thankful to the Lord for? Thankful people are God's people. God's people give to the work of the Lord and give blessings to others, for God's heart is to give. He loves it when we honor Him by thanking Him, although He doesn't do it to receive thanks. Thanks is a love response.

Are you thankful that you are not where you were before and that you have changed? It is important to remember where you came from. Would you rather not remember where you came from? Understand, you have to remember so you have the "before." Yes, Paul says in Philippians 3 to forget the things behind and press ahead to the mark of the high calling of God that is ours in Christ Jesus. But I have found in life that he is talking about leaving the stinger of the past behind. Leave the curse of the past behind, but remember from whence you came because that will help you to stay thankful for what lies ahead.

Have you gotten into a hum-drum sort of life at different points in your walk with God? You got stale and dried up a little, and everything became routine. It's somewhat compared to marriage in that it starts out like a rushing river coming from the mountains (everybody is having a good time). After a while it mellows out like the Mississippi River, meandering along (ho-hum). Praise God, at least it is still moving. However, there is a danger of little stagnant ponds that form on the side. They're not getting fed with fresh water (no fresh life), and even the frogs and fish leave. Something has happened that we didn't want to happen, but it just happened. Over time little things went on to make everything become stagnate.

We need refreshing, renewing, and restoration, and we need to get the spark back. Being thankful is how we get the spark and freshness back. When I read that Jesus told the disciples, "*Behold, I give to you a new commandment,*" I got excited. I thought, *Oh, a new commandment. Great.* In my heart I want to do what God says. *Let's do this new commandment,* I thought. Then He continued, "*Love your neighbor as yourself,*" and I concluded, *That's not a new commandment* but a very old commandment. I wondered *What's with that?* However, I found out the word "new" means fresh. God's mercy is fresh and new every new day. Yesterday is over, and the future hasn't come. A new opportunity.

"To whom much has been forgiven the same loves much." If I totally forget the past, then I am missing something because I need the before and the after. I need to remember the day I received Jesus as my Lord and Savior, which was in the past. I need to remember when I got filled with the Holy Spirit and started speaking in new tongues, and all the joy that went with it. I need to remember that I got water baptized when I believed God. The old me went down in the water and the new me came out of the water. Like Jesus was raised from the dead, I was raised to a new life. The old was dead and buried with Christ and the new me came forth to serve God. I need to remember that.

I need to remember the times when God blessed me, helped me, healed me, and delivered me. He was there in my lonely moments and my weak moments. I need to remember those things of the past when He helped me to overcome temptation, or when He forgave me after I had given into a temptation, and He cleansed me and washed me. I need to remember how I

was before I met Christ, and so I stay thankful to God for what He is and what He is doing.

Is It Fresh?

The Christian walk is like a marriage. In fact, God calls it a marriage. He is the husband and we as the church are the wife, and He doesn't want a ho-hum marriage. He wants a vibrant, exciting, enthusiastic marriage. He doesn't want a stale, old, crusty kind of working. He wants fresh bread.

Do you like moldy bread? No, you want fresh bread, right out of the oven. Good stuff. God wants those prayers to go up to Him as a sweet smelling savor. He wants things fresh, and He makes everything fresh and new.

“Forget the former things. Behold, I do a new work.” A new thing. God does new and fresh things in this moment. Perhaps you read a particular scripture verse 100 times, and every time it revealed different things to you. That is the way it should be. If the verse reads the same way, and has the same effect every time, it isn't fresh. I have heard people say, “I already know that.” Actually, you don't already know that because God makes it fresh. He makes everything apply. Maybe if you really did know, you would be rejoicing about hearing it again. Everything of God is life and spirit and blessing, and you want it to be fresh and new.

People say, “I'm tired of these clothes. I want some different ones.” That is an interesting thought. Are you also tired of having the same friends? Friends get better with age.

As mentioned in the last chapter, I was thanking God one day about an overwhelming sense of Jesus that came over me. The Lord was giving me a great thankfulness for all the people He has sent to help me, to bless and carry on His ministry and do His work. It was so awesome – the friendships, the relationships, and what God has done over the years. There are people who have been here over 20 years, and there are many in between (heading toward 20 years).

Never take people for granted. They are gifts from God to us. The Lord starts out immediately putting people in family and community because He never wants anybody alone.

You want to keep everything vibrant and moving, fresh in this moment and in this day. When God says that He creates His mercy fresh and new every day for His people, He is saying it is a fresh start. Today is a fresh start. You may have messed up yesterday. You may have done well yesterday.

Past, Present, Future

The Lord told me years back, “Son, you can’t live off of yesterday’s testimonies.” Yes, they happened, and they were grand and glorious and I love to think about them because they encourage me. Then I know if God did something there, He will do it here. He will do it again. I thank God for that. Past testimonies give hope for today and hope for the future, and they give faith for today and faith for the future, but you can’t live off of them because they are in the past.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, so the past is a part of our lives. We want to thank God for everything in it that is good. Even the bad helps us because we learn what to do and what not to do, what to get involved with, what to stay away from. These things were written for us so that we might have examples. (1st Corinthians 10) I thank God for the word of God because He gives us help in the present.

God was in our past, God is in our present, and He has already been in our future. That is encouraging because we don’t know about the future. We can know what we know about the past, we can know what we know about the present. God is going to reveal even more today as He does every day. We don’t have a clue about the future except we have a promise – one about the hope of our calling (Jesus is coming back to get us), and another that God knows His plans and thoughts for us (plans for good to prosper us, not for evil, plans to give us hope and a future). Many people don’t know they have a future, but they have to remember that they are not *in* the future. They are in this moment right now, and this moment is fresh and new. It is of God, and God is here with me and with you.

Thanksgiving needs to rise in our hearts. The Bible says, “*Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.*” So when I enter into the new day, I want to enter into it with thanksgiving on my heart and on my mind. I want to rehearse the works of God, which are in the past. I want to welcome today and this moment because God has something special He wants to do. I want to thank Him for His presence with people around the earth. God is here. Emmanuel: “God with us.”

One of the joys around Christmas time is bringing out the verses about Emmanuel, God with us, in the Christmas carols. One year when I was expressing a little “bah-humbug” about some of the traditions of Christmas, the Lord reminded me, “Son, it’s the only time when the whole world is singing carols about Me, believer and unbeliever alike. Jesus is being lifted up”. He says, *“If I be lifted up, then I’ll draw all men to Myself from all the nations.”* I had an attitude adjustment.

Many people carry issues from yesterday into today. The scripture says, *“Don’t let the sun go down upon your wrath.”* Don’t start a new day carrying anger, bitterness, selfishness, jealousy, envy, or strife. Leave that all behind. This is the beauty of forgiveness: When we are faithful to acknowledge our sin (separation from God through actions, behaviors, and thoughts), then God is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. God removes everything that separates us from right standing with Him as far as the east is from the west. He blots out our transgressions. *“He will remember your sin no more.”* Speaking through the prophets, Jesus said, *“Though your sins be as scarlet, (indelibly etched into you so that you can never change the situation), I will make you white as snow.”* God is saying He can take all that out and make us brand new, so new that we don’t even recognize ourselves.

God wants every day to end that way, and every new day to begin – fresh, clean, new. If you ever get up early enough to see the sun rise and the new day start, notice there is no smog in the air; there is nothing but freshness and cleanness with dew on the plants and grass. It is a brand new day, a brand new start, a brand new opportunity. If we would just allow God to do that in us every day. When you wake up, and, if you have a family, you look at them and thank God for them this new day.

The first day of a marriage is brand new and fresh. When you see your friends (you may have had them for years), you should look at them like it’s the first day of your friendship. There is freshness, vibrance, happiness, and thanksgiving. Lose the ho-hum. Lose the mundane boredom. (Boredom is a state of mind). It is because you are not putting anything into it. When you are not putting anything in, you don’t receive anything out. *“Give and you shall receive, pressed down shaken together, and running over shall blessings come to you.”* (Luke 6:38) You don’t ever have to be bored again. If God is allowed to put freshness into you today, then you left all the past

behind, including the stingers. We keep the “before” because we want to contrast the “after,” which is our witness and testimony to others. They saw you before, and they see you after, and they see the differences. It isn’t that we are hanging on to the past to allow it to burden us down in the present or to inhibit and disqualify the future. It is that we know that God has forgiven us and cleansed us. He has done a good work, and that is why we are different. We are new creatures, a new creation. The old has passed away the new has come. We need to remember that and walk in it.

Be Fresh Again

The danger to Christian believers is that they settle, and then they lose the spark. Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit, said to Timothy, “*Fan the flame, stir up the gift of God in you.*” Let things become fresh again. Let your faith rise up, your love and your hope. Paul and Timothy lived in a time of great persecution, and people were betraying one another, turning each other in to the authorities to be imprisoned and killed for their faith in Jesus. Not everybody wanted to stand up and say, “Hey, I’m a believer.” It must have been pretty hard to pastor a church when everybody was running for the hills and abandoning, betraying, and forgetting their faith to save their lives. Paul told Timothy to be encouraged. “*Stand up, remember the faith of your mother and your grandmother who raised you in God. Remember that hands that were placed upon you and you received the gift of God, the Holy Spirit. Rise up in this moment now in faith, hope, and love and don’t abandon the faith.*” Don’t give up. *You’re not born of a spirit of fear or timidity, but power, love, and a sound well-balanced, disciplined mind.*” You become stable even when everything is crashing down around you because you know God is with you, and He is for you, not against you. There is a reason to rejoice and be thankful. There is a reason to sing and rejoice even though all things are going on because this is a fresh new day.

The birds get a headstart on us. They are chirping just before the dawn, for they are already singing praises to God. All creation praises the Lord that way. The Lord says, “*Behold, I make all things new.*” God builds on yesterday. Where we did good, He will pick up on that. He will continue that.

Paul said in Philippians “*I give thanks to God in every remembrance of you.*” That is a good thing to say.

Memories are convenient in many respects. Some days it isn't good that people forget the past because they have also forgotten all the blessings that have been done for them. *"Were there not ten healed and only one came back to give thanks to God?"* Those yelling, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him" were many of the same people who had been blessed, healed, delivered, and touched by God through Jesus' life and ministry. They all rejected Him. The next time you are feeling rejected, just remember what happened to Jesus. Everyone rejected Him, but it didn't bother Him because He had a relationship with His Father in heaven, and He knew God wouldn't leave Him or forsake Him. He knew He wouldn't be abandoned in the grave.

When He said, *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* He was quoting the first verse of one of the most glorious resurrection psalms in the bible. He couldn't speak out the rest of the psalm that said, *"My God won't leave me in the grave. He won't abandon me. He will raise me up."*

Don't go to sleep at night without a clean slate. If you have carried cares over from one day, did you find you couldn't sleep at night and were dragging the next day? You kept dragging until you let go of whatever it was, which is carrying baggage into the next day. Jesus said, *"Take no thought of tomorrow for each day has it's own evil."*

You can't carry 20 days worth of baggage into the end of the month and then wonder why you're wiped out, dragging, and pathetic. Take thought only about this moment and don't take a thought except to praise and thank God and ask Him what His thought is for this moment ("fresh bread" or manna from heaven). *"Give us this day our daily bread."* Jesus didn't say to store up for the month or store up for the year.

I am going to believe God today. I am going to trust God today, and I am going to let God take care of today. I don't know what will happen tomorrow, but I know when I get there, then I will deal with it, but in the meantime I will put my faith, hope, and love in God. I will go around doing good to folks, and when I go to bed at night I will search my heart. If there is any residue that I don't want going into a new day, I will ask God to take it away, cleanse me, renew me, refresh me.

Minister to me, Holy Spirit, as I sleep, and let me wake up refreshed about your purpose and your business today.

Flow with the Spirit of God

Did you get upset when your plans were changed? Did you get upset because they were *your* plans? We make plans, but God orders the steps. We need to learn to flow with the Spirit of the Lord. That means, yes, we make our plans, but God will order the steps. We need to learn to be patient, trust God, lean not to our own understanding, acknowledge Him in all our ways, and He will direct the path. (Proverbs 3:5, 6.)

Then we are able to enjoy the moment a whole lot better because we are at peace and full of joy in the Holy Ghost. We are not worrying. We need to enjoy the moment with God, ourselves, and each other. We can do it through Christ Jesus who strengthens us. We can't do it on our own.

Have you noticed how your mind is always thinking about things? You have to settle down. "*Be still and know that I am God.*" (Psalm 46)

A man wrote to me one time, "I think it's interesting that you say, "Thank you, Jesus" all the time." I wrote him back and said, "That's because I'm thankful to Jesus." I am thankful to Jesus for who He is. Then from there everything else flows. Everything else comes through Him.

Are you afraid to wake up in the morning because of what you will have to deal with that day? You may be tired and worn out from the day before, or maybe you stayed up too late. There are many, many reasons. However, you will find that when you start living the way we are talking about, you will love it in the morning. You will find a freshness. It's amazing what starts to happen. There will be an energy that goes with it if you do not have a list of 50 things you have to do for the day. It's alright to have a list, but just block out the other 49 things and start with the first thing.

The way the mind works! Are you tired out just thinking about what you have to do? I used to be that way. Sometimes I still get back into it, but I catch myself and go back. I used to think I had to do too many things, but the Lord has shown me that I only have to do what He wants me to do in that day – no more and no less.

Maybe you do have many things to do, but with the Lord, He will help you order the day. The key is thanksgiving, and not thinking about anything being a burden. If people are problems, the circumstance is a problem, you would be burdened, and you wouldn't have much thanksgiving coming

forth. Change that attitude. Give thanks and offer the sacrifice of praise. Even though you may not feel like it, even though you may feel burdened, it is a sacrifice of praise, the offering of your lips. You can speak life or you can speak death. You can speak blessing or cursing. You can speak burden or joy from the same mouth. *“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”* What is in us will come out. Is it fresh and clean? Or is it from the septic tank?

What comes out of your mouth the first thing in the morning? The bible says, *“Rise early to meet the Lord.”* It says, *“Let everything that hath life and breath praise the Lord.”*

Don't be distracted by somebody else's nonsense, but if you lead others into nonsense, you are guilty and responsible. Better a millstone be put around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea than to cause little ones to stumble or to offend people and get them sidetracked from the Lord.

On the other hand, when you encourage somebody in God, you will be blessed, you will receive blessing on that. Again, you can't live off of yesterday's testimonies, but today God has more testimonies He wants to do in this moment through us. You want to be in a place to allow it to happen. Thanksgiving keeps the pipes clear. Nothing is clogged up, nothing is stopped up and nothing is constipated. Everything is flowing good from the throne of God. God wants to flow through each of us to the people of the earth.

CARING FOR PEOPLE
Commandments & Consequences
With Testimonies
Chapter 22

What are the Ten Commandments really about? They are more than a bunch of do's and don'ts. They are God's principles for life and living. I love that the commandments of God are not grievous. (1st John 5:3) They are not a burden. They are a delight. Paul delighted in the commandments of God after his inner man (his spirit). (Romans 7:22) He rejoiced in the commandments of God because they showed him how to love God, how to love his neighbor as himself, and how to have a blessed life. Who wouldn't want that?

Blessing vs. Cursing

When people are ignorant of what God says, a poverty spirit keeps them back from having that blessed life. The commandments of God are very positive and uplifting, for they tell you how to be blessed. They show you how you will curse yourself if you don't do what they say.

I like to go through the bible and find where it says "blessed is the man." I like to key into that. I also like the ones that say "cursed is the man" because I can learn what is cursed and stay away from it. It makes life very simple. If I do these things, I will have the results. I will see the blessing if I am doing what is right, and if I am doing what is wrong, I will see the cursing.

I like to know the results before I step in and do something. For example, I know that if I give to God's ministries I will be blessed because I am giving to the Lord. God says He will bless you as a result of that. I don't really know how He will do it, but I know there will be increase.

On the other hand, He says if I don't give, then I am cursed. I am a God robber. (Malachi 3) Therefore, I look at what it says if I give – God will open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing so great I will not be able to hold it all. He will rebuke the thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy. Everything I set my hand to do will be blessed and prosperous. It will be a witness to other people and to the nation about how good God is.

God says to bring the full tithe, not a part of it. Some people who call themselves believers don't believe all the way about what God says, and as a result they don't get the full promise. If you don't take care of God's things first, then it will be like you have holes in your pockets. (Haggai 1:5, 6) It goes in and goes out, and you wonder where it went. You have nothing to show for it, and away it goes. When you take care of your own stuff first and neglect the things of God, there is a curse.

So even if I look at that promise in Malachi 3, but I'm not doing what God says, then God won't open the windows of heaven. All that I work on will come to nothing. There will be thieves that come and take parts here, there, and everywhere. The next thing you know, it all disappears. Nobody around me will call me blessed when I am not honoring God, and there is no witness going to the Lord that I am a Christian.

People are always concerned about their future. You can know your future: If you do what is right, you will be blessed. That is what your future will hold. Goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life. You will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

- *“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him.”* (Jeremiah 17:7)
- *“Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord. He will be like a bush in the wasteland. He will not see prosperity when it comes.”* (Jeremiah 17:5-6)

The people who are not honoring God can't see a blessing when it is right in front of their faces. They can't understand it because they are not thinking spiritually; they are thinking fleshly. They can't realize the blessing.

Appreciate What God Has Given

God is sending things to everybody, but it will pass certain people by and go to somebody who will appreciate it. Everything from God is good and precious. The world wants the good stuff, but it doesn't really appreciate the God who is the Giver of the good. Then people aren't able to enjoy what they have. Even when they have something, they can't appreciate it, whether it's in a relationship or in things that God blesses them with. Before long they lose it.

Have you heard someone say, “I didn’t know how good I had it until I lost it”? That may be in regard to a relationship, a job, or any situation, but if you don’t appreciate what God has blessed you with, then you will lose it. You don’t consider it of any value or importance.

Whatever is important to us we cherish. We make sure we take care of it and look out for it. Above all, the relationship with the Lord is to be our first priority. We have to get back to our First Love, with our perspective in place.

“The cursed man will dwell in the parched places of the desert. In a salt land where no one lives.” This deals with spiritual loss or a life that is desolate. Dry places. When the devils are cast out, they go to the dry places. A life that is dry has no freshness to it.

A certain lady who had many children found out she was pregnant again. She was not happy about the situation. Children are a heritage from the Lord and He calls them a blessing, but unfortunately in our society, they are sometimes considered a cursing. In some nations they don’t allow couples to have more than one child, and it needs to be a boy. They actually kill the girls. In America many women abort the children because there is no sacredness of life.

We live in a throw-away society. People throw away relationships. They don’t hold anything significant and important. If they don’t like something, they just throw it away. As soon as someone disagrees with them, there goes the relationship. They end up with a desolate life and no friends. Nobody is in their life because they don’t appreciate or care about anybody. They are simply just selfish, which can be very lonely.

When the lady who was carrying the baby was about six months into her pregnancy, I had a dream about her. In the dream I saw the woman running around with the placenta in her hand, showing everybody, and she was very happy about it. When she came up to me, I was nauseated and appalled about the whole thing.

Afterward I went to the woman and asked her a few questions, like what her thoughts were about this baby she was carrying. She said, “I don’t want it.” I told her the Lord said that she needed to receive this child with joy.

At one point in her pregnancy the baby started to abort, but after I told her she needed to receive this child with joy, she carried the baby full term. She had a midwife when it came time for the delivery. The child came out blue and grey, and he was dead. The placenta which is normally full of rich blood and life was ashen grey, and it fell apart in the midwife's hands. Then the woman remembered what I had shared and she started to praise the Lord for her child, thanking Him and rejoicing for him, and the baby began breathing. This child has been a blessed child ever since.

There is death when you don't rejoice in the Lord. We have seen six people brought back from the dead over the years and this was one of them, and it was because of the word of the Lord.

When I had the dream, the Lord was showing me that the baby was dead. God kept the baby for three more months in the womb. He grew the child in the womb. The baby wasn't dead, but everything around him to nourish him was dead. That came from the mother's desire that her child not live. She repented and asked God's forgiveness. God granted life and turned it around.

Cause and Effect

We need to have around us what is vibrant, what is alive, what is rich in God if we are going to grow into everything that God has intended.

If you allow barrenness, emptiness, and death, you aren't doing what God says, or believing what God says, and you won't have abundant life.

We can't be thinking unbelief or disobedience. Unbelief yields disobedience. Belief and faith in God yields obedience. Nobody can tell me they are believing God if they're not doing what He says. They are deceived. They are what the Word says are self-deceived. If I am believing God, I will do what He says because I love Him.

"If you love Me, you keep my commandments. You do what I say," the Lord says. That will bring life. If you love yourself, you will do what God says. You should want the best for your life, and for everybody you touch, because we don't live in a vacuum. Our lives affect other people.

There is a cause and effect for everything. As you do one thing, you are setting something else into motion. That is why I want to know if what I am doing will set blessing or cursing into motion. Have you ever had to retract something you said and ask God's forgiveness? Did you deal with the consequences of your actions?

A baby should not be the consequence of sin. But, understand, there are consequences. Which is better – to receive forgiveness or not do something wrong in the first place?

God's desire is that we not sin. (1st John 2:1) If we should, we have an advocate with the Father, our Lord Jesus. Still, that is not an excuse to go out and do what is wrong. There will be a consequence to what we are doing. Do you want good consequences?

There used to be a program called "Truth or Consequences." If you chose the truth, you would receive a good consequence, but if you didn't you got the bad consequence. God told Cain, "*If you would do what is right, you'd be blessed.*" You know if you do wrong there is a consequence. Live in the dynamic of cause and effect. If I speak well about somebody, that will release favor.

If I speak well of someone who is evil, then what am I saying? Am I condoning their behavior? "*God calls things that be not as though they are,*" but I cannot condone their behavior.

Jezebel's husband was King Ahab (I call him Jezebel's husband because she ran his life. She was wicked and he was wicked too. "Birds of a feather flock together." He was weak, but his intention was evil.). He invited his son in-law, Jehoshaphat, who was a godly young man, to come and fight with him. Jehoshaphat said, "Let's seek the Lord about this" which is what any godly man will seek to do. "*Have you sought the Lord about this?*" he asked Ahab, and Ahab said, "No, but if it will make you feel better, we'll do it." Jehoshaphat asked if there was anybody who could give them some answers. Ahab brought the false prophets in, and they all confirmed, "Yes, go ahead with the battle."

It is a good thing to check in with the Lord. Not everybody who says they hear from God actually hear from Him. All the men said what King Ahab wanted to hear, for they would find out what he wanted to hear and then

spoke it accordingly. (A vision from their own heart.) God will deal very seriously with the people who are giving words from their own heart, for they are not of the Lord. They all said to go ahead with the war, but it didn't sit right with Jehoshaphat.

Have you felt something inside that said it's just not okay? Don't do anything until you have peace. There is a false peace, but it usually comes after the true peace. There is always a counterfeit in the working. And so, Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there someone here who hears from the Lord?" King Ahab answered, "Yes, there is, but he never says anything good about me." Understand, the Spirit of Truth won't say anything good about what is false, evil, or wicked. Ahab brought the man of God in and, interestingly he said, "Yes, go ahead, do the war." King Ahab listened to it and countered, "That's not right. Tell me the truth." The prophet proceeded to tell him that he would lose his kingdom. He would lose his life, the war would go down and they would radically lose, and that was it. He walked out. Still, Jehoshaphat compromised and ignored the word of the Lord for his relationship with Ahab, and they went into the battle anyway.

In the meantime King Ahab already figured out what he was going to do because wicked minds are sharp. He set up Jehoshaphat by dressing him in his armor and had him wear his colors, so that when they were out on the battlefield, the enemy would go after Jehoshaphat, thinking he was the king. Ahab set up his son-in-law, and the very one who compromised the word of the Lord to go to battle with Ahab, thinking he was helping his father-in-law, was set up to die. Ahab fully intended that they kill Jehoshaphat, for then they would leave Ahab alone. When the guys came in to capture and kill him, they saw that it wasn't the king. They asked Jehoshaphat why he was wearing King Ahab's armor. In the meantime, a stray arrow struck King Ahab and killed him. (It really wasn't a stray arrow.)

On the way back, the Lord sent a prophet, what is called the seer, to Jehoshaphat to say, "*Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Because of this, the wrath of the Lord is upon you. There is, however some good in you...*" (2nd Chronicles 19:2, 3) Jehoshaphat could have lost his life right there because he compromised the truth. He compromised the word of the Lord, knowing his father-in-law was evil (not held in God's top ten favorites for obedience). He sided with Ahab. That is like putting a snake under your cloak.

Watch Out for the Snakes

The snake story goes like this: A guy climbed up the mountain and there found a snake who was freezing. The snake begged, "Please, please, please take me in. Bring me down where it's warm." The man took the snake in his shirt and brought him down the mountain. At that point, the guy felt a piercing, searing pain. What had happened? The snake had bitten him. He threw the snake on the ground, and asked, "Why did you do *that*?" The snake looked at him and said, "Well, you knew I was a snake when you picked me up."

The Lord makes it very clear in His word what to do and what not to do - What is blessed and what is cursed. Why do something that God says is cursed? How can you disobey Him and then expect something wonderful to happen? It isn't going to happen. It will come back and bite you.

The snake asked Eve in the garden, "What did God say about this?" She said, "God says that you shouldn't eat of the fruit of this tree or you will surely die." The devil countered with, "Will you surely die?" And she answered, "Yes, God says you'll surely die." Then she went ahead and ate the fruit!

God said she was surely going to die, but she did it anyway. Adam came along and took it simply because Eve said to. (Will the *real* men stand up? The godly men.)

The whole story would have ended differently if Adam had stood up and said, "Forget it," or if Eve hadn't been hanging out where God said not to. There were consequences, and we are living in them today. It is what brought poverty into the earth. All sickness, disease, wars, fighting, calamities, earthquakes, and death came into the earth as a result of what they did. All the deformed babies and mental problems that people have. Depression, worry, fear, torment, and terror all came in because they compromised the clear word of the Lord. Then Adam and Eve saw that they were naked, uncovered, exposed.

What the Ten Commandments Taught People

If we can teach our children and ourselves to take God for what He says and do it, we will be blessed. How easy! Therefore, the commandments of God need to be taught. They need to be taught in the way that God teaches them

by His Holy Spirit. Many people don't even know what the Ten Commandments are.

Some of the people in the congregation were asked, "How has learning about the Ten Commandments helped your life?"

Here are their responses:

- *It really amazed me when we got to the tenth commandment about not coveting, and I heard it put in a different way. When you are wishing evil on someone or wishing they would not succeed, that is a form of envy. So it was like a slap in the face. Then I began to see how some of my thinking processes were that way, and it just got bigger and bigger. It was like, yikes! I'm not such a nice person. When I saw that, the Lord had me ask for forgiveness, and He forgave me. Now I have caught myself sometimes saying that people deserve something other than what they are getting, but God is merciful. I want to have the heart of God. I have begun to get an awareness, and I will cast down imaginations and pray a blessing on people. But it was a revelation.*

Were you not happy with someone else getting blessed? If you're not happy about it, you will never be blessed. The Bible says rejoice with others because if they are blessed, you are blessed. We are all one.

- *What comes to my mind is that the Ten Commandments were written by the finger of God. And secondly they are on my heart. I don't care how many times they try to get rid of the Ten Commandments, it is impossible. I'm a born again believer.*
- *The first commandment about loving God and not having any idols helped me. My emotions were my idol.*
- *I was surprised with myself with the commandment "Thou Shalt Not Kill." I didn't realize, when you explained murder, that your words can be murdering somebody, not just in the physical realm. When you say something or wish something bad about a person, you're murdering them. So, the Lord showed me that I need to watch my words and catch myself.*

- *For me it was to honor the Lord on the Sabbath. Saturday has always been a big day of work for me, so it was a hard step to put everything aside on Saturday, trust God, and depend on Him to make up that lost day.*

Isaiah 58 is a great blessing.

- *Stealing is an act of violence.*

The commandments of God should be right in front of our faces. Day in and day out. It says to teach the children along the way wherever you go, whatever you do, and be thinking about the commandments all the time.

- *I have five children so the most important commandment for me is that they honor their father and mother. I have three older children that have other parents and they go to other homes and then come back. Trying to get them back in line and saying, “Hey, you need to listen to me, obey me, and honor me” was a big thing. When they were younger I made little charts. With my son I made dinosaurs. I put all the commandments on it and I would give them a reward if they knew all of them. Even now as they are getting older, they get into themselves and I have to constantly keep it in their face. If you have kids, you have got to do it. I know it will work and I know it does work, but some days you get frustrated, but that is the one that I look at the most.*

Honor your father and mother stands out to me more than anything because even though I lived in an ungodly world when I was growing up, I still honored and respected my parents just because of the fact that they were my parents. I had a father that abandoned me at a very young age and another one that stepped into his place, but when I finally spoke to my real father on his death bed, I said, “There is a part of me that will always love you because you’re my father, and the other part is that I will always respect you because you are my father.” So, I never had hatred towards him and that was what I was trying to teach my children. This is a big thing. That one commandment is huge because God says that’s the only one with a promise. So, I encourage everyone who has children, don’t ever stop making them respect and obey you because it is going to mean a lot when they get older.

That is the honor principle.

It is, and I told my children I didn't have parents who were always there. A lot of times I was raising my younger brother, but it didn't matter. I still respected my parents and loved them no matter what. Growing up I knew not to talk back, but it seems in this generation there's a lot of that. To me it is what gets me going the fastest — talking back to me when I ask them to do something because when I was young, I didn't even think twice about it. I knew the shoe was going to come out or the hanger or something, but I learned at an early age you just don't do that. They feel that they need to get that word back to you. It is total disrespect and disobedience, and it's tough with me because my husband works a lot so I'm home with all of them, and even trying to teach the two little ones. They were throwing tantrums this morning trying to get ready for church and they got the rod from dad. You need to stay in there, but with me and the kids sometimes I have to snap them back and remind them, why did you talk to me like that? Trying to bring back, if you want to live a long life, you need to obey mom and dad. If you don't, what does God tell you? Many times I make it short. I just say, "Go see what the word says. If you're acting the way you're supposed to, then come and tell me, but if you're not, then stay in your room until you are ready to come back out, and as long as you live in our house, you will do what is right."

Here are some testimonies from people who have been equipped to care for people who are going through different things.

- *I learned about how to love by loving people the way God loves them, and He teaches us to see them in a gentle, kind light. It's hard to look at another human and love them through God's eyes, but He's teaching us to do that, and part of the commandments is to love your neighbor as yourself, and love as He loves.*

Yes, He is helping us.

- *When you shared the first commandment, honor the Lord God with all your heart, I found that having that in my life affected not only honoring God, as far as my own daily walk with Him, but also my*

respect for my husband, in my work life, and in my family life. It touched so many areas. I've been through a lot, but through your teaching, God is doing a lot of cleansing within me to where I am able to honor. He's putting me back on the track where I need to be, and I thank Him for that.

The first love principle is honor. Love and honor go together. If you want to win people for God, and you want to have a blessed life you must honor God first and then people. God says it will be well with you and you will live long on the face of the earth.

- *I was just seeking the Lord about what He wanted me to do, and before I wanted a lot of attention, but what the Lord told me was I burn brightest on the back burner. He told me that my ministry, I guess you could say, is to listen and to pray. When I started keeping that in my mind, then people would come and talk to me. I would just listen and I would pray, you know, to myself, and then a few things would come out of my mouth and they'd go, "Exactly, exactly." It was like the Lord knew and then they knew, and it would help them somehow.*

If you're expecting attention, then you are not listening. When it's all about you, you're not ministering or carrying for anybody, and God actually won't even use you.

- *I've been taking care of my mother, and a lot of emotions from my childhood have been coming up. Yesterday I was helping her to get her house in order for Christmas, so I moved her carousel, and I went outside to do some other work. Then I heard my mom going, WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED TO THE CLOCK. And I thought, you know, I'm going to lose it here because I was hanging up over a side of a garage. Then I just said, "Mom, what are you talking about?" She said, "Well, that clock was put up by two men." And I said, "Well, in order to get the carousel up I had to do it a certain way." I could see that old emotion coming up where I was going to let her have it, and that doesn't do anybody any good. I mean really, it comes up when you don't think so because I'm 61 years old and my mother's 87. I just stood there, and I asked the Lord to help me, and He really helped me because it could have been a very ugly picture. We could have thrown things at each other, and you know this is Christmas time. It's*

supposed to be a real sweet time. So, anyway, I later laughed about it, because I thought, Gee, my mom's going to be dying soon. I thought she was going to die last year. I really did. Her husband died, and we buried him in West Virginia and I thought it's going to be a double funeral because I thought that was the way it was going. She's been through a lot, and I thought, Well, I'm not supposed to be doing what I'm doing with her. You know, shouldn't she just go to Alaska and find a nice little rest home or something? Now, it's just been, it's only God. That's my whole point. It's only God because if it had been me, she might have died yesterday. I don't know.

So, what are you learning about that? What quality is in you?

What I'm learning is I have to really be dead to myself and pray up before I go in there.

How are you to be towards her?

Loving.

Alive to God.

- *Yes, alive to God because I was raised with a critical, judgmental type of spirit family. I mean before we could get the turkey out of our teeth we were already talking about my aunt who didn't do this or didn't do that. We weren't looking at, God, the aunt's alive, and we did eat the turkey. That's a hard thing when you're raised in that because then you get judged. You're sitting there, and then this anger comes up, but then you've got to be alive to the Lord. So, I'm learning that, but meanwhile it's like I'm psychotic or something because I know I'm a Christian, but this WOMAN'S DRIVING ME NUTS. Yet, then on the other side, isn't she sweet? Everything is nice, and she looks so happy. I am learning love. Love, you know, it's only love because He loves us, and He's put a lot of people in my life that normally, years ago, I may not have been able, I would have probably left for Alaska. But now it's just, I'm seeing it in God's eyes. But there are those moments when that anger wants to come up, and I just want to say, "Don't you get it?" Because she's a little controlling. But it doesn't matter if they're controlling.*

So what do you do at that moment when that anger comes up?

Drop, stop, and pray. I may lay out real soon and let it all go. But that's what it is. I'm learning, and I see Him working through that because before I used to have a real hot anger. It was like everything was so good and everything was so happy, and then the other side is like, WHAT THE HECK, GET OUT OF MY HOUSE.

Frustration comes because you are trying to change the other person. Many times the folks that affect us the most are the most like us, or we are like them.

But I don't see myself controlling. I mean, I might be.

Nobody ever does. That is the thing about self and pride.

That's true.

We have to come to grips with the fact that the Lord loves that person, the Lord loves me, but I'm not going to take abuse. I don't have to, but *"be not overcome of evil; overcome evil with good."*

I will try to help that person understand what they're feeling, why they're doing what they're doing, and not react to it. That gets self out. That is what she said: "I need to die." I can't go in there to help anybody if I have an agenda about the way I think this should go. Otherwise I'm just as controlling as they are.

Well, I used to help other people through the ministry or however God said, and it was easy. You know, it was kind of like, well, we do this.

Because they are not your mother.

They're not your muth-a. And so when it's your mother, you know, all these old kind of ways come.

Your mother knows all. She is the one who taught you everything and you don't know anything.

That's it. I thought she was going to change because she kind of weakened for a while there.

“By weakening” you mean to say she was sick?

Yeah, she was sick.

And not able to help herself or do anything.

That's true.

And she was very thankful that somebody was around to help her in her time of need, and she wanted you to leave your husband and take care of her.

Yeah.

So, friends, when we are helping folks, we need to set boundaries. We are not controlled by the people we are helping, but we set the boundaries as to what we are able to do and what we are not able to do.

Right. That's really true.

And ultimately you are not the source of the care. The Lord is the source of the care.

There is a tendency to take a care on because you want to help them. You want to make sure of this and that, but the Holy Spirit told me to leave her and just come in on certain days.

People get dependent on you.

I think you had told my husband that she may live another 20 years or another hundred years, my God. Anyway, I do love my mother. I know this sound tacky, but you try it some time. It's not easy. Then, Pastor, your wife helped me too. She said, “You don't have to literally do the diaper thing,” I mean, to get technical...— Or do the shower thing and all the stuff that I was doing. She said, “You can make sure that she is being taken care of, but that doesn't mean that you are necessarily the one who has to be doing all the stuff.” My mom was so cool about it. She sort of expected me to do it all. You

know, from the south, a southern bell. But it all worked out then. The Lord had another way for me. So, it was just come in there and make sure, but not do all the different kinds of care myself. Because it's your mother, I mean, it's just totally different than somebody else. Anyway, that's good.

Pray.

Pray. Yes, there's got to be prayer. And before I go in there the Lord said, "pray."

Bind what isn't of God before you go in. You pray going in, you pray while you're there, and you pray going out.

Yeah, just pray your guts out!

And believe when you pray that you receive what you ask, and don't come in with a set agenda trying to change somebody else because it won't work.

That's what I was trying to do.

Yes.

I thought, This is it, she's on her way out, we're going to change her.

Oh, so you admit to being controlling?

Yeah.

Oh. Alright. Give thanks to God.

When that word goes out, it is changing and touching, and we know that. The word of God doesn't go out and come back empty, but it is accomplishing the purpose for which God sends it.

Prayer:

We bless you, Lord, for the good word that you give, and the receptive hearts to receive that word, and for all the changed lives as a result of your Holy Spirit and your word working in us in Jesus' name. Amen.

Responses to the Word

A member of our congregation wrote, “Pastor, I believe I’ve had a Holy Ghost moment.” I like those. The Lord shows you something, and He does something. “As you were teaching about stretching our tents, lengthening our cords and strengthening our pegs, I got to thinking, how does one strengthen His pegs? I thought about this, and it came to me that the scripture does not say, get stronger pegs, but strengthen your existing pegs.” (Isaiah 54)

“Perhaps the best way to strengthen tent pegs is to pound them further into the ground. Actually, that’s probably the only way to strengthen the ones that are in use. As I continued to think about this (meditating on the word that’s been shared. You know, it gets deeper in you.), the word commitment came to me, and wouldn’t go away. As we left that evening, I wondered what the heck commitment had to do with all this. This morning as you began to share, and particularly at the end of the last service, there it was. Commitment, and an obvious call to fish or cut bait.”

Either you are with God’s program or you’re not. You can’t be in the middle. You are either on the team or you’re not on the team. *“You are either for Me,”* Jesus says, *“or against me. You either gather with me or you scatter.”*

“I believe God is calling us to drive our stakes in as far as they will go. When you do this, you obviously have committed to that position. If you lightly tap the pegs into the ground and wait to see what happens, you have not committed to that position, nor will your tent withstand the elements. Well, there you go. I got excited about that.” He says that both his wife and he have been enriched and blessed by the work that “You continue to allow the Holy Spirit to deliver through you. Our walk with the Lord has been more intense and vibrant as a result of Glory to God Ministries.”

I like the word intense and vibrant. How alive! That is what we are looking at. The Lord told me many years ago, “When you give the word of God, demand a response.” It isn’t that it goes out there, and if you want to do something with it, fine, if you don’t, too bad. No, it demands a response. You are either with it and for it, or you are against it. You are either for God, or you are against God. You are either going to do something with the word or you’re not going to do something. If you do something with it you will be blessed, if you don’t you will be cursed.

People over the years have said, “Pastor, don’t talk about that subject,” like they were trying to tell me what to preach. I actually had a church board tell me, “You can’t talk about those things.” (That’s what the denominational church said.) I say, how can I not talk about it? It is there in the word. “Well, we don’t believe that. We don’t teach that.”

If it is there in the Bible, then why don’t we read it, why don’t we teach it, why don’t we believe it? If nobody knows about it, they can’t very well do it.

Another fellow asked, “When are you going to finish the series you’re teaching?” and I knew where he was going. I replied, “Oh, probably never.” Then he stated, “Well, I’ll come back when you’re done with it.” I said, “Then, happy trails.” He didn’t want to hear the word of God and be responsible for it. I have heard that one many times. If you hear it, then you will be responsible and accountable to it. If you don’t want to do it, you’ll come back later.

When Jesus got spiritual with the people, thousands of people left. (John 6) That was the best church service He had ever had. He looked at the 12 disciples and said, “Are you going too?” Their response was, “To whom shall we go?” In other words, you have the answer to life. They were thinking about leaving, but they figured he was the best option happening. But when He was crucified, they thought it was all over, and even before He was crucified, they all left him.

At first, most people can’t handle truth when it comes, but if they will keep their hearts for God, they will stay with it and the Holy Spirit will work it. The next thing you know, they start to grow into God’s image rather than their own image, and they get blessed.

There are hard sayings in the bible. “*This is a hard saying.*” Why? It calls people to a higher commitment, accountability, and responsibility, which is God’s definition for love. When people are challenged to a higher commitment, accountability, and responsibility, many times they don’t want to go. They don’t want to move on because things are going to change. It will cost them.

Jesus says if you deny yourself and leave everything to follow Him for His sake and the kingdom of God, God will bless you 100 fold in this life, with persecution. There is a great blessing in withstanding persecution for the sake of your faith in Christ. The highest crown is the martyr's crown. *“You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon you. You shall be my witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth.”* The word for witness there is martyr. *“You shall be my martyrs to the uttermost parts of the earth.”* You may die for your faith, but God gives the highest crown to the martyr because that is Jesus' action on our behalf.

This should be very simple. It is just a matter of doing it. The Lord says to do what you know to do, and if you don't understand something yet, the Lord will show it to you if you pursue it.