

Faith Alive

in

Heart, Home and Church.

by

Wilbur S. Johnson

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HIGH APPRECIATION!

It was in the beginning of time that God said "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper..." (Genesis 2:18)

My wife, Imalee, and our finding each other is also a matter of Providence. My life would be incomplete and the stories and the writing of this book unlikely without the every faithful assistance of MY HELPER--

Imalee B. Johnson

Imalee first shared this poem prior to singing at one of our revivals. The golden deed thoughts describe her important ministry of life in a beautiful way.

There isn't much that I can do, but I can share my bread with you, and sometimes share a sorrow, too--as on our way we go.

There isn't much that I can do, but I can sit an hour with you, and I can share a joke with you, and sometimes share reverses, too--as on our way we go.

There isn't much that I can do, but I can share my flowers with you, and I can share my books with you and sometimes share your burdens, too--as on our way we go.

There isn't much that I can do, but I can share my songs with you, and sometimes come and laugh with you--as on our way we go.

There isn't much that I can do, but I can share my hopes with you, and I can share my faith with you, and sometimes shed some tears with you--as on our way we go.

There isn't much that I can do, but I can share my friends with you, and I can share my life with you, and ofentimes share a prayer with you--as on our way we go.

DEDICATION

TO the EVERLASTING GLORY of GOD, my Father: JESUS, my Saviour and the HOLY SPIRIT, my Guide.

The testimonies and history of this book tell of a faithfulness that has no equal on earth!

*Of a love that followed me as a prodigal thru a desert land of many a year...

*And a voice that never grew weary of calling me from the country hills of my childhood on to town, thru the cities, to the East and back to the West.

*With beautiful provisions of "Water from the Rock," "Quail in the wilderness," "Manna" from the sky with "Ravens" and Angels all along the Way.

*Guidance as clear as a "pillar of cloud by day" and a "pillar of fire by night." He led the Way!

*And always and always that CERTAIN ASSURANCE "FEAR NOT, FOR I AM WITH YOU."

Praying and Praising!

Wilbur S. Johnson

Please meet the author---

The author and his wife, Imalee, and daughter, Lisa, are true examples of what it means to walk with Jesus in living by faith. Just as we see the rainbow after a rain, so we see the rainbow of thanksgiving and praise in the lives of the Johnsons. They have learned to wait on God and follow orders in knowing that God is able to work all things together for good.

As we were driving down the street one cold blustery Sunday, a column of leaves was marching, dancing, swirling in front of our car. They had fallen from their lofty home in the tree tops to the street below; but, they were not overcome. I called it the "Ballet of the Leaves" for it seemed as if they were leading us.

Wilbur and Imalee Johnson are like that in that no matter what happens, good or bad, they never forget that there is victory in Jesus. Like the dancing leaves in the wind, the Johnsons have their own special way of rejoicing in the Lord. They are spiritual leaders worthy of following.

Since the Word of God never grows old--being the same yesterday, today and forever--there is always a new truth to be learned. I have known these folks for many years and they have been a blessing to me as I sat in their "Faith Alive Revivals" and attended the "Dealing With The Devil" classes. The Johnsons not only tell it like it is, they live it!

This book is written that multitudes whom the Johnsons can not possibly reach through "Faith Alive Revivals" may be encouraged to step out on faith and find the joy and comfort that comes from a greater commitment to God.

It is exciting to see the manifestation of God's love as He leads His faithful servants and gives them joy unspeakable and full of glory in the fruits of their labor!

To God be the glory!

-*Hazel Burghardt -
Dodge City, Kansas

(*)Hazel Burghardt is one of those beautiful "dear hearts and gentle people" who knows Jesus and wants everyone else to enjoy Him too! She has a daily prayer ministry which includes us and a multitude more. Besides her gifts of gold and daily prayers, she has a ministry of golden words which has often blessed us. Now in her mid-eighties she is still a faithful member of the Central Christian Church of Dodge City.

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-A PERSONAL WORD-

Not until my teenage years did I know that churches met on Sunday morning. For the church I attended as a child met at 2:30 on Sunday afternoon. The PLACE was an old country church building atop one of the lonely Gyp Hills southwest of Medicine Lodge, Kansas. Founded in 1910, it is called "UNION CHAPEL". The REASON for the unusual meeting hour was that four of the town Preachers--Methodist, Christian, Presbyterian and Baptist--rotated through the Sundays of the month, preaching in town on Sunday mornings and driving the seventeen miles of dust or mud through the wind and rain, cold and heat, to preach for us each Sunday afternoon.

I found my way into this world about three miles down the road from this old grey stucco church building via the heir-lines of my parents, Galen and Tempest Johnson. The day was June 4th and the United States was in the middle of the Big Depression.

I found my way into another world on a cold winter night during a Revival Meeting in the Union Chapel building. Revivals were very rare in this country church and getting

there was a challenge. Our Model A car had to be filled with water at home and the radiator covered with a blanket while we were inside the church building. Upon arriving home my Mother crawled under the car to turn the valve to drain the radiator. I asked her to let me crawl under the car and turn the valve. She always responded by saying, "Get in the house where it's warm! You'll catch your death-of-pneumonia out here."

This Revival was preached by a Rev. Amos Rundus telling us to "flee from the coming Storm of Judgment!" I had started stealing when I was five and shoplifting at age seven; but the bad dreams started at age six. In this frightening dream, I was falling through space into a pit that seemed to have no bottom. When I would scream loudly, my Mother would come in, shake me awake, make inquiry and sometimes let me sleep with her and Dad. Now, in this Revival they were singing "Only Trust Him" for the second time. They had reached the last chorus and the preacher was saying, "*His Door is standing open. No need to perish in the Pits of Hell. Is there one more?*" I said out loud "*WAIT FOR ME, I'M COMING, TOO!*" I skirted around the wood-burning stove and ran down the aisle into the arms of Jesus. The dreams ceased and I had peace!

Converts were encouraged to join one of the town churches as Union Chapel had no membership roll. On Easter Sunday I joined the denomination my Mother and Grandmother were members of. The year was 1944 and I was twelve years old.

Two years later, our family moved to a farm in Southeast Kansas and into Cherryvale the following Spring.

Drawn to the First Christian Church of Cherryvale through a Revival invitation, I made my decision to be baptized on a Sunday morning just as the congregation was singing the closing hymn. I hurried to the baptismal dressing room and started knocking loudly. Anxiously I inquired, "IS IT TOO LATE TO BE BAPTIZED?" From inside, Brother Bob Cox calmed my fears when he answered, "CERTAINLY NOT! COME ON IN AND GET READY." I was taking yet another

step in following Jesus. It was Sunday, September 28, 1947!

I started preaching at age 16 in 1948. My preaching material consisted mostly of five truths that I had found and obeyed--1. Baptism by immersion including a five-step plan of salvation; 2. Communion every Sunday; 3. Tithing; 4. Wearing the right name; and 5. Church government according to the Bible. This desire to have ONLY TRUTH at that particular time in my life led to my later problem of becoming a "Pharisee." With these facets of truth I proudly judged others for the next twenty-five years. I nearly starved to death on this "menu" as did others who "ate" from my preaching. But, I was young and proud!

THIS BOOK is T-H-E STORY of how the Lord delivered me from this vicious vise and became the Lord of my Life. It is as Bill Gothard of Basic Youth Seminars says: "A LIFE MESSAGE--Sharing with others how God is using my weaknesses to conform me to the image of His Son." Romans 8:28, 29. I write this story for HIS GLORY and the GOOD of the Saints!

Part 1

Faith Alive Through--

LEARNING TO DIE

CONTENTS

The Quicksands of Mule Creek

A Strange D.V.B.S.

Deflated Ego

Self-life Check List

This Servant Washes Feet

Put Up Or Shut Up

Two Preachers Learn To Obey

The Lord Opens My Eyes With Truth.

Dying by letting go of self is the first lesson to an ALIVE FAITH! It is a primary lesson that opens the door to every other grace.

I learned this lesson on a physical plane when only 10 years old. The teachers were my older brother, Oren, and the quicksand of Mule Creek. We lived within one-half block of this creek and often spent the long hot summer afternoons swimming, fishing and exploring its sandy holes. On this particular day in late Spring, just after the creek had flooded, we found a patch of quicksand. Running through it we would sink in up to our ankles or knees and slosh out the other side. It felt good on our bare feet. Next time, I decided to walk through and quickly it sucked me down to my waist. No amount of self effort could get me back on top or over to the edge. The more I tried to get up and out, the deeper I sank. Oren hollered to me these strange words: "Lie down flat!" In my fear that was the last thing I wanted to do. I struggled! Even now the fear of that moment causes my skin to tighten and goose bumps to appear. My fear told me that I would probably be buried alive. Into my mind popped an incident about a young cousin that had lost his life trying to rescue a watermelon out of a flooding creek. "LIE DOWN! LIE DOWN FLAT ON YOUR BACK!" came my brother's voice, now filled with some apprehension. I was losing the battle myself, so with no understanding as to WHY, I followed his strange advice. And, suddenly I was winning! The quicksand would not act rapidly on a large flat surface like my back. The next moment I was looking up at the bright afternoon sun as it filtered through the swaying limbs of the cottonwood trees that lined the creek bank. Tears ran down my cheeks as I caught my breath. Now, he was saying, "Start rolling over from side to side." Strange words again, but he had been right once, so I obeyed. I rolled over from side to side out of the quicksand and stood on solid ground. Glad I was to be safe from the sinking quicksand!

Now, many years later, the Lord was teaching me the same lesson on a Higher Plane. He bid me to die to self and lean on Him!

The Lord called my attention to a simple three-fold recipe that tells HOW TO DO IT. It is recorded in Philippians 2.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”
(1)**

This Divine recipe for effecting the mind of Christ in us is accomplished by the action of the words underlined in the above Scripture.

LESSON #1 - Let GO OF Self

To let go of self is to learn to die. No, not the kind of death when our heart ceases to beat, but the kind that Paul was thinking of when he said “I die daily.”

One translator records Philippians 2:6,7 like this, (Jesus) “did not consider it necessary to hang on. He was willing to let go.”

God has two plans to assist us in dying to SELF.

#1--We can voluntarily let go of self by facing the events of life with a humble attitude.

#2 If we demonstrate an unyielding spirit, God will humble us by *allowing* certain obstacles and trials in our living.

In plan #1 the c-h-o-i-c-e- is ours as suggested by the first word in Philippians 2:5 - “LET”-Meaning that permission must be granted. We can voluntarily LET GO of SELF by exercising our will to choose. James says it this way “Humble yourself in the sight of God, and He will lift you up.” (4:10)

We must watch ourselves very closely in this every day

**Hereafter, in this book all special markings in Scripture Verses are mine and used for emphasis. (italicized, underlined, or capitalized).

business of living. Most matters that concern ourselves and others reveal where we place SELF. When self is on the throne, all kinds of inner turmoil and outer conflict result. Conversely, when Christ is on the throne, we experience inner joy and outer peace.

Words from an old fisherman -- he had probably forgotten more about fishing than most of us will ever know about it --speak to this matter of dying to SELF.

(Jesus) said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. Simon answered and said to Him, Master we have toiled all the night and taken nothing; nevertheless at your word I will let down the net." (2)

SELF bowed to the Savior and the next scene is a net so full of fish that it begins to break.

Jesus was faced with invitations to yield to SELF interests. First, the tempter said "Turn the stones to bread" (yield to hunger). Second, he invited Jesus to jump from a pinnacle of the Temple (tempt God by abuse of power). Third, the challenge to exalt SELF: "All these things I will give you if you will fall down and worship me." (Matthew 4:1-11) So, the Lord was tempted to worship a lesser god--self. SELF is one of satan's great disguises. So, we recognize the built-in dangers of SELFishness, SELF-assertion, SELF-exaltation, or SELF-sufficiency.

Just as Jesus waged a battle with SELF, each of us also engages the enemy on the same battleground. I remind myself constantly that SELF is a wall as high as the Great Wall of China. It was the original battleground in the Garden of Eden. Satan tempted Eve and Adam in the same three areas as Jesus was tempted--to elevate SELF thru PRIDE. They lost! He won! We wage the battle!

A vivid lesson for me in LETTING GO OF SELF arose when the Church in Drumright, Oklahoma invited us to consider being their located preacher.

Seeking the Will of the Lord, I chose to use our August Daily Vacation Bible School as a guidance factor. I

prayed--“Lord, if you will us to stay at Minneola, then let the D.V.B.S. this year be more successful than last year.”

True to FLESHLY SELF I chose the enrollment, attendance and mission offering figures as guidance factors. I noted the first three days that everything was running just a little less. Total previous enrollment of 100 was down 10, average daily attendance down 2 and mission offering was off \$1 per day from the previous year. Some kind of a direction signal was developing?

In my Wednesday meditation time, the Lord reminded me that “even the devil can influence numbers.” A quick survey in my mind reminded me that three of our faithful families were on vacation this second week in August which could easily account for the lessened numbers over a year ago.

However, the Lord chose His own time and way to tell me what HE considered to be “A MORE SUCCESSFUL DAILY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL.”

Friday came and the final closing assembly. The usual reports were read, announcements made about the picnic and closing program. As we sang the usual closing chorus, kids started moving. Now, among 90 kids, there is always movement and noise; but, these kids were moving out into the aisles. I stepped over to our Summer Youth Minister, Dan Cravatt, and said--“*What are these kids doing?*” Dan said--“*I don’t know. Let’s ask and find out.*” Keep in mind that NO INVITATION was being offered or had even been mentioned. Yet, 14 kids lined up across the front. The end result was 7 baptisms, 1 transfer and 6 re-dedications. Never before or since in dozens of Vacation Bible Schools have I seen anything like this. I have seen results a-f-t-e-r a school is ended from the seed sown but never during the school. **GOD WAS SPEAKING!** This was HIS ANSWER as to a more successful DVBS than the previous year! True, God used numbers but the kind, as we sometimes say, that the devil wouldn’t touch with a ten foot pole.

In letting SELF die I heard and saw the answer loud and

clear! We stayed on at Minneola and the best was yet to be in those later years.

PLAN #2:

God has another plan when we are unwilling to let go of SELF. He allows events in our life to puncture our ego, to deflate SELF. He uses various instruments to accomplish this. With Jonah it was a fish. The still small voice spoke to Elijah while a mysterious hand writing on a wall deflated Nebuchadnezzar. Peter was humbled by a crowing rooster. Jesus said to Saul *"It is hard for you to kick against the pricks."* The goad that was Saul's undoing was the stoning of Stephen followed by the bright light and voice on the Damascus Road and then three days of blindness. (Acts 8:58-9:6)

One by one the Lord removed my artificial crutches of trusting in SELF.

***SELF-assertion was struck a hard blow when the Army refused me as a Chaplain due to faulty hearing in one ear.

***SELF-exaltation shook when an aptitude test in the Graduate School of Butler University indicated I should be an undertaker, not a preacher.

***My SELF-sufficiency was shattered with the final diagnosis of our youngest daughter's problem. Through many months of medical appointments and examinations, our confidence that man can solve all problems jumped up and down like a recording needle on a wind instrument in a hurricane. Each medical specialist and psychologist brought new but false hopes.

The conclusion was that Lisa had a severe emotional handicap. We were advised to place her at the age of six in a State Institution.

***Our firstborn son's strange car accident and death was a blow to our SELF-satisfaction. We were

proud of his graduation from high school with honors and enrollment in Bible College. Lynn was eager to do God's Will!

God deflated my SELF by taking away some prized possessions named above. The poet expresses it well when he said:

One by one He took them from me,
All the things I valued most;
Until I was empty handed,
Every glittering toy was lost
And at last I understood,
With my mind so slow and dull
That God could not pour His riches
Into hands already full.(3)

Our walk with Jesus must be punctuated with many deaths of self. My study of God's men and women of the past and present reveal the above truism. Beautiful is such a story of a friend of mine, Bro. Carl Ketcherside. Leroy Garrett tells it this way in his book.

The turning point in Ketcherside's ministry came while he was a missionary to Ireland, where he was exposed to a larger fellowship of believers. Finding that the sectarianism he had brought with him from America was not the answer, he was tossed upon a sea of despair and uncertainty. He found his answer on a wintry night in a little frame Church of Christ in Belfast. Alone and cold, he set his mind upon the promise of Revelation 3:20, and while he had been a preacher for three decades and had baptized thousands and was a "bishop," he did what he had never done before: he invited Jesus into his heart. (4)

Therefore, if we would have the mind of Christ, let us do as he said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:23.

LESSON #2 - Become a Servant

The next two Divine lessons in Paul's recipe are both causes and effects. Some may say, "How do I know if I have let go of self?" We can t-e-s-t ourselves with these examination questions---How many rights do I have? Do I have a servant's attitude? Of Jesus, Paul says in Philippians 2:7. *(He) "emptied himself by taking the form of a servant."*

First, we die to SELF and become a SERVANT by doing as Jesus did, *(He) "emptied himself..."* (Philippians 2:7). How can we t-e-s-t ourselves as to being empty or full of SELF?

"How empty am I of SELF?" is a question that forever arises in our walk. My good friend, Ruth McKinley of Muskogee, Oklahoma, shared with me some meaningful words in a tract by an unknown author that tests our SELF-LIFE.

The following are some features and manifestations of the self-life. The Holy Spirit alone can interpret and apply this to each individual life. As you read, examine yourself in the very presence of God.

Are you ever conscious of:*

*A secret spirit of pride - an exalted feeling, in view of your success or position; because of your good training or appearance; because of your natural gifts and abilities? An important, independent spirit?

*Love of human praise; a secret fondness to be noticed; love of supremacy, drawing attention to self in conversation; a swelling out of self when you have had a free time in speaking or praying?

*The stirrings of anger or impatience, which, worst of all, you call nervousness or holy indignation; a touchy, sensitive spirit; a disposition to resent and retaliate when disapproved of or contradicted; a desire to throw sharp, heated words at another?

*Self-will; a stubborn, unteachable spirit; an arguing, talkative spirit; harsh, sarcastic expressions; a driving commanding spirit; a disposition to criticize and pick flaws when set aside and unnoticed; a peevish, fretful spirit; a disposition that loves to be coaxed and humored?

*Carnal fear; a man-fearing spirit; a shrinking from reproach and duty; reasoning around your cross; a shrinking from doing your whole duty by those of wealth or position; a fearfulness that someone will offend and drive some prominent people away; a compromising spirit?

*A jealous disposition, a secret spirit of envy shut up in your heart; an unpleasant sensation in view of the great prosperity and success of another; a disposition to speak of the faults and failings, rather than the gifts and virtues of those more talented and appreciated than yourself?

*A dishonest, deceitful disposition; the evading and covering of the truth; the covering up of your real faults; leaving a better impression of yourself than is strictly true; false humility; exaggeration; straining the truth?

*Unbelief, a spirit of discouragement in times of pressure and opposition; lack of quietness and confidence in God, lack of faith and trust in God; a disposition to worry and complain in the midst of pain, poverty, or at the dispensations of Divine Providence; an overanxious feeling whether everything will come out right?

*Formality and deadness; lack of concern for lost souls; dryness and indifference; lack of power with God?

*Selfishness; love of ease; love of money? (5)

The above are some of the traits which indicate self rules in part or whole. I search my heart with this prayer:

Search me, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me'' (Psams 139:23,24) "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me (Psalm 51:10).

Second, we become a SERVANT by developing a servant's attitude.

Supper was over. The disciples of Jesus were playing the waiting game according to John 13:1 and following. No one wanted to be the servant. Thoughts like these must have traversed their minds.

Who is going to take his robe off?

Who is going to gird himself with a towel?

Who is going to get a basin?

Who is going to fill the basin with water?

Who is going to kneel in front of each one?

Who is going to wash the dirty feet?

He needn't think I'm going to do it!

I wouldn't wash his feet ever!

Another looks across the room: if he hadn't said what he did about me, I might have.

Another reasons: why should I wash his feet?

I'm far superior intellectually to him!

JESUS GETS UP...Removes His robe...Girds himself with a towel...Fills a Basin and approaches Peter...Kneels and takes hold of Peter's feet.

Peter says, "What do you think you're going to do"?"

"I'm going to wash your feet, Peter."

"No, you're NOT!"

"Then, you're no part of me, Peter."

"OH, THEN WASH ME ALL OVER!"

If we have been washed in the Blood of the Lamb, then plunge in today, deny self and seek to be a servant!

More often than not, we are called "slaves-servants" in the New Testament. Dulos is the Greek word for both. We have NO RIGHTS! This doesn't set well in a "free" age. We hear so much about Civil Rights, the right to demonstrate and march, the right to sue our fellow men in a court of law. Yet, I affirm the only possible right we have is to die and go to hell. You see, we earned that right because we "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;" "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 3:23; 6:23)

Dangerous are our SELF-assertions! As a young "pharisee," I had made many "I WON'T" statements. Among them was this declaration: "I WILL NEVER WASH FEET AS A RELIGIOUS ACT!"

The test of this assertion came at a week of Senior Youth Camp near Glencoe, Oklahoma. O.S.U. Campus Minister, John Lacey, was the dean of the week. I was serving as Evangelist and teaching a course on "Dealing With The Devil." On Wednesday evening all of us at camp met around a blazing campfire to dedicate ourselves to God. Strange things

began happening the next morning. A spirit of bitterness swept thru the camp. The campers complained about the food. The cooks heard and became bitter. The bad spirit was contagious as faculty members began to grumble and complain.

Evening came, and a somber spirit with nobody talking prevailed. Supper was eaten in almost complete silence and the evening service lacked the Presence of the Lord.

As the sun was setting the Dean summoned us back to the ashes of last night's campfire. We sat in a circle. Very deliberately, without a word, he laid the wood in place for the new fire. No one was talking or looking around. Young servant, John Lacey, took a pan of water and a towel and began to wash the feet of faculty and campers. He told us he had sinned. That we had sinned. But, God loved us and he did too. Muffled sobs filled the air. He washed my feet. I allowed the act as it was being done to me, not by me. The moonlight and the light of this act cast long shadows across all our hearts. Campers often do strange things. At this point, they began to chant in whispers-"Who will wash the Dean's feet? Who will wash John's feet?" I shivered in the cool breeze. No one moved. Still they chanted. I got up, picked up the pan and the towel. My tears mingled with the water as I washed the feet of servant John and told him about Jesus' love and mine, too. John lit the fire. It flamed up high as if angels were fanning the blaze. He passed the Lord's Supper. The service was done; but, the spirit of the Servant had just begun!

Just as Jesus stepped from Deity into humanity thru the door of humility, even so, if we are to step from humanity into eternity, it must be thru that same door of humility.

LESSON #3 - Learning to Obey

This lesson is also a test and a tool in letting go of self. The test question is: "How willing am I to obey?"

We take the third step in realizing this "mind of Christ" that Paul speaks about by doing what Jesus did.

“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”(6)

In our call to obey, PRAISE GOD, we will never be called on to face what Jesus faced. Death, hell, and all the sin of the ages was the enemy He met on the battleground of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. Obedient He was and victorious forever!

The importance of obeying truth had been instilled in me at an early age. After moving to Cherryvale, Kansas in 1947, I began to attend the church I had joined at Medicine Lodge out of the Union Chapel Revival. In the Fall of that year, we were invited to attend a Revival Meeting at the Christian Church. The Evangelist, Bob J. Cox, preached on the subject “What The Bible Teaches About Baptism.” As we left the service that night, my Mother said to Preacher Cox at the door, “You are mistaken about baptism. We have not been immersed but we have been baptized and we always follow the truth of the Bible.” Bob Cox responded by saying--“Mrs. Johnson, if you have the time, I can come by your house tomorrow and we can discuss this matter from our Bibles.” So an appointment with Divine Destiny was made for us. The meeting was arranged for after school so my sisters, Patsy and Janet, and myself could be there.

Let me say kindly that my Mother, Tempest Johnson, lives up to her name which means tempestuous. Her 4 foot 6 inch physical stature is compensated for by drive and determination. Being a school teacher in earlier years, she did her homework well. We had Bibles and were prepared to use them. Further preparation included calling our local preacher and asking for appropriate Bible verses to establish truth. I have forever appreciated this good man’s honesty when he said, “Mrs. Johnson, don’t get all excited about this subject. It is not that important and there are no Bible verses I can give you that will prove sprinkling is baptism.” We were defenseless and could do little else at the appointed hour than look up one verse after another which revealed a facet of truth.

Now, came the **MOMENT OF TRUTH**. Would we do what my Mother had asserted?--“we always follow the truth.” We did! One by one we took this new step of following Jesus.

OBEYING TRUTH now came to be a banner flying high from the flagpole of my life! Yet, I limited this obedience to a few central truths for some twenty years. Wearing the right name, communion every Sunday, tithing, baptism and proper church government were the truths that I held high in practice and preaching!

After twenty years of little growth I was privileged to begin learning **OBEDIENCE** in the company of others desiring a closer walk with the Lord. Bob Osburn, fellow preacher, was one of these. I first met Bob when he was preaching at Syracuse, Kansas and we labored together in the Ashland (Kansas) Christian Youth Camp. Both of us were concerned about **OBEYING TRUTH** that we had shut ourselves away from for many years. So, when one of the campers was overtaken by some kind of fit and critical abdominal pains, we asked ourselves--doesn't the Bible say to “Pray for the sick? Ask and you will receive?” Knowing that it did, we laid hands on this high school senior at two o'clock in the morning and prayed. Bob was as surprised and elated, as was I, when the fit and the pain ceased. The young man was so much amazed at the power of God in response to **OBEDIENCE**, that he accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour!

God uses many tools to teach us **OBEDIENCE**. One of these is suffering. It is written of Jesus, “Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8)

Some of God's servants today are called to learn **OBEDIENCE** by suffering. Included in this band of pilgrims was my good friend, Bro. Osburn.

After the above camp incident, the years went by and Jesus presented Bob with many challenging lessons. His response, time after time, was a beautiful **YES**.

So, when the medical news that he had inoperable cancer

of the pancreas and liver reached Bob during Christmas week in 1981, he responded with beautiful OBEDIENCE--The Lord is in charge! That suffering leads to obedience is well illustrated in Bob's life. At Bob's memorial service, Dr. Max Foster, leader of the Random Road Chapel in Arkansas City, Kansas where Bob ministered, told this story.

One of Bob's concerns was that he might not have shared enough suffering for Jesus' sake. We know that Paul in the Roman letter in chapter 8, verse 17, tells us that if we are to share His glory we must also share His suffering. It was only four or five nights ago that Bob and Rose were discussing this very thing in his hospital room.

There are different kinds of suffering and not all qualify as suffering for Christ, but those that witness for Christ do qualify. Some suffered the torture of the whip for speaking the Good News; others suffered the torture of disease and were yet holding the banner of Christ high. In both cases they were sharing Christ's suffering.

Rose read to Bob this passage from I Peter 4: 12 & 13. It reads like this:

"Dear friends, don't be bewildered or surprised when you go through the fiery trials ahead, for this is no strange, unusual thing that is going to happen to you. Instead, be really glad because these trials will make you partners with Christ in His suffering, and afterwards, you will have the wonderful joy of sharing His glory in that coming day when it will be displayed."

Rose asked Bob at this time if he didn't feel now as if he had suffered with Christ and he said yes he had. He felt this way. They both agreed that Bob and Christ were partners and both would share in His coming glory. Praise God!

OBEDIENCE now became a new way of life for me. For twenty-five years after finding Jesus, I was too busy going to church, memorizing Scripture, tithing, judging others and attending Bible College to OBEY.

In my blind zeal to follow truth, I became a zealot seeking out parts of truth and judging others with the same. My horizons were much too limited. For my study of truth was limited to a few particular facets of truth--*Baptism, *Wearing the right name, *Communion every Sunday, *Tithing and

***Proper church government.**

Was I dead to SELF? Did I have a SERVANT'S attitude? If so, OBEDIENCE would not be hard. And it wasn't! It was the unlearning of half-truths and well entrenched religious habits that was most difficult.

Worship was the first truth God called me to see and OBEY. To me, worship meant going to Church on Sunday to sing, pray, give, commune and listen.

While preaching through the book of Romans at the Minneola (Kansas) Christian Church, I came to the 12th chapter, verses 1 and 2 and in particular the phrase "reasonable service." I almost doubted God when he opened my eyes through a search of His Word to see that worship always had been and still is the "Presenting of our bodies as living sacrifices" (Romans 12:1). The "bridling of our tongue,..visiting the orphans and widows,..and keeping myself unspotted from the world" from James 1:26,27 is also worship. This was contrary to everything I had ever called or heard of anyone in America calling worship. I was threatened by such thoughts because of my many years of "Dr. Jekyll -Mr. Hyde" style of religion--Doing the proper religious acts on Sunday but living the SELF life Monday thru Saturday.

The Lord revealed to me out of a long study, which has now become a teaching seminar, that there are seven Greek words in the New Testament all translated "worship" in the King James Bible. "Reasonable service" of Romans 12:1 is one of these as is "religion" in James 1:26-27. None of these seven words are ever associated with the church or Sunday activities. The church met together for at least ten reasons, but worship was not among them.

I was encouraged to learn that others before my time had realized these same truths about worship. Some of them include devoted Bible students Carl Ketcherside, R.M. Bell, J.W. McGarvey, Victor E. Hoven, Henry E. Hill and Burton Thurston in "The Christian Standard" weekly publication plus M.R. DeHann of "The Radio Bible Class" had realized

these same truths about worship. Sadly, precious few had ever given this truth any practical OBEDIENCE.

William Barclay in his "Daily Bible Study Series" says it best with these words--

"So, Paul says, 'take your body; take all the tasks that you have to do every day; take the ordinary work of the shop, the factory, the shipyard, the mine; and offer all that as an act of worship to God.' Now here we have a most significant thing--the true worship, the really spiritual worship, is the offering of one's body and all that one does every day with it, to God."(7)

As I learned a new truth and followed it the LORD REVEALED HIMSELF to me more and more. Just as He had promised in John 14:21:

"He that has my commandments and keeps them, loves me; and he that loves me is loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him."

Weymouth translates this last phrase to say--"*Reveal myself to him*".

There is great power in obedience. My return from the "far country" of serving self and sin is measured best by TRUTHS REALIZED! Thus, in the years that followed, He led me in learning to be filled with His Spirit, living by faith, praising Him in all things, dealing with the devil, fasting and praying, hearing God as He speaks, following the Spirit's leading to win the lost, loving others by faith, enjoying the ministry of God's Angels, learning His 10 laws of healing plus the secret of why He doesn't always heal and the list gets longer--year by year. But, it all depends on my continued willingness to let the Mind of Christ be supreme by dying to self, possessing a servant's attitude and following through with OBEDIENCE to His Truth.

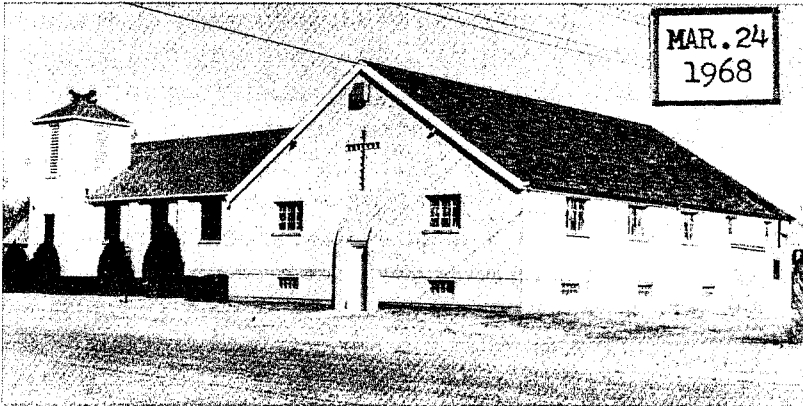
The common denominator of this self-death is:

ACCORDING TO OUR DYING TO SELF, SO SHALL OUR LIVING BE.

1971 was the year I learned to die to self and be serious about obedience to His revealed Truth! It was a very good year.

FAITH ALIVE IN HEART, HOME and CHURCH
NOTES - Chapter 1

1. Philippians 2:5-7
2. Luke 5:4
3. Poem, "One by one He took them from me"
4. Book, "The Stone Campbell Movement" p. 668
by Leroy Garrett. Used by permission of College Press,
Joplin, Missouri
5. Tract by an unknown author
6. Philippians 2:5
7. From "The Letter to the Romans" by William Barclay
p. 169.



First Christian Church
Minneola, Kansas

Part 2

Faith Alive Through--

BEGINNING AGAIN

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A 20th Century Prodigal

The Call Of Love

A Crisis Approaches

The Dead-end Road

A Moment Of Truth

“Welcome Home!”

Just Like The Old Violin

-THE NEED TO BEGIN AGAINI-

I was a Prodigal living right at home in the Father's House. The "house" was a typical American Church and I was the Preacher!

Jesus told a story about a "prodigal church member." It is often dubbed "*Parable of the Prodigal.*" It reads like this:

"A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' And he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. And when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!' I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fattened calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry." (1)

Now, please know, that this is NOT a story about a young man who lived in a shack on Shady Street frequenting the back alleys of the world. This IS a story about a "church member" for he was a "SON in the FATHER'S HOUSE." Look again and note to WHOM Jesus was speaking in Luke 15:1-3. It was to the Pharisees and Scribes! The religious people of the day! Thus to give this parable relevant application, Prodigal is a "church member." The Father is God while the

Father's House is the "church." Yes, I know the church didn't come into existence until after Christ's death; but, prodigality begins in the "church house" even as Vs. 13 says of the Prodigal: "...*the younger son gathered all together, and JOURNEYED INTO A FAR COUNTRY.*"

H-O-W do I know so much about the HOW and WHERE of prodigals you ask? Because, you see, I was a prodigal, who journeyed a long way from home, yet, was a church member and called God my "Father."

One day Bro. George Reynolds, Elder in the West Lebanon (Indiana) Church where I preached, came saying--"*Too bad about John Doe! He has quit the church and backslid!*" I said--"*Now, George, it is too bad, but John didn't quit and backslide. He BACKSLID and t-h-e-n QUIT!*" This is always the order of events in a prodigal's life. **THIS** was the road I followed.

Slipping away from the Lord begins in *places* no one can SEE!

*****WHO** could see that the weekly Communion was mere bread and grape juice to me?

*****WHO** could *know* that I had most of the hymns memorized and could and did sing them by rote without meaning a word?

*****NO MAN** *knew* that my sermons were NOT messages from God, but right out of the latest "Sermon Book." And, these sermons were legalistic down to the last "jot" and "tittle" and VERY JUDGEMENTAL---Always *judging someone else*.

*****WHO** could see the lack of love as I put my offering in the plate?

*****WHO** could know that God quit answering most of my prayers, but I manipulated matters with Programs, Projects, Gimmicks and Gadgets, so *it looked like* real power. It was as Bro. Carl Ketcherside said in his "Mission Messenger", "Straight as a gun barrel and just as empty."

Sad, sad was this prodigal a long way from home.

Discerning readers will ask--“How did you do this? How could you be the preacher and be backsliding?” The simple but sad answer--By staying one step ahead of most of the Church members, while still being lukewarm in my own life.

Across some twenty-five years there was the exhausting SELF effort to do better. My constant trying to rededicate a carnal self to God. Trying to serve two masters even though Jesus said “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24.

-THE V-O-I-C-E That Calls-

The *famine* came for the Prodigal in Luke 15 and it came for me, too! Words in this Parable of Life that speak of a lonely heart a long way from home are: “*he began to be in want*”... “*he would fain have filled his belly with husks*” (he had already filled his heart with ‘husks’). And, so IT IS --*thank God!*-- that forever HE SEEKS *the LOST SHEEP...the LOST COIN...A LOST SON!!!* Always and always there is the *VOICE* of the seeking Shepherd, the willing Father that cannot be stilled, calling to remind us of--What used to be! What could be, IF...! and to simply say--I LOVE YOU!!

It was this voice of love that called loudly as I attended a Workshop on Conversational Prayer. The lady was dressed in what appeared to be sackcloth. She came onto the platform from a back door that I concluded led to the kitchen where a banquet was being prepared. No doubt she was in charge of the meal and had a special announcement relating to it. Her words were strange for a cook. She said, “*Before we eat, I must tell you that GOD LOVES YOU! And, JESUS LOVES YOU; but, YOU DON’T KNOW IT and you may not even LOVE YOURSELF!*” Her eyes of love reached my heart as she looked directly at me. I was uncomfortable as I made the mistake(?) of sitting in the front in this large Methodist church building in Emporia, Kansas. At this point, I turned halfway around to see who else she might be looking at.

There was no one within another four pews and now she said. "You don't need to turn around Mister, I'm talking to YOU! JESUS LOVES Y-O-U! and before we leave this workshop, I want YOU and everyone else to K-N-O-W Jesus' love in a personal way!"

We ate the banquet meal but the words of Rosalind Rinker (the "cook" in sackcloth) ate on my heart. I had been studying and teaching the LOVE OF GOD for 25 years and surely didn't need ANYONE to tell me about something so simple and basic as l-o-v-e. After the meal, which was as simple as the sackcloth dressed lady, we returned to the giant auditorium. So BIG was it that one could get lost in the crowd. I did just that, hiding myself halfway back. It was a painful experience in that she didn't preach, just talked. She made everyone see themselves as the *little lost lamb*, *the coin*, *the prodigal* a long way from home, and maybe, perish the thought, *the Elder brother* in Jesus' Parables of Luke 15.

It was invitation time, which signaled the end, and I was more than ready to get out and go home. The traditional song gave me some comfort. I did not feel threatened by an age-old custom for I knew what was going to take place and how to control the situation. What followed, not only threatened, but wrecked me. As soon as the song was finished, this strange lady said--

"The Closing will be a little different tonight. Since this is a workshop on Conversational Prayer, quickly form a circle with four or five other people around you, put your arm on the shoulder of the person next to you and pray for each other."

I quickly looked for those who had accompanied me, Lyle & Eileen Marshall and Sharon Kennedy, but couldn't find them. Someone was already putting a hand on my shoulder. One man said, "Let's introduce ourselves by name, tell what church we are from and any special prayer need." GREAT! I could handle that! Around the circle we went--one was a Baptist, another a Friend, a Lutheran and a Methodist. I tensed up for these men were not *my kind!* Now, please understand that as the years had gone by I had become a 'Pharisee' in attitude, dealing with the kind of people facing me in the circle in a

JUDGMENTAL way! N-o-w, *t h e y* were going to PRAY FOR ME! Beyond this, I was being asked to PRAY FOR THEM! My request was: Please pray for my wife, Imalee and I. We have a little 12 year old daughter, Lisa, at home who is emotionally handicapped. PLEASE PRAY FOR HER! They did, but also saw beyond my words and prayed for my real needs. One man prayed that Jesus' love would come alive in me and another made bold asking God to fill me with the Holy Spirit.

At last, the evening session was over, and I hastened to my hosts' home for the night. They were a lovely couple. He taught Math in a local school and was a leader in the Church where the Workshop was being hosted. I was tired, so I asked to be excused. It was about 11 o'clock as they showed me to my room. However, it was 4 a.m. before sleep came for I had a battle to wage with God and He had a few words for me, too. I experienced something like Jacob who wrestled until the breaking of day.(2)

The battle started with me on my feet telling God that I CERTAINLY DID LOVE HIM for I had preached LOVE for twenty plus years! He responded--"*Feed my Sheep(!) if you love me.*" I responded that I had been doing just that for many years! HE replied in my spirit with--"*Why are they hungry and hurting and why did a lady at the church door just last Sunday say--'Your judgmental sermons make me feel dirty inside.'*" The battle raged on. I had lots of questions--How do you love anyway? What is love? Would love make any difference? He had a-l-l the answers. Each question of mine was answered with an immediate verse of Scripture. The battle ended just before Sunrise with me on my knees praying--"I LOVE YOU, GOD! YOUR WILL BE DONE! LET YOUR LOVE SHINE THROUGH ME! A new day was dawning in ways I could never imagine. This prodigal was being called home and the road was paved with LOVE.

-THE CRISIS APPROACHES-

The Prodigal would have eaten the "husks", the Bible says. **I DIDI**

Early on in my life, I had made "friends" with a couple of sins. One sin came at the early age of five and the other appeared a few years later. I tried to give them up time and time again, but the "*pleasure of sin for a season*" was stronger. So, I became the proverbial "Dr. Jekyll" on Sundays and "Mr. Hyde," Monday through Saturday. Yes, I knew what Jesus said: "*No man can serve two masters.*" But, surely I could be an exception to the rule.

Of the Bible Prodigal it is stated: "and NO MAN GAVE unto him." A new day was dawning, now that men were no longer going to give, give, give to him! When the world quits meeting our every need and we are forced to f-a-c-e our spiritual bankruptcy, there is the potential for a NEW BEGINNING! With the Bible Prodigal it had been: Give me my rights--my share of the inheritance; Give me my freedom, even in a far country; Give me a good time and finally, Give me some pig feed.

I had made special arrangements to feed my bankrupt soul with the "fodder" of the world. For 39 years I had been able to manipulate THINGS with money. I never believed God could produce funds outside the church program. Thus, I said to the WORLD--"Give me!" And the world was delighted to do so. So much so that at one time I owed five small loan companies. God allowed me to get myself in a "corner" on many occasions in hopes of getting my ATTENTION! But, MAN always bailed me out with one more loan to pay off all the others. And, I breathed a sigh of relief!

Both of my "pet sins" produced a deep sense of guilt within. And true to the psychosomatic process--the unresolved guilt brought on a bad case of NERVES. In early years I confessed my sin to God and He forgave me just as His Word says--"*If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us.*" (I John 1:9) As the years wore on I grew weary and the devil deluded me into believing that these "SINS" were only "BAD HABITS." I ceased to confess! God stopped forgiving! The nerves got worse!

ONE MORE TIME--MEN GAVE TO ME. Dr. Charles

Stephens of the Minneola Clinic made an outside observation and said: "Preacher, you have a very bad case of nerves and unless you do something about them, a nervous breakdown may ensue. I'll give you a prescription for some nerve pills." I breathed a sigh of inward relief. One more time I had avoided a mounting crisis of having to deal with the real cause.

-THE CRISIS-

"NO MAN GAVE UNTO HIM" surely was an action that caused the Prodigal to t-h-i-n-k! For, the n-e-x-t words are--"*And when he came to himself.*"

Isn't it amazing how God uses little and powerless things to CONVICT US? It was not the wind, earthquake or fire that got Elijah's attention, but, the "*still small voice*" of the Lord and the question: "*What are you doing here?*"(3)

Three of the twelve Apostles of Jesus were warming themselves at a pre-dawn fire while Caiaphas and the Council sought to find fault with Jesus. Consider the sounds all around--milling Passover crowd, Sanhedrin arriving for the trial, horses of the Roman Centurions-- and, in the midst of all that, a rooster crows! Now, roosters have been crowing since the dawn of time. Is this rooster any different? No, but the timing is. ONE MAN h-e-a-r-s that sound and goes out and cries like a baby. God was speaking and Peter heard!(4)

God used a Pharmacist to awaken me. After about three years of taking the prescribed "Nerve Pills," I went one more time to get the bottle filled. Lyle Gifford of Minneola (Kansas) Pharmacy said: "Preacher, I'm very busy and not playing favorites today. Your tranquilizers will not be ready until late afternoon." "Fine," I said, "but, DON'T put any tranquilizers in that bottle! I don't take them!" I'll never forget his going to the file and digging out the original prescription, checking it against the big Pharmaceutical Book on the shelf and saying, "Call them nerve pills if you want, but they are TRANQUILIZERS!" I replied: "DON'T FILL IT for I DO NOT TAKE THAT KIND OF STUFF!" And the bottle still sits on my shelf

with one last Librium capsule in it.

Now, I was on a collision course with God! I could REPENT o-r CONTINUE ON without my medical "crutch" and end up with a nervous breakdown.

-THE MOMENT OF TRUTH-

And when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" I will arise and go to my Father, and I will say to him: "Father I have sinned...MAKE ME like one of our hired servants."(5)

Just like you are unaware of snow falling silently in the night, so I was not aware that Sunday, February 14, 1971 would be any different from a hundred others.

As the Sunday Morning Service came to a close, I did something I had not planned or ever done before. I ANSWERED MY OWN INVITATION by asking the people to be seated. I said to the audience of the Minneola (Kansas) Christian Church: "This will seem strange to you for it IS strange to me! I just want to tell you that from this day on- I MUST DECREASE. HE WILL INCREASE!"

As the song says--"Church was finally over one more time." I walked home. Nothing seemed different. Imalee had a good meal prepared. It was a warm happy time as we ate Sunday dinner with our four children.

One-thirty signaled the time for my usual custom of a quick nap before preparations started for the Youth Meetings and Evening Family Hour. But, the Moment of Truth was finally upon me as I closed my tired eyes and prayed this simple and honest prayer:

"Dear God, I'm sick of myself and the church and the ministry and I'm terribly tired of spinning my wheels. Here I am, a crooked stick. Break me if you must! Melt me and mold me! Fill me with Yourself and Your Spirit! I no longer ask to be a stone in your Temple Grand. Not even a grain of sand, just a drop of water in the mortar that holds the stones in place will do. I only ask that You will use me! Please don't refuse me!"

I awoke from my nap. Everything *seemed* the same and yet time would decree that **NOTHING** would ever be the same again from that day on!

-“WELCOME HOME!”-

The Prodigal of Luke 15 walked into the o-p-e-n arms of unending love! He discovered upon his arriving home that his Father had gone “deaf”. The lad had his return speech all prepared. He said: “*Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.*”(6) It is at this point that the Father goes “deaf” and i-n-t-e-r-r-u-p-t-s his son with: “Bring forth the best robe,(7) and a ring, and shoes, and a calf, for a WELCOME HOME PARTY....for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”(8) Now, God is always like that! He says “*Come let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.*”(Isaiah 1:18)

Time would decree that this day was the place of beginning again. It is from this point on that all the blessings that come from being filled with His Spirit can be numbered in my life. Yes, the works, fruits and gifts of the blessed Holy Spirit started to bloom out of the desert lands of my life and the remaining chapters are that STORY for H-I-S GLORY!

In summarizing my journey up to this point, I am reminded of the beautiful words of the poet Myra Brooks Welch in “The Touch of the Master’s Hand.”

’Twas battered and scarred and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But held it up with a smile:
“What am I bid, good folks,” he cried,
“Who’ll start the bidding for me?”
“A dollar, a dollar;” then, “two! Only two?
Two dollars, and who’ll make it three?
Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;
Going for three---” But no,

From the room, far back, a gray-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow;
Then, wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening the loose strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet
As sweet as a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said: "What am I bid for the old violin?"
And he held it up with the bow.
"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two?
Two thousand! And who'll make it three?
Three thousand, once, three thousand, twice,
And going, and gone," said he.
The people cheered, but some of them cried,
"We do not quite understand
What changed its worth?" Swift came the reply:
"The touch of the master's hand!"

And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and scarred with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd,
Much like the old violin.
A "mess of pottage," a glass of wine;
A game--and he travels on.
He is "going" once, and "going" twice,
He's "going" and almost "gone."
But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul and the change that's wrought
By the touch of the Master's hand!(9)

I was much like the old violin, the man with life out of tune.
But the Master came! He touched me and now my life is no
longer the same!

I chose a road of beginning again. Some will ask: "Is it
necessary for everyone to follow this road? To experience
evil? To backslide?" The answer is clearly "NO!" However, it
is **absolutely essential** that everyone of us come to the
place of the Prodigal in saying: **"THY WILL BE DONE!
MAKE ME! MOLD ME! USE ME!"**

Even as Jesus said: *"If anyone desires to come after Me,
let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me."*
Matthew 16:24.

Like the last verse of Robert Frost's poem:

"I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."(10)



Our Family in 1957
West Lebanon, Indiana
Wilbur, Galen, Teresa, Lynn,
Imalee and Rebecca

FAITH ALIVE IN HEART, HOME and CHURCH
NOTES - Chapter 2

1. Luke 15:11-24
2. Genesis 32:24
3. I Kings 19:11-18
4. Matthew 26:75
5. Luke 15:17-19
6. Luke 15:18,19
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Poem, "The Touch of the Master's Hand" by
Myra Brooks Welch.
10. Poem, "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost.
Written November, 1974.

Part 3

Faith Alive Through--

**GETTING TO KNOW THE
HOLY SPIRIT**

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Who Is On The Throne Of My Heart?
Spirit Filled Signs--Walk, Talk, Gawk.
The Policeman Said: "Stand On One Leg."
"Shut Up About Jesus Or Get Out"
Desiring The New Wine
Surrender!
Burning Our Bridges And Other Things
Fill My Cup Lord!
Keeping Our Spirit Tanks Filled
Changed Lives!--Sam and Jeanie.

My being filled with the Holy Spirit, as shared in the last chapter, was so simple that it seemed too good to be true. Several questions demanded answers:

#1-HOW could I c-o-n-t-i-n-u-e to be filled with His power?

#2-HOW could I keep Jesus on the throne of my heart?

#3-HOW could I have missed such an obvious teaching and power for so many years?

Answers to these questions were in waiting when I attended the "Conversational Prayer Workshop" spoken of in the last chapter. Arriving early on Saturday morning at the church building in Emporia, Kansas, I decided to walk through the Sunday School classrooms.

There it lay on the floor, a little blue tract-booklet authored by Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ. Its subject was-"Have You Made The Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit Filled Life?" I sat down and gave it a cursory reading. My spirit rejoiced because the contents, most of which is Scripture, seemed to be true to the Bible.

My strong desire for TRUTH led me on a search of the Word of God. This chapter is a retracing of my unlearning and learning about the Holy Spirit.

One of the true stories that Bill Bright gave me permission to share is this one:

During the depression years a Mr. Yates owned a large sheep ranch; but was unable to make enough money on his ranching operation to pay the principal and interest on the mortgages. He was in constant danger of losing his ranch. With little money for clothes or food, his family, like many others, had to live on government subsidy.

Day after day, grazing his sheep over those rolling West Texas hills, he was greatly troubled about paying his bills. Then a seismographic crew from an oil company sought his permission to drill a wildcat well. They said there might be oil on his land. He signed a lease contract.

At 1,115 feet they struck a huge oil reserve. The first well came in at 80,000 barrels a day. Many subsequent wells were more than twice as large. Thirty years after the discovery, a government test of one of the wells showed that it still had the

potential flow of 125,000 barrels of oil a day. And Mr. Yates OWNED IT ALL! The day he purchased the land he received the oil and mineral rights. Yet, he was living in near poverty on relief. A multimillionaire living in poverty! He owned it, but HE DID NOT POSSESS IT.(1)

This true story illustrated the plight that I had been in for some twenty years. The moment I became a child of God through obedience to Christ, I became an heir of God, and all His resources were made available to me. Everything I needed--including wisdom, love, power--to be a man of God, and a fruitful witness for Christ, was available to me. But like most Christians I continued to live in self-imposed poverty, because I did not know how to appropriate God's spiritual resources. Like Mr. Yates with the oil beneath his feet in the land, we live in ignorance of our vast riches.

Up to this point in my spiritual journey I knew a lot about the Holy Spirit, having studied the theology of the Godhead in Bible College, memorized Scriptures and taught courses on the Holy Spirit from time to time. Yet, I lacked the reality of the Presence and Power of Jesus in my life.

Like Mr. Yates who owned the land but did not possess its resources, I too possessed the Holy Spirit but HE DIDN'T POSSESS ME.

For years I had been a church member worshipping on Sunday, preaching, serving on committees and doing all kinds of church busy work. Yet, while busy and laughing on the outside, I was empty and crying on the inside. I knew about Jesus, but didn't know Him as Lord and Guide. The Holy Spirit was NOT filling and controlling my life as Jesus said He ought to in John 7:37,38a:

“ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of heart will flow rivers of living water’. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit whom those who believe in Him would receive”(2)

The Scripture the Lord used in speaking to me at that time was Ephesians 5:18-21. It will be our guide throughout this chapter.

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be

filled with the Spirit, speaking...singing and making melody...giving thanks always...submitting..." (Ephesians 5:18-21).

Five truths came alive to me in the above verse. They will be signposts along the trail of our thinking in the following order:

1. DON'T DRINK the Old Wine!
2. New Wine Defined!
3. Be Filled!
4. Be Filled with the Spirit
5. Fruits of His Presence!

I - Don't Drink the Old Wine!

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation"
(Ephesians 5:18).

The word "wine" in Scripture is used both in a literal and a metaphorical sense. I see both concepts in Paul's admonition here in Ephesians 5:18.

Beyond question is the fact that drinking the wine that Solomon speaks about--"Do not look on wine when it is red...At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper"(3)--leads to dissipation*. Other translations render this word "dissipate" as --*

*riot...ASV

*debauchery...RSV

*makes prodigals...Greek

*leads to ruin...Knox

Jesus used the word "wine" in a metaphorical sense in the "Parable Of the Wineskins" when he says--"And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'"(4)

Looking at the context of Paul's own words here in the fifth chapter of Ephesians, he speaks of the old wine of vile sin along with the second kind of low sighted priorities.

OLD WINE OF Ephesians 5:

**Vs3--fornication,
uncleanness,
covetousness,**

**Vs4--filthiness,
foolish talking,
coarse jesting,**

**Vs5--whoremonger,
unclean person,
covetous man (idolater)**

Vs6--empty words that deceive

**Vs14--spiritual sleeping that leads to death,
walk not as fools,
abusing-misusing time**

I drank the "old wine" for some thirty years. Early in my life, I made "friends" with a couple of sins. The "lust for things" started when I was five and stealing satisfied it. The "lust of the flesh" reared its head a few years later. I tried to give them up time and time again, but the "pleasure of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25) was stronger and my daily victory became weaker.

While vile sin is one kind of OLD WINE which leads to dissipation, there is another type which is far more subtle. It is well expressed in these words--**THE WORST ENEMY OF THE BEST IS THE GOOD**. Paul alludes to it in the above list from Ephesians 5:14-16 when he talks about followers falling asleep, walking as fools and abusing the use of time. Many are pulled into the devil's den by this philosophy of the second best. One of my Bible College Professors, Howard Hayes, summed it up by quoting an old mountaineer as saying--**THERE AIN'T NO BAD LIQUOR, IT'S ALL GOOD AND BETTER**. Jesus alluded to this when He advised Martha with these words--"Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."(5)

While many give higher priority to amusements, hobbies and sports placed before searching the Word of God and seeking the Will of God; yet, with me it was over involvement in church busy work--files, forms and a consuming spirit about church buildings and equipment.

The Lord was teaching me that the NEW WINE of His HOLY SPIRIT is the antidote for deadening the appetite for both kinds of OLD WINE.

II - NEW WINE DEFINED.

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking...singing and making melody...giving thanks always...submitting...” (Ephesians 5:18-21).

My scientific, logical set-of-mind demanded to know--How could the Holy Spirit fill me?

Out of Scripture the Lord reminded me that both the Holy Spirit and I are by intrinsic nature, spirit.

Jesus said “God is Spirit.”(6) Now spirit defies an absolute definition. This was emphasized in a conversation I had with Professor Nibarger. While sharing in a Faith Alive Revival with Gerald Zuck at Valley Center, Kansas, it was my privilege to be hosted at Tuesday noon dinner by Bill and Agnes Nibarger. Professor Nibarger was head of the Physics and Chemistry Departments of Wichita State University. I like to ask science-minded people certain questions, so I said:

Professor Nibarger, may I ask you some scientific questions?

“Yes, but I can’t guarantee you all the answers.”

“I am interested in a definition of fire.”

She responded: “So am I. What else do you want to know?”

“Can you give me a definition of electricity?”

She smiled and said. “Now, Preacher, there are a great many things that science does know about fire and electricity but no absolute definition can be given. Ask me something that I do know.”

I congratulated Agnes on possessing true wisdom and told her she was the first among many, in a search I was making, to acknowledge that no absolute definition existed.

I observed for our thinking and consideration that day that **NO ABSOLUTE** definition can be established for **LOVE, TRUTH, LIFE, DEATH, LIGHT** or **SPIRIT**. The reason may be that the Bible declares--“God is a fire(7); life(8); love(9); Light(10); Spirit”(11). You see, if we could define these words in an absolute, final sense, then we could define God. But, the Bible says that God and His ways are past finding out. (Romans 11:33). Since God’s essential nature is **SPIRIT** he operates on a plane that cannot be discerned by our senses. Even though spirit is ethereal, yet His work is very real! Jesus compared being born again of the water and spirit to the wind when He said:

“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound , but cannot tell where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:8)

This matter of the new birth being like the wind is a strong indication, much to the consternation of our logical mind set, that the total work of the Holy Spirit **CANNOT** be traced like a line on a map. I made a long study of the blessed Holy Spirit as revealed in the Bible which has resulted in a special study course--“The Holy Spirit Applied.” In this, I point out that the **w-o-r-k** of the Holy Spirit begins in the life of a human even before he is born. (Psalm 139:13-16.) This was true with me in being an unwanted pregnancy in 1931. It was the days of the Big Depression and one more mouth to feed and person to clothe was not desirable. As my Mother drove down the seventeen miles of dirt road into Medicine Lodge to get an abortion, a voice spoke to her--“Turn back! Turn back!” And she did! I believe it was the Voice of the Spirit speaking. The Spirit is the giver of our breath of life as Genesis 2:7 records--“And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the **BREATH OF LIFE**;

and man became a living soul.” This expression “breath of life” in the ancient Hebrew is the word for “spirit,”

When does He begin to CONVINCe us about Truth? To CONVICT us of sin? To CONVERT us to Jesus? My answer is: when a human first hears the TRUTH! But, that is like the wind for no man can name the day and hour when a baby, a child first hears the Truth and Name of Jesus.

One doubt that plagued me for years was the thought--“Spirit isn’t real.” The Lord led me to see that to the contrary, **s-p-i-r-i-t** is **r-e-a-l-i-t-y** and that which we see and touch all around us is NOT real. I owe this insight to my College Science Professor at Oklahoma City University. Dr. Hammer could be rather dramatic in illustrating his teaching. One day in teaching us about the atom, he jumped upon his desk and stomped on it. “How many of you think this desk is solid?” Everyone raised their hand and he said, “You’re wrong. The atoms in this desk are only more dense than those of the air you breathe. Given enough time, many thousands of years, and all the atoms that are now flying off this wood desk will leave nothing in its place.”

What Professor Hammer was teaching was given Christian application by my Bible College professor, Howard Hayes,(12) in pointing out that this concept is first stated in Hebrews 11:3 and Colossians 1:16,17. In these verses the truth is established that the unseen atoms are God’s building blocks. Further, the Scriptures state in II Peter 3:10; I John 2:17 and Revelation 21:1 that this material earth will in God’s time, dissolve but the **real world of the spirit** will go on and on. Matters of the Spirit--joy, peace, love, mercy, etc. will never cease. Since we are not evolutionists, humanists or materialists, we remind ourselves that God is spirit and the unseen virtues of the Spirit are the greater.

This “Unseen Presence” of God’s Spirit that had been working in my behalf before I was born is much like the man in Francis Thompson’s poem: I share here the beginning and end of the long journey he describes.

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
 I fled Him down the arches of the years;
 I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways
 Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
 Up vistaed hopes I sped;
 And shot; precipitated,
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
 But with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbed pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 They beat--and a Voice beat
 More instant than the Feet--
 'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.'

After a long pursuit covering many years, and through a
 myriad of fears, this Unseen Pursurer--The Holy Spirit--brings
 his man home. Here are the final words.

 Now of that long pursuit
 Comes on at hand the bruit;
 The Voice is round me like a bursting sea:
 Save Me, save only Me!
 All which I took from thee I did but take,
 Not for thy harm,
 But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
 All of which a child mistakes
 As fancies lost. I have stored for thee at home:
 Rise, clasp My hand, and come!
 We're going Home!(13)

Unseen He is and yet Reality personified! We need Him!
 Must have Him! Therefore, He seeks us like this "Hound of
 Heaven" from the cradle to beyond the grave where His work
 will be completed when we are crowned in that Last Day!

III - BE FILLED!

1. DON'T DRINK the Old Wine!
2. New Wine Defined!
3. Be Filled!

Now that the Spirit had reminded me from Scripture
 that I was a spirit, living in a body and had a soul, I

continued my search as to WHY I needed to be filled?

A high school senior asked: "How can the Holy Spirit fill me and does this mean He is measured in pints, quarts and gallons?"

My answer to him was, "No" and "Yes." No, He doesn't come in pints, quarts and gallons and yes we can receive more of Him into our spirits."

It is to Believers that Paul speaks in this fifth chapter of Ephesians:

"Therefore He says: 'Awake, you who sleep; Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.'

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,"(14).

The Word came alive reminding me--The Holy Spirit desires to CONTINUE FILLING ME.

It is this truth that Paul was speaking when he said--"but be filled with the Spirit," Ephesians 5:18. Three truths shined out of this statement into my understanding.

#1-It is a COMMAND.

#2-It is an assumed command.

#3-And a continuing command.

Bible commands are known by the Imperative mood in the ancient Greek language. Dake's Daily Study Bible reveals there are 1,050 commands in the New Testament; but, only about 700 when all the duplicates are consolidated.

Examples of these 700 imperatives are:

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations."
(Matthew 28:19)

*"Repent and be baptized." (Acts 2:38)

*"Love one another" (John 13:34)

*"And be not drunk with wine...; but be filled with the spirit."
(Ephesians 5:18)

Ephesians 5:18 contains a double imperative: one negative--don't be drunk with wine and one positive--do be filled with the Spirit.

Professor Seth Wilson(15) points out there are four (#) imperatives (commands) in the New Testament relating to the Holy Spirit.

#“Walk in the Spirit” Galatians 5:16

#“Do not quench the Spirit” I Thessalonians 5:19

#“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God” Ephesians 4:30

#“Be filled with the Spirit.” Ephesians 5:18

When I attended high school in Cherryvale, Kansas there were two kinds of courses: (1) Required, such as math and English and (2) Electives, such as band, FFA, home economics and shop. Now in this vein of thinking--Being FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT is a REQUIRED course in our spiritual walk.

1. A command.
2. An ASSUMED COMMAND.

The Lord taught me from my search of Scripture that in language construction of the verse--“Be filled”--is in the passive voice - a passive verb. Meaning that the subject is acted upon. Namely, the Holy Spirit is the One that does the filling. We are the receivers.

It is couched in casual language because, Paul the writer, assumed that what Christians were given when they received Jesus as Savior according to Acts 2:38--“The gift of the Holy Spirit”--they would c-o-n-t-i-n-u-e to need and seek. After nearly two thousand years of church history, a multitude of people, including me, did NOT know!

When our children were home I might send one of them to brush their teeth. I would say, “Galen, go to the bathroom and brush your teeth **and don’t forget to open your mouth.**” No, I didn’t add that last phrase for I *assumed*, and rightly so, that Galen would know he must open his mouth to brush his teeth. Just so, the record of the early followers of Jesus in the Book of Acts indicates they knew the necessity of continuing to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

I knew that the Holy Spirit took up residence in my life when Jesus came in even as Acts 5:32 affirms:

“And we are His witnesses,...and so also is the HOLY SPIRIT whom God has GIVEN to those who Obey Him”

Falsely I assumed that this was the end of the matter not knowing of Jesus' continuing plan for the Holy Spirit to fill His Followers.

1. A command.
2. An assumed command.
3. A CONTINUING COMMAND.

This is made clear from the Greek that this statement “Be filled with the Spirit” is a continuous present imperative. Literally it could be translated: **Be filled and keep on being filled.** My Greek professor, Boyd Lammiman(16) of Midwest Christian College used to describe this tense to us by saying, “Boys, this tense is like the waves on the ocean. They seem to go on and on and on forever. Just so the linear (continuous present) tense indicates an action that keeps moving on.”

After searching out the Greek words, I turned to a review of plain English since this is what I had read and studied for many years.

I looked at the promised coming of the Holy Spirit and His arrival on the Day of Pentecost in the eight different references in the first two chapters of Acts.

(#1)Acts 1:1,2 declares that it was through the Holy Spirit commandments were given to the apostles.

(#2) Acts 1:4,5 speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit as “the promise of the Father.” Jesus interprets this in Vs. 5 as being “baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.”

(#3)Acts 1:8 records Jesus' last words before returning to Heaven--“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”

(#4)Acts 1:15,16 records an event in the Upper Room where the 120 were gathered praying. In preparing to elect an apostle to take the place of Judas, Peter quotes David from Psalm 69:25-28 and 109:8-15. Peter's words are--“Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas....”

(#5) Acts 2:1-4 tells of the promised arrival of the Holy Spirit. "And when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

(#6) Acts 2:14-18 is the beginning of Peter's sermon. "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is only the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel:'

'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh; And your sons and your daughters will prophesy, And your young men will see visions, And your old men will dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out in those days of My Spirit;' "

(#7) Acts 2:32,33 Peter continues his sermon: --"This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."

(#8) Acts 2:36-38 Peter concludes his message:--"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (The people respond:)

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call."

THE BOTTOM LINE

So-to-speak of these first two chapters in reference to the filling and continued filling of The Holy Spirit is this.

(_____)

When the sun went down on the Day of Pentecost the 120 (Acts 1:14), the 12 (Acts 2:14) and the 3000 (Acts 2:41) had in the words of Scripture received one or all of these--*

- *"the promise of the Father"
- *"baptized with the Holy Spirit."
- *"filled with the Holy Spirit."
- *"Spirit poured out upon them."
- *"the gift of the Holy Spirit."

There is an old adage that says--You can't see the forest for the trees. Meaning that when one is walking through the woods, it is impossible to have a total overview of the forest. In reference to the Holy Spirit's coming in Acts 1 and 2, this same problem often exists. I became lost among the "trees" so-to-speak in trying to decide WHO received WHAT in reference to the three groups of people named above and the various phrases used to describe the arrival of The Holy Spirit. My thinking here does NOT concern this proposition. The question is: WILL THERE BE A CONTINUING NEED FOR THESE PEOPLE TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT AGAIN?

It is at this crucial point that I made a serious mistake in supposing that the BOTTOM LINE of the coming of the Holy Spirit in the first two chapters of Acts was:

--ONCE FILLED - ALWAYS FILLED.

My plight is illustrated by an incident that happened while driving in Colorado. I said to the Denver policeman: "I'm just a visitor here in your City and I didn't see the One-Way sign." He was most considerate, giving me a good safety talk and providing assistance in turning around. It is true, that ignorance of the law is no excuse. Yet, this is all I could plead concerning my lack of being filled with the Holy Spirit. No one ever told me or showed me any different. I assume that well meaning people assumed that I knew the WHY, WHEN and HOW of continuing to be filled with the Holy Spirit. They were wrong and so was I!

I discovered that CONTINUING TO BE FILLED with the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts is a reality.

Acts 4:23-31 records the n-e-x-t filling. In between the end of Acts 2 and this place several events transpire--*

*A lame man is healed (Acts 3:1-10)

*Peter and John are arrested as a result of this healing (Acts 4:1-4)

*They are tried before the Jewish Council and finally let go. (Acts 4:5-22)

Acts 4:23 says "And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them." WHO the "companions" or "company" was is not absolutely certain. They may be the 12 apostles, the 120 of the Upper Room or the entire church which had now grown to 5,000 men plus women (Acts 4:4)

Do keep in mind that at least two of this group were apostles, Peter and John (Acts 4:19), which is most significant considering their having just received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 1:12,13; 2:14). The WHO of "their own company" is secondary to the BIG NEWS about to happen.

Acts 4:24-30 records a prayer that was prayed by the assembled group. Much different from most church prayers today and prayed in unison. (Vs. 24). The HOW is secondary to the BIG NEWS about to happen.

THE REFILLING with the HOLY SPIRIT now takes place.

#"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31)

#ACTS 6:1-6 indicates that "full of the Holy Spirit" (Vs. 3) was one of the qualifications required for selecting seven men to serve the church. We will explore this in the next part.

So, the followers of Jesus continue to need the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit continues to fulfill this need by filling them!

IV - BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT!

1. DON'T DRINK the Old Wine!
2. New Wine Defined!
3. Be Filled!
4. Be Filled with the Spirit!

While the filling of my life with the Spirit was as silent and unseen as the wind; yet, MUCH VISIBLE were HIS WORKS, FRUITS and GIFTS!

A QUESTION:

HOW do we **KNOW** when we are Spirit Filled?

President Jimmy Carter often used the expression "born again Christian," while other contemporary thinkers talk about "Spirit filled believers." These expressions are well meant. There are plenty of people in American churches who have NOT been born again and so are NOT Spirit filled while there are too many others who walk after the flesh and so quench the Spirit. New Testament expressions that speak to these spiritual conditions include:

"So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God."
(Romans 8:8)

"Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Romans 8:9b)

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14)

"This I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16)

I conclude that it was a matter of simplicity for the First Century Christians to recognize men full of the Holy Spirit. Our problem today is that men make matters complex while God reveals simplicity!

These early Christians were asked by the twelve apostles according to Acts 6 to assist in solving a problem of discrimination.(17) The solution involved being able to recognize a Spirit filled person. The problem originated when tens of thousands of Jews from many nations came to Jerusalem for the Passover (during which Jesus was crucified)

and stayed over fifty days for the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:1,9-11). Some three thousand of these responded to Peter's invitation on the Day of Pentecost to accept Jesus as Saviour (Acts 2:38-41) Verse forty-one says--

"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day about three thousand souls were added to them."

So these became the first members of the Lord's church. These Christians, former Jews, elected not to return to their homes in foreign lands. They pooled their resources and out of a common purse shared with each other (Acts 2:45). In the daily handing out of food, money, etc. certain Grecian widows were neglected (Acts 6:1).

The twelve apostles proposed solving the problem by asking the church to select seven men to be responsible for the daily distribution. They specified the qualifications for these seven as follows:

"Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." (Acts 6:3)

Wisdom of the apostles' advice is seen in the simple qualifications, clear procedure and the resulting solution to the problem.

Ten words in verse 5 tell the rest of the story--

"And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose..."

HOW could it be so *simple* when countless words have been written in our age concerning the qualifications of certain leaders in the Church and whole books written concerning the matter of being filled with the Spirit? Because GOD in His wisdom provides SIMPLICITY! Man, out of the flesh, complicity!

WHAT were the qualifications and **HOW** did the brethren discern them in the seven men?

#1 - "GOOD REPUTATION" Acts 6:3. No difficulty in the Brethren identifying this in the seven men. Listen to what others say about the man. Look at him in his

business and home.

#2 - "WISDOM" Vs. 3. Easy recognition of this quality by listening to what a man says and how his advice turns out for himself and others.

#3 - "FAITH" Vs. 5. You can't miss it! Not how much he talks about faith or blindly tries to lead; but, HOW MUCH DOES HE WAIT UPON GOD IN THE MATTERS OF LIFE?

#4 - "FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT" Vs. 3.

Some say that everyone is equally FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. Don DeWelt, Professor of Ozark Christian College, Joplin, Missouri points out that if everyone was equally filled and there was no such thing as being part filled, half filled or not filled, then this qualification would be superfluous - without purpose or meaning.

It was not difficult for the disciples in Acts 6 to determine a SPIRIT FILLED MAN as they observed one another in daily living. They noted the Presence or absence of JESUS in one another's daily WALK. In relation to---*

*daily living, fellowship, praying, daily communion, preaching, sharing with one another and praising of God. (Acts 2:42-47)

*On the other side of the coin of life they also observed the profane, carnal, mundane focus such as Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. Note the expression by Peter-- "*Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...?*" (Acts 5:3)

HOW could I recognize a SPIRIT FILLED PERSON?

A true story by Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ answers this question with a very simple picture.

"There is a throne, a control center, in every life--either self (ego) or Christ is on that throne. This concept of Christ being on the throne is so simple that even a child can understand it.

We began to teach our sons this great truth when they were very young. One evening when we were saying our prayers together, I asked our then eight-year-old son, Zac, 'Who is on the throne of your life?' He said, 'Jesus.' I asked our then five-year-old son, Brad, who was on the throne of his life. He answered, 'Jesus'

The next morning, their mother had prepared for breakfast a special dish called 'egg in a bonnet.' It was a delicious thick piece of French toast with a hole in the middle, and in that hole was a poached egg. As I was enjoying it, I looked over at our little lad. He was not eating the egg nor the toast.

I said, 'Brad, eat your breakfast.' He replied, 'I don't want it.' 'Of course you do,' I said. 'You'll enjoy it. Look at me; I am enjoying mine.' 'Well,' he said, 'I don't like it and I'm not going to eat it.' Being a bit dramatic, he began to release a few tears. I had to make up my mind what I was going to do. I could either say to him, 'Now, young man, you eat that breakfast or else I'll spank you'; or 'Forget it. I'll eat it myself.'

However, I thought of a better idea. I asked, 'Brad, who is on the throne of your life this morning?' At that, the tears really began to pour. He understood the point that I was making. He had learned the concept that Christ must be on the throne; but Christ was not on the throne of his life at that moment. When he regained his composure, he replied in answer to my question, 'The devil and me.' Then I asked him, 'Whom do you want on the throne?' He answered, 'Jesus.'

So I said, 'Let's pray,' and he prayed, 'Dear Jesus, forgive me for being disobedient and help me to like this egg.' God heard that prayer; and Brad enjoyed his breakfast. As a matter of fact, he ate it all. You see, he had said that he did not like it before he had even tasted it.

That evening we were saying our prayers, I asked Brad who had been on the throne of his life that day, and he said, 'Jesus.' 'Oh,' he added, 'except at breakfast this morning.' "(18)

How can I know that the Holy Spirit is filling me?

The simple answer is--when JESUS is on the throne of my heart!

The above question is answered by three simple phrases:

- #1. My WALK;
- #2. My TALK;
- #3. My GAWK.

Let us note that these three specific areas of the Spirit's Presence in our lives is named in Ephesians 5:18ff.

Ephesians 5:18 - fruit

WALK

submitting:

- submit one to another-Vs. 21
- wives submit-Vs. 22-24
- husbands love-Vs. 25-33
- children obey-6:1-3
- fathers provoke not-Vs. 4
- servants, be obedient-Vs. 5-9
- masters, do the same-Vs. 9

TALK

speaking:

- singing-Vs. 19
- giving thanks-Vs. 20

GAWK

- be strong in the Lord...6:10
- put on the whole armor of God.-6:11-17
- praying always-6:18

SIGN #1 - OUR W-A-L-K!

While sharing in a Faith Alive Revival in Denver, Colorado it was impressed upon me that we measure certain things about people by their w-a-l-k.

Following the evening Revival service, Preachers, Rodger and Connie Thompson, provided a time of fellowship. We enjoyed food and talk. I drank two cups of coffee. It was 11 o'clock as I left their house to drive to my housing hosts in Golden. On this cold November night an ever-so-thin coat of frost covered my windshield. Scratching through it with my fingernail I determined the defrosters would remove it in seconds. I backed out of the driveway and drove slowly towards the freeway two blocks away. By the time I reached the Interstate my windshield was still frosted over. With no traffic in sight, I pulled on to the outside lane driving about 10 mile per hour, with two wheels on and two wheels off the

pavement, waiting for the frost to disappear. Within two minutes a flashing red light appeared in my rear window. Instantly I knew why I was being pulled over. They suspected intoxication because drinking drivers often drive ever so cautious and slowly afraid of making a mistake. And when the blood alcohol reaches yet another level, they drive very fast.

A black policeman inquired: "What are you doing in our City?" Pointing to the Green Mountain Christian Church building I said: "See that church building up on the hill. I'm preaching a Revival there."

He said: "Let me see your driver's license and registration papers." I found the first but not the latter.

"Mr. Johnson we will need to run some tests on you. First of all walk right down the edge of that pavement." I tried and fell off as there was a 8 to 10 inch drop off down to the dirt.

Next he said: "Stand down here on the dirt and hold your right leg up and spread your arms out." I did and lost my balance. "Now, try the other leg," he said. Same results.

"One last test, Mr. Johnson. Put your hands down to your side. Now bring your right arm up and touch your nose. Now your left." I did it!

"Mr. Johnson, why couldn't you pass the first two tests?" the policeman inquired.

I'll never know if the Lord gave me a Word of Knowledge for the moment or force of habit from preparing many three-point sermons for a lot of years. Instantly I said, "There are three reasons, Sir. Concerning the first test, I do not walk tight ropes and so I fell off the edge of the pavement. I can walk a straight line on a level surface but not on these frozen mud ruts. Concerning the second test, I do not usually stand with one leg in the air and thirdly I'm cold and scared to death." I saw a faint smile in the corner of his eyes and my heart started beating again.

He made a radio call and a white policeman showed up with more questions and a firm talk: "Don't drive with frost on your windows and have a good evening!"

Having learned a lot of lessons, I scraped away the frost, and continued West.

Just so, we can t-e-s-t the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives by our w-a-l-k. The kind of spirit that controls our w-a-l-k is known by what we w-a-l-k towards and what we w-a-l-k away from.

Scripture is an excellent means of checking our w-a-l-k to determine if we are Spirit led.*

*Romans 6:4:

“Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

*Romans 8:1:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

*Romans 13:13:

“Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and wantonness, not in strife and envy.”

*II Corinthians 5:7:

“For we walk by faith not by sight.”

*Ephesians 5:1,2:

“Therefore be followers of God as dear children. And walk in love.”

*Ephesians 5:8b,9:

“Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth).”

*Colossians 4:5:

“Walk in wisdom...”

*I John 1:7:

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another...”

*3 John 1:4:

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth”

SIGN #2 - OUR T-A-L-K!

A. Walk.

B. TALK.

When the church of Acts 6 was asked by the apostles to select 7 men who were “full of the Holy Spirit”, they listened to what the men t-a-l-k-e-d about.

J.B. Phillips in his introduction to the Letters to the Young Churches says something very important concerning why we TALK about certain matters.

The great difference between present-day Christianity and that of which we read in these letters (New Testament epistles), is that to us, it is primarily a performance; to them it was a real experience. We are apt to reduce the Christian religion to a code or, at best, a rule of heart and life. To these men it is quite plainly the invasion of their lives by a new quality of life altogether. They do not hesitate to describe this as Christ living in them.(19)

Acts 4:31 tells WHY the early disciples of Jesus were so BOLD!

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”(20)

If one KEY WORD can be coined to judge the work of the Spirit within us in relation to our TALK, I suggest it is the name, JESUS.

Here are some probing questions that assist in measuring the Spirit’s control of my TALK.

1. **Do I use His Name in my casual conversation?** Such as-****The Lord blessed me today in... **The Lord led me in this... **God is my strength!**

I note that folk often give the devil credit in their conversation when they say (#):

#“That’s the way the ball bounces” or #“That’s the way the cookie crumbles,” or “Whatever’s to be will be,” and again #“It’s written in the stars,” or “Lady Luck sure smiled on me.”

Let us cultivate more and more the use of the sweetest Name in all of earth and Heaven--JESUS!

2. **Am I embarrassed at the use of His Name?** I often

seek spiritual knowledge about people by asking--“How are you and Jesus getting along?”

This question brought me to the edge of being thrown out of a house in Circleville, Kansas. Preacher, John Messer, and I were out visiting folk in their home during a Revival there. One lady had been a Christian many years before but had grown cold in her love and service. Knocking on the door, I prayed as always: “Jesus, be in charge!” We were invited in and seated in the living room. Trying to avoid all the often trite talk about the weather, politics and community grapevine, I said: “Mrs..., we are having praise and preaching services down at the church building. John and I are out checking on people’s spiritual health, and came by to see how you and Jesus are getting along?” The dear soul responded instantly by saying: “Preacher, it is none of your...(blank, blank)...business about me and Jesus.” “Oh, but dear lady it is my business! So much so that the church pays me. Please know that God loves you and I do too and how can we help you know Jesus better?” She said--“Listen, you...blankety...preacher, if you’re going to talk about Jesus, there is the door!” Now, I have visited in a few thousand homes across 40 years and never been thrown out. Not seeing that there could be any possible gain for the Kingdom of God, I backed down. We struck up a conversation about the weather followed by a discussion of farm problems and politics. In the midst of this, she put on the coffee pot and opened the cookie jar. We had a good time and a long talk as long as Jesus wasn’t included.

When we walk with Jesus and know Him on a first Name basis as did Peter and John, then our TALK will reflect His Presence!

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that **they had been with Jesus.**”
(Bold marking, mine.) (Acts 3:13)

SIGN #3 - OUR G-A-W-K

A. My Walk.

B. My Talk.

C. My GAWK.

When the disciples of Jesus in Acts 6 were asked to select 7 men full of the Holy Spirit, they would be looking for men with a Christ-like WALK, a Christ-centered TALK and a GAWK that focused on JESUS.

Our G-A-W-K, that which commands our attention, is determined by which spirit is on the throne of our hearts--Self and sin or Jesus.

Following is a paraphrase of our key verse, Ephesians 5:18, which I prepared from the Greek text:

Don't get your stimulus from the spirits, which makes prodigals, but be drunk with the Spirit.

Let me draw a picture with words. This verse turns on one axle so-to-speak and two bearings. The one "axle" is that of being FILLED. The bearings are the two spirits. The first "spirit" which we have already discussed in Part I is usually translated with the word "wine". I remind us that we often refer to alcoholic beverage as "spirits", so I chose this word in the above paraphrase with that thought in mind. It is the "spirits" of alcohol or the flesh on the one hand and the "Holy Spirit" on the other hand that determines whether we produce what Paul calls "works of the flesh"(21) o-r the "fruits of the Spirit"(22).

Our GAWK is determined by one of these spirits. It is defined in the language of today's youth with this question--what turns you on?--Money? Things? Music? Pictures? Sex? Praise? etc. To each of these must be addressed certain questions--*What Kind? and What for?*

Our G-A-W-K (that which causes us to intently gaze) is determined by WHO is on the throne of our hearts? If we are engrossed with SELF (fleshly mind, carnal desire, earthly lusts), then our focus will see the sordid, base, vulgar, mundane side of everything around us. If we are FILLED with THE SPIRIT, then JESUS will be the focus of our lives and we will see that which is beautiful, good, holy and meaningful all

around us. Look at a lovely lady. What do you see? **HOLY SPIRIT FILLED** hearts s-e-e a being made in the image of God, a help-meet for man, a temple of beauty, The **CARNAL MIND** looks at the same woman and sees thru the eyes of lust a sexual object.

Do not complicate the matter of recognizing a person **FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**. These simple fruits of our walk, talk and gawk will reveal the presence or the lack of the blessed Holy Spirit.

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.” (Ephesians 5:18-21)

V - WHAT MUST I DO?

While I had almost stumbled into the process of being filled with the Spirit, or so it seemed to me; yet, God was at work with a well defined order of procedure. Here is the order of **HOW** Jesus fills His followers with the Holy Spirit.

There are four actions necessary on our part.

- A. Desire
- B. Surrender
- C. Confess sin
- D. Ask

I was, so to speak, like the dog in a joke that my friends tell about preacher, Roland Hill. Bro. Hill preceded me a few years at the Minneola (Kansas) Christian Church. Preacher Hill was bothered by a little dog that made havoc of his garden and shrubs. One day when Bro. Hill was cleaning his lawn mower's gas tank, he poured the bad gas into a bowl. The little obnoxious dog appeared and quickly drank the contents of the bowl. The dog took off like a rocket and ran clear downtown making both blocks of main street and came back to the parsonage, falling over on its back with four little legs up in the air. Bro. Hill was always asked--“What was wrong with the dog?” His answer--“**IT RAN OUT OF GAS and CAME**

BACK FOR A REFILL.” Now, according to this story, that dog had more sense than I did. I didn’t know **HOW** to get a refill of the Holy Spirit.

Now that we have explored the desire of the Holy Spirit in wanting to fill us, we come to the actual--**HOW TO BE FILLED** with the **HOLY SPIRIT?**

A. Desire

Jesus gave us a valuable life principle from the “Sermon on the Mount”

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”(23)

Can’t we assume that everyone knows they must **DESIRE** a closer walk - to be filled with the power and presence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit?

One person said to me “The Holy Spirit can fill me if He wants to, I am not going to seek Him.” Entertain no illusions, the Holy Spirit will **NOT** fill those who have no desire. The Holy Spirit only walks through doors that are already open. The door of our heart is our **WILL** and the latch on that door is **DESIRE**. Desire is a door latch to every grace God has to offer--salvation, prayer, guidance, victorious living, strength, our daily needs, etc.

James wrote it down with these words--“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”(24)

David encourages us--

O God, You are my God
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.(25)

This simple story impressed on me the need for heartfelt **DESIRE**.

A seeking soul once went to a religious wise man asking how he could know God better. The teacher took the seeker down to the ocean and they waded out into the water. As they

approached shoulder deep water the teacher pushed the disciples' head under and held it there. The lad began to thrash around and flail his arms. The teacher continued to hold him under the waves. Finally he allowed the lad to surface. He came up gasping for breath and saying--"What is the meaning of this?" The wise teacher said--"Lad, what did you want more than anything else when under the water?" "To breathe air" he replied. "Very well," the teacher said, "and when you desire God as much as you wanted air under the water, you shall have Him."

Now the Bible says, (God) "is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being..." (Acts 17:27b, 28a) Yet, it is forever true that we must o-p-e-n the door of our wills with d-e-s-i-r-e if the Holy Spirit is to fill us.

I had MUCH DESIRED over some 20 years for the Holy Spirit to fill me; but, there had been a lack of surrender and the habitual sin problem in my life.

A. Desire.

B. Surrender.

As common as saying water is wet and ice is cold is the admonition to Christians to continue SURRENDERING. It is to Christians that James and Paul speaks:

"Submit therefore to God."(26)

"You must dedicate yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life."(27)

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice,..."(28)

Paul's picture of sacrifice is drawn from the daily Temple sacrifices. The lamb's legs were tied together, its chin pulled back so the Priest could cut the jugular vein to begin the sacrifice. A bonus for us as we offer ourselves to God is that having died to self, we get to go on living while tied-up on God's Altar of service.

Surrender begins when we first receive Christ. However men like Carl Ketcherside, who I shared about in Chapter 1, found a new beginning in inviting Jesus into his life. And,

across the country many people tell me that in their original confession of Christ before being baptized, they simply answered a preacher's question about Jesus with a "Yes" or "No." I suggest they again confess Christ and renew their surrender with a prayer like the following:

A PRAYER OF SURRENDER

Lord, Jesus I believe You are the Son of God who died for my sins and rose again that I may live forever according to the Scriptures.

"As far as the East is from the West" so remove my sins from me.

I still believe and receive You as my Lord and Saviour. Come into my heart and be the Lord of my life.

Use me as You choose through all my days and ways to glorify You!

In Your Name Jesus - Amen!

A. Desire.

B. Surrender.

C. Confess all known sin.

Now that we DESIRE to be filled with the Spirit and are SURRENDERING OURSELVES, we need to search out and CONFESS ALL KNOWN SIN in our life.

S-i-n and self are the great obstacles to being filled with the Spirit. Living in sin or as Paul says in Romans 6:1, continuing in sin, keeps the Holy Spirit from doing His work. Many are the Scriptures that speak of this danger:

Psalm 59:1,2 "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear."

Galatians 5:16 "This I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

Ephesians 4:30,31 "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."

It is necessary, so to speak, to break-the-back of habitual sins. I conclude that it was to this need that Jesus spoke when He said, *“And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is profitable for you that one of your members perish, and not that your whole body be cast into hell.”*(29) As one of my Bible College Professors, Professor Howard Hayes, used to say--“Boys, the best place to cut a snake’s tail off is right behind its ears.” And so it is with sin. Not that in a practical sense we become sinless; but, that we bring to an end the practice of living in the same sin day after day. See Hebrews 12:1.

We are encouraged by John to confess our sin.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we CONFESS OUR SINS, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”(30)

David found it essential to deal with sin in his life and so he prayed:

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight---Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow...Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your Presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me with Your generous Spirit.”(31)

A living illustration of this occurred while I was engaged in a Faith Alive Revival with Mark Bowers in Walterboro, South Carolina. The evening message was on this subject of HOW TO BE FILLED with THE HOLY SPIRIT? Following the service, a lady asked me if we could talk the next morning. We agreed on 10 o’clock. With her permission I share this story using a fictitious name “Mary Doe.”

When the appointed hour came I walked into the building. There was a lady that I did not recognize. Coming closer I

said--“Mary, is that you?”

“Yes, it’s me,” she responded.

I bantered with her--“Mary, you look like you have been up all night.”

“I have been,” she said.

“Oh, you work the night shift?” I inquired.

“No, I work days but I have taken today off. You said last night that if we had a habitual sin to cut it off with definite action. For years I have fulfilled the lust of the flesh by looking at pornographic stuff. I was up all night running magazines, pictures and books through the paper shredder down at the office. Now, I have cut my hand off so-to-speak and am **READY TO DO BUSINESS WITH GOD**. Will you pray with me that His Holy Spirit will fill me?”

We prayed and hallelujah the Holy Spirit filled her just as He promised!

- A. Desire.
- B. Surrender.
- C. Confess sin.
- D. ASK.**

The Holy Spirit is ready to **FILL US** now that we **DESIRE** Him and **SURRENDER** self with a **CONFESSING OF SIN**. Jesus was telling His disciples **HOW TO BE FILLED** with **THE HOLY SPIRIT** when He said:

“And I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks bread from any of you who is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”(32)

And **H-O-W** shall we ask? I offer the following words as a prayer frame for our asking.

*Dear Father, I love You, Praise You and Seek You!
Thank You for Jesus and His power and presence
through the Holy Spirit.*

*Please forgive me for those times when I have acted as
boss of my life.*

*Jesus, I now invite you to take your place on the throne
of my heart.*

*Fill me with your Holy Spirit as you have promised in
your Word.*

*And, now as an act of faith, I thank You for directing
my life and filling me with the Holy Spirit.*

In Jesus' Name - Amen

And, HOW OFTEN shall we ask?

I respond to this posed question by asking a question--
What size is your "fuel tank"? For many years I drove a
4-cylinder Opel station wagon. It had a 10 gallon gas tank
and when full would take me 300 miles. Now I drive a 8
cylinder 454 engine Suburban with a 30 gallon tank and if
the terrain and weather are favorable I can go 210 miles on
a full tank. I suggest we human beings vary as much or
more than automobiles. Because I made a dry run for so
many years in NOT knowing to ASK for the Holy Spirit to fill
me, I now ask every morning before getting out of bed.
Other times during the day when I am weak in body, lack
strength in my spirit, need wisdom, etc. I instantly
pray--"God, fill me with Your Holy Spirit and thank You in
Jesus' Name."

VI - FRUITS OF HIS PRESENCE.

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be
filled with the Spirit, speaking...singing and making melody...
giving thanks always...submitting..." (Ephesians 5:18-21)

1. DON'T DRINK the Old Wine!
2. New Wine Defined!
3. Be Filled!
4. Be Filled with the Spirit!
5. Fruits of His Presence!

My special study of the Holy Spirit in the Bible revealed

there are sixty-seven blessings or fruits the Holy Spirit has for us. The **GREATEST** fruit-evidence of the Holy Spirit is the **GLORIFYING OF JESUS IN OUR HEARTS** as our Lord said:

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and **HE WILL GLORIFY ME**, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you.(33)

We need not seek the gifts but the **GIVER**. Even as Jesus said:

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in Him, **BEARS MUCH FRUIT**; for without Me you can do nothing.(34)

The **FRUIT** of the Holy Spirit is illustrated in this beautiful life story.

The second time I shared these truths about being **FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT** was in a Faith Alive Revival at Havensville, Kansas. Tim and Cathi Newton from Manhattan Christian College were the student Ministers.

Among those that packed the building night after night was a young couple - Sam and Jeannie Keehn - who lived in the neighboring country town of Soldier. Sam had been a lukewarm Christian Church member prior to this time and Jeannie had been a lukewarm Methodist Church member.

With their permission I share this letter Jeannie wrote concerning their being filled with the Holy Spirit.

"God touched our lives in August, 1973 and I knew it was important that I be immersed, because I did love Jesus and believe He is the Son of God. It was a new beginning. I would live a changed life from now on.

Oh, how Satan deceived me, for the harder I tried to be good the worse things got. My greatest good deed for God was manipulating my husband until he would consent to go to Church with our two boys and myself, but somehow the victory was usually short lived, for the rest of the day was full of tension and unrest between us.

Sam and I have a good marriage, in spite of the usual ups and downs. So, after working a 2nd. shift (3 pm to 11pm) for seven years (this included Saturdays) we were elated when Sam finally got a 1st. shift. We now had Saturday night free and could have some good times together. So for many Saturday nights we left the boys with my folks, bought a bottle and went with friends to a night club, out to eat, to play cards, to have fun, usually getting home anywhere from 2 to 6 am. I always got up with enough time to pick the boys up and make it to Sunday School. I was one of the teachers and definitely wanted the kids to have religious training. If we had some money or time left over from the week, we graciously gave it to the Lord. Oh, how good I was! So, why was I getting more confused by the week?

What happened to the peace? Why didn't I know without doubt what was right and wrong? Why the feeling of guilt about leaving the boys so much and teaching young children God's Word when my mind and body were so tired? Every Sunday I vowed to do better: would overcome my sins. Well, I was probably as good as anyone and just wasn't appreciated.

PRAISE GOD! He has a plan and takes care of us even when we are floundering. First, a weekly Bible study was started. After badgering, Sam consented to go. It was a fascinating study on prophecy and we were hooked and never missed.

Then in March, '74, the Havensville Church held a Revival. I'll never understand why we went? But, PRAISE GOD, He has control of everything and knew we were ready to hear HIS WORD thru Wilbur. The evening was anything but ordinary. Ron and Haven Howard stirred my spirit as the songs of Christ they sang were so alive, because Christ is alive in their lives. Wilbur's message was different too, almost as though he were looking into my soul telling me things about myself I thought was a secret. Of course there are no secrets from God, He knows everything and He was talking to me thru His servant, Wilbur, that March evening and PRAISE GOD it soaked in!

The next morning I sat at the table reading one of the tracts the boys had picked up, I even got out the Bible and then I began to pray, **REALLY PRAY**, and for the first time (after all those years of Sunday School and Church) I **ASKED JESUS INTO MY HEART** and **THAT I MIGHT BE FILLED WITH HIS HOLY SPIRIT**. In that moment my life was changed in a way that can't be put into words. Suddenly I realized I wasn't good, and even if I was, my good works couldn't buy my salvation. God wanted me and my will just as I was and in the light of His love - His beautiful

perfect love - I saw how black my heart was and I shed tears of sorrow and thanked God that He loved me so much He sent His Son to shed His blood for my unrighteousness. Jesus went to the cross for ME and all I need to do is accept Him. THANK YOU JESUS!

The second night of the Revival Sam got around to go without any hassel. Seemed strange. I wondered why he acted so differently? PRAISE GOD, he had accepted Jesus as LORD OF HIS LIFE, too! How good God was to us! We attended the classes on "Dealing With The Devil" and the Revival every night. There was so much to learn and our minds were thirsty for God's Word after that long dry spell. The following Sunday Sam was the first one ready for Sunday School and Church and our home was FULL of JOY because CHRIST is at the head of our family now!

The days were EXCITING as the Bible came alive! It made sense now with Jesus helping us to understand it. The works I did now, I did out of love for Jesus, not for a pat-on-the-back. I was no longer confused, I knew right from wrong because the Holy Spirit convicted me of my sins and continues to guide me day to day and show me the right path. Our tastes in entertainment, music, magazines and TV programs have changed and it wasn't even a sacrifice because they were only things we used to fill a void that only God can satisfy. Most important of all our security is in Christ now and not the material things of this world that will not last. We know that everything we have is from God our Father because He loves us, HIS to give, to use or take away. I am finally able to open my home for meals and prayer gatherings without worrying about the way things look. My what JOY I have received!

I thank God that I belong to His family and for my brothers and sisters in Christ. What a precious gift.

No, I'm not perfect, my life isn't perfect, and my days aren't perfect. God didn't promise that, I still slip and fall, but my Father in Heaven picks me up, brushes me off and helps me on my way again. He walks with me every step and shares my sorrows and my joy, listens to my complaints, requests and praises of thanksgiving and patiently and lovingly teaches me as I serve Him with the best I have. Praise God for His goodness to me and for sending Wilbur Johnson to open our eyes to His love."

Signed--Beverly (Jeannie) Keehn(35)

May this beautiful poem by Glenda Fulton Davis encourage you as it has me in seeking to do God's Will by being filled with His Spirit from day to day.

HELP ME HOLY SPIRIT

I want to talk like Jesus,
words of truth my mouth to speak.
I want to walk like Jesus,
circumspect with holy feet.
I want to see like Jesus,
through the man into the heart.
I want to be like Jesus,
Spirit-filled and set apart.
I want to live like Jesus,
faithful to my God above.
I want to give like Jesus,
not of duty, but of love.
I want to pray like Jesus,
"Father, not my will but thine."
I want to stay like Jesus,
in God's presence all the time.
I want to dare like Jesus,
speaking out on wrong and sin.
I want to care like Jesus,
seeking souls to win for Him.
I want to preach like Jesus,
seeing captive souls set free.
I want to teach like Jesus,
of the blood He shed for me.
O help me, Holy Spirit,
your Presence to receive,
Yes, help me Holy Spirit,
close to Jesus, to cleave.
Lift me up to things above,
that through me all may see
Christ's redeeming love
exemplified in me.(36)

FAITH ALIVE IN HEART, HOME and CHURCH
NOTES - Chapter 3

1. Booklet-"Filled With the Holy Spirit, by Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ, Pgs, 21,22. Copyright, Campus Crusade for Christ, Inc. 1971. Used by permission of "Here's Life Publishers," San Bernardino, California. Christ.
2. John 7:38,39
3. Proverbs 23:31a,32
4. Luke 5:39
5. Luke 10:41,42
6. John 4:24
7. Hebrews 12:29
8. John 14:6; Psalm 36:9; Acts 17:28
9. I John 4:8
10. John 1:5
11. John 4:24
12. Howard Hayes has been a life long Bible College Professor. He is now retired living in Johnson City, Tennessee.
13. Poem "The Hound of Heaven" by Francis Thompson
14. Ephesians 5:14-18
15. Seth Wilson is a retired Dean and Professor of Ozark Christian College, Joplin, Missouri
16. Boyd Lammiman has been a life long Bible College Professor and President. He is now retired and living in Calgary, Alberta, Canada
17. Acts 6:2,3
18. "How to Walk in the Spirit," Pgs. 18,19,20. Copyright.
19. "Letters to Young Churches" by J.B. Phillips.
20. Acts 4:31
21. Galatians 5:19-21
22. Galatians 5:22,23

23. Matthew 5:6
24. James 4:8
25. Psalm 63:1
26. James 4:7-1960 New American Standard translation.
27. Romans 6:13c-James Moffatt translation.
28. Romans 12:1a
29. Matthew 5:30
30. I John 1:8,9
31. Psalm 51:1-4a, 7, 9-12
32. Luke 11:9-13
33. John 16:13,14
34. John 15:5
35. Letter to me from Beverly Keehn of Soldier,
Kansas, November, 1974. Used by permission.
36. Poem "Help Me Holy Spirit" by Glenda Fulton
Davis.



**Sam and Jeannie Keehn
and Sons
Soldier, Kansas**

Part 4

Faith Alive Through--

LIVING BY FAITH

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While I had memorized 500 Bible verses as a youth through the Rural Bible Crusade of Kansas, graduated from Bible College, taken 30 hours of graduate study and preached 20 plus years; yet, I was not living by faith on a daily basis. I did what most other preachers and church members were doing as writer Elton Trueblood suggests--living by SIGHT and calling it FAITH.

My eyes were opened thru the reading of a book--"GOD'S SMUGGLER"--by Bro. Andrew. I read it during the after lunch rest period at a week of Christian Service Camp. Upon completion I prayed: "Lord, if Andrew doesn't have a copyright on TRUST or a patent on PRAYER, please enroll me in the school of faith!" Andrew didn't and GOD DID!

My walk started the next day with my weekly task of barbecuing chicken for all the campers at a lake outing. THIS I KNEW HOW TO DO. I'm not an expert at anything but BBQ was one thing I had learned by practice. I knew what was needed--number of chickens, 60# of charcoal, two and one-half cans of lighter fluid, matches, time to leave for the lake, when to light the fire, how long to cook the 120 quarters of chicken. An old ranch cook from Ashland, (Kansas) Virgil Bowman, had taught me to make mouth watering BBQ sauce. Little did I know that living by faith could possibly include barbecuing. I hitched onto the charcoal burner with the old Ford pick-up and headed towards Clark County Lake. Arriving on time I spread out the charcoal and poured on a can of lighter fluid. All went well on this 110 degree in the shade summer day until the two and one-half cans of lighter fluid were gone and nothing but flash fires that quickly died away. It was one of those rare Western Kansas days when some humidity was hanging around and had caused the charcoal to draw dampness. No fire and no white spots on the charcoal indicating a fire-in-waiting. Not enough time to travel 20 miles to town and 100 plus hungry campers coming in 90 minutes. I took off my straw hat and sat down in the shade of a picnic shelter. In moments of desperation FAITH is often born. So, it was in this crisis I decided to pray. I PRAYED--"Lord if you

want YOUR chickens cooked then YOU'LL need to do something.”

A little hot breeze blew up out of the southwest. A few minutes later smoke was pouring out of the 20 ft. charcoal burner. I walked over in disbelief and there was a beautiful bed of white coals. The chickens were cooked. The hungry campers ate and later that night in my small closing prayer circle at Camp I shared with the campers the strange events of the afternoon. It had been a good first day in His School of Faith! Little did I know that this event was but a kindergarten lesson for the days ahead.

This chapter demonstrates what FAITH is and how to LIVE BY FAITH right where the tires of our lives meet the pavement of our living on the Road of Life.

H-O-W do we T-R-U-S-T God? Solomon gave us a perfect recipe which many of us have committed to memory. now let us commit it to life. We will follow this Divine recipe for FAITH just as it was given.

Solomon's Recipe for Faith--

PART I - "Trust"

*“And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.”
Proverbs 3:5,6*

Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

This is almost the land of ho-hum since so much has been said and written that is only half true. One contemporary speaker said--“FAITH is TRUSTING in something you BELIEVE IN.” This sounds important and informative until you study the matter and realize that it says nothing. Nothing because all three words--faith, trust, believe--come from the very same Greek word. When the Old Testament Hebrew was translated into Greek--called the Septuagint--the word chosen for translation is the Greek--“pistis.” Simple authoritative definition of this word is:

"A conviction of a particular truth, co-joined with obedience to that truth."(1) Thayer's Greek Lexicon

"A firm conviction producing a full acknowledgement of God's revelation or truth."(2)Vine's Expository Dictionary

When did the great divorce in FAITH take place? The divorce I speak of, that is rampant today, is the concept expressed by W.E. Vine in his Dictionary:

"All this stands in contrast to belief in its purely natural exercise, which consists of an opinion held in good faith without necessary reference to obedience."

Was it some obscure year in ancient history? No! In the first century while the New Testament was being written this separation was starting. So, James addressed almost an entire chapter to the problem expressed best in his words-- "*Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works is dead.*"(3) Some might counter that even without the works, obedient-application of the truth, one still has FAITH. Once in a discussion I suggested that if the life is gone out of my riding horse do I still have a horse? My friend countered with "Yes! For there is still the horse hide, ears, eyes, mane, legs, hoofs, etc." I still affirm that a DEAD HORSE is NO HORSE at all. And, the same truism applies to FAITH.

Now, these two parts of f-a-i-t-h are MOST important and interesting. For one is OBJECTIVE and the other is SUBJECTIVE. These two parts are well pointed out by this simple story. A small boy was in Sunday School class and the subject of study was love. The teacher made it a point to go around and put his hand on each student's head and personally tell them of Jesus love and his love too. The teacher lived across the street from one of his students. On Saturday following the Sunday lesson he was pouring a new concrete drive. He went inside for a cup of coffee while waiting for the truck to return. His Sunday School student came over and rode into the fresh concrete with his bicycle. The wheels sank down and a deep rut was left. Promptly the teacher came out and gave the lad a tongue lashing. The boy looked up at the man and said "Mister, I don't understand. Last Sunday you told me that you loved me, now it sounds like you don't even like me." The

man replied, "Well, boy, let me put it this way. I love you in the **ABSTRACT** but I don't like you in the **CONCRETE**."

This story illustrates the two parts of **FAITH**--First: Objective or concrete; Second: Subjective or abstract. Much has been written about "Objective-Subjective Faith" in recent years. This represents another attempt to divorce the CONVICTION from the OBEDIENCE of f-a-i-t-h.

Let me spell it out further. Some will say, "what is **OBJECTIVE-SUBJECTIVE FAITH**?" Here is a simple definition:

OBJECTIVE FAITH:

Is that truth produced completely apart from one's self. Such as Jesus dying on the Cross.

SUBJECTIVE FAITH:

Is one's response to truth. That which transpires inside a person. Such as a person accepting Jesus as Saviour.

Fred P. Thompson, Jr. in "The Christian Standard" quotes Geoffrey J. Paxton on this subject as follows:

Paxton is critical of the typical evangelical appeal, "Let Jesus come into your heart." It is not a Biblical way of preaching, and it does not indicate a proper response to the gospel. Man is saved not by the coming of Jesus into his heart but by Jesus' coming to the manger in Bethlehem.(4)

Now, I ask you as a thinking person: **WHICH** of the above two is correct? The **ANSWER** is that it is **NOT** either/or but **both/and**. Bible **FAITH** is **b-o-t-h** **OBJECTIVE** and **SUBJECTIVE**. It consists of a **CONVICTION** based on **TRUTH** (that's objective) **c-o-u-p-l-e-d** with an **OBEDIENT RESPONSE** to the truth (that's subjective).

In conclusion of this part of our thinking, let us be mindful of two factors about **FAITH**:

- #1. Faith i-s a conviction about Truth coupled with obedience to that Truth.
- #2. The tendency of man is to separate the conviction side of faith from obedience.

Have I belabored the discussion of the first word "Trust?" If you nod your head yes, then we must conclude the same thing about Solomon. For he said it all with the first word-"TRUST"-but used many more words to tell us HOW TO TRUST.

We press on with Solomon's Divine recipe which tells us HOW TO TRUST in a fashion like the old nursery rhyme: "*This is the way we tie our shoes, tie our shoes, tie our shoes so early in the morning.*" Even so, this is the w-a-y we are to walk by faith, live by faith, conquer by faith in all of our ways through all of life's days!

II - Trust in the Lord!

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths."

Proverbs 3:5,6

It would seem that I-F we could arrive at the place of living out FAITH through following our convictions about Truth, that all danger would be past. Not so! There is a hidden **danger** of agreeing with the Bible that FAITH consists of a conviction of truth co-joined with obedience t-h-a-n going off the deep end on the obedience-works side so that one's walk becomes that of a natural man in the flesh. This is what I referred to earlier as WALKING BY SIGHT AND CALLING IT FAITH. The American church is an example of this kind of folly--always talking about faith but so very few ACTS OF FAITH.

This second part of Solomon's recipe--"TRUST IN THE LORD" gives clear emphasis on this very point. The f-o-c-a-l point of our f-a-i-t-h is of the utmost importance!

David said--"*The Lord is my Shepherd...*" Everything else in the 23rd Psalm rests on that first assertion--

When the Lord is my Shepherd--

*I do not want
I lie down in green pastures.
He leads beside still waters.*

*He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness.
I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.
I fear no evil.
His rod and staff comfort me.
I eat in the presence of my enemies.
My cup runs over because He anoints my head with oil.
Goodness and mercy follow me all my life.
I dwell in His House forever.*

Andrew, the Dutch boy from Holland that became God's man for taking Bibles behind the Iron Curtain, had a focal point: THE LORD. This is the young man that I spoke of earlier whose book God's Smuggler opened my eyes to the reality of living by faith. He grew up in a typical small Dutch town, the son of a not-too-prosperous blacksmith. While still a teenager he went off to fight for his country. Shot in the leg, he returned home walking with a limp and a crutch. At home he found a job in a sewing factory and the Spirit of God continued to prick his conscience. Here is the way he wrote of his learning to live by FAITH.

"What is it, Lord? What am I holding back? What am I using as an excuse for not serving You in whatever You want me to?"

And then, there by the canal, I finally had my answer. My "yes" to God had always been a "yes, but." Yes, but I'm not educated. Yes, but I'm lame.

With the next breath, I did say "Yes." I said it in a brand-new way, without qualification. "I'll go, Lord," I said,... "Whenever, wherever, however You want me, I'll go. And I'll begin this very minute, Lord, as I stand up from this place, and as I take my first step forward, will You consider that this is a step toward complete obedience to You? I call it a Step of Yes."

I stood up. I took a stride forward. And at that moment there was a sharp wrench in the lame leg. I thought with horror I had turned my crippled ankle. Gingerly I put the foot on the ground. I could stand on it all right. What on earth had happened? Slowly and very cautiously I began walking home, and as I walked, one verse of Scripture kept popping into my mind: "Going, they were healed."

Could it be? Could it possibly be that I too had been healed?(5)

PRAISE GOD! He had been made whole! Leaving the crutch on the bank of the canal he ran home rejoicing. He was moving forward with and for God. He was learning to TRUST THE LORD.

The Lord still calls all His Children to WALK BY FAITH on varying planes to various places in serving and living. Jesus was walking on the water and Peter wanted to do the same, Jesus said, "Come."(6) Will he climb out of the boat TRUSTING JESUS and knowing that the water beneath his feet will be like pavement? He did and it was! As long as he TRUSTED, all was well. When he quit TRUSTING in THE LORD, it was then that he began to sink and say "Lord, save me!"(7) It is important that we note Solomon's words again--"Trust in the Lord." In Peter's experience, the record says "But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid;"(8) Too, often in our desire to LIVE BY FAITH, we end up attempting to TRUST THE LORD p-l-u-s something else. We need to look to the Lord exclusively for directions.

I know of a church that decided to build a building. They planned to determine the Lord's Will by receiving a Victory Day Offering. The offering was low and did not provide nearly enough. THE LORD WAS SAYING "NO!" Next, they said we will determine the Lord's Will by borrowing from the people on a special note plan. The amount promised was only half of what was needed. Once again The Lord said "NO!" Next, they said, in essence, very well we will TRUST THE WORLD for the funds we need. The banker said "Yes! at 14% we will loan you the money." The lessons we learn from this example is: **KEEP OUR EYES ON JESUS - TRUST IN THE LORD and HIM ONLY!**

Preacher Joe Wright blessed my faith-walk when he said:

Most Christians never experience the power of God because they never put themselves in a position where they will need it.(9)

Seeking to learn the lessons of LIVING BY FAITH, we press on with Solomon's recipe in Proverbs.

TRUST IN THE LORD--

III - With all your heart!

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart.” Proverbs 3:5

WHY add this? Can't Solomon take for granted that everyone knows that TRUSTING must be WHOLE-HEARTED?

We should all know that the Bible *heart* does NOT in most places mean the pump organ that moves the blood around in our body. It is the part of man that thinks, feels and wills with a conscience that functions through the three of these. The terms we use to describe these actions are--Intellect, emotions and will. So, the Scriptures speak of us doing these three things with the **heart**. Examples are:

H-E-A-R-T as our INTELLECT:

“I have given you a wise and understanding heart.”

(I Kings 3:12)

“With the heart one believes to righteousness.”

(Romans 10:10)

H-E-A-R-T as our EMOTIONS:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.”

(Deuteronomy 6:5)

“Let not your heart be troubled.”

(John 14:1)

H-E-A-R-T as our WILL:

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things.” (Matthew 12:35)

“But God be thanked that though you were slaves to sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.” (Romans 6:17)

Solomon makes his statement--“*Trust in the Lord WITH ALL YOUR HEART,*” exclusive. That little word “ALL” is a word that means 100%. We are to T-R-U-S-T in the Lord with ALL our intellect, all our emotions, and all our will. I see all around me folk who have fallen into the pit of attempting to TRUST with an-intellectual faith; or a faith of emotion or a faith of the will, that is all social action with no anchor in Truth. Please understand there really is NO such thing as “intellectual faith” or “faith of emotion” or “faith of the will”; but, people fall into these traps making them appear to be real.

Here is a little mental test that I want you to consider. This quiz has 12 items preceded by one question. Here they are:

How many of the following 12 great themes of the Bible DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT?-*

- *God?
- *Jesus?
- *Holy Spirit?
- *Salvation?
- *Church?
- *Life?
- *Faith?
- *Love?
- *Prayer?
- *Sin?
- *Devil?
- *Providence of God?

I trust you said “Yes, I know something about all twelve of these great themes.”

If you did, I extend to you an “E” for effort for you are on a level with the devil. You see, on a purely INTELLECTUAL level, the Devil knows these twelve subjects, some of them better than any one of us. The writer James says, “*You believe that there is one God. You do well. The demons also believe--and tremble!*” (James 2:19)

- *If anyone knows about GOD the Devil does for he previously lived in Heaven as one of the Archangels.
- *He certainly knows about his arch-enemy, JESUS.
- *He hates the HOLY SPIRIT for He is God’s present power.
- *Finally he comprehends SALVATION after Jesus emptied the halls of Hades through the Cross.
- *He understands the CHURCH and works overtime in it.
- *He knows all about LIFE and how to tempt the Pilgrims on the Road to the House not made with hands.
- *He counterfeits TRUST with unbelief.
- *He feigns LOVE.
- *Understands PRAYER power and seeks to defeat it.
- *SIN is his great tool; and “DEVIL” is his own name.
- *He knows about the strange PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

So, if we are on a level with the Devil with **INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE**, then to follow Solomon's **TRUST RECIPE--“Trust in the Lord WITH ALL YOUR HEART,”** (Proverbs 3:5) we must step up to higher ground. A step higher on the **TRUST** ladder includes **EMOTIONS** and **WILL**. Applied to the twelve great Bible themes of our quiz, our emotions plus our will, these nouns now become verbal-active.

- ***GOD** reveals Himself that we might worship Him!
 - ***JESUS** comes into my heart to become the Lord of my life!
 - *The **HOLY SPIRIT** is a present active power!
 - ***SALVATION** means to be saved from my sins!
 - *The blessed **CHURCH** is a living Body.
 - ***TRUST** makes it possible for me to rest on God's Promises!
 - ***PRAYER** means I can talk with God!
 - ***SIN** and the **DEVIL** are subjects that we overcome as Believers.
 - *The **PROVIDENCE OF GOD** means God is at work in our behalf!
- So, we **PRAISE HIM!**

“With ALL YOUR HEART” Solomon says--intellect, emotion and will. Here is a beautiful story that causes all of these to come alive in **LIVING BY FAITH**.

The young man called “God’s Smuggler--Andrew,” responds to God’s Call with a “Yes God, if you will open the doors, I will walk through them.” The next week, after his call by the canal and healing of his leg, he makes formal application to the WMS (World Mission School) in Glasgow. He was accepted depending on space opening up in the men’s dormitory.

Now, when we resolve to trust in the **LORD**, with all our heart, there must of necessity be opportunity to w-a-l-k in that resolution of f-a-i-t-h. Such was the case with young Andrew. He continues his story.

I had enrolled in a school sponsored by no church, supported by no organization, lacking all the recognized, dignified, time-honored accompaniments that were a part of education--and indeed of religion itself. Ahead of me now was the task I dreaded above all others: breaking the news to Thile, my girlfriend.

.....

Meanwhile, I set about raising money for my trip. I sold the few things I owned--my bicycle and my precious shelf of books--and

purchased a one-way ticket to London, where I was to meet the directors of the School, before heading for Glasgow...

I was to leave for London on the 20th of April. But just before that date three things happened in such rapid succession that they left me reeling.

The first was a letter from Thile. She had written to the board of missions of her church asking their opinion of the school in Glasgow. They had replied that it was a nonaccredited, unaffiliated enterprise that had no standing in any mission circle with which they were involved.

This being the case, Thile went on, she would prefer neither to see nor to hear from me as long as I was associated with this group. She signed the short letter, Thile. Not: Love, Thile. Just, Thile.

As I stood in the doorway holding the letter trying to take in what it meant in my life, Miss Meekle crossed the little bridge to our house.

"Andrew," she said, "there's something on my mind. Something I've wanted to tell you for a long time ever since I started teaching you English. Only I didn't quite know how to do it." She took a deep breath and plunged in. "You see, Andrew, I've never actually *heard* any English. But I've read a lot of it," she added hastily...She paused miserably. "I just thought I'd tell you." And she fled.

I was still digesting these two pieces of information when, two days later, a telegram arrived from the school I was enrolled in London: "**Regret to inform you expected vacancy has not materialized. Request for admission denied.**"

Three blows in a row. There was no room for me in the school. I probably could not speak the language in which the courses were taught. And if I went I would lose my girl.(10)

WHAT will we do when the Lord bids us **WALK BY FAITH**; yet, obstacles spring up? Learn we must, that **FAITH** must be **TESTED!** Andrew closes this chapter in his life with his answer.

Every reasonable sign seemed to point away from the school in Glasgow. And, yet unmistakable inside me, sublimely indifferent to every human and logical objection, was a little voice that said "Go." It was the Voice that had called to me in the wind by the canal, the Voice that had told me to speak out in the factory, the Voice that never made sense at a logical level.

The next day I kissed Martje and Getje good-bye, shook hands with Papa and Cornelius, and ran down the road to a bus that would take me on the first leg of a journey that is still going on.(11)

There is a missing piece to Andrew's living out Solomon's words--"*Trust in the Lord with ALL YOUR HEART*". You will remember that his Bible College in Glasgow had sent a telegram telling him NOT to come; yet, by the canal and through the Scripture of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19 God called Andrew saying "Go"!

Andrew, TRUSTING THE LORD and His Word caught a bus and headed for the School.

What happened?

When he arrived at the School and walked up the dirt road carrying all his earthly possessions in two large trunks, he saw a little man peering thru the bars of the large iron gate in the rock wall around the campus. The man was the Headmaster of the School. When he came within shouting distance, Andrew said "Sir, I am Andrew from Holland." The Headmaster responded--"Oh, Andrew! Is it really you? I'm so glad that you have come! You see we had to send the telegram to check on your FAITH."

I heard Professor Seth Wilson express the need for a whole-hearted faith with these words:

"FAITH is not accepting truth because of the evidence: but accepting Christ regardless of the consequence."(12)

So LIVING BY FAITH--*Trusting in the Lord with all our heart*, is meant to be the norm for every Christian. We are to look to the Lord for job and salary, places of service, and in ALL THINGS--health, weather, equipment, courage and daily strength, transportation, housing needs, healing and hope and may the list be as long as life itself--make these needs known to God in PRAYER according to His Promises and be willing to wait upon His providing.

We conclude this part by stating that AN ACT OF FAITH IS--

Any matter can be an act of faith when we

1. Willfully commit it to God and
2. lean not on our own understanding to make it happen;
but,
3. look to and wait on God for the answer.

IV - "Lean not on your own understanding".

Proverbs 3:5

One of life's most difficult tasks is learning NOT TO LEAN ON OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING after you have spent years learning to do just that. This unlearning for me was born out of many desperate situations.

One of the many crisis out of which The Lord taught me to TRUST ONLY HIM by N-O-T leaning on my own understanding occurred in January of 1979. My schedule called for a Faith Alive Revival to begin at Holly, Colorado on Sunday morning, January 14th.

On Saturday morning a car spinning its wheels awoke me with a start. A snow storm was beginning outside and already there was some four inches on the ground. What I did not know at that moment was that a quarter inch of ice lay beneath the snow. I hastened around and after a family prayer circle headed northwest by 9 o'clock. Ground Blizzard conditions existed between home and Wichita where the snow was hubcap deep. Our daughter, Rebecca, accompanied me as far as Wichita to catch a ride back to Manhattan Christian College. Leaving her with her grandparents, Raymon and Ina Barrick, I headed west down Highway 54. My courage decreased as the howling wind increased and the blowing snow began to produce whiteouts. At the west edge of Kingman, Kansas, I met with a barricade and a Patrolman that advised me the highway was closed, all travel discouraged. My spirit sank within me and I returned downtown to check on motels. Every motel had the same sad sign--SORRY FOLKS. NO VACANCY. I called preacher, Terry Neidens, and told him "Terry, it will be impossible for me to arrive in Holly to begin the meeting Sunday morning. I am in the middle of a

raging blizzard. Possibly I can get there by Sunday evening but it may be Monday afternoon." Terry said, "I never did think YOU could make it and now you won't for sure!" I hung up and drank a cup of coffee standing up as the cafe was wall-to-wall people. The dilemma was clear: I couldn't stay there. I was not inclined to go back. The westward road was the only way. My OWN UNDERSTANDING died as I prayed "Lord, it's your Revival 275 miles to the West. It's your storm and it's your road and I'm yours, too. Take charge!" I drove back out to the barricade and said to the Patrol, "Is travel on this road forbidden?" I know not why he said, "Do you have a Kansas driver's license and pay taxes in this State?" I responded, "Yes, Sir, I do." He shouted through the blowing snow, "I can't forbid you to go around this barricade but all travel is discouraged." I thanked him and drove around not only the barricade but MY OWN UNDERSTANDING onto an ice-snow packed highway into the face of a ground blizzard. The barricade proved to be a blessing as it had the effect of providing me with a PRIVATE HIGHWAY with no traffic, which was a necessity as most of the highway to Pratt was a one-way path through the snow. The snow ploughs had left 20 foot high banks on each side and the high wind made drifts out of that. My job was simple: go slow, pray and sing to the Lord. So, I PRAISED the miles away arriving in Dodge City by 6 pm. I called preacher Terry with a progress report. His only response was, "Y-O-U will not make it." The storm let up some and I drove through Garden City at 8:30 and into Syracuse by 9:30 and the lights of Holly shined dimly through the storm as my vehicle passed the City limit sign at 10:30. I pulled over to the curb for a few moments to give my broken spirit, my shattered OWN UNDERSTANDING, a little sympathy and THE LORD a lot more PRAISE!

Now consider this, in all those 350 miles from home not once did my car slip, spin, skid or slide, for beneath and all around had to be the unseen audience of the Lord's Angels.

Yes, we started the meeting in 16 below 0 temperature and it was a VICTORY MEETING clear through Friday night!

Hallelujah for JESUS who works when our own UNDERSTANDING dies!

Solomon gave us God's high wisdom when he said--

"And lean not on your own understanding."

Proverbs 3:5

Solomon knew the heart of man, that's for sure. With the wisdom that God gave him, he tells us five things to do in trusting God and ONE THING NOT TO DO. It's this "N-O-T" that we now consider--*Do NOT lean on your own understanding*. WHY? Because the greatest P-O-I-S-O-N to the faith life is leaning on our own understanding.

The Hebrew word in the text is "binah" translated intelligence or understanding.

There are four good reasons W-H-Y we should NOT lean on our own understanding:

1. **"Lean not on your own understanding;"** because: **It makes man his own god.**

In America, humanism makes man a god unto himself. Satan has cleverly woven this philosophy of TRUSTING IN SELF into the fiber of our lives so that some consider it near insanity to think otherwise. The Christian's enemy is deadlier than a hungry lion stalking its prey. What's worse there is **no natural defense** against him. Some animals enjoy protective coloration, others have quills and the skunk is usually left alone. We are helpless in terms of natural defense. Our enemy uses the natural means against us. Here is a simple ten statement quiz. Mark them TRUE or FALSE according to what is proper for a Christian.

- T F 1. It's natural to want to get ahead in this world?
- T F 2. It's natural to stick up for your rights?
- T F 3. It's natural to take advantage of all opportunities?
- T F 4. It's natural to protect yourself first?
- T F 5. It's natural to want the best at any cost?
- T F 6. It's natural to put yourself first?
- T F 7. It's natural to clutch what's yours?
- T F 8. It's natural to want a good time?
- T F 9. It's natural to cater to appetites and passions?

T F 10. It's natural to place self and family first?

For the Christian the answers are all FALSE. For the person of the flesh, of this world, the answers are all TRUE. Yet, many followers of Jesus would agree with all or part of this list as being TRUE. WHY would church members assert that any of this list is right? Because Satan has blinded their eyes, even the eyes of their understanding. See Revelation 3:14-19 with attention to Vss. 17,18.

2. *“lean not on your own understanding;”* Proverbs 3:5, because: man’s understanding is faulty.

Many have said to me--“God gave us brains and he expects us to use them.” Be very careful when asserting the above for man used his brains (mind) in the Garden of Eden. Man’s absolute knowledge of today may well change tomorrow. It wasn’t all that many years ago that--*

*“Bleeding” was a knowledgeable health treatment procedure in the day of George Washington. The Bible had been saying for near 6,000 years *“The life of the flesh is in the blood”* (Leviticus 17:11). Now man has changed his mind and bleeding is no longer an accepted procedure in the 20th century.

*“The earth is flat” intelligent men taught during the Dark Ages. The Bible recorded millenniums before *“It is He who sits above the circle of the earth”* (Isaiah 40:22). Now men know that the earth is round.

3. *“And lean not on your own understanding;”* (Proverbs 3:5), because it ties the Hands of God.

Leaning on our own understanding ties the hands of God to act in our behalf. It is the greatest poison there is to the faith-life. No Bible miracle would have ever occurred if men had leaned on their own understanding. As valuable as modern man supposes that the products of the mind-knowledge and intelligence-is, yet, God acts when men, through the simple TRUST of all their heart, look to Him!

Suppose at Jesus’ first miracle in Cana of Galilee when the Bridegroom ran out of wine and the Lord said to the servants “fill the waterpots with water,”(13) they had said “NO, we k-n-o-w how to make wine. Plant a vineyard. Prune the vines each year. The third year will bring a bountiful crop. Pick the

grapes and put them in a rock vat. Take off your shoes and walk around on the grapes to get the juice out. Let the juice set and soon you'll have wine. What else is new?" There would have been NO miracle if they had chosen to LEAN ON THEIR OWN UNDERSTANDING. They didn't! The record says in response to Jesus' request, "And they filled them to the brim."(14) And, you'll remember the results, the water turned to wine was declared by the Master of the feast to be the BEST!

4. - "And lean not on your own understanding;" because: The entire Bible says NO!

Many are the admonitions in the Bible, both in direct statements and stories to teach us NOT to LEAN ON OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING.

Consider the words of Jeremiah:

Thus says the Lord:

*"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,
Let not the mighty man glory in his might,
Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;
But let him who glories glory in this,
That he understands and knows Me,
That I am the Lord, exercising loving
kindness, judgment, and righteousness
in the earth.*

For in these things I delight," says the Lord.(15)

Isn't the entire Bible given to man to teach him NOT to trust in his OWN UNDERSTANDING? The Promises of God for the most part are neither logical or reasonable from man's point of view. What is there in blood that will take away our sins? See Hebrews 9:22. The answer is NOTHING, except God willed it so out of our need and His Love! So, God announces through Isaiah--"*Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.*"(16) And, Jesus becomes the GOOD NEWS in flesh and blood. So, John announces--"*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*"(17)

The list of beautiful things God does in my life gets longer and longer as the years go by and they are ALL a result of simply LEARNING TO LEAN on Jesus moment by moment.

Here is one of those beautiful moments. Many times we had traveled the highways from Minneola (Kansas) to Topeka taking our little daughter, Lisa, to the Kansas Neurological Institute. I knew those roads like the palm of my hand. Upon professional advise we had placed her there at the age of six for treatment of a severe emotional problem. Many times on these 300 mile trips we were out on the highways at midnight or later. My understanding had taught me where the all-night gas stations were. However, in the days of the "Gas crunch" the all-night stations started closing at 8 or 9 pm. On this particular night we came into Pratt, Kansas with an empty gas tank. The signs along Highway 54 were not encouraging--"OUT OF GAS", "CLOSED FOR THE NIGHT." However, I k-n-e-w my Chrysler would go 40 miles after the gauge said empty. So, we motored on down to Greensburg where there was ALWAYS an all-night station. My heart fell and my "OWN UNDERSTANDING" shook when we rounded the last bend in the highway and the station was dark. Now, I knew the desperation procedure of getting the local Law out of bed. He would have a key to a station and we could get gas. However, I was tired. It was 2 o'clock in the morning and the Lord called to my mind these words of Solomon:

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths."*

Proverbs 3:5,6

So, I prayed:

"Lord, we have been on a mission of mercy. Our hearts are heavy and our bodies are tired and we need gas. I want to claim Your Promise through Solomon in Proverbs. We're trusting in you with all our hearts and not leaning on our own understanding. We're acknowledging you in all our ways including the need for gas. We're heading on home on an empty tank, twice over, and we believe that you will direct our paths as You said."

I spent the next 40 miles just saying over and over--*Thank you Jesus for the millimeters and the miles and most of all that YOU are the Master of everything! Thank You for what you have promised! For what you have done and are doing right now! Hallelujah, A-men!*

When we pulled upon our driveway at home forty miles later, I reached to turn the key off but the engine died. The next day the Coop Service Station brought gas. It took twenty-four gallons for the twenty-four gallon tank and they had to remove the air-cleaner to prime the carburetor before the engine would start.

Somebody may say: How did it happen? I don't know. For many years while leaning on my OWN UNDERSTANDING, I always required a rational explanation. If I couldn't explain it, it couldn't happen and few things did! Did God put gas in my tank? He could have; however, I did not see the hand on the gauge move. Did God send a tail-wind to move us down the highway? He could have but I was not aware of it. Did God send Angels to bear us along as His Word promises in certain places? He may have. I only know what happened on this occasion and several others when I was in a corner and chose to LEAN ON THE LORD.

Someone may say: Why don't you drive without gas all the time? Here is the difference between TRUSTING GOD and TEMPTING GOD. God invites us to TRUST HIM but warns us not to TEMPT HIM. To start out without gas is to tempt God. To seek Him on the Road of Life in the midst of need is to TRUST HIM. And when we will LEAN ON HIM and N-O-T OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING, He directs our paths!

The antidote

For this poison of leaning on our own understanding is:

1. Determine with the intellect (mind) to **Trust in the Lord alone,**
2. Coupled with a strong emotion of love; **with all our heart;**
3. Resolve to cast aside our OWN UNDERSTANDING.
"Lean not on your own understanding."

4. Now, stand on the Lord and His Promises.

V - In all your ways acknowledge him.

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him.”*

Proverbs 3:5,6

What do these interesting words--“**In all my ways acknowledge Him,**” mean? Notice that when man tends to TRUST in the Lord plus something else, this leads to leaning on our OWN UNDERSTANDING and we begin to live this out in life. Our self-centeredness begins to show up in our talk and walk of life. We hear ourselves and others saying--*

- *Sunday is Sacred while the other six days of a week are secular.
- *The tithe is the Lord’s but the rest is mine.
- *Lady luck sure shined on me to provide good health.
- *I earned this money by the sweat of MY brow and It’s MINE.
- *These things happen because that’s the way the ball bounces.
- *This is a good day--Thanks to my lucky stars.
- *Fortune has given me good health.

Solomon encourages us to ACKNOWLEDGE the Lord in ALL OUR WAYS. What are the w-a-y-s of a person?

The WAYS of a person include--* *The PLACES I go... *The PEOPLE I meet... *The WORK I do... *The GAMES I play... *The BUSINESS I transact... *The GIRL/BOY I date... *The TRIPS I take... *The MONEY I spend... *The MONEY I keep... *The HOUSE I build... *The FRIENDS I choose... *The BALLOT I cast... *The BOOKS I read... *The MOVIES I see... *The THOUGHTS I think... *The MAN/WOMAN I marry... *The STRENGTH of my life and WEAKNESSES, too... *The SMILE I can give and the LOVE I can share... *The MELODY I sing... *The HEALTH that I have and the DEATH that I die.--All of these, everything I think and am and do, are “M-Y W-A-Y-S”.

So, Solomon says--“**In all your ways acknowledge Him;**” Make God your partner! PRAY!

When I was learning this beautiful truth of faith-living in my own life, our second son, Galen, began to apply Solomon’s faith-living recipe to his life in seeking God’s Will about atten-

ding College after his graduation.

On a lovely Spring day of 1974, Galen and I were walking home after the Sunday morning assembly.

I asked him where he would be attending college in the fall?

He said, "God and I have a deal going. I'm doing what you preached--Just trusting in the Lord with all my heart, not leaning on my own understanding, acknowledging Him in all my ways and knowing he will direct my paths like Solomon said."

My interest thermometer shot up high for this principle of faith-living was new to me and I did not know very much about applying this truth.

I inquired. "Galen, just how is God going to do this?"

He responded by saying, "My agreement with the Lord is that the first college coach that asks me to play basketball will be the school I am to attend."

My heart sank for I wanted my son to go to a Bible College for at least a couple of years. Galen had a lot of basketball and track trophies and medals at home and I felt sure some Juco Coach would be there first.

Coach Comeaux of Midwest Christian College in Oklahoma City drove 300 miles up to Minneola. He found Galen out in a pasture loading limbs on a wagon. The Coach said to him, "Galen, come play basketball for me and MCC this Fall."

Instantly Galen recognized this invitation as being an answer from the Lord in directing his path. He responded "Yes sir Coach, I'll be there this Fall! You can count on me."

Upon hearing the news, I breathed a sign of relief, which was short lived, for Galen's next answer put me back on the road of wondering and expectation. I had worked my way through Bible College and had a philosophy that part of a college education was working ones way through.

He answered with a smile of confidence, "The Lord and I have this deal going according to Proverbs 3:4,5. I trust Him

with all my ways, He directs my path. If the Lord wants me to go to Bible College He will provide the money.”

My heart sank, for these were kindergarten days for me in trying to live everyday life by faith. I thought to myself--how can God produce money? Church money in offering plates, yes, but hard cold cash out in the everyday world?

The rest is HIStory, that is HIS-STORY--The Lord's.

First came a three-week wheat harvest job in June with Frank and Geraldine Ramsey. This brought in some good wages but not nearly enough for a year at college.

Next, a widow-Irene Grimmett, called up. “Galen, are you busy?” “No I’m not,” he said. “Will you come and paint my house?” “Sure will!” he said. This brought in some more good wages.

After that came another job and August was drawing close. Soon it would be time to leave for the big City and yet he lacked \$250.

He had an opportunity to apply for a scholastic scholarship back in July but the application came on July 6th and was due back in the Dean’s office on July 3rd. I said, “Galen, Dean Warren Woodrome, is a busy man. The application coming late was the Dean’s problem. Send it in anyway.” Galen answered with a rule of sports--“Nope Dad, if I play the game, I play by the rules.”

Galen went down to the College the first week in August to check out the dorms, etc. The Dean met him in the hall. “Good to see you Galen. By the way the Scholarship Committee is meeting today. I sent you an application but never heard anything.” Galen explained about the late arrival date. The Dean acknowledged it was his problem and if Galen would fill out a quick application, he would put it on the bottom of the pile. Galen did and the Dean did and the School awarded him a \$1,000 scholarship to be used over four years!

Divine ‘fingerprints’ showed up again. Just like Solomon had said--

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.”*

Proverbs 3:5,6

Galen went to Bible College two years, then on to Oklahoma State University at Stillwater to become a Forest Ranger. In the midst of his schooling, using the same Proverbs 3:4,5 principle, the Lord provided him with a lovely Christian wife, Kim. The Lord provided for all his schooling but each time with a different set of circumstances. Always and always the “deal” was the same--TRUST by not leaning on self. Acknowledge the Lord in ALL WAYS and the bottom line was, a path DIRECTED BY GOD!

VI - “And He shall direct your paths.”

Proverbs 5:6

So Solomon has given us five steps to faith-living.

1. Trust.
2. Trust in the Lord.
3. Trust in the Lord with all your heart.
4. Do not lean on your own understanding.
5. In all your ways acknowledge Him.

Now comes what the commercial world calls THE BOTTOM LINE. At the end of Solomon’s Divine faith-living recipe the bottom line is--**“And HE SHALL DIRECT YOUR PATHS.”**

This is what we all want. The recipe is not done until the icing is on the cake. Just so, there’s no disappointment in Jesus. Even a cursory reading of Hebrews 11, the great Faith-Living Chapter, clearly points out the fruits of faith. NOAH built the ark in a dry land and in a rainy day was not disappointed. ENOCH trusted God and at the end of his walk he got to see God. ABRAHAM looked for a City and was given a Country. ABRAHAM and SARA longed for a son and were given innumerable children. And the blessings of God are greater by far than the fondest hopes and dreams of His Children.

DIRECTED PATHS always come at the end of the trail of **TRUSTING THE LORD**. In between, the Providence of the Lord leads His dear Children along.

In chronological order, in my learning to live by faith, after the BBQ camp lesson shared in Part One of this chapter, the next event the Lord used to teach me **HOW TO LIVE BY FAITH** was the journey to a youth conference.

Two thousand five hundred high school and college youth, including 30 from Minneola, Kansas, responded to the invitation of the "Christ in Youth Conference" in the Kiamichi Mountains of Southeast Oklahoma. Leading the youth was Jon Durre, our Youth Minister, plus Carol Epley, Julie McCune, Mark Houser, Terry Morrow, Susan Sibley, Kay Lee Bush, Doug Wilson, Steve Council. Other Youth Leaders and youth included Clyde and Nancy Goff; Benny, Sharon, Mike and Marci Kennedy; Roy, Joyce, Jimmy and Kenny Sturdy; Duane, Joan, Kelley, Toni and Joel Marshall; and part of our family--Imalee, Galen, Rebecca, Lisa and myself.

The group left for our first stopping point, Oklahoma City, at different times on that hot Western Kansas Sunday afternoon of August 6, 1972. It was 2 o'clock when our family joined hands together for a circle of prayer: "Lord, we look to You on this journey of faith. Lead, teach and use us on this trip. In Jesus Name. A-men."

I take this opportunity to share an over-view of the trip and the **FAITH-LESSONS** learned.

LESSON #1

As we motored into Woodward, Oklahoma, two fan belts broke on our vehicle. Please know that in 1972 both north and south of Woodward was desert land--huge Ranches with few houses not visible from the highway. Had the belts broken out on the highway, we could have been delayed an hour or two. The interesting point was that they broke at an intersection with a service station on each corner. I had only to decide which station would replace the belts. The **LORD** had **DIRECTED OUR PATH** by supplying an important need.

LESSON #2

Having been delayed only twenty minutes, we were back on the highway when Imalee snapped her fingers and said "Oh no, I left the music at home." I inquired, "What music?" "All the music that our 'Liquid Love Singers' are to use tonight in presenting their concert in Oklahoma City," she announced. She made one phone call, and when we arrived at the church building in Oklahoma City with fifteen minutes to spare, all the music was waiting. **THE LORD HAD DIRECTED OUR PATH** by making special arrangements.

LESSON #3

We left the City early Monday morning pulling our home-made camping trailer. The Kiamichi Mountain Christ's 40 Acres Campground was about five hours ahead. It was 2 pm when we pulled onto the Campground. A man came running up and said--"My goodness preacher, your trailer door is open and looks like some stuff may have fallen out." He was right for both my tool box and suitcase had fallen out. A group of people gathered around and asked, "Shall we go and look for it?" "I don't think so," I said, "Let's just trust the Lord some more and see what happens?" About ten minutes later a native lady of the Mountains drove up in an old pickup, hopped out and said, "Anyone lose a tool box and suitcase? I found them back down the road several miles near Nashoba." I said, "Thank You Lady for being the Lord's freight agent!" **THE LORD HAD DIRECTED OUR PATH** again.

There were eight most unusual things that happened on this trip. With each one it became more clear that the Lord's hand was involved in the solutions. **HE WAS DIRECTING OUR PATH** in a special **FAITH-WALK**.

LESSON #4

Lisa our youngest daughter was thirteen years of age at this time. I mentioned previously that she has some special emotional problems. Sometimes in a strange place surrounded by strangers she would become very upset, screaming, biting herself and pulling her hair. She had spent six years from age 6 to 12 in a State Institution, thus had never been

camping before. Imalee had prayed as we left home that the Lord would **DIRECT LISA'S PATH** by surrounding her with a mantle of peace. The reality that **THE LORD WAS DIRECTING HER PATH** became evident as the week wore on and she had perfect peace. Angels were on duty!

LESSON #5

The 2,500 youth were gathered under the Big Tent for the evening assembly when in the midst of a violent thunderstorm, lightning struck a tent. Little signs of panic began to sweep through the audience. Leader, Don DeWelt stood to his feet, asked the kids to stand and led them in singing, "Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you...". Fear disappeared! No one was in the tent. God was **DIRECTING OUR PATH** keeping watch by day and by night!

LESSON #6

Near sundown the next evening, CIY Director-Bob Stacy had a time called LUG (Look Unto God). The hundreds of youth were out on the grounds reading their Bible and praying. In the midst of this solemn moment an old coon dog began to howl. The longer the dog howled, the more disturbing it became. I was just learning to **WALK BY FAITH** in dealing with the Devil and didn't know whether the Devil could cause dogs to howl or not. But, I took the venture and came against the Devil in that dog with a verse of Scripture and Jesus' Name. Like turning out a light, the howling ceased and the dog slipped away. I could see the hand of God **DIRECTING MY PATH!**

LESSON #7

Seeing God at work was now becoming commonplace. So, when we were ready to leave and the battery on the car was dead, I was not surprised. Nothing--lights, ignition, doors--had been left on. We were many miles from the civilization of service stations. There wasn't even one, much less one on each corner, like the Sunday before back in Woodward when the fan belts broke. I asked Clyde Goff what I should do. He said, "Have you noticed that parked right against the front bumper of your car is a Power Vehicle from a Service Station

in Dodge City, Kansas?" I hadn't and it was a humbling experience to see once again THE LORD DIRECTING OUR PATH by taking care of every need. For those that may wonder, the dead battery of that morning lasted three more years with no problems.

LESSON #8

We were going home by Emporia, Kansas where our oldest daughter was taking a special Summer Science Seminar. So, we headed North out of Oklahoma City that afternoon. Just North of the City, for no apparent reason, the heat gauge hand went into the red as the radiator boiled over. We pulled onto the shoulder of Interstate 35 and waited for the radiator to cool. It was very low on water. Where could we find water on a hot Summer afternoon? There was a little farm pond just over the fence; but, we had no means of carrying the water to the car. Walking down to the pond I saw a beautiful sight--on the far side in a deep ravine was what looked like 10,000 white empty plastic Borden milk jugs. Thank You Lord, we only need two. But, our PATHS WERE DIRECTED by the HAND OF THE LORD! For those who may wonder, we drove that vehicle three more years and not once did it ever overheat again.

Some may say just bad luck - good luck. I say NO WAY. Not eight incidents on one trip and solutions far out of the ordinary. We TRUST - HE DIRECTS OUR PATHS! PRAISE TO THE LORD!

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths."*

Proverbs 3:5,6

FAITH ALIVE IN HEART, HOME and CHURCH
NOTES - Chapter 4

1. Thayer's Greek Lexicon
2. Vine's Expository Dictionary, "Faith", Pg. 71
3. James 2:17
4. Article by Fred P. Thompson, Jr. quoting Geoffrey J. Paxton in "Reflecting on the News." From Christian Standard - March 16, 1975 - The Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio. Division of Standex International Corporation. Used by permission.
5. Brother Andrew in "God's Smuggler", Pg. 55
GOD'S SMUGGLER by Brother Andrew with John and Elizabeth Sherrill. Chosen Books. Chappaqua, N.Y. Used by permission.
6. Matthew 14:29
7. Matthew 14:30
8. Ibid.
9. Joe Wright ministers to the Central Christian Church of Wichita, Kansas.
10. Brother Andrew, Pg. 56
11. Ibid. Pg. 57
12. Seth Wilson is a retired Dean and Professor of Ozark Christian College, Joplin, Missouri.
13. John 2:7
14. Ibid.
15. Jeremiah 9:23,24
16. Isaiah 1:18
17. John 3:16

Part 5

Faith Alive Through--

PRAYING ALWAYS

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God taught me to pray when I was twelve years old. The setting for this lesson of life was the cold Winter of 1944.

In March of this year I had accepted Jesus during a Revival at our Union Chapel church. I had listened to others pray but it was something the preacher did at funerals and in the church building.

The prayer lesson was centered around a desperate need to find a hammer. My brother and I ran a trap line every winter to make spending money. We trapped and hunted with dogs the wild animals common to Mule Creek and the Gyp Hills of Barber County--skunks, possums, coyotes and muskrats. These we skinned, stretched their hides and in due time shipped off to Chicago for a check in return. I looked after the trap line while Oren attended High School in Medicine Lodge during the week. On this particular winter day I borrowed my Mother's hammer to drive the stakes in the ground or a nail in a tree that secured the chain to hold the trap. Please understand that there was an unwritten law in our house--NOBODY EVER TAKES MAMA'S HAMMER. I wanted this hammer as it had a handle made of hard wood which would not stick to your hands in the sub zero temperature.

When I returned to the house, Mother met me at the door with these words--"Wilbur, my hammer is missing. I am sure you took it". With chattering teeth from the extreme cold I replied, "I don't have it." I had not missed it until that moment and my reply was a true statement for I had lost it out on the trail. Mother admonished, "You go right back out there and get it and don't come home without it."

Back through falling snow and cold wind I tramped across the stubble of the wheat field and down the trail of traps. Results? No hammer. With numb toes, red ears and some tears I searched the same ground again, more carefully this time. NO HAMMER!

Finally, out of a sense of sheer desperation and not religiosity, I knelt down in the high weeds along an old barbed wire fence around the wheat field. I prayed a terribly simple

prayer--"GOD, PLEASE HELP ME FIND THAT HAMMER!"

So sudden was the answer that came into my mind, that I doubted it. The answer that came was this thought--Look on the other side of the creek.

I started to lean on my own understanding again, which up to this point had produced no hammer and near frozen toes, ears and fingers. I answered the answer by reasoning--There is no use in crossing the creek. We haven't had any traps over there this winter. So, I trudged back down the trail fighting the knowing inner thought--Look on the other side of the creek. Results? NO HAMMER!

The winter storm was increasing and I had not found the hammer that stood between me and the warm wood stove back at the house. Stubbornly I answered the knowing thought--Look on the other side of the creek--by marching down across the sandy creek bed, climbing the opposite bank and walking a dozen steps. There in the middle of the foot trail was a beautiful sight--THE HAMMER!

How did the hammer get there? Probably some possum or coon that likes to get their teeth into wood dragged it across the creek.

It was in that instant that I knew GOD HAD ANSWERED MY PRAYER! Joy so warmed me that I ran all the way home and was warm when I got there.

Could I define prayer? NO! Did I know a lot about prayer? NO! But, this did not keep me from using this blessed permission God has granted His people to speak with Him with the assurance that He hears!

I have read books about prayer, studied men of prayer, and contemplated the Scriptures. These have produced the largest folder in my files out of many hundreds of subjects, a four inch thick folder on PRAYER. Yet, by far the greatest blessing to me has been my walking and talking with the Master Teacher, Jesus in prayer. Since we learn most about PRAYING by praying, let us pray.

Jesus I come boldly to our Father's Throne in Your Name. As of old when men sought You in the market place, the mountain-side, the wedding feast--You were there. Be with me right now and hear my request--Teach me to pray better and more. I want to know You on a First Name basis and talk together like friends. Help me to be willing to attempt the impossible of praying always about all things as You taught us to do. In Your Name, A-men!

Jesus spoke a parable that tells us much about prayer.

LUKE 18:1-8--"And He spoke a parable to them to this end, that men always ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying: There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. And there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying 'Avenge me of my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterwards he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge said. 'And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?' I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"(1)

Jesus tells us four things about prayer in this parable.

1. Men ought to always pray.
2. Men ought to always pray.
3. Men ought to always pray.
4. Men ought to always pray and not to lose heart,
5. Will he find faith on the earth?

I - What is Prayer?

A definition?

As I suggested previously when we thought about the Holy Spirit and our spirit, many matters of the spirit defy defining. Yet, this does not remove them from reality. To the contrary, reality, whether it be truth, love, spirit, prayer, etc., is often beyond our understanding as Thomas A. Edison wrote:

We don't know the millionth part of one percent about anything. We don't know what water is. We don't know what light is. We don't know what gravitation is. We don't know what enables us to keep on our feet when we stand up. We don't know what electricity is. We don't know what heat is. We don't know

anything about magnetism. We have a lot of hypotheses about these things, but that is all. But we do not let our ignorance about these things deprive us of their use.(2)

So it is with prayer. Jesus never defined prayer. He simply prayed. When His disciples came asking, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."(3) He did not give a lecture, write a book or send them to the Temple. He taught them to pray by praying. This was the occasion when he spoke what we have come to call the Lord's Prayer.

As a matter of theology, philosophy, and religion, men have written volumes about prayer. From these we glean insight both into the author and the subject of prayer. I call attention to three of these that have blessed me much.

Prayer is conversation with God.
Clement of Alexandria(4)

Prayer is the chief agency and activity whereby men align themselves with God's purpose. Prayer does not consist in battering down the walls of heaven for personal benefit or the success of our plans. Rather it is the committing of ourselves for carrying out of His purposes. It is a telephone call to headquarters for orders. It is not bending God's will to ours, but our will to God's. In prayer, we tap vast reservoirs of spiritual power whereby God can find fuller entrance into the hearts of men.(5)

G. Ashton Oldham

Prayer is not only "the practice of the presence of God," it is the realization of His presence.(6)

Joseph Fort Newton

What is prayer? men ask. God gives no answer except as we glean insight out of the words, phrases and practices in the Bible. The late Dean E. Walker writes:

Start with creation. No systematized doctrine of prayer is recorded. Instead, unconditioned man, created in God's image, is presented as living in free, natural, normal companionship with the Father. Part of this life is expressed in words--sentences--language.

Speech is integral to man. God spoke. Man replied. Each understood. God gave man stewardship of earth. Man accepted the trust. They talked about it.

This privilege was shared by no other creature. It was an aspect of life of the "God who is" as recorded in divine delibera-

tion, "Let us make man in our image." Prayer is both the evidence of, and the realization of, the privilege of the family created by the Word.

Man could choose, He was instructed about choice. He could live in his freedom of prayer with God. He could eat to know evil and die. He died. Separated from his garden and his God, he lived with deafened ear the dreary existence of death.

He struggled with the soil. He fell to savage beasts. He fought other men. He built cities. He herded animals. He fabricated tools from metal. He fashioned instruments and played music. He suffered in the grip of the earth he was intended to subdue and rule. He built altars. On occasion he heard the word of God (Genesis 4:6,7,9-15). He lamented his choice of evil (Genesis 4:23,24). But not until the day of Enos did men begin "to call upon the name of the Lord." And not until the prophet Abraham is it recorded that one who spoke for God included in this word an example and commendation of prayer (compare Genesis 20:7).(7)

Our greatest blessing from PRAYER will come from accepting prayer as conversation with our Maker and doing what the word implies--PRAYING!

Men ought to always pray.

Because God Specializes in the Impossible!

The setting of Jesus' Parable is an impossible situation. In a Jewish context, a woman might(?) approach a Judge; however, notice how Jesus arranges the story.

"And He spoke a parable to them to this end, that men always ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying: There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. And there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying 'Avenge me of my adversary.' "(8)

Note that the judge neither reverences God or man. He has all the qualifications of a Gentile and in that type of society women had no rights. Being a widow underscores the woman being looked down upon by a non-Jewish judge. It is an impossible approach! Yet, the woman received her request because she persisted!

Yes, our God is a GOD OF THE IMPOSSIBLE! Jesus spoke to this point as recorded in Luke 18:27--"*And He said, 'The*

things which are impossible with men are possible with God.' ''

My good friend, Bro. Jim Tillery of Wichita, Kansas wrote an article with this title--"**IMPOSSIBLE=HIM POSSIBLE.**"

Confronted with impossible problems in life, we are invited to take them to God in prayer. There is an old camp chorus that speaks this great truth.

Got any rivers you think are uncrossable? Got any mountains you can't tunnel thru? God specializes in things tho't impossible He does the things others cannot do.(9)

One of several hundred times I have seen God work His marvels happened as we headed west up Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain Park near Estes Park, Colorado. It was a steep climb pulling our twenty-six foot travel trailer up and over the Continental Divide. About a quarter of a mile from the pass, the big 454 engine on our Suburban died. I used my own understanding to check distributor spark, gas flow and heat of the engine. All were functioning properly. Traffic was stacking up behind us on the steep mountain road. A Park Ranger arrived to direct traffic around us. The carburetor wasn't flooding. No vapor lock of the engine. No over-heating; but, the engine refused to start. The Ranger indicated he would call a wrecker to tow us down the mountain to a garage. We paused to pray in Jesus' Name that He would send Angels to start the engine. I turned the ignition key in faith and the engine started with a roar! We were back on the road and over the mountain rejoicing all the way!

We ought always to pray because God does the impossible!

The woman in this parable made her own invitation to speak to the judge because of her need. She continued to seek out the judge until she received help. Jesus said--"**And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him....?**"(10)

When we consider that it is the GREAT ALMIGHTY EVERLASTING GOD OF THE UNIVERSE bidding us to PRAY, how can we do less?

Yet, the reality of what happens all too often in our hearts,

homes and churches is told in this story.

One of our deacons, Morris Kennedy, handed me two Sunday bulletins as we shook hands one Sunday morning “What are these?” I inquired. “That’s the story, preacher. Read it and weep!” The bulletins were current ones from our last two services at the Minneola (Kansas) Christian Church. On them he had recorded from his stop watch the elapsed time of each part of the service. When I added up the score, it was embarrassing. In the order of greatest to least amounts of time spent doing each part of the service, the score was:

- #1--MUSIC (all hymns, special music, etc.)
- #2--PREACHING
- #3--COMMUNION/OFFERING
- #4--ANNOUNCEMENTS
- #5--PRAYER (Including the invocation, benediction, pastoral prayer, communion prayer, offering prayer and moments of silent prayer.)

With this, I started a study-search of the book of Acts to see WHAT God’s People did most. I placed the activities into 12 categories. Shocking results came out like this. The numbers here signify the number of times the activity is named in the book of Acts.

# 1--PRAYER (Fasting).....	29
# 2--PREACHING.....	22
# 3--SALVATION (Jesus Accepted).....	17
# 4--MIRACULOUS GIFTS.....	15
# 5--God’s People MET together.....	14
# 6--TEACHING of the Word.....	13
# 7--TESTIMONIES.....	10
# 8--ELECTION SELECTION.....	4
# 9--COMMUNION.....	4
#10--FELLOWSHIP.....	1
#11--PERSECUTION.....	1
#12--SINGING (in jail).....	1
#13--ANNOUNCEMENTS.....	0

In short order we changed matters so more time was spent praying than making announcements. As time went by, our praying time increased and came very close to the TOP of the list.

This is almost a commentary on my life for the first twenty-five years. I spent much time doing "church busy work"--campaigns, drinking social coffee, promoting, eating lots of banquet meals, heavy publicity with promotion and prizes.

Let us be further reminded of Jesus' urging:

"It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' " (Matthew 21:13)




Men ought to always pray.

Because Prayer is a blank check.

LUKE 18:1--*"And He spoke a parable to them to this end, that men always ought to pray and not to lose heart."*

Jesus says--**"I tell you He will avenge them speedily."** Vs.8.

The widow woman knew that she needed help and she knew only one person that could help her--the judge. This judge was so-to-speak a blank check of possibility and from that source she continued to seek until help came.

PLANET EARTH, _____ 19____ No. 2	
BANK OF HEAVEN	
TO THE ORDER OF _____	\$ JOHN 14:13 _____
<i>Whatsoever</i> _____	DOLLARS
FOR _____	   God - Jesus - Holy Spirit

Notice in the facsimile of the above check that it is to be drawn on the greatest bank -- THE BANK OF HEAVEN. Let us choose the present tense for a date because God is listening now! The check bears the signature of God's family--GOD, JESUS, THE HOLY SPIRIT. It is not easy to choose signature symbols for God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. However, when Moses needed to identify God to the children of Israel, the credential that God gave him was this phrase--"And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.'" (Exodus 3:14) (11) So, I choose the same words. For Jesus I choose the universal symbol of His finished work--the cross. And, the dove for the Holy Spirit. The amount of the check is one of God's promises. There are many hundreds of promises in the Bible which can be claimed-cashed like a check. A promise must be taken in context of meaning. Examples of such promises that I use continually are:

PHILIPPIANS 4:19--"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

ISAIAH 40:31--"But those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;

They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint."

PSALM 23:1,4--"The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death;
I will fear no evil;"

PSALM 27:1--"The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?"

Notice carefully that this check **LACKS ONE THING**. Since you cannot see the opposite side, I will tell you what it is. It lacks an endorsement. The check is good because God's Promises are genuine! However, any check that is properly drawn up for any amount to us, is not cash in our hand or bank account UNTIL it is endorsed. Just so with God's Promises. We endorse God's promise-checks through obedience

and prayer. I often pray in the terminology of checks--Lord I'm cashing your check-promise of Phillipians 4:19. Thank you for the promise and now the reality that my needs are supplied.

One of the multiplied times that Imalee and I have cashed the promise-check of Phillipians 4:19 occurred on Labor Day week-end of 1976. We left a located ministry of 14 years in June moving as the Lord directed from Minneola to Arkansas City, Kansas. We had no promised support at that time, and still do not have beyond God's Promise of Matthew 6:33-- "*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all of these things will be added to you.*" August ended with all needs met and a balance of \$19.73 and \$175 in rent due in five days. Most of our gifts come by mail and over a holiday this all but grinds to a halt. Rent was due on the 6th. No gifts came. On Saturday night in our Family Altar time we cashed God's promise-check of Phillipians 4:19 praying--*Lord, our working agreement is that you open the doors for service and supply our needs and we follow. We're cashing your check that Paul wrote down in Phillipians 4:19. Thank You for our needs supplied.* Ordinarily no mail is put in the boxes on Sunday or Holidays. I went to the Post Office in good faith on Monday morning which was Labor Day. There was one lone envelope in the box from Central Christian Church of Dodge City, Kansas. It contained a check for \$138.62. Al Hickerson, Elder of the Church, had placed the letter in the mail on Sunday evening. It was post marked "Sun, PM, September 5, 1976." It traveled two hundred miles and with our balance of \$19.73 paid the rent and we rejoiced in the Lord and His Promise!

Addition decrees that \$19.93 plus \$138.62 does not equal \$175; but, it did equal the rent payment. While contemplating the dilemma, our good Landlord, Bro. C.O. Britton, an elder here in Bible Christian Church, came across the alley to tell us that as long as he had some things stored in our garage the rent would be \$150, not \$175. Now, we rejoiced twice over!!

GOD IS FAITHFUL in keeping His Promises! If we will

follow His invitation to pray, then we discover He does impossible things and the heavenly currency of His blessing becomes the provision for our lives!

Always Pray.

The Lord was not through teaching me about praying. This phrase "always praying" was a BIG LESSON for me.

LUKE 18:1-8--"And He spoke a parable to them to this end, that men always ought to pray and not to lose heart."

I searched out the matter of ALWAYS PRAYING with these words--*

*WHY?

*WHEN?

*HOW?

*WHAT?

*WHO?

Always Pray - WHY?

Without doubt Jesus' third statement--MEN OUGHT TO ALWAYS PRAY--is a k-e-y to effective praying.

WHY PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING? Beyond the fact that Jesus said so, is the realization that GOD IS INTERESTED in ALL THINGS. Why else did Jesus say in Matthew 10:29-31 that the hairs on our head are numbered and God keeps a running census on the sparrows that fly through the air? Note the phrase--"Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."(12) In context it is a contrast picture telling us that God cares for everything, but MAN IS AT THE TOP OF HIS LIST!

The devil has hoodwinked us into believing that prayer is for religious matters in church buildings--weddings, worship, funerals and sick Saints--on Sundays, Wednesdays and Holy Days. Too many think that proper prayers are prayed by Preachers and Priests. You'll wear your eyes out looking for one example in the New Testament of one person leading a whole group in prayer. Prayer is a personal matter and while I

may pray a personal prayer in the midst of a group, I cannot pray their prayer.

Always Pray - WHEN?

Some say--No way, I can't pray all the time. One person said to me--"ALWAYS doesn't mean always and ALL doesn't mean 100%!"

The Greek word from which we translate this word "always" is "PANTOTE." This word is also translated as ever, evermore and always. Note these three examples out of the forty times the word is used in the New Testament:

1. John 11:42--"I knew that thou hearest me *always*."
2. II Corinthians 2:14--"which *always* causeth us to triumph."
2. Hebrews 7:25--"he *ever* liveth to make intercession."

If I entertain the suggestion that ALWAYS doesn't mean always, then radical questions can be raised about the above promises such as:

1. In John 11:42 was Jesus saying that the Father heard him m-o-s-t of the time, NOT always?
2. In II Corinthians 2:14: do we triumph part of the time but not all the time?
3. Does Hebrews 7:25 mean that Jesus makes intercession for us most of the time but not forever?

Perish the thought! The Word says it! That settles it! God heard Jesus ALL the time! We triumph ALWAYS! Jesus intercedes for us FOREVER and EVER! A-n-d "men ought to **always** pray." (Luke 18:1)

I remind us there are other Scriptures that exhort us to pray *always*:

- I Thessalonians 5:17--"pray without ceasing."
- Romans 12:12--"continuing steadfastly in prayer."
- Ephesians 6:18--"praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."

HOW?

How can a person be ALWAYS PRAYING?

The GREAT REQUIREMENT for ALWAYS praying is expressed in these words:

For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
"I dwell in the high and holy place,
With him who has a contrite and humble spirit,"(13)

The next words of Jesus, recorded after the key words we're looking at in Luke 18, concerns the Pharisee and the Publican who went up to the Temple to pray. You will remember God was not pleased with the bragging Pharisee; but, of the contrite Publican he said:

And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.(14)

Folding hands, closing eyes and bowing heads may be desirable on occasions, but is NOT required for talking to God. The GREAT REQUIREMENT is humbling self to seek God.

If we are *willing* but not *able*, God specializes as the Great Enabler in providing us with the necessary power.

I bowed down before the Lord with mustard-seed faith and prayed this prayer.

Lord, praying always about everything is impossible for me. However, I know that with You all things are possible, so please make me to be able to follow Your Will in this matter of always praying. Thank You for working out Your Will in my life for Your Glory! A-men.

My first lesson in ALWAYS PRAYING took place in my office behind a typewriter.

LESSON #1 for me: PRAY before you type and as you type. So, when it was time to type I prayed--"*Lord, help me cut this stencil. Lord, give me wisdom in writing this letter in Jesus' Name, A-men.*"

A ringing telephone, when I am busy, has been a source of irritation across the years.

LESSON #2 for me: A ringing phone is a call to prayer. As the

phone rings I learned to pray--*Lord, be in charge of this phone call in Jesus Name*. What do you end prayer with? (- - -)? So, as I reached for the phone I prayed and picked up the receiver and said "A-MEN!" Lyle Marshall, one of our elders, said: "Preacher, what is going on down there? A prayer meeting?" I chuckled and said, "Yes. But it's all over now."

Now a beautiful thing about ALWAYS PRAYING is that God can answer prayers in an instant. Early on in the Lord teaching me to ALWAYS PRAY, I was in a Faith Alive Revival with the Copeland, Kansas Christian Church. I had left Minneola with one of our members brother having passed away. The brother lived away from there at Meade. The agreement was that our Youth Minister, Clyde Goff, would minister the Memorial Service. Monday morning, at preacher Walter Birney's house in Copeland, the phone rings. Before I even think where I am or whose phone is ringing, I pray--*Lord, be in charge of this phone call in Jesus' Name*". Walter answers and says, "Wilbur, it's for you." Clyde Goff was calling to say, "Wilbur, I'm real sorry but I cannot have the funeral. We have five teachers out of school today." (In addition to serving the church as Youth Minister, Clyde taught elementary school.) "There is no way I can get off to do that funeral since five of our teachers are out with the flu," said Clyde. As he talked to me, Ed Goble, School Principal and one of the church Deacons, who already reviewed the matter and made a decision, walked into the room and said, "Mr. Goff, who are you calling?" "I'm calling our Preacher to tell him I can't preach the funeral and for him to come home from the Revival." Mr. Goble said, "Just tell the Preacher that I'll take your class and we can double up some others and you do the funeral. Tell the Preacher to stay in Copeland with the Revival." So, you understand why I attribute this instant answer to PRAYING ALWAYS.

Always Prayer: WHAT?

GOD CAN BLESS, CHANGE, MAGNIFY and ENHANCE anything and everything. So, we o-u-g-h-t to PRAY about ALL THINGS, always!

In preparation for using the mustard seed faith to determine WHAT we will pray for I want to share a true story about a group of average men. We were studying the matter of Prayer and came to this text, Philippians 4:4-6. For variety, I read the text from The Living Bible.

“Always be full of joy in the Lord; I say it again, rejoice!

Let everyone see that you are unselfish and considerate in all you do. Remember that the Lord is coming soon.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for His answers.”(15)

The proposition of the lesson was: If we prayed always that would mean everything must be included in our praying. The men responded by saying “No, preacher, you cannot bother God with a lot of little stuff. We are to pray about big things.” I answered, “All right, men, for the sake of discussion I'll accept your premise--Pray about big things not little things. Now, what are the big things?” Their response, as it often was, “You know, Preacher.” “No, guys, you're doing the pitching in this half of the inning. I have the chalk and a blackboard to write the big things down. You name them,” So after a bit they agreed on three big things we ought to pray about. I wrote them on the board--1. Who you will marry?; 2. Your life's work and 3. Where you will go to college? I said “Men, I agree with you that these are big things that ought to be matters of prayer. Now, I want to nail something down. This is personal and I will never reveal how you voted individually.”

Proposition #1--“How many of you men prayed about the woman you married? Or did you just fall in love with your high school sweetheart or meet the girl of your dreams in college or in the Armed services?”

ANSWER: 0

Proposition #2--“Men, did you pray about your occupation? Or, did you follow what your Dad did or the leading of an aptitude test?”

ANSWER: 0

Proposition #3--“Men, I know that over half of you have gone to college. Did you pray about that and where you should go?”

ANSWER: 0

I commended the men for their honesty, but told them that since their approach to praying only about BIG THINGS had added up to "0", that I would stick with the seeming *impossible* challenge of PRAYING ALWAYS about ALL THINGS.

This lesson of ALWAYS PRAYING was spoken clearly to me by a farmer at Circleville, Kansas. As people were leaving the church building on Wednesday evening of our Faith Alive Revival, a wheat and cattle farmer paused and asked me a question: "Preacher, do you know what I've learned about prayer?" I responded, "No, please tell me." He said, "Well, I've learned that if I don't pray about everything, I don't pray about nuthin'." Later I learned that his ALWAYS PRAYING included talking to the Lord about cows and calves, the drilling, growing and cutting of the wheat, along with the nuts and bolts of repairing machinery and the catching of coyotes.

Both the HOW and WHAT of ALWAYS PRAYING is illustrated by the simple story of a cleaning woman.

Several ministers had gathered to discuss difficult Bible questions. The particular proposition under consideration was I Thessalonians 5:17--"Pray without ceasing."

Various suggestions were offered, and at last one of the number was appointed to write an essay on the subject to be read at the next meeting.

A servant who was cleaning heard the discussion and exclaimed:

"What! a whole month to tell the meaning of that text? Why, it's one of the easiest and best verses in the Bible."

"Well, well, Mary," said one minister, "What do you know about it? Can you pray all the time?"

"Oh, yes sir!"

"What! when you have so many things to do?"

"Why, sir, the more I have to do, the more I can pray."

"Indeed! well Mary, most people wouldn't agree with you. How do you do it?"

"Well, sir," said the girl, "When I first open my eyes in the morning, I pray: Lord, open the eyes of my understanding; and while I'm dressing, I pray that I may be clothed with the robe of

righteousness; while I am washing, I ask to have my sins washed away. As I begin work, I pray to have the strength for all the work of the day; while I kindle the fire, I pray that revival may be kindled in me. While preparing and eating breakfast, I ask to be fed with the Bread of Life and the pure milk of the Word. As I sweep the house, I pray that my heart may be swept clean of all impurities. And as I am busy with the little children, I look up to God as my Father and pray that I may always have the trusting love of a child and so I pray my way through the day. Everything I do gives me a thought for prayer." "Enough! Enough, cried the minister! These things are often hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes, as the Lord Himself said. Go on Mary, pray without ceasing as we thank the Lord for this lesson."

Always Pray - WHO?

Paul answered the "Who" question when he wrote to Timothy:

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."(16)

I suggest that people are at the top of God's concerned list as the entire Biblical record testifies: It is written about people, by people inspired of God, for people, because God loves people!

For many years I carried around a long PRAYER LIST of people and needs of the Kingdom. I quit that many years ago when the Lord taught me to ALWAYS PRAY. Now I use a LIVING PRAYER LIST. I have a walking agreement with the Lord that every person I meet in a conversational way during a day, I PRAY FOR THEM. Does anything happen by chance in the life of a Christian? My studied conclusion is NO! Nothing happens by chance. The people I meet in a day's time has a Divine design for me. I try to be "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" as James 1:19 says. So, while I'm listening and looking directly into my fellow human beings eyes, I lift them up before the throne of God in PRAYER. I used to get frustrated at Missionaries that showed scores of slides of

black, white, brown, yellow people. People I didn't know and probably never would in this world. Then, the Spirit moved in my heart to say--You can pray for those people. Now that's a beautiful opportunity, so while I'm sitting there looking at the picture I lift those people up in prayer. True, I do not know who the people are but God knows. If they are Believers then I ask the Lord to fill them with His Spirit that they may be strong in His service. If they are pagans then I pray that the Spirit will bear witness through the Word to convict them of sin and bring them to Jesus. Now, I grow frustrated when the Missionary goes too fast and I don't have time to finish praying for the people in the picture.

You see, there really is no end to prayer opportunities. People, people everywhere--in the doctor's waiting room, in the church committee meeting, the clerks in the stores and the teller in the bank. As Joel said--"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!" Joel 3:14. And, you and I can be a vehicle of prayer to bless men and women in a way that will ring bells of VICTORY for all eternity!

That is why Jesus said:

"Men always ought to pray and not to lose heart." Luke 18:1.

Not Fainting.

LUKE 18:1--"And He spoke a parable to them to this end, that men always ought to pray and not to lose heart."

Here is what the business world calls the bottom line. God's bottom line is a blessing--if we will be **ALWAYS PRAYING**, we will **NOT FAINT**.

We cannot p-r-a-y and f-a-i-n-t at the same time. Here is a personal letter that illustrates this truth.

First let me say that Jim and Vona Stacy preached ten miles down the road from us at Fowler, Kansas. At the time of this incident they were ministering at Gallup, New Mexico. Jim died on August 11, 1971 in a one-car wreck. He and his family were returning home following a week of camp at Como, Colorado where he served as camp evangelist. His son, Mark,

age seven, injured in the same wreck, died on August 13.

Their son, Steve, was of high school age at the time and this casualty tripped him up on the road of life. Following the wreck, Steve and his mother and family moved to Scottsbluff, Nebraska. About a year later we went by to see Vona, Steve and the rest of the family. Steve wasn't home but I left him a cassette tape about God's love. He wrote me this letter in the following days.

Dear Wilbur,

I was surprised to hear from you. I've lost contact with everyone in your area and don't hear from anyone in Kansas.

My mom told me you had stopped by when you were here. I don't believe I've been to church since that time, but that has little to do with my relationship to God. There comes a time when one has questions that his religion cannot answer without falling back on the old "faith" trip that Christianity used to explain away many of the questions without Biblical answers. I reached that point a long time ago.

I haven't had time to listen to the cassette tape you sent. I don't have a player.

Yes, we all have problems but rarely do I burden God with mine because I feel that my destiny is shaped the way I choose. Only when I can't find my own solution do I ask for help.

I keep a close watch on all Karmic aspects of my every action, and I've found that the more good Karma one generates, the more he receives.

Thanks for the tape and your letter, and I promise to try to listen to it sometime.

Signed--Steve Stacy(17)

Why was Steve losing heart on the road of life? The answer is contained in his own words: "Yes, we all have problems, but rarely do I burden God with mine...Only when I can't find my own solution do I ask help." The very first time I shared this letter was in a Revival at Havensville, Kansas in 1974. Ron and Haven Howard, Gospel Singers, were in charge of the music. When the Invitation Hymn and Closing Prayer were finished, Haven Howard came running back to the door. She said, "Did you know Steve Stacy is my cousin?" I replied, "No, I had no idea you even knew him." Haven con-

tinued, "Do you know where Steve Stacy is tonight?" "No," I said, "where is he?" "He's in Manhattan Christian College because people prayed," Haven responded.

You see, it was the lack of prayer that caused Steve to stumble and it was much praying by scores of concerned people and finally Steve himself that brought him back to walk with the Lord.

"And He spoke a parable to them to this end, that men always ought to pray and not to lose heart." Luke 18:1

Prayer is more important than the mind of man can ever imagine. My years have taught me three probable regrets we will have when we see Jesus on the other shore.

- #1. That I loved not nearly enough;
- #2. That I prayed so little and
- #3. That I came so late.

God delights in being burdened with our burdens which of course is no burden to HIM. Peter expressed this thought when he wrote--"Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." I Peter 5:7.

I tell people--*No need for God and me to worry. I let Him do the worrying.* Meaning that God does not worry for He is in a position to cause all things to work together for His glory and my good. See Romans 8:28.

The words of Henry Ward Beecher bless me:

Prayer covers the whole of a man's life. There is no thought, feeling, yearning, or desire, however low, trifling, or vulgar we may deem it, which, if it affects our real interest or happiness, we may not lay before God and be sure of sympathy. His nature is such that our often coming does not tire Him. The whole burden of every man may be rolled on to God and not weary Him, though it has wearied the man.(18)

If I grasp God's hand **ALL THE TIME** in PRAYER, then nothing can harm me or cause me to lose heart (faint) on the road of life.

A Big lesson was waiting for me on the night of July 3rd, 1971 concerning PRAYING and NOT LOSING HEART.

About 10:30 I retired for bed on that Saturday night. At 11

o'clock the door bell rang. Three men--Merle McInteer, Glenn McInteer and the Minister of the Methodist church, Dale Clare--were standing at my door. Dale said, "Wilbur, your son, Lynn, has been killed in a car wreck." "Come in" I said, "while I dress and I'll go to the scene of the wreck with you."

That old barbed wire fence around the wheat field that I told about earlier in seeking the lost hammer, came back one more time. This time it was in the form of the hard wood floor of our bedroom. I knelt in desperation and weakness to pray this simple prayer--Dear God. Help! I'm weak and need your strength. Please make me strong! In Jesus' Name."

God heard that prayer and answered in multiplied ways--##

My wife, Imalee, had gone to the Hospital to pick up our daughter, Teresa, from work. Our son had said he would be home at 10:30. Seeing the Sheriff's car heading out of town, they drove south of town on the road Lynn would be traveling. Turning East down the Cemetery Road they saw the lights from the Police cars, ambulance, etc. Cresting the top of the hill there was our yellow Opel car on its top out in the field of wheat stubble. As they stepped from their car, Teresa, said "It's time to pray." Strength was being given.

Quickly I dressed and went downstairs to tell our other son, Galen, what had happened and to ask him to stay there with our eleven year old daughter, Lisa, who was asleep. When I arrived at the scene of the wreck, my son's body was on a stretcher and being carried towards the ambulance. The Lord gave me strength to ask the men to put him down. I knelt beside him to say for the last time--"Son, I Love you and Jesus loves you!" A smile swept across his face that would remain.

The Lord gave me strength to check the vehicle he had been driving. This was good because later when I sought answers, they were not available.

The Lord gave certain strength for us to advise the Doctor and call the Minnis Funeral Home.

Prayer circles for us were born that night. We had prayed across the previous twenty years of our home life from

time to time, not always on a regular basis and never in a circle. That night before we called my Parents, Galen & Tempest Johnson in Cherryvale, Kansas and Imalee's parents, Raymon & Ina Barrick along with our other daughter, Rebecca, who was also with them in Wichita, we turned out the upstairs lights and retired to the basement. There we joined hands together in a family prayer circle asking again for the strength of the Lord.

The words of the Psalms were real beyond words.

"God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble."(19)

"They go from strength to strength;"(20)

Strength to strength unfolded like a warm blanket surrounding our hearts. Dr. Stephens, as acting Coroner, completed his work and came to our house at two o'clock that Sunday morning. He said to Imalee and me, "You can have a shot or I can give you a pill." I knew well what he meant having ministered to scores of families across the years--a knock-out shot or a tranquillizer for frayed nerves. I looked at Imalee and said to the Doctor, "No thank you. We don't want any shots or pills,"

Sunday morning was coming on and not knowing what else to do after making the necessary phone calls, we retired for what might have been sleepless hours, except that I prayed--**"God, somewhere I read in your Word that there is such a thing as ministering Angels. If you have any left over around Heaven tonight, we could use some down here."** Imalee and I remarked the next morning after several hours of peaceful sleep that Somebody had been there and it was not the sandman. God's Angels ministered peace and strength!

The Lord gave strength upon strength as we assembled with the brethren on that Sunday morning. The hymns took on new meaning. The communion table was very special and it was there the Lord gave me a vision of **STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT**. In moments of meditation I saw Heaven's Communion Table stretching into the sky for miles without number. Jesus was seated at the far end of that beautiful table.

Countless numbers of people were seated along each side of this table of the Lord. The last person seated on the right hand side of the table down at this end was my son, Lynn. My hope climbed up high and my strength was made even stronger.

"The Joy of the Lord is your strength,"(21) said Nehemiah in his book. The reality of this was experienced as we spent our time at the Funeral Home in singing and praising God!

God's strength in us came to full blossom in our spirits as plans for the Wednesday Memorial Service unfolded. It became a celebration of victory in Jesus! Our brothers-in-law, W.A. Wheat (husband of Imalee's sister, Fay) and Harold Prough (husband of my sister, Janet) planned their messages as a celebration of faith completed! When I asked our organist, Esther Kennedy, to play--"We'll Work 'Til Jesus Comes"-- as we marched out at the close of the service, she said "That is not a funeral song but I'll play it softly." I said, "Ole faithful organist, when you play it, open the organ up full volume as that is the theme of our hearts--We too, will work until Jesus comes, then we'll be gathered home!" And that's the way it was with strength blossoming out like a lilac bush in the springtime.

If I could name the day and hour that ALWAYS PRAYING had a birth in my spirit, it would be July 3, 1971. As the song says--"I found the answer, I learned to pray."

"And He spoke a parable to them to this end, that men always ought to pray and not to lose heart." Luke 18:1.

The Question.

The only question Jesus asked that He never answered is the one at the end of this parable.

"Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8

This text has been hitched to all kinds of thoughts and themes. In the context of Jesus' proposition--"men always ought to pray and not to lose heart." In the parable about the Widow seeking justice from the Judge he told to

illustrate the proposition, the question at the end signifies--
**WILL MEN EXERCISE THEIR FAITH TO THE END IN
ALWAYS PRAYING?**

IF I had MORE FAITH, I would ALWAYS PRAY may be our first response to Jesus challenging statement, **"Men ought to a-l-w-a-y-s pray."**

When Jesus brought His disciples face to face with an impossible-for-men-challenge in His teaching or a needed miracle in serving, they often responded with **"GIVE US MORE FAITH"**. Such was the case in chapter 17 just prior to the parable on prayer we have been considering.

Jesus had taught them about a brother sinning and their need to forgive even seven times in one day. Luke 17:3,4. Their immediate response to this difficult challenge was:

"And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith' "(22)

And the Lord replied, **"If you had faith as a mustard seed, you might say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."**(23)

First of all I perceive that Jesus said you're NOT going to get any MORE FAITH. If you would take hold of life right where you are with your "mustard seed faith," you could uproot a tree. NO MORE FAITH because you are not using the faith you have. If you won't use the pint you have, so-to-speak, why should I give you a quart or a gallon? It is illustrated by these words of an anonymous poet:

The question is not what you would do with a million, if a million should be your lot.

The question is-what are you doing with the dollar and a quarter you now already have got.(24)

What we do with little we will do with much, be it time, money or faith. The Holy Spirit's power makes it possible for us to respond to Jesus' challenge--**"Men ought to ALWAYS PRAY."**

PRAYER is a **KEY** to all God's treasure vaults. Every grace

of God--His unmerited favor, enabling power and blessings of enhancement upon us is obtained with the **K-E-Y** of **PRAYER**.

Elwood School was a one-room country school with all eight grades. It was there I learned the three R's including this Scottish legend about the Shepherd Boy and the strange key.

A shepherd boy tending his sheep on a mountainside saw a strange flower, one he had never seen before in his whole Scottish life. He thought at first he would pick one blossom, but as he pulled on the stem the entire clump--blooms, stems and roots--came loose. As he cupped it in his hands to take in the beauty and enjoy the fragrance, a great rock in front of him opened up like doors on a vault. Within appeared to be a hall leading to a brightly lit room beyond. He did what any curious person would do--looked around, entered cautiously and walked slowly towards the bright light. He gazed in astonishment at the contents of the great cavern-like room--diamonds, sapphires, rubies, gold. Again he did what humans do, laid down the clump of flowers, and began picking up some of the jewels. He filled his pockets, boots, cap, rolled some up in his shirt and filled both hands. As he started to leave a strange voice said: "Shepherd boy! Shepherd boy! You're leaving the best behind." The lad turned and looked wistfully at all he was leaving, but continued to walk towards the opening. Again the voice: "Shepherd boy! Shepherd boy! You're leaving the key behind." He thought--Key? There was no key to this place! He hesitated no more but walked out into the sunlight. The great rock door closed behind him and all the jewels he carried turned to dust. For the last time the voice spoke--"Shepherd Boy, the key to it all was the beautiful clump of flowers." The key was locked in the vault and picking more flowers would not open the door again.

Most keys have a stem and some notches. I suggest that the **k-e-y** to the vaults of God consists of a stem--our **WILL** and two **NOTCHES--FAITH** and **PRAYER**.

As we started this chapter with prayer, let us press on with prayer now.

"Jesus, I come boldly to the Throne of Grace in Your Name.

Thank You for opening my eyes to some powerful possibilities of prayer.

I want to be an answer of FAITH to your unanswered question--Will men still be always praying when you

break through the clouds of glory? I want to say, Yes, Lord. I WILL!

Now, fill me with your Holy Spirit. Help me to see life as a treasure-room and my prayers as a key to that room to help distribute God's jewels to a world full of needs.

Cause each opportunity of people, plans, problems, and things to become a call to PRAYER that I may be found ALWAYS PRAYING for YOUR GLORY and the good of the Kingdom! A-men."

FAITH ALIVE IN HEART, HOME and CHURCH
NOTES - Chapter 5

1. Luke 18:1-8
2. Thomas A. Edison out of my file
3. Luke 11:1
4. Clement of Alexandria - 150-220 A.D.
The Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations, Pg.338,
Edited by Frank S. Mead. Used by permission.
Copyright MCMLXV by Frank S. Mead. Printed in Great
Britain for Peter Davies Ltd., by Butler and Tanner Ltd.,
Frome and London.
5. G.Ashton Oldham - 1877--, Pg.345
6. Joseph Fort Newton - 1878-1949, Pg.345
7. From article - "The Restoration of Prayer" by Dean E.
Walker. From Christian Standard-October 18, 1970 -
(935) Pg.7, The Standard Publishing Company, Cincin-
nati, Ohio. Division of Standex International
Corporation Used by Permission.
Permission also granted from author's estate- by Mrs.
Dean E. (Keister) Walker of Milligan College,
Tennessee.
8. Luke 18:1,2
9. Chorus--"Got Any Rivers You Think Are Uncrossable..."
10. Luke 18:7
11. Exodus 3:14
12. Matthew 10:29,30
13. Isaiah 57:15
14. Luke 18:13,14
15. Philippians 4:4-6, The Living New Testament by Kenneth
Taylor, 1971.
16. I Timothy 2:1-4

17. Personal letter to author from Steve Stacy of Scottsbluff, Nebraska, November 22, 1972
18. Henry Ward Beecher, 1813-1887, Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations, Pg.337
19. Psalm 46:1
20. Psalm 84:7
21. Nehemiah 8:10
22. Luke 17:5
23. Luke 17:6
24. Out of my personal file.



**Galen, Kim & Elizabeth
Johnson**
1987, Clarksville, Georgia

A TRIBUTE TO MY SON

First, he was my son but of far greater importance, he was my brother in the Lord.

HE FOUGHT THE FIGHT and did a far better job as a teenager than his father. Never once did he talk back or lie to me or take anything that didn't belong to him.

HE KEPT THE FAITH from the day of his second birth when at the age of eight I immersed him into Jesus. He could preach a sermon, teach a class, lead a meaningful discussion group, read the Bible with purpose, pray to a point, plan a worship service, talk to a friend about his Lord, give of his means in a sacrificial way and assist his Lord, the church and preacher father in many other ways.

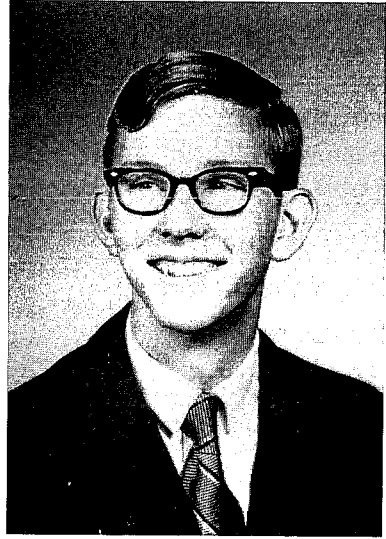
HE FINISHED THE COURSE much sooner than I anticipated; but, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. (II Corinthians 5:8)

Mom and Dad Reflect

LYNN was our first born son having three sisters - Teresa, Rebecca and Lisa and one brother - Galen.

Born in Oklahoma City while we were attending Midwest Christian College, he spent most of his adolescent years in Indiana. While we lived at West Lebanon, Indiana, Lynn invited Jesus to be his Saviour and Lord during a revival preached by Cecil Todd. His spiritual growth was phenomenal as indicated in my tribute. He graduated from the Minneola (Kansas) High School in May of 1971 and enrolled to attend Midwest Christian College that Fall.

On Saturday, July 3rd, 1971, Lynn worked all day washing dishes at the Rancho Cafe. He shared supper at that Cafe with his girl friend--Patty Cusick. They spent the later part of the evening talking about the Sunday School class he would begin teaching the next day and together read the eighth chapter of Romans before going home about 10 o'clock. On his way back to town in our 1969 Opel, he had an accident that leaves many questions unanswered. The car turned over end-ways near the Minneola Cemetery some four miles southwest of town. Thus, he graduated to glory.



LYNN JOHNSON
1953 - 1971



Lisa Johnson
Age 3 1/2



Lisa, Age 5
1965



Lisa, Age 6
1966



Lisa
Age 25

Part 6

Faith Alive Through--

PRAISING THE LORD!

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Family Problems? PTL
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"Praise The Lord!": Win A Soul
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Lisa Is Part Of Our Everything!
PTL For Low And High Attendance
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Seven Praise Suggestions
Singing The Songs Of Praise!

How can snakes, trees, hills, birds and snow praise the Lord? Listen to the Psalmist as he calls on these and more to praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord, O heavens! Praise him from the skies! Praise him, all his angels, all the armies of heaven. Praise him sun and moon, and all you twinkling stars. Praise him, skies above. Praise him, vapors high above the clouds.

Let everything he has made give praise to him. For he issued his command, and they came into being; he established them forever and forever. His orders will never be revoked.

And Praise him down here on earth, you creatures of the ocean depth. Let fire and hail, snow, rain, wind and weather, all obey. Let the mountains and hills, the fruit trees and cedars, the wild animals and cattle, the snakes and birds, the kings and all the people, with their rulers and their judges, young men and maidens, old men and children--all praise the Lord together. For he alone is worthy. His glory is far greater than all of earth and heaven.....Hallelujah! Yes, praise the Lord!(1)

Animals, fish, fire, fruit trees, cattle, snakes and birds praise the Lord by being what He made them to be as suggested by the phrase "all obey" at the end of verse eight. A tree praises the Lord by growing where God planted it, and its' products serving a useful purpose. It would be intriguing to pursue a study of nature and its' praise of God. However, God calls on the highest of His Creation, man, to praise Him!

While I had memorized Ephesians 5:20--"giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"--yet, the truth of the verse had never been lived out in my life.

In Ephesians 5:18 Paul encourages us to be filled with the Spirit. The second blessing he names that results from the Spirit's work in us is "GIVING THANKS ALWAYS FOR ALL THINGS to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (5:20). This is the very essence of God's Divine Provision in our life on the one hand, and the other side is our acceptance of His Plan. We declare our acceptance by PRAISING HIM. PRAISE fulfills GOD'S WILL for us by making Jesus Lord of our lives.

After discovering how to be filled with the Holy Spirit, my mind was renewed and many truths came knocking at my door so-to-speak. Praise was one of these truths.

My desire to praise God was born out of this prayer covenant with the Lord.

“Lord, if Your Words through the apostle Paul—‘giving thanks always for all things’ mean what they say, then please know this is impossible for me. Enroll me in Life’s School of Praise! Please be my Teacher in this course of life. Help me to be a good student in learning Your lessons and passing the tests.”

My first lesson after this prayer came on a humid summer evening in June. The Minneola Christian Church provided us with a house to live in while preaching there. I was painting the trim around the windows and doors a John Deere shade of green to coordinate with the light green siding. The mosquitoes and gnats buzzing around my head were making it nearly impossible to work. Having just learned to always pray, I began talking to the Lord about removing the insects. His reply was the core of truth from Ephesians 5:20--“give thanks always for all things”. Immediately I argued against the truth. It wasn’t logical and furthermore I needed to get rid of these pesky gnats and mosquitoes. No further reply from the Lord except this admonition--give thanks always for all things. Finally out of desperation and aggravation I thanked the Lord like this, “Lord, I do not know why you made gnats or mosquitoes but they are a part of your creation and a problem to me. Thank You for the little creatures and for their being here right now.”

That which followed seemed to have no relation to my giving thanks. The gallon of green paint setting on the stepladder tipped over spilling down the side of the house. I ran to the garage for some rags and paint thinner to wipe the dark green paint off the siding shingles. I scrubbed a shingle then threw the rag in the bush under the window.

Now, the Lord probed my spirit with these thoughts--Are you thankful for spilled paint? Are you grateful for gravity that caused the paint to go down and not up? At first I was furious. "Lord, all I wanted was to paint the trim without being bothered by insects." Finally the stained siding was clean.

Back up on the ladder I pumped up my determination and thanked the Lord for even spilled paint and gravity, too. At that moment I sensed something strange. No mosquitoes! No gnats! I think for the first time in my life I said--"Praise the Lord! Thank You Jesus!"

As I mused upon this strange happening I realized that my original prayer of wanting the insects removed was answered through a chain of events--paint spills, lacquer thinner used to remove stains, rags thrown in bush, fumes= a repellent to gnats and mosquitoes, so they disappear.

Some will smile and say, such a simple little thing. That's true, however I have learned that God is a God of little things, beginning with the atom which He uses as building blocks for all things. (Hebrews 11:3 and Colossians 1:16,17.) For me the lessons of life always begin with just little things and then the Lord leads me on to the higher ground of bigger and greater things.

I learned many lessons out of this simple incident--#

- #1. OBEY His Word. He said it! That settles it!
- #2. Logic, the science of reasoning, is often faulted in man because of his sinful nature.
- #3. God often uses a chain of events in answering our prayers and praise which fulfills the truth of Romans 8:28 that He causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him.

Much of our thinking and speaking about PRAISE is like the man hauled into court on a charge of Assault and Battery.

The Judge said, "How do you plead to this charge of Assault and Battery?"

The accused said, "Your Honor, I plead not guilty of assault 'n battery."

The Judge said, "Are there any witnesses?"

The arresting policeman came forward and testified that he saw the man commit the crime of Assault and Battery.

The Judge further inquired, "Now, what do you say to this testimony?"

"I still plead not guilty to assault 'n battery for I never put salt in anybody's battery."

He did not understand the basic terminology.

Our thinking in this chapter will seek to clarify what praise is and how we can make Jesus Lord of our lives through PRAISE.

The key verse the Lord used in teaching me about praise is I Thessalonians 5:18.

"In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

This verse makes four statements about "PRAISING" THE LORD which will be the focus of our thinking. I plan for us to look at these four facets reversed from the order stated in the verse.

1. THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD.
2. FOR YOU IN CHRIST.
3. GIVE THANKS!
4. IN EVERYTHING!

I - This is the Will of God.

From Paul's phrase in this verse--"**this is the will of God.**" I pose this question: "**WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD?**" It should be crystal clear as Paul has just told us--"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Our humanism shows through as we insist on arguing with that which is obvious. Some say, "What about the context? What immediately precedes the word this?" Look and listen to what the two previous verses say:

**"Rejoice always;
Pray without ceasing;**

In everything give thanks;
for this is the will of God
In Christ Jesus for you.”

The WILL OF GOD for us is:
Rejoice always!
Pray without ceasing and
In everything give thanks.

God is far more willing to REVEAL HIS WILL to us than we are to DO IT.

A young man came to my study saying--“Preacher, I haven’t had a job for six months and my Workman’s Compensation is running out. Can you help me?”

“Possibly. Would you be willing to pray?”

“Yes, but it won’t do any good. I’ve been praying and nothing happens.”

“Would you want to pray God’s Will for your life?”

“Well, certainly!” he said. “Do you know what God’s Will for me is?”

“No, but the Apostle Paul has written it down.”

“Really! What is it?”

I read him these verses--“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” and “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

“Shall we pray the truth of these verses?”

“Well,.....O.K.....I guess so,” he said slowly.

I told him he could repeat my prayer words after me as a prayer since he was not familiar with this type of prayer. We knelt and prayed.

“Thank You God for making Your Will so clear and revealing it to me. Lord, You have numbered the hairs on my head and You keep a running census on the sparrows so that not one falls without Your knowledge. Thank you for the gift of life and Your being the Master of all my days and ways in causing all things in my life to work together

for good. I Praise You that what is happening right now is Your will for me even as Your Word says--'In everything give thanks for this is Your will for me.' So You know that I have no job. Thus, according to Your Word I praise You for that! In Jesus' Name--A-men."

You guessed it, I almost lost my friend on that last phrase in the prayer. But, the good news is that whereas the young man had found no work for six months, within twenty four hours he had a permanent top paying job!

Did this happen by chance? No, not when the same principle has been observed hundreds of times to work the same results. The young man made Jesus Lord of the matter by praising Him and when He did, God acted!

II - FOR YOU in Christ Jesus.

1. This is the will of God.
2. FOR YOU IN CHRIST.

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (I Thessalonians 5:18)

ME? GIVE THANKS?!

Paul does get personal when he says--**YOU!**

We often treat praise in a detached, non personal manner by attempting to praise God in groups or listening to a musical group offer praise. We allow a Preacher to pray a prayer of praise or a soloist to sing praise while we listen.

Thus the Lordship of Jesus in our lives is much like the government of Great Britain. England has a King. Right now the King is a Queen; but, she is not really the Head of State. The Queen makes speeches, dedicates buildings, bridges, etc.; but the Parliament elects a Prime Minister to run the Country. In like manner, many times we say, "Jesus is Lord but I am my own boss making all the decisions and running affairs in general." This is lordship once removed which is as real as a three dollar bill.

For many years the Lordship of Christ was not a personal matter with me. It was a puzzling and fuzzy subject and His

place in my life was not clearly defined. Mostly, He was an insurance policy on my soul. Then I learned there is a direct relationship between being FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT and the LORDSHIP OF CHRIST. The latter is the result of the first. It takes the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the meaning of Lordship. As Jesus said, "He (the Holy Spirit) will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." John 16:14 (Words in brackets, mine.) When Jesus is less than Lord, people consider Him a teacher, friend, guide, elder brother, example, leader or any one of a whole list of additional titles, which show respect but not lordship.

III - GIVE THANKS!

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." I Thessalonians 5:18

1. This is the Will of God.
2. For you in Christ.
3. GIVE THANKS.

Giving thanks is an approximation of the word praise which is one of the major themes of the entire Bible. Not to be treated as an extracurricular matter, God's people are encouraged over 300 times in the Bible to PRAISE HIM!

In this chapter on PRAISE our working definition of PRAISE is:

Praise is an active response to what we know that God has done or is doing for us in our lives and in the world through His Son Jesus and through the person of the Holy Spirit.

This expression, "Praise the Lord," is often used as an expression of PRAISE in our generation as a result of the influence of the "Jesus Movement" of the sixties and seventies; yet, it is much misunderstood. Folk often sing the beautiful chorus "Let's Just Praise The Lord" by the Gaithers and suppose that is praise. It's what we do a-f-t-e-r we sing the chorus that determines whether we praise the Lord. The old hymn "Praise Him, Praise Him" is an exhortation to praise; but, not a substitute for praise. Few hymns are pure praise but America's #1 favorite--"How Great Thou Art!" is!

The expression, "Praise the Lord" is used 174 times in the Psalms alone and denotes nine things.

1. "Praise the Lord" may indicate GOD IS AT WORK in a situation. (Psalm 145:10-12)
2. "Praise the Lord" is spoken to GLORIFY GOD. (Psalm 113:1-3; 50:23)
3. GOD IS THE GIVER of the mercies of life denoted by the words "Praise the Lord." (Psalm 117:1,2)
4. The expression may mean "Thank You God for being in CHARGE". (Psalm 66:1-4)
5. "Praise the Lord" in the midst of the strange twists and turns of life, suggests DIVINE FOCUS. (Psalm 40:1-3)
6. "Praise the Lord!" a SIGN OF A SEEKING HEART. (Psalm 22:26)
7. "Praise the Lord" is used upon DIVINE DELIVERANCE. (Psalm 106:47,48)
8. "Praise the Lord" God keeps me. (Psalm 66:8,9)
9. "Praise the Lord" God made me! (Psalm 146:1,2; Psalm 139:14)

Bro. Rollin Stewart, a Christian poet here in Arkansas City, Kansas, has given me permission to share one of his beautiful poems about thanksgiving and praise.

A THANKFUL HEART

My house is small and very old
But it shelters me from the cold.
My little rusty stove doesn't have much class
But it sure doesn't burn very much gas.
A THANKFUL HEART is such a prize
It makes everything just the right size.

My shoes are large and not so neat
But they're just right for my old feet.
My socks have shrunk, have holes, don't match,
But there's easy access if I need to scratch.
A THANKFUL HEART is such a prize:
It makes everything just the right size.

My income is small, money's hard to get,
But my wallet makes no lump where I sit.
It isn't important to have great things,
But just the large contentment Jesus brings.

A THANKFUL HEART is such a prize,
It makes everything just the right size.
If I have faith the size of a mustard seed,
God will supply everything I need.
What a blessing that my needs are not great,
Just look at what the Lord has put on my plate.
A THANKFUL HEART is such a prize,
It makes everything just the right size.(2)

IV - "In everything give thanks."

I Thessalonians 5:18

Many of God's graces are like pieces of wood along the shores of time. They never appear as a building or piece of furniture unless we do some carpentry. It is my desire to nail the "IN EVERYTHING" of PRAISE down to three specific areas--

- A. Praise for the PAST removes bitterness.
- B. Praise for the PRESENT removes worry.
- C. Praise for the FUTURE removes fear.

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

I Thessalonians 5:18

- 1. This is the Will of God.
- 2. For you in Christ.
- 3. Give thanks.
- 4. IN EVERYTHING.

The Past.

Professor Royce says:

"When you can take the worst thing that can happen to you and declare JESUS IS LORD, you turn it into the best and have VICTORY!"(3)

God has been doing this very thing for His Children ever since Calvary.

On a lonely hill, on a day when God Himself turned His face away, man at his worst, killed Jesus. The sun was blackened, lightning flashed, an earthquake ensued, people hid as the veil of the Temple strangely ripped itself asunder.

It surely was a paradox of ignominy that man chose to call the darkest, blackest, most evil day in all of recorded history "Good Friday". As man looked back at that dark Day of his evil deed through the prism of Jesus' Resurrection Day (Easter), he began to attach the word "GOOD" to the Day!

Now, what God did with that dark, black Friday, turning it into the best thing that ever happened to man--forgiveness of sin with the resurrection hope, He has been doing in people's lives ever since. He takes the dark side and the bright side of life and works it all together for our good and His glory!

We can PRAISE GOD for PAST EVENTS because God is in control.

The Apostle Paul addresses the entire spectrum of life--past, present and future--in Romans 8:28 when the Lord declares through him:

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

In general, the theme of the entire eighth chapter of Romans is--No condemnation to those who walk after the Spirit. Paul delineates the many blessings of our walk after the Spirit and concludes by discussing the victory that follows this walk.

In verses 18-25 he speaks of our daily victory and an even larger victory to come. Yet, there are "weaknesses-infirmities" in our present walk spoken of in Vs. 26. It is in this area of living and praying about these infirmities that we raise most of our questions about God's Will for us. Concerning these, Paul says in verse 26:

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God."(4)

In the midst of our weaknesses, the Divine Record says, God is working out His Will as suggested by these phrases from Vss. 26,27.

***"The Spirit Himself makes intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."Vs.26b

***"He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God."Vs.27

Now, I ask.

"What is the Spirit seeking in my behalf which I do not know how to pray for myself?" Vs.26

"What is the interpretation of these groanings which the Spirit makes?" Vs.26b

In specific, "what is the Spirit seeking for me that I have no knowledge of?" Vs.26a

"What is this elusive 'Will of God' in terms of my life?"Vs.27b

THE ANSWER to the above queries is, in part, hidden from our knowing. It has been often stated--God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. While this is not Scripture, yet the truth of it is borne out in many places in the Bible.

Our lives are w-i-d-e o-p-e-n to God's Will when we pray because the Holy Spirit takes our words and feelings coupled with our real needs, and translates all this with groanings and special intercession to our heavenly Father. So, we get what we need and not necessarily what we ask for in prayer. According to the Holy Spirit's intercession, God allows certain things in our lives which we might not choose if we cast the final ballot, yet He performs His Will by working all things together for our GOOD and His GLORY! Therefore, we can GIVE THANKS in ALL THINGS because GOD IS IN CHARGE!

In consideration of this, we can make God Lord of all our days and ways in accepting the events of the PAST by praising Him!

Let me pose a question as we probe further Gods' Lordship of our past.

QUESTION: How many mistakes can God make?

You may respond by saying: "None and it's sacrilegious to even ask such a question."

I still press the question and pose an answer. God is a big God. So, how about one billion mistakes? One million? One thousand? One hundred? Ten? Most people affirm "No" until I get down to one or two mistakes. Even then, in a formal sense, folk will say out of religiosity, "0 - NONE!" Yet, on the real plane of life, down where the tires meet the highway of life, many acknowledge God has made one, two or three mistakes concerning them personally. This is true, in particular, when our thinking for the moment about possible mistakes is separated from an immediate awareness of God.

The events out of the PAST which many think God personally made a mistake concerning include:

1. OUR BODY.

Did God make some people too tall and some too short? "Yes," according to many people I have counselled. God made some people ugly and others good looking. I believed for many years that God made my nose too long and my ears too big. So much so that I developed an inferiority complex with extreme shyness.

"Self-acceptance" is what the psychologists call the cure for this complex. The writer of Psalms says PRAISE, acknowledging that God made me, is the answer, which produces self-acceptance.

"I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well."
(Psalm 139:14)

Strange as it may seem, PRAISE will cure this faulty thinking about self. When I took the step of faith to say "Thank you God for making me just as I am, fearfully and wonderfully, body, soul and spirit in your image and likeness." there was victory in my soul!

And when self-doubt returns, I affirm that confession of truth about myself to the Lord over and over. The old self gave way to a new truth--God made me! I PRAISE HIM! He loves me just as I am!

2. FAMILIES

People have spoken to me saying that God surely put them in the wrong family, gave them the wrong mate.

Now, really, does God make mistakes?

HUSBANDS: Praise The Lord for your wife just as she is!

WIVES: Praise The Lord for your husband just as he is!

CHILDREN: Praise The Lord for your parents just as they are!

PARENTS: Praise The Lord for your children just as they are, problems and all!

One man said to me--"But preacher, my wife has two faults."

I inquired--"Did she have these when you got married?"

He said, "Well, yes but I didn't see them."

"Oh," I said, "love was blind, wasn't it."

He smiled and dropped his head.

I encouraged him with these words--"Now, fellow, you just PRAISE THE LORD for your wife as she is now and always has been for as long as you have known her and if she needs changing, the Lord will see to that."

He did! and The Lord did too!

"I will, IF....."

This expression, "I will, IF..." is often a response to PRAISING THE LORD for the PAST.

In California after I shared about praise, a young lady came out of the auditorium and paused to say, "Wilbur, you just don't understand my situation. If God would resolve my Mother's domineering attitude toward me and cause my husband to quit smoking, then I would praise Him."

This is a trap set by the Devil that we are prone to fall into when trying to PRAISE THE LORD.

There is a unique answer contained in a true case history of a mental patient who voluntarily checked into a State Mental Institution for evaluation and treatment. His complaint was that he had a cat inside him. The psychiatrist examined the man and told him they would operate and take the cat out. The theory was that when something physical is done to cor-

rect an emotional problem, it often effects the mind in a positive way. The day for the surgery arrived. The patient was wheeled into the operating room and anesthetized. The Doctor made a light incision through the upper layer of skin on the abdomen and sewed it back. While this was taking place two of the nurses obtained a white cat from the alley behind the hospital. They removed the debris from its fur, bathed it and added some perfume. At the appropriate moment when the patient was out from under the anesthetic and back in his room, the Doctor walked in carrying the white cat under his arm. He made this statement to the patient, "Fellow, your troubles are over. That cat will never bother you again for we operated and took it out and here it is." The patient said, "Oh no, Doctor, you took out the wrong cat! It was a black cat that bothers me."

Our modern adage applies here--You can't win for losing. God couldn't either, if He engaged in the business of removing problems from our lives on the supposition that we would praise Him after the removal. There would always be one more problem. God doesn't play this kind of cat and mouse game with people. HE SAYS--"In everything give thanks." (period(.)) Right now! Just as you are! Where you are!

3. LOVED ONES DEPARTING.

From my observation, the death of family members and friends is the biggest stumbling stone that keeps people from praising the Lord for PAST EVENTS.

My good friend, Esther Reiswig of Beaver, Oklahoma said to me--"My father was a Preacher. When he was only 25 years old a horse kicked and killed him. I was one of the four children Mother was left to raise."

She stopped.

I said, "Has any good come out of this event?"

"Oh, yes," she said, "Mother raised four fine children and everything turned out all right; but there were many difficulties."

Yes, it's time to PRAISE THE LORD! He was already work-

ing all things together for good!

Francis Schaeffer relates PRAISE to the PAST when he writes:

“As Christians we died, in God’s sight, with Christ when we accepted him as Savior; but there is more to it than this. There is also very much the demand that in practice we are to die daily. That is the negative aspect.....The Bible gives us a very sharp negative indeed--one that cannot be made an abstraction but which cuts into the hard stuff of normal life.....The Word of God is definite that in all things, including hard things, we are to be contented, to say, ‘Thank You’ to God.”(5)

JOB is an excellent example of PRAISING GOD for the hard things out of the PAST.

JOB’S CASE HISTORY:

Job was blameless and upright. He feared God and shunned evil. Job 1:1

He had 10 children--7 sons and 3 daughters. Job 1:2

His possessions: 7,000 sheep, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and many servants. Job 1:3

Job’s daily practice was to pray for his children and offer burnt offerings. Job 1:5

Yet, in one day he lost all his children, possessions and servants.

Isn’t this reason for bitterness?

Job declared it was time to worship and summed it all up in these words:

And he said:

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,

And naked I shall return there.

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;

Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.(6)
(Underlining mine.)

Bitterness was cancelled by PRAISE before it could take root in Job’s soul. Out of adverse circumstances Job was willing to say, “Blessed be the name of the Lord.” (Job 1:21)

A practical T-E-S-T:

Of Jesus' lordship over our PAST is--

How much bitterness do I have in my spirit?

Folk usually give a dishonest answer by saying "NONE!" Yet, in counselling, I find all kinds of bitterness about the untimely death of loved ones--people thinking they are ugly, being an unwanted child, others getting all the breaks in life, divorce, a domineering mother and/or an abusive father, and the list goes on and on.

Bitterness is unresolved happenings out of the present which we have failed to make Jesus the Lord of. We brood over these happenings and bitterness takes root. These bitter feelings are really projected towards our Creator; however, most people because of strong religious feelings towards God, turn their bitterness inward. This produces many sad fruits--Anger, hate, doubt, despair, depression, ulcers, heart attacks, suicide, nerves, collapsed lungs, etc.

It is impossible to be bitter and praise the Lord at the same time. The antidote for bitterness is PRAISE!

TESTING TIME came for me in July of 1971 when our oldest son, Lynn, left this world out of a one-vehicle car wreck.

Lynn at 18 had graduated in May from the Minneola (Kansas) High School. He planned to attend Midwest Christian College in the fall. Funds for his education were being earned by working at the local "Minneola Record" newspaper office along with washing dishes at the Rancho Cafe.

He borrowed our Opel Cadet car for a date with his girl friend, Patty Cusick, on this 4th of July eve. At 9:30 pm on their way to Patty's house, they stopped at the entrance to the Minneola Cemetery and read together the eighth chapter of Romans. Leaving Marshall and Nadine's house at 10 o'clock driving west he approached the cemetery and the highway a mile beyond. For reasons unknown, the car rolled end-over-end and out into a field of wheat stubble and Lynn went to be with Jesus.

No, I did not pass the test as quickly as Job. In the days following the memorial service, as I began to mull over the

events of the immediate PAST, bitterness was born in my soul. The devil added fuel to this fire of bitterness with strange facts(?)--**

**A mechanic told me someone had tampered with the linkage on the carburetor. Meaning that when the accelerator was engaged it would go faster and faster without releasing.

**A Highway Patrolman told me that when he arrived at the scene a stranger was there taking pictures. This photographer claimed to represent the U.S. Army. When the Patrolman sought him again, he was gone.

**A mortician asked me, "Did you know your son was killed by stabbing with a sharp instrument like a screwdriver or ice pick?"

**Another person said, "I'll pay for a private detective to get to the bottom of this."

**I added to the list that an automobile company had produced an unsafe car with a high center of gravity which would tip over easily.

Higher and higher burned the fires of bitterness within me. Now, we human beings do strange things as suggested by an old adage--We get mad at the cat and kick the dog. The truth was that I was bitter towards God. However, it's not acceptable to say--GOD, I'M MAD AT YOU! So, I became angry with my fellowmen. It was easier to say--The police didn't do their job and the auto manufacturer made a no-good car. Why didn't the Doctor get there sooner? Why didn't the first people at the scene give artificial resuscitation? Who was the stranger taking pictures? Why couldn't they be sure about the seat belts being fastened? When the devil gets the train of bitterness started rolling, it goes faster and faster like a runaway down a mountain. This runaway went on for nearly a year and it was PRAISE that brought it to a screeching halt. The Lord was touching this sensitive spot in my spirit with His Word. Is Romans 8:28 true? Can God work ALL THINGS together for good? Did Paul really mean "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."? I Thessalonians 5:18.

Nearly a year passed by and I had no peace within my bitter soul. One more time I rode my ten-speed bicycle four miles out to that cemetery atop a quiet windy hill. I remember it now like yesterday. As I gazed out across the prairie towards the

setting sun, the meadowlarks were singing while the ground squirrels scurried here and there. I knelt in front of the freshly made grave of Raymon Lynn Johnson, closed my eyes and **THANKED GOD** for my son and for the night of the wreck on July 3rd. I PRAISED THE LORD that He was in control and nothing happens by chance in the life of His Children.

Like the lifting of a ton of weight from my shoulders was the disappearance of bitterness and the coming of peace that flooded my soul. I stood up and sang a hymn--"Many things about tomorrow, I don't seem to understand; But I know who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand!"

And, it was a truism, **EVERY STEP WAS GETTING BRIGHTER, EVERY BURDEN GETTING LIGHTER, FOR THE ONE WHO FEEDS THE SPARROW WAS STANDING THERE BY ME! HALLELUJAH!**

Let us remind ourselves again that **PRAISING THE LORD** for an event out of the **PAST MAKES HIM LORD OF THE MATTER** and removes **BITTERNESS**.

In The PRESENT TENSE of life--

Give Thanks In Everything!

Praise for past events removes bitterness.

PRESENT tense PRAISE removes worry.

After listening to the 10 pm news and sharing in our Family Altar time of a chapter from the Bible followed by a song and prayer, my wife and I retired upstairs for the night.

At 12:22 am, Imalee and I bolted upright in bed as a downstairs light flashed on. Immediately my mind working faster than a computer deduced that the doors and windows were shut and locked. The light could only be turned on with a wall switch, so logic(?) decreed that someone unknown to us was downstairs. A search must be made. I was still 80% asleep so **BIG** and **BRAVE** Imalee put on her housecoat and ventured forth. Her search revealed no one down stairs.

Now, a degree of fear made a sneak attack. I spent the next hour sifting thru the facts(?), dealing with the devil in the inci-

dent, praying and inviting the Lord's Angels to assist. Finally, I built up my stamina and **PRAISED THE LORD FOR THE WHOLE SITUATION, acknowledging that He was in charge!** Having done this, sleep came quickly.

The next morning the whole truth became known. Vibrations from thunder outside and our attic fan inside had caused a wall plaque to come loose and slither down the wall striking the Mercury wall switch and turning the light on.

I learned a couple of lessons from this incident:

#1--**DON'T** trust your own understanding including what appears to iron-clad logic.

#2--**PRAISE THE LORD immediately** making Him **LORD** of the situation.

"Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5:20)

Praising the Lord for everyday events turns the trials of life into stepping stones.

Bro. E. Stanley Jones quotes Professor Royce as saying:

"No man is safe unless he can stand anything that can happen to him. However, a Christian goes one step higher. He can use anything that happens to him for the glory of God!"(7)

There are certain unwritten laws woven into the fabric of our lives. One of them is--Sooner or later we must reap what we sow and practice what we preach. (Galatians 6:7) Such as was the case with the Apostle Paul. He wrote the advice--"In everything give thanks" and "Giving thanks for all things" along with "Rejoice always!"(8) Now it's time for him to practice. So, to the **GLORY OF GOD** he uses his own "thorn in the flesh" to **GLORIFY GOD**.

So, Paul describes his own plight as follows:

"And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. For this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that

the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecution, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."(9)

PRAISE equals POWER.

Strange as it may seem, one of the reasons Paul names for **PRAISING THE LORD** ("taking pleasure-boasting.") is **"THAT THE POWER OF CHRIST MAY REST UPON ME."** Vs.10.

Paul's statement, "For when I am weak, then I am strong." is a certain paradox--a seeming contradiction. Yet, it is forever true! Our strongest moments are when we wait upon the Lord in prayer and praise. In these times we get what God can do.

PRAISING THE LORD for the events of life in the **PRESENT TENSE** opens the door to witness for Christ. The world is famous for grumbling about everything--taxes, weather, work, government, and life in general. When Christians unite their voice to grumble with the world, their witness goes down the drain.

A Christian Chaplain in the Army tells of a little incident that won a soul to Jesus. The Chaplain had worked late and so was the last person in the Hotel Dining room near midnight. He ordered some toast and a glass of warm milk. The waitress went to get his order but returned in a moment saying:

"I'm sorry, Sir, but some blankety blank locked the refrigerator, took the key and went home."

The Chaplain said, "Oh, Praise The Lord!"

The waitress said, "What did you say?"

"I just said Praise The Lord!" responded the Chaplain.

"What kind of religion are you?" asked the waitress.

"Oh, just a Christian trying to make Jesus Lord of all my life. I have learned that God keeps the hairs on my head numbered and He knew that I didn't need that milk. You know Jesus don't you?"

"No, I don't," said the waitress.

No one else was in the dining room so the Chaplain said,

"Do you have a moment to spare?"

"Well yes, I guess so."

The Chaplain took out his New Testament and told the young lady about Jesus. She accepted the Lord.

The Chaplain reflected later. When the refrigerator was locked and there was no milk, what if I had reacted like most of the world does and said-"What kind of a no good joint are you running here? I'll take my business elsewhere?" An opportunity to win a soul to Jesus would have been lost.

THE POWER OF CHRIST rested upon him when he PRAISED THE LORD!

INFIRMITIES is one of the matters Paul says he takes pleasure in.

"Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities,.....for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

II Corinthians 12:10

One of the first lessons the Lord taught me about trusting Him was to use my mustard seed faith to PRAISE HIM in negative-adverse circumstances.

For many years in the sixties I was allergic to the springtime pollen of Elm trees. I called the problem "Elmitis." Symptoms included red, burning, weeping eyes, itching ears, sore throat, running nose, etc. When all the home remedies failed and I couldn't stand it any longer, Dr. Stephens would give me a desensitizing injection.

As I journeyed through the School of Praise, the Master Teacher-Jesus, reminded me of Paul's taking pleasure in infirmities. So, I began to PRAISE THE LORD for my "Elmitis allergy." Bicycle riding is my exercise pastime. So, as I rode down the country roads with the pollen from the wheat, sorgum grain, wild flowers, trees and weeds everywhere-I started to praise the Lord for all of these plants with their pollen which was a part of His plan and my problem. I included my INFIRMITY of "Elmitis allergy" as well.

Logical? NO! Awkward to give thanks for the negative? YES! But, HIS WORD said "Give Thanks", "Take pleasure!",

“Rejoice Always!” So, in simple obedience I **PRAISED THE LORD** for all his creation. And, **A WONDER TOOK PLACE!** The Lord took my “Elmitis allergy” away! This **VICTORY** called forth more **PRAISE** and **REJOICING!** It’s now been sixteen years and the pollen and mold spores of Springtime, Summer and Fall come and go and the allergy is gone! No more shots, just shouts of **HALLELUJAH!** Praise the Lord!!

Am I suggesting a cure for all **INFIRMITIES?** **NO!** There are at least nine reasons, according to the Bible, **WHY** infirmities come into our lives. One of these is **TO POINT OUR ATTENTION TO THE LORD.** Such was the case with Saul of Tarsus in Chapter nine of Acts. His being struck blind and led into Damascus commanded his attention which led to his conversion to Jesus. James says “Count it all joy, when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” James 1:2.

Many years ago in an Upper Room devotional booklet, I read about a New York City construction laborer who was working on a skyscraper overlooking Fifth Avenue. The man fastened the huge beams in place with foot long rivets. He was running his rivet gun at quitting time and did not hear the signal. At 5:15 he prepared to take the freight elevator down but it was not there. Unable to attract the attention of fellow workers who were now forty floors below, he crawled out on a beam overlooking Fifth Avenue. For years he had carried three silver dollars in his pocket. Hoping to attract attention, he dropped one to the street below. It hit the sidewalk and rolled into the gutter. Someone picked it up, wiped the dust off and put it in their pocket. The second silver dollar bounced on the sidewalk and a person reached out and caught it. Apparently not believing that money was falling from the sky, they bit it with their teeth and walked away with a smile of satisfaction. The third silver dollar did not get the attention the worker needed for rescue. The riveter crawled back to the work area and picked up a couple of the large, bolt-like rivets. Back out on the ledge he dropped the first rivet. It plunked on the sidewalk missing everything. The second one hit a man on the shoulder and immediately **HE LOOKED UP.** There he saw

this man waving his arms and throwing things down on people, so he called the Police. They came and got him down. The man writing the devotional mused that the silver dollars got no one's attention but the rivet did. And, that God works this way at times as He says--

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance. (Romans 2:4)

Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. (Romans 11:22)

The Scriptures and life verify that God at times allows, not causes, certain events in our lives to bring good to us and glory to Him. Classic cases are Job's boils, Paul's thorn, Timothy's stomach problem, and the Woman bent double for eighteen years.

If God is allowing a certain infirmity for the purpose of getting my attention to PRAISE HIM, FOLLOW HIM, OBEY etc., then when that purpose is fulfilled, the tool may be removed.

When I PRAISE THE LORD for a PRESENT TENSE event, this makes Jesus LORD of my will and ways.

Beautiful illustration of this in my own life took place while living in West Lebanon, Indiana. For many years I had taken good health for granted and did not make it a matter of PRAISE TO GOD. At the age of 28 I suddenly began having health problems. Dr. Nelson indicated I was far too young to have prostritis and sent me to a specialist in Danville, Illinois. There Dr. English ran all the tests and diagnosed it as chronic prostritis. He indicated it would get worse with the passing of time. He was right, that is until 1972 when I said--Lord, You said "Give thanks for all things." So, I started to thank Him for the problem and the pain, for the good days and tough times. In a matter of weeks, PRAISE GOD the problem was gone!! And after sixteen years is still gone! Hallelujah!

Could it be that The Lord wanted to gain my ATTENTION to PRAISE HIM in a-1-1 things including infirmities? My answer for me is: **Yes!**

In Reproaches, PRAISE THE LORD!

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches,.....for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong." II Corinthians 12:10. (Underline mine)

Two other words used to translate this word "reproaches" are ill treatment and insult.

An incident of several years ago taught me to trust the Lord by PRAISING HIM while being reproached.

The letter of December 16th from the Department of Revenue of the Kansas Division of Vehicles was not a Christmas present. The plain words were:

ORDER OF REVOCATION

"On this 16th day of December, 1977, the registration privileges of the above vehicles (1969 Chrysler, 1966 Ford) have been reviewed and the registration of the listed vehicles are hereby revoked for a period of sixty (60) days pursuant to KSA 40-3118. This order is being forwarded to the Kansas Highway Patrol who will pick up your tags and registration within fifteen (15) days."

Immediately I sought the mind of the Lord. God speaks through ten different 'voices' according to the Book of Hebrews but most often through Scripture. The only Divine answer I received day after day was pointing my mind to Habakkuk's promise.

Though the fig tree may not blossom,
Nor fruit be on the vines;
Though the labor of the olive may fail,
And the fields yield no food;
Though the flock be cut off from the fold,
And there be no herd in the stalls--
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord.
I will joy in the God of my salvation.
The Lord God is my strength;
He will make my feet like deer's feet,
And He will make me walk on my high hills.(10)

So, I PRAISED THE LORD in the midst of this devastating situation. For if the State carried out their plans, our Faith Alive Days Ministry would come to a screeching halt with no

vehicles to take us to our preaching and teaching appointments.

Leaning on my own understanding I sought counsel. I explained to the lady of the License Bureau at the County Court House that what appeared to be a three day lapse in our liability insurance coverage was in reality a problem with a change in billing by the Insurance Company as they changed over to computers. Our Insurance Company acknowledged this was the case.

The lady said, "So sorry, but that three days represents a violation of the Kansas Law. Like any other criminal, you must pay the penalty."

"May I hire a lawyer to protect my interests?" I asked her.

She replied, "Sure you can. It's a free country and lawyers do some strange and wonderful things. However, I have never seen a lawyer get anyone out of this type of violation."

I employed Bill Ellis, Cowley County Attorney. According to his record he wrote two letters and made five phone calls.

In response to the above maneuvers the State of Kansas advised me:

"This revocation order #710 23 696 is being forwarded to the Kansas Highway Patrol who will pick up your tags and registration on December 31, 1977."

"You may purchase new registration and tags from your county treasurer at the end of the sixty (60) day revocation period."

The days passed and as they did we **REJOICED IN THE LORD** as His Word says--"In everything give thanks."

December 31st came and no Highway Patrol. Our confidence was one-hundred percent strong in Jesus that He would work it out, but since He is a God of infinite variety, we had no idea what the solution would be.

The New Year brought no news until the 3rd of January when a letter came from the Kansas Department of Vehicles. Simply it read:

"We are pleased to advise you that your Kansas vehicle registration privileges, which were revoked by this Division, are hereby

reinstated and your case has been closed.”

Yours very truly,
John W. Smith, Supervisor

Yes, we PRAISED THE LORD for making our feet like the feet of a deer to walk on the high hills and slippery places of life as Habakkuk said!

**IN PRESENT TENSE--
NEEDS
PRAISE THE LORD!**

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs,.....for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong.” (II Corinthians 12:10.)

Is it practical to face **NEEDS** with **PRAISE**?

As the hour for the crucifixion came near, Jesus **PRAISED** the **FATHER**.(11)

Paul and Silas needed to get out of prison. So they sang hymns and **PRAISED GOD**. An earthquake opened the doors of the prison and set them free.

The Macedonian Christians were in great need. II Corinthians 8:2b says--“they have mixed their wonderful **JOY** with their deep poverty, and the result has been an overflow of giving to others.”

In our own **NEEDS** we have found **PRAISE** to be the right solution.

Lisa, our youngest daughter, was one of those **NEEDS**.

Born to us on a Winter morning two days after Christmas in 1959, Lisa was normal in every sense of the word. She walked at 15 months and began saying the usual words--mamma, dad, dog and cat, and her brothers and sisters names, Lynn, Teresa, Galen and Becky.

In the Summer of 1961 Lisa ran a high fever, vomited and was covered with a red rash deepening to welts in places. She was diagnosed over the telephone on a Saturday afternoon as having hives and treated with a prescription.

The changes that began to take place in the following

months were so little that we ignored them at first. Lisa quit saying words and lost interest in her toys and other surroundings. At night she would get up in the dark and tear scores of pages out of catalogs and magazines.

Lisa doesn't talk, dress herself or take care of other needs. She has been examined by doctors and specialists in several of the major medical and psychiatric clinics from Indiana to Kansas and yet remains a medical mystery.

In 1966, when Lisa was six years old, we committed her to the Kansas Neurological Institute of Topeka. Here the latest therapies, tranquilizers and treatments were administered. After six years the bottom line was--NO PROGRESS FOR LISA.

In November of 1971, we brought Lisa home to stay. Now she was back on the home scene and her family was just learning to PRAISE THE LORD in ALL THINGS. We realized that Lisa was a part of our "all things" and "everything" that Paul spoke of in I Thessalonians 5 and Ephesians 5. So, we began to say to the Lord:**

****THANK YOU JESUS FOR LISA JUST AS SHE IS RIGHT NOW!**

****WE PRAISE YOU LORD THAT YOU WORK ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR OUR GOOD AND YOUR GLORY!**

****THANK YOU FOR MAKING LISA AND THAT YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF ALL HER DAYS AND WAYS!**

I cannot tell you today that Lisa is A-OK. I do tell you that Lisa has made more progress since we started to PRAISE THE LORD for her in the present tense than in all the other years put together. We press on, PRAISING THE LORD, knowing that at just the right time, HIS TIME, HE DOES ALL THINGS WELL! Hallelujah!

Persecuted? PRAISE THE LORD!

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions,.....for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong." (II Corinthians 12:10)

It is significant that the New Testament often associates persecution with praise, joy, and rejoicing. **PRAISING THE LORD** when opposed by evil people or forces makes Jesus **LORD** of the situation.

Beautiful examples of this include:

And they departed from the presence of the council, **REJOICING** that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. (Acts 5:41)

But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up **PERSECUTION** against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with **JOY** and with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:50-51)

And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word with much **AFFLICTION**, with **JOY** of the Holy Spirit. (I Thessalonians 1:6)

But **REJOICE**, insofar as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be **GLAD** with exceeding **JOY**. (I Peter 4:13)

Distressed? **PRAISE THE LORD!**

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong." (II Corinthians 12:10)

We live in a world of stress and the United States is full of stressful situations--crowds, traffic, phones, fast moving pace of life, etc. **PRAISE** is the best antidote for stress.

The Devil plays cat and mouse games with our lives through little things. One of the things that used to raise my stress pressure was church **ATTENDANCE**. During our ministry at Minneola, Kansas we averaged 153 and fluctuated between 130 and 210.

In April of 1972, while learning to **PRAISE THE LORD** in **ALL** things, our Morning Assembly Attendance on a non-holiday Sunday shot up to 165. **WOW! I PRAISED THE LORD!**

The next Sunday it dropped to 140 and I talked to the Lord about it but **WOULDN'T PRAISE HIM**. The Lord reminded me

over and over of what Paul said in II Corinthians 12:10--take pleasure in STRESS-DIFFICULTIES.

The following Sunday attendance dropped to 138. The Lord reminded me that 138 people were a lot more than a dozen or one or two, Furthermore that the sheep and lambs were His not mine. Wouldn't I do what He said through Paul?--"In everything give thanks." I Thessalonians 5:18. My answer: I agreed to think about it. That is as far as it went.

When the count was posted on the next Sunday, it read 135. I stopped the service and explained to the people what was happening with me and the Lord over this PRAISE and ATTENDANCE STRESS matter. We paused for a long PRAYER OF PRAISE.

The following Sunday when 156 was posted on the board, we gave the LORD a STANDING OVATION clapping our hands as David said--"*Oh, clap your hands, all you people! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!*" (Psalm 47:1)

The stress was gone. I praised the Lord all week long and learned the lesson of PRAISING HIM in the midst of STRESSFUL SITUATIONS.

When DIFFICULTIES arise, PRAISE THE LORD and press on!

WEATHER brings stress; but the Lord makes the weather. Some of my coffee drinking Christian brothers used to tell me that God is NOT in control of the weather. It operates by the laws of nature. This is a bunch of gobbledgook. My search of the Bible reveals that God is personally in charge of the weather. The Psalmist said--"*This is the day which the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.*" (Psalm 118:24)

Consider the possibilities when we PRAISE THE LORD in the midst of STRESS--*

*It removes the tension of stress!

*May be a witness to a lost soul!

*Glorifies God!

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ

Jesus concerning you.” (I Thessalonians 5:18.)

Facing the unknown FUTURE: **Praise The Lord!**

On Thanksgiving Eve in 1983, Imalee and I attended a Community Thanksgiving Service with our son, Galen, and his wife, Kim, in Dahalonaga, Georgia. Sponsored by the Ministerial Alliance, it was held in the First Christian Church building. The speaker was the local Methodist Minister. During his timely message he made a simple but profound statement that I share with you.

IT REQUIRES GREAT CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S GOODNESS TO BE GRATEFUL.

“Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 5:20.)

So, whether we think of PRAISE in terms of the PAST, PRESENT or now the FUTURE--it takes great confidence in God's goodness to be grateful.

A. Confident that--

God is in absolute control working all things according to His Will.

Therefore, we can PRAISE HIM!

- A. Praise for the Past removes bitterness.
- B. Praise for the Present removes worry.
- C. PRAISE for the FUTURE removes FEAR.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,.....In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the PURPOSE OF HIM WHO WORKS ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL.”(12)

God taught me to relate PRAISE for future tense matters in a simple and amusing way.

Imalee and I had planned for some time to attend a 7 pm special Bible College Choir concert at the Central Christian Church of Dodge City, Kansas. We went early and ate out. Having some extra minutes to spare, we stopped at the shopping mall. I told Imalee she could get out at Penneys, walk down through the mall and Lisa and I would drive around and

meet her at the Woolworth entrance. "Please don't linger as its 6:30 now and the concert starts at 7 pm. You have fifteen minutes to walk through."

True, I must have been dreaming to think that a lady could walk through a shopping mall in fifteen minutes.

Soon it was ten 'til seven. I began to pray. The Lord responded with "Praise Me!" I didn't.

Now it was 7 o'clock. I was getting steamed up, as being on time has been a rule of my life.

The Lord admonished--For things FUTURE, give thanks.

NO WAY! Being late is not a matter for PRAISE. Now it was five after seven. My stress pressure was zooming up. Ten after seven and out the door came Imalee.

"Don't you know the concert started at 7 pm?" "Well, yes, but I met a lady and stopped to talk. I Had to find out how she was getting along."

I was aggravated and the Lord was prompting me--"In everything give thanks."

I drove down the street fast with the Lord in mental pursuit--GIVE THANKS! BE THANKFUL! REST IN ME!

Finally I did--"Thank You, Lord, that we're on our way finally. We're going to be late; but, thanks anyway!"

It was 7:25 pm as we pulled up to the church building. My mouth fell open while my eyes got big. No one was there except the big bus used to transport the choir. Starting time was 8 pm. We were early and the Lord knew all along.

Now since the Lord knows the time schedules including the end from the beginning, it is best by far to acknowledge as David did:

But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord;
I say, "You are my God,
My times are in your hand."

Psalm 31:14,15a

Out of this I learned a life-long lesson. Now, in the midst of

a stressful situation, we encourage one another with--**HANG LOOSE, THE LORD IS IN CHARGE! PRAISE HIM!**

B. Confident we are that--
GOD IS TOTAL GOODNESS,

Therefore, we can PRAISE HIM as the Scripture admonishes.

The goodness of God endures continually. (Psalm 52:1)

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from you. (Isaiah 54:10a)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)

Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." (Psalm 63:3)

Most of us know John Newton for his having written the hymn "Amazing Grace." John Newton had an unusual appreciation for the goodness of God, for he had wandered a great distance in sailing the Seven Seas. In a series of fourteen letters written to a friend, he discloses the many acts of God's Goodness that led to his salvation. From his early years of hardship and his life as a sailor and slave dealer, he relates God's goodness and mercy in delivering him.

So the GOODNESS OF GOD towards His Children is well stated in these words;

"But to us there is a time coming when our warfare shall be accomplished, our views enlarged, and our light increased. With what transports of adoration and love shall we look back upon the way which the Lord has led us! We shall then see and acknowledge that mercy and goodness directed every step; we shall see that what our ignorance once called adversities and evils, were in reality blessings which we could not have done without. Nothing befell us without a cause; no trouble came upon us sooner or pressed on us more heavily, or continued longer than our case required.....By the light offered us in the Scriptures, we may collect proof, from our narrow circle, that the wise and good providence of God watches over His people from the earliest moment of their lives, overrules and guards them through all their wanderings in a state of ignorance, and leads them in a way to the possession of that exceeding and eternal weight of glory which the Lord has prepared for His people."

C. Confident we are that--

GOD HAS MADE US WINNERS!

WE PRAISE HIM!

If God is for us, who can be against us?.....Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written:

“For your sake we are killed all day long;
We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.”

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.(14)

How could we be MORE THAN CONQUERORS? Vs. 37.

A conqueror may be a simple foot soldier, a peon, or a king.

WE ARE---#

#Heirs of God! Joint heirs with Christ! (Romans 8:17)

#Kings and priests! (Revelation 1:6)

#Sons and daughters of God! (Romans 8:15,16)

So, we have reason to say--**Hallelujah!**

A simple fable illustrates the story of our victory.

A little bird built its nest out on the end of a limb in a high tree.

A Storm spoke to Little Bird saying:

“Little Bird, I am preparing the worst storm that has ever been. There will be black clouds with thunder and lightning. Then will come my wind which will exceed one hundred mile-per-hour. I will attack you with fury and vengeance shaking your tree. At the worst, my wind will begin to whirl and swirl and your tree will begin to shake. I'll rip your tree out of the ground and blow your nest off the limb and you out of your nest.”

The Little Bird said to the Storm:

“O.K. Mr. Storm, do your worst. Blow my tree down and blow my nest off the limb and me out of my nest and when you do, I have another alternative--I HAVE WINGS AND I’LL FLY AWAY!”

Isn’t this our response to all the things Paul lists in Romans 8:35,38,39?

The winds of adversity may bring---*

- *Tribulation?
- *Distress?
- *Persecution?
- *Famine?
- *Nakedness?
- *Peril?
- *Sword?
- *Death?
- *Life?
- *Angels?
- *Principalities?
- *Powers?
- *Things present?
- *Things to come?
- *Height?
- *Depth?
- *Any created being?

What can any of these do to us?

Nothing!

Some will say-- BUT DEATH is in that list.

Yes. But what can death do?

Only bring us into the living, everlasting, glorious, holy PRESENCE of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Angels and Saints gone on before us. So, in the language of the fable, when DEATH blows its chilly breath our way and says--I’LL BLOW YOUR LIFE AWAY.

We respond in the language of Little Bird--“O.K. Mr. Death. Do your worst. Blow me out of my earthly house and when you do I have another alternative--I HAVE WINGS AND I’LL FLY AWAY AND BE AT HOME WITH GOD, FOREVER!” That’s what I mean when singing that grand old hymn--“*Some*

glad morning when this life is o'er, I'll fly away."

So, we face the PAST, the PRESENT, the FUTURE with absolute confidence and PRAISE THE LORD as we pass down this Trail of Life towards the rising of the SON where the shadows all disappear when the day at last is done saying: Hallelujah!!!

Praise the Lord!!!

SOME PRAISE SUGGESTIONS:

1. PRAISE is a personal release of FAITH. So, just as I cannot believe for someone else even so I cannot do their PRAISING. Praising God for the problems of another will remove any anxiety that exists in me; but, it will NOT bring a solution to the other person.
2. DO NOT look for a reason WHY you should or should not praise the Lord. The devil always has a bagfull of reasons why you SHOULDNT. God says it! That settles it! I'll do it!
3. We do not need to keep praising God over and over for an event out of the PAST. Make Him Lord by PRAISING HIM. When the devil attacks again with a wave of bitterness, remind him that you have placed the matter in God's hands with PRAISE.
4. SEAL PRAISE with FAITH. That is, after thanking the Lord for a matter, do as Jesus said--"Believe you received them, and you will have them." Mark 11:24. Show this faith by THANKING THE LORD for the matter.
5. DO NOT intend to USE THE LORD in PRAISE. I mean, when one learns that PRAISE for the PAST will remove bitterness, PRAISE for the PRESENT dismisses WORRY and PRAISE for the FUTURE cancels FEAR, it is a real temptation to PRAISE THE LORD just for the benefit of removing undesirable factors.
Simply PRAISE THE LORD for WHO HE IS and WHAT HE HAS DONE and IS DOING NOW. PRAISE HIM for the PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE because HE can and does work all things together for our good and His Glory!
6. ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES for praise. Too often we treat praise in a detached, non-personal manner by attempting to Praise The Lord through listening to a musical group or soloist offer praise. We allow a preacher or leader to pray a prayer of praise, while we listen. This is praise once removed and is no more real for us than a three-dollar bill.

7. PRAISE THE LORD NOW! Don't Wait! Praise God at the very moment an event occurs. A Beautiful example is found in II Chronicles 20:1ff. Judah was surrounded by enemy forces. Jehoshaphat sought the Lord. The Lord's victory plan for the Nation is written in these words:

Vs. 15--"FEAR NOT, neither be dismayed by reason of this great multitude: for THE BATTLE IS NOT YOURS, but GOD'S."

Vs.22--"And when they began to sing and to PRAISE, Jehovah set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab and Mount Sier, who had come up against Judah; and they were defeated."

Our journey of thinking about the wonder and glory of PRAISE is winding down; but, I trust not ending. I PRAY THAT EACH PERSON WHO HAS READ THIS WILL RESOLVE TO TAKE UP THE TRUMPET OF PRAISE in a greater way and "In everything give thanks!" So, may the following song encourage you as it does me.

PRAISE THE LORD!

When you're up against a struggle
That shatters all your dreams,
And your hopes have been cruelly
Crushed by Satan's manifested scheme
And you feel the urge with-in you
To submit to earthly fears,
Don't let the faith you're standing in
Seem to disappear.

Praise the Lord!

He can work through those who praise Him.

Praise the Lord,

For our God inhabits praise.

Praise the Lord,

For the chains that seem to bind you

Serve only to remind you

That they drop powerless

Behind you, when you PRAISE HIM!(15)

"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name."
(Hebrews 13:15)

FAITH ALIVE IN HEART, HOME and CHURCH
NOTES - Chapter 6

1. Psalm 148:1-14 - The Living Bible Paraphrase (1971) by Kenneth Taylor. Used by permission.
2. An original poem from Meditations from the Heart by Rollin Stewart of Arkansas City, Kansas. Used by permission.
3. Professor Royce as quoted by E. Stanley Jones from a taped message by Mr. Jones. #738-E.
4. Romans 8:26,27
5. True Spirituality (1971) by Francis Shaeffer, Cp.2, Pg. 18, Copyright 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois.
6. Job 1:21,22
7. Transcribed from a sermon tape #738-E - "Jesus is Lord" by E. Stanley Jones.
8. I Thessalonians 5:18; Ephesians 5:20; Philippians 4:4.
9. II Corinthians 12:7-10.
10. Habakkuk 3:17-19.
11. John 17:1; Hebrews 12:2
12. Ephesians 1:3,11.
13. Book - John Newton, Out of the Depths, Pgs.8,9. An autobiography. Public domain. Used by permission of Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.
14. Romans 8:31b, 35-39.
15. Song - "PRAISE THE LORD" by Brown Bannister and Copyrighted 1978 and this arr. copyrighted 1980 by BUG AND BEAR MUSIC & HOME SWEET HOME MUSIC. Used by permission of WORD MUSIC.

Part 7

Faith Alive Through--

LIFTING UP JESUS' NAME

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Two Young Men From California

The Faith Alive Revival at Los Lunas, New Mexico with Jack and Billie Havens was over on Friday night. We left for our home in Kansas on Saturday morning. As we crossed the New Mexico-Texas State line headed east, we were looking and praying for gas. It must have been the orange color of the service station sign in Vega, Texas that caught my eye. Supposing it was a Phillips 66 Station, we stopped. The kind of station was important as we had some funds at home in the bank but only \$3 cash and a Phillips 66 card with us. I filled the tank and handed the lady my 66 card.

"We don't accept these here," she said.

"What kind of station is this?" I inquired.

"Why, Gulf of course," she replied.

"Do you accept checks?" I asked.

The lady replied, "Sometimes we accept local checks. Who do you know?"

Many years before I had worked as a bank teller, so I knew what she meant by "Who do you know?" Without thinking I spoke what came into my mind, "I KNOW JESUS."

The lady responded, "Do You? I know Him, too. That's good enough reference for me. Make out your check."

I did and we went on our way rejoicing! The n-a-m-e of Jesus made the difference!

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."
Colossians 3:17

I learned to let the NAME OF JESUS bless me by following Paul's three guide points. (Colossians 3:17)

1. "In the NAME of Jesus";
2. Do deeds!
3. Speak Words!

I - In the Name of Jesus!

N-A-M-E-S make a difference.

The famous banker, Baron Von Rothschild, was visited by a young businessman seeking a loan. He had

come highly recommended, but the shrewd Rothschild saw that the application didn't warrant the loan. Turned down, the young man was crestfallen. His hopes were shattered.

The Baron's heart went out to him. He rose from his chair and escorted him through the outer offices taking him personally to the front door of the building. There he put his arm about him and consoled him with...**"You are going out of here with something better than the money you wanted and it hasn't cost you a cent."**

Of course, the young man saw only failure in his visit to the banker. He had no idea what the wily Rothschild meant by his remark -- until the next day!

Cards from industrial leaders began to arrive. Businessman dropped by to see him. Offers were extended to him. The money world was interested in someone who appeared to enjoy the confidence of the mighty Rothschild. Scores of businessmen had seen the Baron's arm around the young man. The name of Rothschild rubbed off. So that's what was worth more than money -- that powerful name!(1)

The Lord opened my eyes to see that **"NAMES"** signify **personhood, power and purpose.**

"In the NAME of Jesus" signifies three things:

- A. Personhood
- B. Power
- C. Purpose

A NAME signifies PERSONHOOD.

As far back as recorded history reaches, it has been the practice of civilized people to give their offspring at least one n-a-m-e.

God was not content for long to simply refer to His first child-of-earth as merely "male" and "female", a "man" or a "living being." (Genesis 1:27; 2:7). Adam's name appears in the Holy Record as though God has been using it all

along--“*Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them.*” (Genesis 2:19). And before this chapter ends, man is addressed as “Adam” six times in four verses.

I note that in our society, as soon as a father or mother announces they are the parents of a new born, two questions will follow immediately, usually in this order--#1. Is it a boy or a girl? #2. What is its' NAME? A n-a-m-e signifies personhood--body, soul, spirit--a being that can think, feel and will.

That a NAME signifies a PERSON is indicated by our daily response to names.

We say---*

*“Who is calling?”

*“Tell Mr. Jones that I called.”

*“WHO said such and such?”

The “NAME” in Colossians 3:17 is enhanced far beyond the earthly plane when Paul says; “*in the NAME of the LORD JESUS.*” In our humanism we are apt to ponder--Is just a name enough to bring heaven's power down to earth? We will not be the first to raise such a thought. Moses pondered this very question. Exodus 3:13,14 records it as follows:

Then Moses said to God,

“Indeed when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

I trust you remember that Moses wasn't totally convinced about the use of GOD'S NAME. Before Moses would go to deliver Israel out of Egypt in GOD'S NAME, he had to have a spokesman, Aaron, and two signs--the leprous hand made whole and the shepherd staff turned into a serpent. (Exodus 7).

The NAME OF JESUS makes the difference in bringing Heaven's power to earth's needs!

It was Jesus' name that caused great controversy in the first century world. Matthew announces the stage setting when he quotes the word of an announcing angel--*"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His People from their sins."* (1:21) The storm gets under way when Herod hears that JESUS has been born a "King" in Judea. Throughout the Gospels the expression "thy Name" and "my Name" are expressions that indicate or incite ACTION!

The Pharisees and Sadducees intended to bring the controversy to an end with the crucifixion. The Gaithers in one of their songs have the Jewish Leaders at the Crucifixion of Christ saying--"There, that takes care of that!" But, **IT DIDN'T!** It only moved God's Mighty Plan of the Ages forward for a weary world in waiting!

Peter carries the banner of the Cross on Pentecost when he speaks these words:

"And it shall come to pass that whoever calls upon the NAME OF THE LORD will be saved." (Acts 2:21)

The banner of JESUS' NAME flies high from the old rugged Cross as Peter invites men and women to enter The Way through the door of Jesus as he says--

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.....Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:36,38)

The storm increases as Peter heals the lame man "*in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.*" (Acts 3:6) The storm rages around the NAME OF JESUS as Acts 4 records the arrest of Peter and John. The Jewish Council charges them NOT to speak or teach in JESUS' NAME. (4:18) Peter responds by saying--"*... we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*" (Vs.20)

The remainder of the book of Acts and Christianity across the centuries is HIS STORY through HIS FOLLOWERS in HIS NAME!

A "NAME" signifies a person with POWER.

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them,..... "If we this day are judged for a good deed done to the helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by HIM this man stands here before you whole." (Acts 4:8-10)

"And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from Their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

Every child born into this world is given a NAME and that NAME comes to be identified with the person. That is, John Doe is known by his personality, exercise of power with or over others as a leader or tyrant and his purpose in life.

The expression - "*in the Name of the Lord Jesus*" was borrowed from the Greek commercial world. It signified that an act could be performed by the AUTHORITY of another person even though that person was absent. Our closest approximation in English is --**power of attorney**.

A "power of attorney" is dependent on two things:

#1-The resources of the one giving the power of attorney.

That is, for me to draw up a power of attorney to handle a one million dollar trust when I only have one thousand dollars would be empty and meaningless.

JESUS, however, has unlimited resources as the Scriptures state.

"And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'" (Matthew 28:18)

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)

"The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness," (Psalm 24:1)

#2-A "power of attorney" is dependent upon:

***The WILL of the individual,**

***The LAWS of the State and**

***The KIND drawn up.**

*A general power of attorney does allow the payment of bills and other obligations.

*A general power of attorney will NOT allow the party using the power to change their will or cast a vote for them in a general election.

JESUS' "Power of Attorney" is contained in the New Testament. Our authority is as broad as the New Testament and yet limited according to the promises and commands of Jesus in the Scripture.

We are told to:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19)

We are told NOT to:

Pass eternal judgment upon men. That alone belongs to the Father and His Son. (John 5:22; Acts 10:42; 17:31)

"In HIS NAME" is to us what a uniform is to a policeman. Whenever he wears it, his acts are authorized by the department. When he pounds on a door, he says, "**Open in the name of the Law!**"

His own name is never mentioned. In fact, he wouldn't dare try such a thing in his own name. No one would pay any attention to him if he did. He has authority only as he speaks in the NAME OF THE LAW!(2)

There is **MIGHTY POWER** in the **NAME OF JESUS!**

Paul tells us in **Colossians 3:17** that *everything* we do in *word* and *deed* is to be done according to our Lord's power of attorney--"In HIS NAME."

Enjoying the blessings of HIS NAME does not rest upon our understanding some deep theology about the matter. Like

most of God's great truths, we are blessed when we enter into the Truth through practice.

The "N-A-M-E" signifies ALL the PERSON OF JESUS stands for.

In the THIRD place there is PURPOSE in a NAME.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Our youngest daughter's NAME is LISA. On her 27th birthday I gave her a NAME plaque that hangs on the wall near her favorite chair. It gives her NAME and its' meaning plus an appropriate Scripture. It reads--

L I S A
"Consecrated One"
"The Lord is my portion, says my soul,
Therefore do I hope in Him." Lamentations 3:24

1. "In the Name of Jesus" signifies:
 - A. Personhood
 - B. Power
 - C. Purpose

Now this is a truism with every person. Every NAME has a MEANING. Every LIFE has a PURPOSE.

The complexity of the human as a being made in the image of God indicates there is a planned PURPOSE for such a creation. I often tell folk that when God was ready to make flowers--and there are over 5,000 species of wild flowers in the Rocky Mountain area of Colorado alone--He did not have a TG&Y store to walk down the aisle and get ideas. HIS ideas are all originals! And far, far, far beyond flowers is the intricacy and wonder of a human being! There are over five billion human beings in the world now, and Grit Magazine reports an estimate that as of 1971 there had been 12 to 14 additional billions on the earth since Adam. And no two of these have the same set of finger prints!

Jesus, as God's only begotten Son, was unique with a singular PURPOSE.

The PURPOSE OF JESUS' LIFE IS REVEALED THROUGH THE "HIS NAME" STATEMENTS in SCRIPTURE--*

- *Saved from sin by HIS NAME! Matthew 1:21
 - *Receive a child in HIS NAME! Matthew 18:5
 - *Jesus among us in HIS NAME! Matthew 18:20
 - *Leave all in HIS NAME! - Great Reward! Matthew 19:29
 - *Devil cast out in HIS NAME Mark 9:38
 - *Miracles in HIS NAME! Mark 9:39
 - *Reward for a cup of water in HIS NAME Mark 9:41
 - *Ask and receive in HIS NAME! John 14:13
 - *Life in HIS NAME! John 20:31
 - *Justified in HIS NAME! I Corinthians 6:11
 - *Baptized in HIS NAME! Acts 2:38
 - *Saved in HIS NAME! Acts 2:21
 - *Healed in HIS NAME! Acts 3:6
 - *Anointed in HIS NAME! James 5:14
 - *Do deeds in HIS NAME! Colossians 3:17
 - *Speak words in HIS NAME! Colossians 3:17
 - *Depart from iniquity in HIS NAME! 2 Timothy 2:19
 - *We get a NEW NAME - HIS NAME! Revelation 3:12
 - *NO OTHER NAME - HIS NAME! Acts 4:12
- "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.....and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*
Philippians 2:9-11

The Apostle Paul tells us we can find our PURPOSE through "JESUS' NAME":

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." (Colossians 3:17)

"WHATEVER YOU DO IN WORD OR DEED" seems like an impossible asking. It's not and it does make a difference! As the Gaithers have expressed it in music--"*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus: There's just something about that Name!*"

II - In The Name Of Jesus DO DEEDS!

A. MEET NEEDS IN JESUS' NAME!

I learned in an intriguing way that the NAME OF JESUS does make a *DIFFERENCE!*

Minneola, Kansas is located twenty miles south of Dodge City at the cross roads of Highway #54 and #283. During the fourteen years of our ministry with the Christian Church there, we shared with a number of highway travelers. These folks traveling from somewhere to everywhere came in various forms of transportation--cars, trucks, a wagon, horseback, motorcycle or on foot. Some were shabbily dressed, others wore a coat and tie but they all spoke the same language--"WE NEED HELP PLEASE. We will return the money as soon as we arrive at our destination".

Needs of these travelers varied from a tank of gas, car repairs, a meal or night in the local hotel. The Elders had set up a \$25 per incident allowance fund for these travelers that I could expend without further permission.

Within reason we did what they asked. And not one of them ever did what they said--return the funds when they arrived at their destination.

In 1970, the congregation was studying a chapter per Sunday from the Gospel of Mark and I preached on the same chapter in the morning assembly. We came to Mark 9, Vss. 38-41:

And John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us." But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side. For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."(3)

That Sunday evening as the Elders met prior to the Family Hour time, I posed this question: "Men, do you suppose Jesus meant what He said in our lesson Scripture this morning about giving even a cup of water in HIS NAME?"

George Ferguson responded by saying--"Preacher, as far as I know, Jesus always meant what He said. What do you have in mind?"

I pointed out the highway travelers that we had been help-

ing for seven years: I asked, "Should we give this assistance IN JESUS' NAME?"

One of the men raised this question: "The Scripture says 'because you belong to Christ' in verse 41. Should we help them if they are not Believers?"

Don Wyatt interjected, "Don't forget these words--'forget not to entertain strangers for thereby some have entertained Angels unaware.'"(4)

Since I was the one that greeted these travelers, listened to their stories, and offered assistance, it would be up to me HOW and in WHOSE NAME it was given. My decision was to do what Jesus said--share in HIS NAME!--(drink of water, gas, oil, repairs, food, lodging) IN HIS NAME.

It was a cold blustery Sunday in February that the entire congregation of Minneola (Kansas) Christian Church got to be a part of putting into practice this great truth of SHARING IN JESUS' NAME.

The essence of Matthew 18:20--"For where two or three are gathered together IN MY NAME, there I am in the midst of them." was coined in these words on the church lawn sign:

WELCOME IN JESUS' NAME!

I'll share this from the news report in The Christian Messenger.

"Last Sunday as we sang 'There's a Christian Welcome Here' a forlorn looking family of four boys and two girls plus mother and father walked through the double swinging doors into our midst. Following the opening prayer, folk made room for the family to be seated on one of the pews.

Sharon Kennedy sang 'What Will You Do For Jesus?' and Howard Davis, missionary home from Japan spoke on 'inasmuch' from Jesus' words--'*...inasmuch as you have done it to the one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it to Me.*' Matthew 25:40

It was a great TEST! It was a grand OPPORTUNITY to share in JESUS' NAME!

The Spirit moved upon the spirits of the Brethren in many beautiful ways--**

**The ladies had prepared a bountiful basket dinner. Someone invited this family to eat with us. Someone else said, 'Let the strangers go first in line at the meal table.' (PRAISE GOD Read James 2:2-9)

**The family was unusual in that they did not ask for food, money or clothing. The man asked for work. While we ate, the congregation took up a love offering for the family. (WONDERFUL! Read James 2:14-17)

**Following dinner we invited them to the parsonage and as the Winter sun burned the afternoon away we extended the LIVING SON to strangers from the highway. Howard Davis and Marion Welsh gave haircuts. My wife, Imalee washed and dried clothes. Katy Johnson brought by clothing her sons had outgrown. Everyone received a bath. The phone rang and rang as folk invited the family members into their homes for supper. (MARVELOUS: Read Matthew 25:34-40)

**They attended the Sunday evening 'Family Hour' and were overnight guests in two homes.

**Monday morning they continued their journey from Illinois to Arizona to see a sick mother for the last time.

'Thank You, Mr. and Mrs. Woodward and family for passing our way. You put us to the test. We tried to pass that test by giving you our best IN JESUS NAME.' (PRAISE THE LORD! Read James 1:27 and Hebrews 13:2)"(5)

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."
(Colossians 3:17)

B. ASK IN JESUS' NAME and RECEIVE!

And whatever you ask in MY NAME, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:13)

It was a mission story that I read which caught my attention and taught me a valuable lesson. The yellowed pages of that clipping still read like this:

God was pleased when Abraham trusted him, and God

was pleased when a Christian woman out in Africa asked Him for a strange gift.

You see, her baby was sick. The mother was a poor, ignorant woman who had become a Christian and knew that Jesus was her friend.

It was several months after she had asked Jesus to be her Saviour that her little child became sick. Everyone thought the baby was surely going to die. Ice was needed but in all that hot country, there were no refrigerators and no ice anywhere.

The Mission Doctor had taught her the truth of John 14:13--

And whatever you ask in MY NAME, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:13)

"I am going to ask God to send ice," the mother said to the missionary.

"Oh no!" the missionary said sadly. "You can't expect Him to do that."

"Why not?" asked the simple-hearted believer. "He has all power, and He loves me. You told me so. I shall ask in His Name and I believe He will send it."

She did ask Him and God answered. Soon there came a great thunderstorm with rain and hail pelting down. Joyfully thanking God, the happy mother ran out into the storm with a large bowl and scooped it full of icy hailstones. Packed in ice the fever was reduced and the child lived!

God heard and answered her "impossible prayer of faith in Jesus' Name!"

Up to this point in my life I had prayed "IN JESUS' NAME" as a proper religious way of ending a prayer. I gave little attention to whether what was prayed was God's Will according to His Word and did NOT pray with simple absolute FAITH believing and acting after praying like GOD HAD HEARD.

In the Fall of 1973, the Ashland Christian Youth Camp Planning Committee selected me to be the Dean of the 1974

Senior High Camp. I agreed with the understanding that JESUS would be the Dean and I would assist IN HIS NAME. I spelled out a working agreement with the Lord--*

*****HE** must call aside all the faculty including teachers, counsellors, missionary, evangelist, pianist, song leader, life guard, cooks, etc.

***I would **PRAY** and schedule His servants.

*****He** must bring the kids to camp. High School sophomores, juniors, seniors and college youth are difficult to persuade to stop summer jobs during the first week in June and come to camp.

***I would enlist kids to **PRAY** and help to organize the ones the Lord brought there.

***The missionary offering, decisions, etc. would all be in **THE LORD'S HANDS**.

***I would ring the bell to change classes and make announcements.

I asked in THE LORD'S NAME and certainly expected to receive.

The rest is **HIS**story!

During the Fall, I wrote scores of high school and college youth, seeking to enlist them as a **MIGHTY BAND OF PRAYER WARRIORS**. I would write them two more times before June to make a **PRAISE THE LORD PRAYER REPORT** and invite more prayers in personnel posts not filled.

It was beautiful across the months as one by one individuals called me on the phone, wrote a note or stopped me at a Rally or on the street to say **I PLAN TO BE THERE! I WANT TO HELP JESUS! LET ME SERVE** as a _____!

Two weeks before camp all the personnel posts were filled except one. We had **NO** evangelist. We **PRAYED** and **WAITED ON THE LORD!** One week before Camp---still the same.

A Fifth Sunday Fellowship Convention of the churches was in progress.

Now, I ask you a question: Do you remember when God needed someone to deliver Israel from Goliath the giant? The likely one was not volunteering. God's man-of-the-hour, little David, was out herding his father's sheep.(6)

The Lord's m-i-s-s-i-n-g man for the 1974 Camp at Ashland, Kansas was also a small-of-stature fellow--CLYDE GOFF.

Again, remember that Jesse sent David with a lunch for his brothers who were in Israel's Army. Likewise, it was while we were eating the fellowship meal at this Fifth Sunday Convention that **Bro. Clyde Goff** leaned over and said to me,

"Do you have a preaching evangelist for Senior Camp yet?"

"No, Clyde, the LORD doesn't have an evangelist. You have signed-up to cook. Right?"

Clyde said, "Well, I didn't want to be too forward about the matter but the Lord indicated several weeks ago that I should volunteer to **PREACH THE EVENING MESSAGE**. But, I decided to cook and let someone else preach."

I said, "**GLORY TO GOD, CLYDE!** You're the Lord's Preacher for this hour!"

Now everything came together quickly. Before the day was over Clyde's mother, Lillian Goff, a long time Bible College cook, came around to say, "I'll cook". Al and Virginia Hicker-son, Church elder and assistant manager at High Plains Journal came to say "We'll be there to assist in the kitchen and wherever needed."

Now, at last the LORD'S stage was set and it was almost curtain time for a week of camp that would ring the bells of Heaven as it met the needs of youth in Jesus' Name!

If notes had been kept, a short book could be written; but, statistics tell part of the **GLORY STORY!**--**

Camp officially opened at 5 pm on Sunday afternoon in the Chapel with everyone kneeling to sing "Let Us Break Bread Together On Our Knees." And, **HALLELUJAH Jesus became our loaf of bread all week long.

****The Lord called aside 104 youth plus some 30 adult workers. An all time record!**

****The HOLY SPIRIT prompted 53 decisions at evening invitation time through the week!**

****No Mission giving goal was set beyond committing our treasure to THE LORD upon our knees. An all time high of \$504.82 was shared in the MISSION OFFERING for the Lord's Missionary--Jesse Yangmi from Thailand.**

Because we ASKED in JESUS' NAME and let THE LORD be in charge, we RECEIVED abundantly!

And whatever you ask in MY NAME, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:13)

C. GO IN JESUS' NAME!

And He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest that He would send out laborers into His harvest." (Luke 10:2)

After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them **TWO BY TWO** before His face into every city and place where He himself was about to go. (Luke 10:1)

Then Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As My Father has sent me, I **ALSO SEND YOU.**" (John 20:21)

Therefore **THOSE** who were scattered **WENT EVERYWHERE PREACHING THE WORD.** (Acts 8:4)

The above Scriptures are in sharp contrast to the lack of witnessing today.

The free spirit of the sixties and seventies gave birth to the "Jesus Movement." This movement did not have a formal name until much later but it was made up of thousands of young people who wanted to get serious about Jesus in their lives. Their interests were characterized by at least six facets--*

- *1. LOVE was their battle cry.
- *2. They spoke freely of their Leader, JESUS!
- *3. Possessed an intense HUNGER for the WORD of GOD.
- *4. PRAYER circles often lasted one or two hours.
- *5. "Coffee Houses" were often the center of their counselling one another and confessing faults to one another--"rapping" they called it.

*6. OBEEDIENCE to the WORD marked much of what they did. This came through in public baptisms in the ocean, lakes and ponds making headlines in the news.

The institutional located churches were shook up by all these "strange happenings" as they were often dubbed.

At this time, the "Jesus Movement" was affecting religious thinking across the entire country in several ways. One manifestation was when individual Christians in located churches saw some reality to the "Jesus People," they caught some of the free spirit of the age by turning negative towards many religious methods and matters of opinion which made them appear to be on the "band wagon" so-to-speak.

I noted this in 1963 soon after moving from Indiana to Minneola, Kansas in reference to Evangelism. In response to winning the lost I heard people saying--#

- #1. The Bane Driscoll Decision Day campaigns for bringing in new members is too artificial.
- #2. The Salvation Army soap-box preaching on the street and handing out tracts is too showy.
- #3. Showing filmstrips such as the Jule Miller series in homes by appointment is too much like selling vacuum cleaners.
- #4. Or they would say "I don't agree with the 4 Spiritual Laws concept."
- #5. A plan dubbed the "5 Finger Plan" (Hear, Believe, Repent, Confess, be Baptized) is too legalistic.

When I inquired--WHAT PLAN DO YOU LIKE? They would grow silent, possibly saying, "Well, one person winning another is Biblical." But, when the matter was pressed, I discovered these people had NO plan of any kind.

So, in the Spring of 1964, I wrote twenty-five of our members a personal letter inviting them to a TOP-SECRET meeting of interested individuals to be held in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday morning immediately after the Morning Assembly. They were asked NOT to mention the letter or the appointment to anyone until after the special meeting.

I wrote and sent the letter in JESUS' NAME and so was not overly surprised when twenty-five stayed for the meeting.

Simply, I told them the Master needed fisherman. We would be meeting the following Wednesday for a light meal, followed by a simple lesson from Tidings "Two by Two" flip-over chart, prayer for assignments, selecting assignments, prayer again, going to people's homes **IN JESUS' NAME** to tell them we love them and please come and follow Jesus with us. After 90 minutes we would report back for the coffee and a time of reporting and rejoicing.

When Wednesday came I was elated when all twenty-five of those people came to do some fishing for Jesus.

IN JESUS' NAME we went forth every Wednesday evening once a month for many years. This accounts for the 426 souls brought to Christ during our labor at Minneola.

Every conversion is a miracle when we consider red-as-crimson sins turned to white-as-snow by the Blood of Jesus! Many were older men and women who simply said--No one ever asked me to accept Jesus before. So Clyde Shinogle at 74, Harold Downs at 60, Elmer Spahr at 80, Marcille Chilton Hale at 59, Herschel Davis at 64, Ernie Grimmett at 68, Lester Hull at 60, Dorothy Hale at 66 found their way into the Kingdom because we went forth in **JESUS' NAME**. Each of these entails a beautiful story of the power of **JESUS' NAME!**

One of my favorite stories of **JESUS' PREVAILING LOVE** is Bud and Gertrude Turner.

Month after month for seven years we had gone to their home to share a Scripture, offer a prayer, speak a word of invitation in **JESUS' NAME**. Our workers always went out **TWO-By-TWO**, one to pray and one to talk, just as Jesus sent the Seventy out. From the beginning we asked the workers to sum up the call in one or two words or sentences on a simple 3x5 record card. By 1971, we had been calling on the Turners some seven years and there were 4 or 5 cards giving the simple reports of calls made in their home.

On the night of November 16, 1971, we were out fishing for Jesus one more time. God would show us on this night that it was **HIS POWER, HIS WAY, HIS LOVE** and n-o-t our devices that wins the **VICTORY!** We always reminded ourselves to

never take these information cards in the house when calling. Leave them on the car seat was the rule. **Clyde Goff**, our Youth Minister and **Doug Wilson**, a senior in high school, were the team of two to call on the Turners.

Without a car they were walking around town calling on their assignments. This meant they were carrying the information cards in their hands. Having knocked on the door, Gertrude, invited them in and made them feel welcome. She always had. She always would.

Now Gertie had at least one problem. She was sure her neighbors talked about her and sometimes asked--“What are our neighbors saying about us?”

This visit by the Fishermen for Jesus started out wrong according to the rules.

Bold for Jesus, Doug Wilson, said: “Mrs. Turner would you like to know what people are saying about you?”

Faster than lightning strikes, she said--“Yes, Are they talking about me again? What are they saying now?”

Bro. Clyde Goff cringed; but, before he could stop what was about to happen, bold young Doug pulled the information cards out of his Bible.

Here is a sample of those report statements that Doug read to the Turners--*

“Here is what people are saying about you Mrs. Turner.” as he started to read the notes callers had made over the previous seven years.

*11-18-64/Turners made us MOST WELCOME! They have high interest...We told them that “God is love” and “He loves them.” (I John 4:16)

*12-9-64/Gertie served us coffee and cookies...We invited them and reminded them that God loves the whole world including them. (John 3:16) Left some Bible tracts.

*1-20-65/Gertie fears her neighbors are talking about her...We remind her that “perfect love casts out fear.” (I John 4:18) We ask them to receive Jesus. “No, not now. Someday” they say.

*10-11-67/Bud talks about his work on the Santa Fe Railroad. Can't come to church because he is always on call. “Someday”

he says. We remind him "Today is the day of salvation, now is the accepted time." (II Corinthians 6:2)

*1-11-68/"May we ask you a personal question?" "Yes," the Turners say. "Will you repent and be baptized for remission of sins according to Acts 2:38." No reply.

*9-10-69/Glad to see us again. There has been a death in the family. We express understanding and remind them that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. Have a prayer circle with them.

*4-9-70/Come more often they both insist..We tell them the "wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." (Romans 6:23) Ask them if they plan to go to hell? They both respond by saying, "Oh no! Not that."

One by one Doug read those statements plus a lot more from the "Fisherman's Data Cards."

When I first heard of the incident, my inner thought was--throw in the towel, reel up the white flag of surrender. However, I was reminded that **GOD IS IN CHARGE**--two by two we had gone out in **JESUS' NAME!**

Keep in mind that God **CONVICTS** hearts by words--most often His Word. Note that many of the caller comments on the cards were Scriptures.

Therefore, there were shouts of joy when the next afternoon at 3 pm, seventy-five year old Bud and Gertie Turner were down at the church building being baptized in **JESUS' NAME!!**

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

(Colossians 3:17)

D. A MINISTRY IN JESUS' NAME.

Since February of 1974, my wife, Imalee, and I have labored for the Lord in a special ministry seeking to be channels in bringing revival and renewal to hearts, homes and churches. "Faith Alive Days" is the name of this ministry. From the beginning we have had a working agreement with Jesus that as long as He opens doors of opportunity for teaching and preaching and supplies our needs, we will follow.

The Lord gave us a couple of years of on-the-field training

while still ministering with the Minneola (Kansas) Christian Church. For HE has always required us to PRACTICE THE WORD before PREACHING IT. Among many lessons HE taught us, was to ask or do projects in JESUS' NAME! Time after time He demonstrated that HIS NAME does made a *difference*.

Lessons we learned early on include-*

***1. ASK H-I-M, not men, FOR OUR NEEDS.**

Several years later we read of Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission following this same principle. Some of his words are:

"God is too wise to allow His purposes to be frustrated for lack of a little money; but money obtained in unspiritual ways is sure to hinder blessing.....God's work, done in God's way, will never lack God's supplies."(7)

So, over the last 14 years we have followed that policy. HE has supplied every tangible and intangible need including over three hundred thousand dollars. Many of these supplied needs are beautiful miracle stories.

***2. HE will o-p-e-n all the doors of opportunity.** An interesting side note is that on three occasions we made an attempt through some special publicity and direct letters to o-p-e-n some doors. Our efforts stand at "0."

Doors THE LORD has opened are--#

#542 opportunities to share His Word in preaching and teaching.

#Hundreds of counselling opportunities.

#13,453 first class letters of counsel and inspiration with tracts mailed IN HIS NAME.

#75,000 tracts-pamphlets of Christian truth distributed IN HIS NAME!

#Dozens of requests for sets of messages and classes on cassette tapes.

#100 editions of a publication called "The Lamplighter" published in HIS NAME!

#2,130 known decisions of baptism, membership and renewal made IN HIS NAME!

#Tens of thousands of miles traveled always IN HIS NAME!

Faith Alive Revival #8 was a meeting full of lessons emphasizing THE NAME OF JESUS!

Stan and Susan Stockton were the ministers along with the Song Leader, Mike Schoonover, all students at Manhattan (Kansas) Christian College.

The **NAME OF JESUS** made the difference between defeat and **VICTORY**. The weapon that won the battle time after time was **JESUS' NAME--****

****1. IN JESUS' NAME** we mailed the letters of information, inspiration and invitation to the members and prospects of the Vermillion (Kansas) Christian Church six days prior to the beginning of the Revival.

Letters mailed **IN HIS NAME** means that after Imalee typed the letters and I signed them, we stuffed, stamped and sealed them. At this point we stopped and laid hands on the envelopes in prayer **IN JESUS' NAME**.

They were postmarked on March 3, 1975 at the Minneola, Kansas Post Office. Elwood Marshall, Postmaster, told me later that the letters were transferred to our sectional center at Dodge City and left there on a plane that evening. Just after take-off this mail plane crashed and burned. 98% of the mail was lost. Among the 2% that was saved were the Faith Alive letters.

I planned for these letters to arrive on Thursday or Friday prior to the beginning of the Revival. Singed around the edges from the fire, these letters arrived during the Revival from day to day just as a family needed a bit of encouragement or a special invitation to attend. **THE LORD'S DIVINE PLAN** worked very fine!

****2.** While we slept Sunday night, ten inches of snow fell on the town. We awoke Monday morning to find a March winter storm in progress on the outside while on the inside a storm of discouragement and pessimism was taking place. Some of the brethren proposed calling the meeting off. I reminded the folk that challenges of all kinds often bring out the old pioneer spirit in people.

I prayed that we press on IN JESUS' NAME! We did!

The Lord did a strange thing on Tuesday. Another storm was brewing as it started snowing and blowing. This went on until about mid afternoon. Long enough to cause cancellation of a community sports event. By 4:00 the sun was shining again and ushered in a beautiful winter evening for the Revival with no events conflicting.

****3.** Would JESUS' NAME be sufficient to warm cool hearts and bring them through the blowing snow? Only 21 came Sunday night. A phone call to Howard and Kay Messer, who lived sixty miles south of Vermillion in the Havensville-Soldier area, where there was NO snow, brought a whole caravan of cars. They had enjoyed Faith Alive Revivals there the year before and came to enjoy the spiritual feast and encourage the Brethren at Vermillion. A total of sixty attended on Tuesday night. Their coming struck a spark that sprang into a blaze of excitement and the meeting closed with 100 on Friday!

****4.** During the storm on Monday, Stan, Mike and I knelt on a cold basement floor in the church building and prayed. Stan, the minister, prayed--"Lord, on this cold winter day, guide us to just the right places as we visit in homes. Tell us just what to say IN JESUS' NAME."

We set out on foot on that bleak cold Monday morning. Since Stan only came up on the week-end to minister, he stopped at the local grocery store in this country town of 167 people to ask directions. The proprietor of many years told him to go out of the store to the corner, turn East and go two blocks, turn South 1/2 block and there on the East side of the street in the middle of the block would be the Jones' white frame house. Tramping through the snow, we followed the directions. When we came to the house someone had already shoveled a path through the deep snow. We walked up to the porch and knocked. A white-haired lady came to the door and Stan said--"You're not the right lady."

She said, "Well, I guess I am since I live here."

Stan replied, "What I mean is we're looking for Mrs. Jones. The man at the Grocery Store said she lived here."

The lady said, "Well she doesn't, but you're welcome to come in out of the cold." We did and the warm house felt good with the wood-burning fireplace a bonus. We took off our coats and the lady volunteered to fix us some hot chocolate. That sounded great and tasted even better.

There was an old white-haired man bent with the years of time sitting in front of the fireplace. He said, "Have a seat boys and warm your feet."

The weather needed little discussion and Mr. Curtis was a man of few words.

I asked him the usual question: "Mr. Curtis are you a Christian?"

"Nope," he replied.

"Have you ever thought about being a Christian?" Stan asked.

"Yep, I have," he said.

"In your thinking about it, Mr. Curtis, what have you decided?" I inquired.

"Probably should someday," he said slowly gazing into the fire.

"Mr. Curtis, please understand that I never attempt to rush people into these matters unless they are old enough," I continued. "You must have seen thirteen at least 50 years ago."

Mr. Curtis looked up with a bit of a smile and said, "You're not a very good guesser. I'm 86."

"Well now, God has been good to you Mr. Curtis, and you've saved the best He has to give you until last--the gift of eternal life in Jesus. Do you mind talking about these matters?" I asked.

"Guess not" he said.

Noting a large Bible open on the coffee table I asked if

we might read from it.

He agreed. So we read Acts 8:26-40. This Scripture in narrative form tells how to receive Jesus.

Mike Schoonover shared two or three other verses--John 3:16; Romans 6:23 and Acts 2:38.

"Do you believe in Jesus?" we asked.

Mr. Curtis replied, "Yes."

"I PRAISE GOD, Mr. Curtis, for you and that great confession of Truth! Have you thought about being baptized?"

"When?" he said. "I can't get out at night in this weather."

Stan, the preacher, and Mr. Curtis agreed on a place and time. So on Tuesday at 2 pm, FLOYD CURTIS was baptized in JESUS' NAME down at the church building!

Two interesting footnotes:

1. Two years later, Mr. Curtis passed from this world into that larger life beyond.
2. Did we get to the right house that day with the wrong directions or did God answer Stan's prayer of that morning--

"Guide us to just the right places and tell us what to say IN JESUS' NAME. Amen."

III - IN THE NAME OF JESUS SPEAK WORDS!

1. "In the Name of Jesus"
2. Do deeds!
3. Speak Words!

A. STAND UP! STAND UP! IN JESUS NAME!

"And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the NAME OF THE LORD will be saved."(8)

During the last century, a religious debate took place in a Boston Opera House between an atheist and a Christian. The atheist's last speech was a ringing challenge affirming that there is no God. He called on any person in the packed opera house to refute his affirmation by standing to their feet. No

one stood! There was a large grandfather clock on one wall which added to the embarrassing silence as it ticked the seconds away. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight ticks of the old clock and the atheist beamed with an increasing smirk on his face. Finally up on the third balcony a little girl stood up and her faint voice was heard singing--"STAND-UP, STAND-UP FOR JESUS, YE SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS: LIFT HIGH HIS ROYAL BANNER, IT MUST NOT SUFFER LOSS..." As she came to the chorus many others on that upper balcony stood with her to sing. By the time they came to the last verse a news reporter said that it appeared everyone in the opera house, on all three balconies and the main floor, was standing and singing with a deafening roar--"STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS, THE STRIFE WILL NOT BE LONG; THIS DAY THE NOISE OF BATTLE, THE NEXT THE VICTOR'S SONG..." The atheist bowed his head and walked from the platform in defeat.

On another day, in another year, our daughter, Lisa, stood up for Jesus in an unusual way.

I mentioned in a previous chapter on "Praise" that Lisa does not talk and yet she understands much of what is said to her. One of the words we know she understands is "JESUS" as her face lights up with a big smile and when we sing the old song--"Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so,"--she beams with total approval. We had often wondered about Lisa's desire and need to accept Jesus as Saviour? Yet, with communication lines almost nil, we were perplexed how and if such a response could ever be.

Lisa travels with us in sharing the Faith Alive Revivals across the country from coast to coast and border to border. By 1979 she had sat through literally hundreds of invitation hymns. In October of that year we were sharing in the Glencoe, Oklahoma Church of Christ. On three different nights during this Revival, Lisa stood up during the singing of the invitation hymn when folk were being invited to make decisions for Jesus. On Friday night some of the folk said--"Is it possible when Lisa stands up during the Invitation Hymn that she

wants to receive Jesus?" Our answer was that it might be, but without communication lines it was next to impossible for us to know.

We decided to attempt communication with Lisa on the basis of actions. We talked to her on a child's level about Jesus and His love and plan, telling her that IF she ever wanted to receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord that she could STAND-UP during the singing of the invitation hymn and we would know that this would signify her desire to confess and accept Jesus.

Sunday after Sunday went by. Many invitations. No more standing up. Weeks grew into months. No response.

It was another October, a year later, we were at Wilroads Gardens Christian Church near Dodge City, Kansas with ministers, Jeff and Debbie Hiers. The Monday night singing led by Bro. Jack Heaston was a high point. Little did we know that even higher holy ground would appear when we sang the invitation hymn. I concluded the preaching message with the above story about the debate and we started to sing--"Stand-up, Stand-up for Jesus." On the second verse LISA STOOD UP! Instantly her mother, Imalee, recognized her response to our agreed signal. Stepping out of the way, Lisa slowly made her way into the aisle and down to the front. I offered words of--"God bless you, Lisa! This is a wonderful thing to receive Jesus! Please be seated," and I assisted her in sitting down. Now remember that the only communication line with Lisa was--STAND-UP if you want to receive Jesus. No sooner had I helped her sit down than she was back on her feet. Happy, smiling, peaceful that this was her moment of decision to say--JESUS I LOVE YOU! I WANT YOU!

One of Lisa's favorite Special Education Classes had been swimming (floating) in the water. So, baptizing her was no problem as she simply followed the example of Jesus.

There were sounds of weeping and rejoicing across the auditorium that night as Lisa demonstrated WHERE THERE IS A WILL, JESUS MAKES A WAY!

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the

Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

(Colossians 3:17)

B. STOP in JESUS' NAME!

“Our help is IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, who made heaven and earth.” (Psalm 124:8)

On our way to the Revival at Edison, Nebraska we had enjoyed warm hospitality on Tuesday night at the home of fellow ministers, Phil and Janet Ashley of Hill City.

Kansas winters begin most any time, but snow doesn't usually fly until December or January. So, the November skiff of snow and coat of ice on Highway #283, South of Norton, was unexpected.

It was high noon on Tuesday, November 19 as we pulled our Travel Trailer down the Main Street of WaKeeney. Suddenly, without provocation or warning, our Suburban and 26 foot trailer began to slide sideways on the ice. Imalee, in quick anguish, said--“HONEY! HONEY! HONEY!” Now honey will stick a lot of things but not 10,000 pounds of rubber and steel. We were meeting a car and the closer we came I saw the lady wince as we moved towards her vehicle at a sharp angle. Imalee closed her eyes and said out loud--“JESUS, BE IN CHARGE!” At that i-n-s-t-a-n-t and not a moment before or too soon, I might add, the slide STOPPED! and we proceeded forward down the middle of the street pulling ever so gradually back into our lane and PRAISING THE LORD at the same time!

Victories at the Revival with ministers, Fred and Marilyn Applegarth, may have been the reason the devil was trying to give us the slip.

“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

Colossians 3:17

C. RESIST THE DEVIL in JESUS' NAME!

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7)

“And the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us through Your name.’” (Luke 10:17)

Resisting the devil is not a passive matter but requires an active confronting the enemy with the WORD OF GOD and the NAME OF JESUS! See Matthew 4:10; 16:23; James 4:7; Revelation 12:9-11.

I have discovered the devil always has a 100% attendance record when we are seeking to win souls for Jesus. Therefore, it was no surprise when Larry Winger and I were out visiting during the Revival at Galva, Illinois to find the enemy present. That which often catches me off guard is the manner and ways in which the devil appears. I had never associated the devil with a ringing telephone until Wednesday afternoon of this Revival.

Remember Scripture identifies him with some unusual words--"roaring lion" I Peter 5:8; an "angel of light" II Corinthians 11:14; a "woman" Luke 13:16; a "man" Matthew 16:23, etc.

We had made an after school appointment to talk with Kurt Larson, a high school senior. Kurt invited us in and we talked for a few moments about his school activities and sports. Telling him that we understood he was interested in receiving Jesus, I suggested we all sit on the divan so we could look at the Scriptures. He agreed and we opened our Bibles to Romans 8:26ff. I read three verses and the phone rang. Being an athlete, Kurt jumped over the coffee table in front of us and ran to answer the phone. He returned with a puzzled look on his face and said, "They hung up just after I answered." Now, Larry read two verses and the phone rang. Kurt was up in a flash, over the table and out to the kitchen to answer the phone. He returned saying, "That's strange. They hung up just as I answered." I inquired: "Kurt, does this go on all the time?" "No," he said, "first time that I know of." He sat back down and I had him read Vss. 32-35 about Jesus. The phone rang again. Kurt went through the same motions--up, over and out to answer the phone. By this time, I saw what was happening--the devil was prompting some prankster to make phone calls. As is often the case, the practical joker probably had no idea what was taking place. While Kurt went for the

phone the third time, I confronted the devil in this situation with a quoted VERSE OF SCRIPTURE insisting in JESUS' NAME that the devil depart. Kurt returned more puzzled than ever. He sat down and we finished reading the Scripture. THE PHONE DIDN'T RING ANYMORE! Kurt received JESUS as Saviour and Lord and was baptized that evening. We PRAISED GOD!

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

Colossians 3:17

D. BE A FRIEND IN JESUS NAME!

"And whoever receives one little child like this IN MY NAME receives ME." (Matthew 18:5)

In short order the Lord gave me a never-to-be-forgotten lesson pointing up the fact that "JESUS' NAME" is a NAME of high POWER and PURPOSE!

Two young men knocked on my study door at the church building on Friday, March 12th. Their request for help was no different from dozens of others but they told a strange story.

They said:

"Our home is in California and we have been to Chicago looking for work. Finding only short term jobs we decided to return to our families in California. We caught a ride with a trucker outside of Chicago going to California. The Interstate would take us through Des Moines, Omaha, Denver and on to California. The driver told us we could sleep if we wanted to. Having been trying to catch a ride for 24 hours, we were tired, so we slept. Awaking, we saw mileage signs indicating we were approaching Springfield, Illinois and St. Louis. We asked him about California."

He replies--"Yes, I'm going to California but have decided to go through St. Louis and Kansas City."

"That seemed O.K. with us as we were just going along for the ride. When he left Interstate 70 at Kansas City heading for Wichita, Kansas, we questioned him again about the route."

"He assured us that we would get to California following

the route of the old Wagon Trains.”

The young man continued with his story--“When we got to Wichita and spent our last money for our breakfast and that of the driver, he was unhappy. Now this driver left the Interstate and turned off on a little two lane highway #54, we were apprehensive and questioned him again. He gave us a terse reply that if we didn’t like his route we could get out and walk. The farther west we came the country looked more and more deserted. So, when the driver stopped at a rest park over at Bloom, five miles east of here, we hid until he was gone and here we are. Could you put us up for the week-end as we have money that will arrive on Monday.”

MY NEW ANSWER: “Guys, we are not a welfare agency. You can seek emergency assistance at our County Seat town, Ashland, 32 miles southeast. We have a little assistance fund but if we assist you it will be **IN JESUS’ NAME** because we want to do what he said.” This naturally lead to the question--“Do You Know Jesus?”

A whole new door was o-p-e-n-e-d for evangelism. The older young man said--“I’m a Christian but my brother-in-law here isn’t.”

You can guess the answer: We put them in a motel for the week-end and provided meals in JESUS’ NAME.

At this time we were having a Revival at the church with Gospel Singers, Jim and Jody Pearson of Nebraska. We invited these “Two Highway Strangers” to share in the Revival. They came on Friday and Saturday night and again Sunday morning. Each invitation, I prayed this would be the moment Robert would say yes to Jesus. He didn’t. Sunday night came and we sang an extra verse of the invitation hymn but Robert did nothing.

I turned out the lights and was back in my Study for a few moments when there was a knock on the door. I announced--“Come on in.”

Robert rushed in saying--“Is it too late? Please don’t let it be too late for me!”

"Too late for what?" I inquired.

"Is it too late to receive Jesus and be baptized?"

"GLORY TO GOD NO, Robert! It's never too late as long as there is life and a willing heart!"

Calling a few of the brethren back to the church building we rejoiced in JESUS' NAME as Robert Debuschere, Jr. was buried with Christ in baptism.

Monday morning we bought two bus tickets and sent the "Two Strangers" on their way to Gardena, California.

I have often pondered--Did those young men get a bum steer from the truck driver? Was it just by chance that they happened to come down Highway 54? Did luck have them get off the truck at Bloom which is 5 miles northeast of Minneola?

The answer is **NO!** God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform!

This marked the beginning for us of a whole new ministry to the Highway People. From the day that we began to meet needs "IN JESUS' NAME", we also began to lead people to receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord. And, the highway travelers that came to our door increased. I soon realized that the Lord was sending the travelers and we were to be a lighthouse along the Road of Life. Their thirst was quenched IN JESUS' NAME with both kinds of water that Jesus spoke of in John 4:10--the WATER FROM THE WELL as we met their physical needs and the WATER OF LIFE, Jesus and His Word.

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

Colossians 3:17

Forever may the reality of the blessed NAME OF JESUS be spoken from our lips and ring within our hearts as the songs say so well:

"All hail the pow'r of Jesus' Name! Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all."(9)

"Take the NAME OF JESUS with you, Child of sorrow and of woe;
It will joy and comfort give you, Take it then, wher'er you go.
Precious Name, O how Sweet! Hope of earth and joy of
Heav'n."(10)

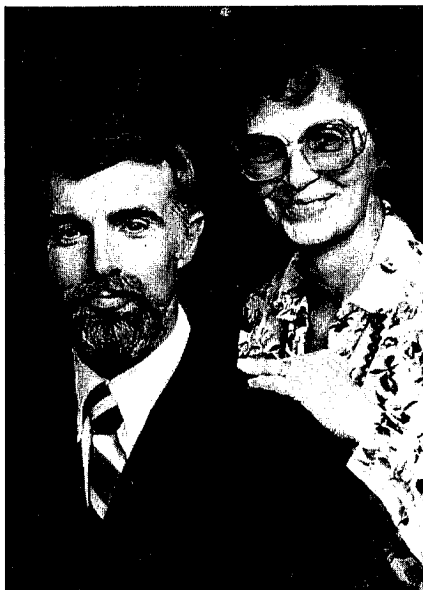
FAITH ALIVE IN HEART, HOME and CHURCH
NOTES - Chapter 7

1. From Dealing With The Devil adused by permission of the author, C.S. Lovertt, Pg.183.
2. Ibid.
3. Mark 9:38-41
4. Hebrews 13:2
5. "The Christian Messenger" of the Minneola (Kansas Christian Church. Vol.2, No.42.
6. I Samuel 17
7. *"Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret" by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, Pg.120,122.(*)1832-1905.
8. From Peter's sermon--Acts 2:21 as he quotes from Joel 2:28-32.
9. Hymn - "All Hail The Power of Jesus' Name" by Oliver Holden.
10. Hymn - "Take the Name of Jesus With You" by William H. Doane.



**Clyde and Nancy Goff,
Michael & Shari
Indianapolis, Indiana**

Ron and Haven Howard
Gospel Singers
Wichita, Kansas



Howard and Kay Messer
Havensville, Kansas - now
Skidmore, Missouri

Part 8

Faith Alive Through--

HEARING GOD'S VOICE

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One of my friends said--“God never speaks to me because He doesn’t speak to anyone anymore.”

My immediate response was--“What is it we sing about in the hymns?”

“I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses; and the voice I hear, falling on my ear, The Son of God discloses. And He walks with me, and He talks with me, And He tells me I am His own.”(1)

“I am Thine, O Lord - I have heard Thy voice, And it told Thy love to me....”(2)

“I can hear my Savior calling,
I can hear my Savior calling,
I can hear my Savior calling,
‘Take thy cross and follow, follow me.’”(3)

“He walks with me and talks with me along life’s narrow way.
He Lives! He Lives!”(4)

It was Monday afternoon, January 21, 1974 that the Lord spoke to me. It was a day of fasting and prayer and while riding my bicycle down a country road, the Lord said: **“Preacher, I am calling you to a larger ministry. Minneapolis will continue to be your home-base for now.”** To say I was puzzled is an understatement. **ONE THING**, I never questioned--**GOD HAD SPOKEN.**

Some may inquire, “Did God speak with an audible voice?” My answer then and now is, “No!” Now, many years later I can tell you **WHY**. He only speaks aloud when He wants another person or a crowd to hear. Such was the case at Jesus’ baptism: Matthew 3:18; the Transfiguration: Matthew 17:5; and in the Temple: John 12:23-30.

God is Spirit, Jesus said in John 4:24, and man is spirit. Thus, for Spirit to communicate with spirit does not require an audible sound.

Watchman Nee (1903-1972) in his great book “The Spiritual Man” makes this most clear.

The ordinary concept of the constitution of human beings is dualistic--soul and body. According to this concept, soul is the invisible inner spiritual part, while body is the visible outer

corporal part...Such an opinion comes from fallen man, not from God; apart from God's revelation, no concept is dependable. That the body is man's outward sheath is undoubtedly correct, but the Bible never confuses spirit and soul as though they are the same. Not only are they different in terms; their very natures differ from each other. The Word of God does not divide man into two parts of soul and body. It treats man, rather, as tripartite--spirit, soul and body. I Thessalonians 5:23, "*May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*".....Is it a matter of any consequence to divide spirit and soul? It is an issue of *supreme* importance for it effects tremendously the spiritual life of the believer.(5)

According to the teaching of the Bible and the experience of believers, the human spirit can be said to comprise three parts; or, to put it another way, one can say it has three main functions. These are conscience, intuition and communion. The conscience is the discerning organ which distinguished right from wrong;...Intuition is the sensing organ of the human spirit. Communion is worshipping God. The organs of the soul are incompetent to worship God. God is not apprehended by our thoughts, feelings or intentions, for He can only be known directly in our spirits. Our worship of God and God's communications with us are directly in the spirit. (Romans 1:9; 8:15,16; I Corinthians 6:17; Revelation 21:10) (underlining mine.)(6)

This chapter has nothing to do with receiving any further Divine Revelation which Jude says "was once for all delivered to the saints." (1:3). But, it has everything to do with God guiding His People. God is far more willing to guide us than we desire to be guided.

God seeks to guide us by communication. Of all the messages contained in the Bible a BIG unwritten message is that GOD IS A COMMUNICATING GOD! The first record of Him speaking to man is in Genesis 1:27,28--

"And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them: and God said to them..."(7)

The remainder of the Bible stands as a monument to the fact that God communicates with His creation thru at least ten different voices. I rejoice to say that God has spoken to me

through these voices that are named in the Book of Hebrews.

#1 - GOD SPEAKS THRU THE BIBLE-

Hebrews 4:12

The pattern of my walk with the Lord has been shaped by my willingness to listen for His Voice in His Word. Each of the previous chapters stands as a testimony that **GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS WORD**. So, my accepting Jesus, being filled with His Spirit, praising the Lord and praying in all things, walking by faith, dealing with the devil and lifting up the Name of Jesus are outgrowths of hearing and following the **VOICE OF GOD in HIS WORD**.

Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts.(8)

For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.(9)

Out of the anger and bitterness following our son's car wreck, **GOD SPOKE** to me **THROUGH HIS WORD**.

I shared in the chapter on "Praise" how the devil created bitterness in my soul by a number of uncertainties--*

*Our Opel Cadet car was apparently unsafe at even normal speed. Following the wreck I asked a friend of mine, Larry Cloutman, who is an expert in physics, to make a study of the car, terrain, etc. Many weeks later, Larry came to my office to say he had looked at the figures I sent him--weight, length, height, and width of the car, distance vehicle traveled after leaving road, etc.--and said, "No doubt this vehicle has a very high center of gravity."

*A knowledgeable person suggested someone had tampered with the carburetor linkage, meaning it would continue to accelerate to higher and higher RPM's with no relief even when the foot pedal was released.

*The Funeral Home advised us that Lynn's death was caused by several stab wounds to the back made by an

ice pick or screwdriver. There was a screwdriver laying loose in the back seat of the car.

*A stranger was on the scene taking pictures of the car and body when the Highway Patrol arrived. The man said he was with the U.S. Army. When the Patrolman sought detailed information later, the man had disappeared.

*A well meaning person said, "Probably foul play is involved. I will personally pay \$500 to hire a private detective to get to the bottom of this."

As my anger grew into bitterness I contacted a lawyer in Dodge City, Kansas. He said that he would take the case if I decided to pursue an investigation.

It was at this point in a mounting crisis that GOD SPOKE to me thru HIS WORD.

He said:

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the sight of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge, I will repay," says the Lord.(10)

These words gave me a satisfied mind and a peaceful spirit. IF there was any wrongdoing in the whole matter, God could and would handle it.

It was later, as I shared previously, that He spoke to me again thru His Words in Romans 8:28 and I Thessalonians 5:18 to GIVE THANKS because HE was in charge! I did and He was!

My experience and observation is that God most often SPEAKS TO US in the midst of a great opportunity and/or crisis.

Unexpected was the VOICE OF GOD SPEAKING the second week in January of 1982. This is the way I wrote of it at that time:

ATTACK #15 by the devil on us and the Faith Alive Ministry came so unexpectedly that the "Roaring Lion" had our 'right leg'

nearly 'chewed off' before we recognized the "Roar of the Lion." It all started on Sunday night, January 10th, when temperatures dipped to -18 degrees with a wind chill of -50 degrees. Our upstairs water pipes next to the outside wall froze. This had happened other times and we solved the problem by focusing an electric heater on the bottom of the pipe channel. Come Monday morning, water was running down the stairwell thru the plaster and wallpaper onto the stairway carpet. I turned the water off and called our insurance agent to come out and have a look. He assured me that our Home Owner's Policy covered the damage. He assessed the damage and since the wallpaper could not be matched, he advised us to get estimates to replace all the wallpaper in the upstairs and downstairs stairwells, repair any loose plaster and the damaged water pipes. The estimates totaled \$1,026.86. He advised us to proceed with the work. We did. When 4/5 of the way into these projects, our agent, Jim Wright, came to have a look and tell us he had made a mistake that we were NOT covered at all since we had "perils 2" and not "perils 1" coverage. He said he was sorry and that I could sue him for negligence but his insurance only covered blunders over one-thousand dollars. He would have to borrow the thousand at the bank to cover the matter.

It was at this moment that **GOD SPOKE** to me out of **HIS WORD** hid in the memories of my heart.

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, you also do to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12)

In a matter of seconds I said--"Jim, if people sued me every time I made a mistake, I would be down at the courthouse a lot. In the interest of practicing the Golden Rule in Matthew 7:12, I will not sue you or cancel my insurance."

And, **PRAISE GOD**, the Lord prompted seventeen individuals to share \$1,093.57 to meet this need!(11)

HOW are we to hear God **SPEAKING** to us in His Word?

Every time I read the Word or it is read to me, I preface those occasions with--**GOD SPEAK TO ME THRU THESE WORDS.**

Much like that hymn that we sing:

"Open my ears, that I may hear, Voices of truth Thou sendest clear;....Silently now, I wait for Thee, Ready my God Thy will to see; Open my ears, illumine me, spirit divine!"

Bro Don DeWalt offers these suggestions:

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT -- LISTEN -- GOD SPEAKS! Let God speak to your inner most needs. Words will jump off the page and into your heart. It will become your lamp and will light your way. Each word will fill you with wonder and great joy.(12)

"And since Christ is so much superior, the Holy Spirit warns us to **LISTEN TO HIM**, to be careful to **HEAR HIS VOICE TODAY**, and not let our hearts become set against Him, as the people of Israel did." (Hebrews 3:7,8 - Taylor's Living Bible paraphrase.)

#2 - GOD'S VOICE IN NATURE -

Hebrews 1:10-12

All of us enjoy the old hymn that tells about **GOD SPEAKING** thru **NATURE**.

"This is my Father's world - The birds their carols raise; The morning light, the lily white, Declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world! He shines in all that's fair; In the rustling grass I hear him pass - He speaks to me everywhere."

The writer of Hebrews draws a contrasting picture that depicts God's Voice in nature thru the earth and its contents growing old and decaying while His mercy, love and power are new every morning.

And:

"You Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens are the work of Your hands;
They will perish, but You remain;
And they will grow old like a garment,
And like a cloak You will fold them up,
And they will be changed.
But You are the same,
And Your years will not fail."

(Hebrews 1:10-12)

A person whose attention is not directed God-ward upon seeing a mountain, a flower, or a star will probably miss hearing God's Voice in most other forms. Without question, David was much influenced by nature--sheep and shepherds, still waters and green pastures, valleys and hills--when writing the Psalms. Consider these words:

The heavens declare the glory of God;

The skies proclaim the work of His hands.
Day after day, they pour forth speech;
Night after night they display knowledge.
There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.
Their voice goes out into all the earth,
Their words to the end of the world.(13)

Like most things, there is also a present danger while meditating upon nature. This danger by name is called Animism, the belief that everything in nature has a soul and is to be worshipped.

Paul asserts that the Gentiles who practiced this philosophy are without excuse:

Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. (Romans 1:19,20)

Many of us get caught in this snare of worshipping the creation more than the Creator. Across the years folk have told me they were going to the lake each week-end during the summer and they would worship God in the midst of Nature. Later they told that reading the Bible, praying and having the communion of the Lord's Supper, was soon left behind as the pleasure pursuit of nature took over.

What should happen to us when we see a beautiful moon, lovely flowers, trees swaying in the breeze, an ever-flowing river, purple mountains, distant hills, quiet falling snow, white frost? God speaks with a loud, mute voice out of these objects of His creative power. They are certainly subjects for meditation!

Communing with nature started when I was in the sixth grade while herding sheep in the Gyp Hills of Barber County, twenty miles southwest of Medicine Lodge, Kansas. My boss, Junior Angel, would send me out to the hills at sunrise with five hundred sheep, one dog and my trusty horse. I carried my 1944 Bible and a copy of Zane Grey's "The Oregon Trail". It was easy to see and hear God in all those surroundings. The words of David spoke to this country boy's inquiring

spirit--“*He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters.*” and “*The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.*” (Psalm 23:2; 19:1) I spent a lot of hot summer afternoons musing and meditating in the shade of the towering cottonwood trees while the sheep napped and my dog stood watch.

Living in the country has certain definite advantages, although I suppose the moon shines just as bright in town. While living in Minneola, a country town of some 750 souls, I was only two minutes from the country. Riding down the country roads at dusk with wheat and cattle, grass and sunflowers all around, I gave my mind to meditating on the moon. Do not smile too big or chuckle too long, for the moon has a long history and has taken millions of pictures of the acts of men.

Consider this--*

*This was the moon that God *spoke* into existence in the beginning to rule the night.

*This old moon *witnessed* the evil in the day of Noah and the Flood that followed.

*This same moon was shining at full intensity when the Death Angel moved thru Egypt striking dead the firstborn in every household; but, sparing Israel's homes because of the blood of the lamb they had painted on their door posts.

*The moon must have *clapped its hands* with joy the night Daniel was cast into the den of lions. Sunrise would reveal the victory of deliverance!

*This same moon was shining full on the night the disciples slept in a lonely Garden and Judas kissed his friend, Jesus.

*That moon wasn't shining in Palestine skies when man at his worst killed God at His best on black Friday.

*This same moon *saw* Angels roll the stone away from a guarded tomb and our Blessed Redeemer come out of that grave victorious!

*The afterglow of a moon meditation has to be--GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST! HALLELUJAH! A-MEN!

As you see, I can get excited about the moon--*that old moon that God made has been a silent witness across the centuries of time to most of the good and evil events in the world.*

It has been moving in its appointed rounds since the dawn of creation and it speaks today to ears that will hear!

The poet described Jesus as One well acquainted with Nature.

My Master was a man who knew
The rush of rain, the drip of dew;
The gentle kiss of midnight air
Upon his face upraised in prayer.
He was a man of lakes and stars;
He knew the Pleiades and Mars;
The silver Milky Way;
The night, the light, the dawn, the day.
His skin was bronzed like that of one
Who travels under wind and sun;
His feet were stained by dusty ways;
His cheeks as brown as autumn days.
He walked alone upon the sea,
Spoke peace to wave-washed Galilee;
All shores and seas were in his thought,
This man, God-bred, star-led, sky-taught.
He heard angelic, heavenly hymns
Sweep through the trembling leaves and limbs
Of Lebanon's old cedar trees;
Aeolian harps and harmonies.
To him there was no sweeter tones
Than water washing over stones;
To him no splendid symphony
Like murmuring, blue Galilee.
His hair was washed by summer showers;
He bent to kiss the wayside flowers;
Old Jordan's share was sacred sod
To Christ, the outdoor Son of God!(14)

--by William L. Stidger--

I still seek God and His voice down the byways of Nature.
My bicycle registers over six thousand PRAISE and PRAYER
miles the last few years.

Attached to my Study Door is a nature poster with this
quotation from Emerson:

Think me not unkind and rude that I walk along in grove and
glen;

I go to the God of the woods to fetch His Word to men.

David depicts the VOICE OF THE LORD in NATURE like this:

The voice of the Lord is over the waters,
The God of glory thunders;
The Lord is over many waters.
The voice of the Lord is powerful;
The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars,
Yes, the Lord splinters the cedars of Lebanon.
He makes them also skip like a calf,
Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox.
The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire.
The voice of the Lord shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh.
The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth,
And strips the forests bare;
And in His temple everyone says, "Glory!"
The Lord sat enthroned at the Flood,
And the Lord sits as King forever.
(Psalm 29:3-10)

"And since Christ is so much superior, the Holy Spirit warns us to LISTEN TO HIM, to be careful to HEAR HIS VOICE TODAY, and not let our hearts become set against Him, as the people of Israel did." (Hebrews 3:7,8 - Taylor's Living Bible paraphrase.)

#3 - GOD SPEAKS THRU PRAYER -

Hebrews 5:7

A five year old boy came running into the living room. He stopped in front of the divan, and gazed intently at a painting of Jesus. "Hi Jesus!" he said, then ran into the kitchen and said, "Auntie, auntie, auntie! How come I always say, 'Hi Jesus' and He never says 'Hi back'?"

A penetrating question and the answer is: JESUS DOES SAY "HI!" However, He says it in a different language. P-r-a-y-e-r is a very real language of God as He seeks to communicate with us.

The Hebrew writer declares this about Jesus:

Who, in the days of His flesh, when He offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly

fear. (Hebrews 5:7)

Since we have spent an entire chapter sharing about prayer, I choose to briefly emphasize here that PRAYER is a v-o-i-c-e of two way communication.

In the above Scripture--Jesus SPOKE! God HEARD! That's PRAYER!

Not only is prayer a two way conversation with our Lord, but as the years pass, and I learn to listen with my spirit, many of the answers come instantly. Our problem is that we allow our minds of intellect, emotion and will to cloud our hearing.

Watchman Nee in his treatise on "spirit" says:

It is imperative that a believer know he has a spirit...Every communication of God with man occurs there. If the believer does not discern his own spirit he invariably is ignorant how to commune with God in the spirit. He easily substitutes the thoughts or emotions of the soul for the works of the spirit. Thus he confines himself to the outer realm, unable to reach the spiritual realm.

I Corinthians 2:11 speaks of "the spirit of man which is in him."

I Corinthians 5:4 mentions "my spirit."

Romans 8:16 says "our spirit."

I Corinthians 14:14 uses "my spirit."

I Corinthians 14:32 tells of the "spirits of the prophets."

Proverbs 25:28 refers to "his own spirit." (Darby)

Hebrews 12:1 records "the spirits of just men,"

Zechariah 12:1 states that "the Lord...formed the spirit of man within him."

The above Scripture verses sufficiently prove that we human beings do possess a human spirit. This spirit is not synonymous with our soul nor is it the same as the Holy Spirit. We worship God in this spirit.

According to the teaching of the Bible and the experience of believers, the human spirit can be said to comprise three parts; or, to put it another way, one can say it has three main functions. These are conscience, intuition and communion.(15)

Since we will give consideration to the matter of GOD SPEAKING THRU CONSCIENCE later in this chapter, I call our attention here to God communicating to our spirits thru ANSWERED PRAYER.

Scripture makes it clear that we COMMUNE WITH GOD and HE COMMUNES WITH US in our spirit.

"My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." (Luke 1:47)

"The true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth." (John 4:23)

"Whom I serve with my spirit." (Romans 1:9)

"We serve...in the new life of the spirit." (Romans 7:6)

"You have received the spirit of sonship when we cry Abba Father." (Romans 8:15)

"The Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit." (Romans 8:16)

"He who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him." (I Corinthians 6:17)

"I will sing with the spirit." (I Corinthians 14:15)

"If you bless with the spirit." (I Corinthians 14:16)

"In the spirit he carried me away." (Revelation 21:10)

When God chooses to speak with us thru a PRAYER ANSWER, it will often be instantaneous.

Two years ago when seeking the Lord's continuing confirmation upon this Faith Alive Revival Ministry, I established a covenant built on the Old Testament story of Elisha's ax head that floated.(16) I called it "Does the ax head still float?" Simply, the covenant was--*if the Lord willed for Faith Alive Days to continue, He would provide \$1,500 during June, July and August over and above our regular needs.* These monies would be used to provide our social security insurance allowance. The day this announcement was placed in the mail to the "Faith Alive Prayer Band," we left for a trip to Minneola. At the free travel trailer park in Medicine Lodge, Kansas, we stopped for the night. I was out walking and praying as the sun was setting and the evening breeze blew off the river. This is the prayer question I asked Jesus: "LORD, WILL THE AX HEAD OF MY COVENANT WITH YOU FLOAT?" Instantly in my spirit, came the answer--"PREACHER, THE AX HEAD WILL NOT ONLY FLOAT, IT WILL FLY!" I praised God for this answer. Time would prove the reality of it three months later with \$2,005.87 being shared!!

The answer came in my spirit from His Spirit because my mind possessed no data to conclude that such an amount

would be forthcoming, particularly during summer days when giving is often less than other times. In previous years I would have discounted any possible *IMMEDIATE ANSWER IN MY SPIRIT* and faced the long three month provision period with uncertainty.

History that would affect the world for centuries to come was shaped because a certain man was tuned in to HEAR GOD SPEAKING. The Gospel was first brought to Ethiopia by a man simply designated as "The Ethiopian eunuch." The preacher, Philip, that was to share the Good News about Jesus with him had to have a tuned-in *spirit*, to receive God's call to go and share with the man. (Acts 8:26-40)

GOD often answers our PRAYERS for guidance by speaking in our spirits at unplanned moments.

This was the case during the first Faith Alive Revival shared at Soldier, Kansas, a lazy country town nestled in the hills of northeast Kansas. It comes complete with "spit and whittle downtown domino club" but has an exciting Christian church. Preacher, Richard Schafer, and I were out visiting people on a Wednesday afternoon. Richard had our calling planned before the Revival started. So, I was surprised when he made an unscheduled turn taking us down a one lane dirt road where the grass grew up in the middle and on both sides. I said: "Richard, where are we going?" He replied, "I have a hunch that we should go see Sue New." The "hunch" turned out to be God communicating--Spirit to spirit.

Sue New met us at the door with these words--"I knew you were coming for I had a dream last night and the Lord spoke to me." These kind of words always conjure up my curiosity, so I inquired, "Really? Now, what did the Lord tell you." She settled any doubts that I might have had by saying, "He told me that two men would come to my house today to tell me what to do to be saved. So, here you are." The Scriptures were opened to my favorite Divine pattern for salvation--ACTS 8:26-40--and Sue New invited Jesus to become her Saviour and Lord with her words and baptism!

DANGERS CAN BE AVERTED, if we will **l-i-s-t-e-n** for God's Voice of Answered Prayer by being tuned in moment by moment. Isaiah says:

"For the Lord spoke to me with a strong hand, and instructed me..."(17)

In the Havensville, Kansas Revival, preacher, Tim Newton, and I had started our afternoon calling with a prayer--"**LORD USE US. GUIDE US. GUARD US. IN JESUS' NAME.**"

The barking dogs were a problem at this farmhouse but the lady raised the window and hollered "Don't mind the dogs. Come on in." I was ahead of Tim and had walked into a dark coat room and raised my foot to go down the stairs when a voice in my spirit said--**STOP and TURN!** This sudden interruption(?) startled me. I did stop and in a moment saw what was about to happen. The people had installed a basement under their house but had not yet installed an inside stairway. I was about to show up in the basement via a twelve foot drop off. Turning to the right there was a door, almost hidden, that led into their present living quarters. We went in and got to share Jesus with hungry souls.

"And since Christ is so much superior, the Holy Spirit warns us to **LISTEN TO HIM**, to be careful to **HEAR HIS VOICE TODAY**, and not let our hearts become set against Him, as the people of Israel did." (Hebrews 3:7,8 - Taylor's Living Bible paraphrase.)

#4 - GOD IN THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE -

Hebrews 10:22; 13:18

Billy Sunday tells a vivid story about God's speaking to him thru his **CONSCIENCE**.

When I was fourteen years old, I made application for the position of janitor in a school

I used to get up at two o'clock, and there were fourteen stoves to which coal had to be carried. I had to keep the fire up and my studies and sweep the floors. I got twenty-five dollars a month salary. One day I got a check for my salary and I went right down to the bank to get it cashed. Right in front of me was another fellow with a check to be cashed, he shoved his in, and I came along and shoved my check in, and I was handed forty dollars. My check called for twenty-five dollars. I called on a friend of

mine who was a lawyer in Kansas City and told him: "Frank, what do you think, Jay King handed me forty dollars and my check only called for twenty-five dollars." He said, "Bill, if I had your luck, I would buy a lottery ticket." But, I said, "The fifteen dollars is not mine." He said, "Don't be a chump. If you were shy ten dollars and you went back you would not get it, and if they hand out fifteen dollars, don't be a fool, keep it."

Well, he had some drag with me and influenced me. I was fool enough to keep it, and I took it and bought a suit of clothes. I can see that suit now; it was a kind of brown with a little green in it and I thought it was the goods. That was the first suit of store clothes I had ever had, and I bought that suit and I had twenty-five dollars left.

Years afterward I said to myself: "I ought to be a Christian," and I got on my knees to read the Bible and pray and the Lord spoke loud and clear through my conscience: "BILL, YOU OWE THAT FARMER'S BANK FIFTEEN DOLLARS WITH INTEREST." I said: "Lord, the Bank don't know that I got that fifteen dollars," and the Lord said: "I KNOW IT." So I struggled along for years, probably like some of you, trying to be decent and honest and right, and every time I got down to pray the Lord would say, "FIFTEEN DOLLARS WITH INTEREST, NEVADA COUNTY, IOWA; FIFTEEN DOLLARS, BILL." So years afterwards I sent that money back, enclosed a check, wrote a letter and acknowledged it. Now I have a clear CONSCIENCE and peace with God, and I have never swindled anyone out of a dollar since."(20)

The writer of Hebrews recognized the need for a **CLEAR CONSCIENCE** when he wrote--

Pray for us. Our CONSCIENCE is clear before God, and our great desire is to lead a life that is completely honest.(19) (Hebrews 13:18)

Let us draw near with sincerity and unfaltering faith, our hearts sprinkled clean from CONSCIENCES oppressed with sin, and our bodies bathed with pure water.(20) (Hebrews 10:22)

Why was the writer of these verses so concerned about CONSCIENCE? Because, **GOD COMMUNICATES** with us **THROUGH OUR CONSCIENCE**.

Watchman Nee reveals certain matters about CONSCIENCE when he writes:

The spirit is the noblest part of man and occupies the innermost area of his being. The body is the lowest and takes the outermost place. Between these two dwell the soul, serving as their medium. The body is the outer shelter of the soul, while the soul is the outer sheath of the spirit. The spirit transmits its thoughts to the soul and the soul exercises the body to obey the spirit's order. This is the meaning of the soul as the medium. Before the fall of man the spirit controlled the whole being through the soul.

The power of the soul is most substantial, since the spirit and the body are merged there and make it the site of man's personality (will, intellect, emotions) and influence. Before man committed sin the power of the soul was completely under the dominion of the spirit. Its strength was therefore the spirit's strength. The spirit cannot itself act upon the body; it can only do so through the medium of the soul. This we see in Luke 1:46,47: *My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour*" (Darby) Here the change in tense shows that the spirit first conceived joy in God, and then, communicating with the soul, caused it to give expression to the feeling by means of the bodily organ.(21)

Be reminded that our spirit houses three functions of our being--conscience, intuition and communion. Bro. Nee speaks of conscience in particular in this fashion:

The conscience is the discerning organ which distinguished right and wrong; not, however, through the influence of knowledge stored in the mind but rather by a spontaneous direct judgment. Often reasoning will justify things which our conscience judges. The work of the conscience is independent and direct; it does not bend to outside opinions. If a man should do wrong it will raise its voice of accusation.

A) The Function of CONSCIENCE in Man's spirit.

"Put a new and right spirit within me." (Psalms 51:10)

"When Jesus had thus spoken, he was troubled in spirit."
(John 13:21)

"His spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols." (Acts 17:16)

"I had no rest in my spirit." (II Corinthians 2:13)(22)

As I write this, CONSCIENCE won a victory just yesterday in Imalee and I. We received our bank statement from the local Home National Bank for our ministry of Faith Alive Days, Inc. It showed a balance \$1,300 larger than our books show-

ed. Many weeks ago we had written a check on the Faith Alive Days Ministry account for over \$1,300 for several week's salary. We endorsed the check and deposited it in the bank where we conduct our personal business--Peoples State Bank of Minneola, Kansas. A couple of phone calls revealed that somewhere between Minneola, Kansas City and Arkansas City, the check was lost by the bank courier service. The days had now grown into weeks and the weeks into months as we waited for the return of the missing check. I PRAISE GOD that conscience prompted both Imalee and I instantly to call the bank and report the check that nobody missed.

GOD COMMUNICATES thru CONSCIENCE, if we keep the channels clear.

"And since Christ is so much superior, the Holy Spirit warns us to LISTEN TO HIM, to be careful to HEAR HIS VOICE TODAY, and not let our hearts become set against Him, as the people of Israel did." (Hebrews 3:7,8 - Taylor's Living Bible paraphrase.)

A good conscience is the palace of Christ; the temple of the Holy Ghost; the paradise of delight, the standing Sabbath of the saints. -St. Augustine-

"Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men." Paul in Acts 24:16.

#5 - GOD SPEAKS THRU SIGNS and WONDERS

Hebrews 2:3,4

Over a cup of coffee the morning after I preached on "The Ten Voices of God," a fellow minister said--

"Did I understand you right that you still believe in the supernatural in this age of the church?"

"Yes, Brother, you understood that right! Now, do I ascertain correctly that by your asking the question, that you do not believe in the supernatural in the church age?"

"Yep, you're right about that!"

"Well now, I thought you believed in prayer?"

He said: "I do!"

I said, "Now, prayer answers are supernatural or else the prayer is just idle words that get no higher than the ceiling

and any resulting answer is purely happenstance. If GOD HEARS, then the ANSWER has a touch of the SUPERNATURAL on it!"

He responded with--"Well, I guess so."

I continued--"I thought you believed in the New Birth of being born of the water and the spirit as Jesus taught in John 3?"

"Of course I do!" he acknowledged.

"Well now, when we do what the Lord asks us to do in being born again, His part of forgiving sin and giving us the Holy Spirit is sure supernatural! If we leave the supernatural out then it's just a matter of joining a religious organization, getting our name on the roll."

"O.K." he said, "I see the point."

Much of American religion is simply churchanity and not Christianity. The reason lies with taking the SUPER out of SUPERNATURAL which leaves only the natural--naturalism, sensualism, materialism, each of which is a facet of humanism.

So we must listen very carefully to the truths we have heard, or we may drift away from them. For since the messages from angels have always proved true and people have always been punished for disobeying them, what makes us think that we can escape if we are indifferent to this great salvation announced by the Lord Jesus Himself, and passed on to us by those who heard him speak?

God always has shown us that these messages are true by signs and wonders and various miracles and by giving certain special abilities from the Holy Spirit to those who believe; yes, God has assigned such gifts to each of us. (Hebrews 2:1-4)(23)

GOD WAS SEEKING TO COMMUNICATE through these "voices" of signs, wonders, miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. So much so that the writer can and does say that the v-o-i-c-e of God's revelation is so clear that we shall be without excuse if we drift away.

A lady in the congregation at Minneola, Kansas saw a sign that blessed me much at a time when Divine confirmation was needed.

The Lord had brought revival and renewal to my life by 1974 through the uncovering of several truths that had been hidden to me--*The Holy Spirit, Worship, Fasting, Living by Faith, Love, Praise, Prayer and Dealing with the Devil*. Questions filled my mind as to why some of these truths had been hidden from myself and others for so long.

As Mabel Copple left the auditorium on a Sunday morning in January of 1974, she said:

“Wilbur, I would like to visit with you sometime when you have some spare moments.”

Had I known what she wanted to share, I would have followed her home. But, not knowing, I said: “Mabel, I have a funeral on Monday and since Monday is my usual day off, I’m taking Tuesday instead; but, I can come by your house Wednesday morning.”

Mabel said: “That will be fine.”

Arriving at her house, I asked: “Where is your good husband, Jolly?” “I sent him down to drink coffee for this is personal between you and me and the Lord.”

She began by saying, “Wilbur, do you believe in signs and visions?”

“Well Mabel, they occurred in Bible times and I had a vision the morning after our son’s death.”

Mabel continued, “Please know I have never seen anything like this before. Last Sunday as you stood up to preach about being filled with the Holy Spirit, an angel hovered over you placing a crown on your head. When you finished with the sermon, he came and removed the crown. Do you think I am crazy? What does this mean?”

I assured her that she was not crazy and that this strange happening was no doubt genuine and very meaningful to me.

His Spirit bore witness with my spirit that GOD WAS SPEAKING. I rejoiced in the Divine encouragement!

The Lord’s call to this Faith Alive Revival Ministry, which I shared in the very beginning of this chapter, came just a few days after this event that Mabel shared. Close on the heels of

these events came the first invitation to share a week long Faith Alive Revival in February.

Paul writes in the PRESENT TENSE to encourage us with the knowledge that GOD IS STILL SPEAKING encouragement to us through His signs, wonders and miracles.

Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you--does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Galatians 3:5)

I thank God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Corinthians 1:4-8)

Signs, wonders and miracles are given to confirm, encourage and point the Way.

As we have traveled across the country sharing Revivals wherever the Lord opens a door, several people have shared dreams with us. Some six different individuals have dreamed that our daughter, Lisa, who has a severe emotional handicap, will TALK.

While sharing in a Faith Alive Revival with Jeff and Debbie Heirs at Wilroads Gardens Christian Church near Dodge City, Kansas, Iris Barnes of Soldier, Kansas called us on October 27, 1980. Her words were--I had a dream last night. In it I saw Lisa accepting Jesus and being baptized and talking. The day that Iris called was the night when LISA STOOD UP FOR JESUS and was baptized. We are encouraged in waiting to behold all the Lord plans to do in and thru Lisa!

"And since Christ is so much superior, the Holy Spirit warns us to LISTEN TO HIM, to be careful to HEAR HIS VOICE TODAY, and not let our hearts become set against Him, as the people of Israel did." (Hebrews 3:7,8 - Taylor's Living Bible)

#6 - GOD SPEAKS THRU EVENTS -

Hebrews 3:7-9

God has often spoken thru the happenings of history-- Noah's flood spoke loud and clear(24); the fire and the earthquake spoke to Elijah(25) so he could hear the "still small voice."

The writer of Hebrews declares God speaks to those he is writing to just as He spoke to Israel.

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
In the day of trial in the wilderness,
Where your fathers tested Me, proved Me,
And saw my works forty years.
Therefore I was angry with that generation,
And said, 'They always go astray in their heart,
And they have not known My ways.'
So I swore in My wrath,
'They shall not enter My rest.' "(26)

"Today," the Holy Spirit says, GOD IS SPEAKING! (Hebrews 3:7) He doesn't just speak at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning. He spoke yesterday and no doubt will still be speaking tomorrow, but much more important is the fact that-- TODAY, GOD SPEAKS! The clear indication is that GOD IS SPEAKING ALL THE TIME. Our need is to tune-in and h-e-a-r Him TODAY!

What were these "voices" of the Lord in the wilderness that He alludes to in the Scripture quoted above? Certainly included would be the parting of the Red Sea, the provision of manna and quail, making the bitter waters of Marah sweet to drink, the brazen serpent in the camp which provided a cure for the bite of the poisonous vipers and the water from the rock.(27)

Even so, God still SPEAKS thru EVENTS.

My friend, Arnold Krob, shared with me an event that changed the direction of his life many years ago.

Arnold and his wife, Ina, and two children, Terry and Ginger were living on a farm southwest of Minneola, Kansas, where Jim and Barbara Houser now live. Here they helped

Ina's mother, Lillie Houser, farm what was known as the "Houser Homestead" which was one mile west and one mile north of Arnold and Ina's house. On this early summer evening in 1955 a storm cloud began to develop in the southwest. The blackness of the clouds and the developing wind caused Lillie to go to the storm cellar. They could tell by the sounds above ground that the wind was working havoc. When they went to the cellar, the wheat was waving in the breeze, the roosters were crowing and the house and barn stood in their places. When they emerged from the cellar, it was as if something had wiped the top of the earth clean with a rag. The chickens, wheat, barn and house were gone.

It was out of reflection on this storm and life that Arnold, using Isaiah's words, said--"*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send and who will go for me?' And I said, 'Here am I, send me.'*" (28) So, in 1957, Arnold and Ina and their family got their belongings together and journeyed down to Midwest Christian College of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to begin studying for a life-long labor of preaching for Jesus. Now in their 20th year of ministry at Concordia, Kansas, the witness of their lives goes on.

God is far more willing to communicate than we are to hear what He is saying. If we will listen with the ears of our spirit, we can hear HIM!

"And since Christ is so much superior, the Holy Spirit warns us to LISTEN TO HIM, to be careful to HEAR HIS VOICE TODAY, and not let our hearts become set against Him, as the people of Israel did." (Hebrews 3:7,8 - Taylor's Living Bible paraphrase)

#7 - GOD SPEAKS THRU PEOPLE

By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offering. And by faith HE STILL SPEAKS, even though he is dead. (Hebrews 11:4)(29)

God spoke thru Abel both while he was living and after he died. The Scriptures contain numerous examples of God speaking thru PEOPLE--*

*GOD SPOKE to David about his sin thru NATHAN. (2 Samuel 12:1-15)

*GOD SPOKE to Naaman, the leper, thru ELISHA. (2 Kings 5:1-14)

*GOD SPOKE thru certain PROPHETS to Paul. (Acts 13:1-3)

*GOD SPOKE to the Widow of Zarephath thru ELIJAH. (I Kings 17:8-16)

*GOD SPOKE to the Ethiopian Eunuch thru PHILIP. (Acts 8:29ff)

*GOD SPOKE to Saul thru ANANIAS. (Acts 9:10-17)

*JESUS SPOKE to Herod "that fox" thru certain MEN sent to convey His Words. (Luke 13:31-33)

*JESUS SPOKE certain words to secure and prepare the Upper Room thru PETER and JOHN. (Luke 22:7-13)

Any message GOD SPEAKS thru another MUST BE PROVEN by the Word of God as Paul said--*"Test all things; hold fast that which is good."* (I Thessalonians 5:21)

I was startled when GOD SPOKE TO ME thru a stranger on July 4th, 1972. At the time, we had ministered at Minneola, Kansas for nine years and were considering if it was time to move. The pulpit of the Central Christian Church in Dodge City, Kansas was open and I was contemplating the Lord's Will for us in relation to that. So, the night before, on my prayer walk, I asked the Lord this question--**"HOW LONG SHOULD WE STAY IN ONE PLACE?"** No one else knew of this prayer query.

The next day was the 4th of July. We went to the Wright Park at Dodge City for an outing. When we arrived at 11:30 a.m. there was a group of "Jesus People" having a rally. You may remember these were common in the sixties and seventies as a facet of "The Jesus Movement." I walked over to the informal gathering of young people and they were seeking someone to lead in a closing prayer. Two guys volunteered and prayed the closing prayer. Just as they finished, the leader announced he had a message from the Lord for someone in the group. This is what he said--*"Someone here wants to know how long they should minister in one place?"* The answer is--*"SOMETIMES YOU MUST STAY IN ONE PLACE FOR TEN YEARS OR MORE TO ACCOMPLISH IN ONE DAY WHAT I WANT DONE."* The leader said the person the message was for could acknowledge it or remain

silent. Much startled and amazed I chose the silent response and sat down to ponder this answer.

“Lord, I must be sure this is YOU speaking? If it is, then cause the Elders and Deacons to give me a raise in salary this Thursday at their monthly business meeting.” From a human stand point, there were three reasons why it would take an ACT OF GOD to accomplish this:

1. The men had their minds on other things like wheat harvest that was just winding down.
2. When they gave me a raise it had always been the Spring or Fall of the year.
3. At that meeting the Treasurer's report showed we were \$44.38 in the red, meaning we were temporarily paying General Fund expense out of the Mission's and Youth Scholarship Fund. Soon after harvest we would be back in the black but not at that moment.

Amazed I was when near the end of the Elders and Deacon's business meeting on that Thursday evening, one of the deacons, Paul Snyder, said: “Men, it's time to give the Preacher a raise.” I was asked to leave the room and the action called for a \$15 per week raise plus Cecil Shelton asked the men to set up a retirement account with the “Christian Church Pension Plan” out of Joplin, Missouri. I rejoiced and praised the Lord for the monetary blessing provided but even more THAT GOD HAD SPOKEN at the Rally on Monday and CONFIRMED HIS MESSAGE again thru this board decision.

The harvest of souls and the Spirit's work in souls in the following years proved again and again and again that IT WAS THE LORD'S WILL for us to stay!

When I am tuned in to hear, GOD OFTEN SPEAKS THRU PEOPLE. Most times I discern the PERSON God communicates through has no idea they are God's transmission line.

Such was the case when Bob and Rose Osburn of Syracuse (Kansas) Christian Church invited me to preach a Revival there in February of 1974. I wrote Bob back saying:

Dear Brethren and Bro Bob,

Thanks for the invitation to preach a Revival there this February 3-7.

Please know that I am not a traveling evangelist. There are several across the country that will bless you and the church in a great way. I'll send you a list of names if you like. You see, Bob, I have preached two Revivals in all my twenty-five years of preaching and one of those was a have-to case at Chico, Texas when Bob Cox scheduled himself for two Revivals during the same week in two different places. In that meeting I preached for him, I got my pants nearly burned off by trying to do an object lesson using acid. It went awry and I had to stand closely behind the pulpit while preaching as the holes in my trousers got bigger and bigger.

Thank you for considering me. I'll pray for you.

-Wilbur-

Not at all did I know or ever guess that GOD WAS SPEAKING thru Bob and this invitation of the First Christian Church.

Interesting is the fact that Bob and the Syracuse Brethren would not take "NO" for an answer. Bob called to tell me that if the Leaders there had wanted *someone else*, they would have contacted them. **Would I please come and preach a Revival on faith being alive and teach a class on the devil.**

I said "Yes" with the condition that they would fast and pray and allow Jesus to do all the "worrying" about the usual things--attendance, offering, weather, people, etc. It would be THE LORD'S REVIVAL, both as to problems and any glory that might accrue. **THEY AGREED!**

So, on a Saturday afternoon this country boy made his way up the hill one hundred fifty miles northwest to Syracuse. I had seven chart sermons which had been prepared and preached at Minneola. I had no class on the devil, though Bob advertised there would be one.

The stage was set for high and holy days with a three hour prayer meeting on Saturday night. I shall never forget that prayer time as the many people simply sat on the floor, joined their hands together in a circle, and began to talk to God like He was their closest friend.

I arose at 4 a.m. Sunday morning and stole away to the church building to pray and listen. And, GOD SPOKE thru HIS WORD, ANSWERED PRAYER, WISDOM and MY SPIRIT--the outline and contents of the course came into my mind faster than I could write it down. Morning by morning the rest of the week at 5 a.m. the Lord gave me the material for the two daily classes. Now the subject--"Dealing with the Devil"--has become a seminar that I have shared several hundred times. Interesting is the fact that after all the times it has been taught, the outline and essential content remains unchanged.

I often describe the Presence of the Lord by saying "JESUS' 'FINGERPRINTS' ARE ALL OVER!" And this was forever true in this meeting, as the song says--"*Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!*" Time would decree this was the BEGINNING of the FAITH ALIVE REVIVAL MINISTRY.

While very busy in this Revival, the LORD SPOKE thru another person. Howard and Kay Messer of Havensville, Kansas called long distance extending an invitation to preach a Revival at Havensville Christian Church the next month. I agreed to come if the Brethren would PRAY! They did and I did!

GOD SPOKE thru another PERSON on the last night of the Syracuse meeting. One of the Elders, Junior Lewis came around on Friday night of the Revival and said--"**In Jesus' Name I confirm this meeting as being from God! I affirm in Jesus' Name that you are God's man for this hour. Speak what He tells you! Go where He leads you.**"

I acknowledge what Junior Lewis said at that time and moment was as idle words in my ears. I was in a hurry to get back to Minneola as there was much work to do. But, GOD WAS SPEAKING, and I would follow where He was leading!

"And since Christ is so much superior, the Holy Spirit warns us to LISTEN TO HIM, to be careful to HEAR HIS VOICE TODAY, and not let our hearts become set against Him, as the people of Israel did." (Hebrews 3:7,8 - Taylor's Living Bible paraphrase)

#8 - GOD SPEAKS THROUGH CIRCUMSTANCES -

Hebrews 12:5,6

And have you forgotten the exhortation which SPEAKS TO YOU as sons:

"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him, For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."(30)

Suggesting that GOD SPEAKS TO US thru the discipline of circumstances, opens the door for a wide latitude of "voices."

V. Raymond Edman suggests many possible CIRCUMSTANCES the Lord uses to direct us--*

- *The Discipline of Discipleship
- *The Discipline of Danger
- *The Discipline of Darkness
- *The Discipline of Declining Days
- *The Discipline of Deformity
- *The Discipline of Delay
- *The Discipline of Detail
- *The Discipline of Difficulty
- *The Discipline of Disability
- *The Discipline of Disappointment
- *The Discipline of Disease
- *The Discipline of Doubt
- *The Discipline of Duty(31)

GOD OFTEN SPEAKS thru the CIRCUMSTANCE of OPEN and CLOSED DOORS. Paul speaks of an OPEN DOOR of opportunity:

"Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a DOOR WAS OPENED to me BY THE LORD." (II Corinthians 2:12)

God is far more willing to communicate than we are to hear what He is saying. God is speaking and if we will set-up a "hearing frame," it will assist our understanding His directives.

We chose to ask God to speak thru the CIRCUMSTANCE of the congregational vote of the Minneola (Kansas) Christian Church in February of 1963. Seeking to determine God's

leading, I made a prayer covenant with the Lord-that if He willed us to leave the seven year ministry at West Lebanon, Indiana, then the vote of the Minneola church must be 100%.

The Minneola church had asked me to preach a mini-revival so we could get to know each other better. Saturday night came and the Elders and Deacons met and agreed to recommend the congregation call us as their minister. The matter was to be decided Sunday morning by secret ballot.

I was staying with Roy and Blanche Barnes. As Chairman of the Elders, he told me of the proposed recommendation and inquired what vote percentage I would expect. My reply: "100%!" Roy said, "Oh no. I can't remember that we ever got a 100% vote on anything. That's not realistic here, Wilbur. We would like for you to come and be our preacher but 100% is impossible!" "Well now, if GOD WANTS US HERE HE WILL ARRANGE THE CIRCUMSTANCES of the vote. It will be 100%".

Sunday morning came. I preached. They voted. The tally was "100% YES!" Now, we knew THE LORD WAS SPEAKING thru this CIRCUMSTANCE. Our staying there nearly 14 years confirmed our conclusion many times over.

Again Paul speaks of a CLOSED DOOR and an OPEN DOOR:

"Now when they had gone thru Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were FORBIDDEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT to preach the word in Asia."

.....

"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'" (Acts 16:6,9)

Of vital consequence to us was Paul's being tuned in to hear God speaking. His obedience to God's "voice" in this vision was the first step that centuries later would bring Christianity to us in the United States. When he crossed over to Macedonia, this placed him on European soil and from here the Gospel spread through Europe and later England and in due time on to America.

Imalee and I faced an "open - closed door" circumstance in 1975. Since the Lord had called us to minister at Minneola, it seemed wise to seek His Directions about leaving.

The invitations for Faith Alive Revivals continued to come-five in 1974, ten in 1975, then eighteen.

I chose the framework of a "Preacher vote" at the annual business meeting of the Church in October of 1975 to allow the LORD TO SPEAK. The policy of the church called for a 51% vote. My agreement with the Lord was:

If the vote is 80% to 100%: the DOOR to stay and continue present ministry is OPEN.

If the vote is between 66% to 80%: the DOOR is closing. Begin to search for God's leading.

If the vote is 66% or less: the DOOR is CLOSED.

The first Sunday in October came and the business of the congregation, voting on Elders, Deacons and Preacher took place. The vote tally for the preacher was 70%. So, I knew immediately from my "hearing frame" that the LORD WAS SAYING, the DOOR is CLOSING, seek further directions.

In my humanism it seemed proper to try several "DOORS" and to learn strangely they were CLOSED--*

*It seemed logical to ME to stay in Minneola while laboring in the Faith Alive Ministry. So I checked the available real estate. There had been a dozen houses for rent and/or sale just previous to this time; yet, when I checked them out, in each case the property had either just sold or rented or the owner had decided not to sell.

*"SHOW-ME-HOME CHILDREN'S HOME" in Missouri contacted us about being Superintendent. When I visited with them they were UNABLE(?) or UNWILLING(?) to provide housing for our entire family.

*Christ's Memorial Church of Ft. Worth, Texas was interested in my locating there. I wrote a letter of application in good faith. No reply was ever received.

*In November of 1975 I shared a Faith Alive Revival with Dean and Phyllis LaVelle and the Bible Christian Church of Arkansas City, Kansas. The following month took me to Cushing (Oklahoma) Christian Church with Chuck and Anita Thomas.

During this meeting Dean LaVelle, minister of the Bible Christian Church of Arkansas City, brought a message from the Elders--Ray Blass, C.O. Britton, Claude Smith and Eli Fadley--inviting us to live in Arkansas City and labor with them. They said, "We will help you and you can help us in the labor of the kingdom." One of the men, C.O. Britton, had a house that he would make available. We agreed with the Lord that the provision of a house would be the final CIRCUMSTANCE if He willed us to locate in Arkansas City. It was of high interest to watch the Lord work thru the CIRCUMSTANCES.

First, the house was being sold to another person but their loan application was rejected.

Second, the house was no longer for sale due to the sickness of Mrs. Britton.

Third, the house was removed from the market due to the death of Mrs. Britton on April 6th.

Fourth, Bro. Britton called to say the house was available.

Fifth, on April 16th we met with Bro. Britton.

Previous to this I set up a "HEARING FRAME WITH THE LORD" so I would know if He was speaking. This was it:

#That if He willed us to move to Arkansas City, this ten room house that Bro. Britton had would be available to us on a rent with option-to-purchase contract.

#Rent no more than \$175 per month.

#Two year option to purchase with 10 year Contract at no more than \$200 a month at 7.5% interest.

Sixth, on Thursday night we lodged with Bob and Rose Osburn, who had moved to Arkansas City two years previous. After breakfast and prayer we looked at the house at 419 North B and talked with Bro. Britton presenting the above business figures.

At noon we dined and prayed with Dean and Phyllis LaVelle. At 3 P.M. on this "Good Friday" afternoon of April 16th we initiated a contract with Bro. Britton containing ALL of the above factors. The die was cast. The LORD HAD SPOKEN thru CIRCUMSTANCES to direct us, we would be locating in Arkansas City!

"And since Christ is so much superior, the Holy Spirit warns us to LISTEN TO HIM, to be careful to HEAR HIS VOICE TODAY, and not let our hearts become set against Him, as the people of Israel did." (Hebrews 3:7,8 - Taylor's Living Bible paraphrase)

#9 - ANGELSI - GOD'S MESSENGERS

Hebrews 1:14; 13:2

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:2)(32)

God uses angels to COMMUNICATE His will, assist, direct, protect and minister to and check-up on the Saints.

Ever since our oldest son's car wreck that I shared about in the chapter on "Prayer," and my discovery that angels are for real, I have made increasing use of their willingness to minister.

"Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14)(33)

In the realm of earth life where we live and serve, servants do more if asked. I concluded that since God's Word declares angels are ministering spirits sent by God to serve the Saints, they might serve more if I talked to God in prayer about the matter. I rejoice in the Lord to report that they are blessed servants of the Saints by God's request. It **does make a difference** if we ask for special angelic assignments on various occasions---**

***Lisa, our emotionally handicapped daughter, often causes people to gawk and stare. This upsets Lisa as it would any human being. I have found on such occasions that if I ask the Lord to send angels to detract the gaze of the person or persons, HE DOES, for in seconds they become busy staring at someone else or eating their own food.

***When in a hurry, aren't we all, and I need the service of a Waitress in a cafe, I simply ask the Lord to send an angel to prompt the waitress to come to our table. And when the waitress comes directly to our table, I PRAISE THE LORD for serving angels on duty!

***Every morning before my head leaves the pillow, among other requests, I ask the Lord to assign angels for that day to each of our family and many others that I pray for by name.

***When we are out on the highways traveling to and from Faith Alive Revivals, part of my "Daily Travel Prayer" is to ask for angelic assignments for that day. Many are the testimonies that attend the miles and the moments of those days---###

###On our 1981 trip to share a Faith Alive Revival out on Long Island, New York at the Holbrook Christian Church, our travel prayer was this--"LORD BE IN CHARGE OF EACH MILE, MOMENT AND MATTER OF THIS DAY TO YOUR GLORY AND ASSIGN ANGELS TO GUIDE AND GUARD US ALONG THE WAY."

###On Wednesday, April 8, right while we were praying in the wide open spaces of Pennsylvania, the engine on our Suburban died. But, a man appeared out of nowhere and took me two miles to a mechanic. Brought us back with the needed fuel pump at NO CHARGE. Who was the man?

###Saturday, April 11, two cars ran a stop light in New York City but missed us by inches?

###Saturday afternoon we needed directions. A Long Island Policeman pulled us over with this admonition--"YOU DON'T PULL TRAILERS ON LONG ISLAND PARKWAYS." We were pardoned since we were from Kansas. NO TICKET but we did get directions.

###Friday, April 24, nearing Johnson Bible College in Tennessee, two cars with no lights were stopped square in the middle of the road. Our vehicle and trailer skidded to a dead STOP within feet of the stopped vehicles. I realized later this wasn't possible as the brakes on our trailer have never worked even though mechanics have worked on them many times. The Amazing thing was that not any of the people in the two stopped cars looked up or around. It was as though we were invisible. Maybe we were?

###Sunday, April 26, our propane tanks on our travel trailer caught fire. In seconds angels put the fire out with no explosion?

###Wednesday, April 29: After traveling 4,614 miles over mountains, across rivers, thru tunnels, New York City and a hundred other towns, when we were within one block of our house here in Arkansas City, without previous sound or symptom, the tongue on our trailer broke off and with a screeching grinding sound it scraped along the brick street to a halt. This time the "angels" had names--Clifford Hensley and Steve Hensley, who came to have a look. They went back for reinforcements which included, Marvin Hensley, with his portable welder. They put the trailer tongue-hitch back together so it's now stronger than the original.

Were angels on duty all those miles and moments?

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by this some have unwittingly entertained angels. (Hebrews 13:2)

My observation from being in many communities and churches across forty plus years leads me to conclude that God keeps one or two angels in the average small community and possibly each church. Why? To check up on people's profession about brotherly love, kindness, longsuffering, etc.

At Minneola, Kansas, an old spinster lady came nearly every day to the church building. Seated alone in the auditorium she would sing, pray, read the Bible and after a while there would be a knock on my office door. "Yes, Hazel, what can I do for you?" She would say, "Preacher, I've been out here singing, praying and reading the Bible, now its time for me to give an offering. Would you come and pray for my offering?" I always did and she placed a "widow's mite" in the offering plate.

One day at coffee one of the men said to me: "Preacher, Something should be done about that old lady that keeps bothering you every morning. I'll sign a petition and we'll get one other person to sign. With this paper we can petition the District Judge to commit this woman to the State Hospital for evaluation." I thought at first this fellow was joking; but, the look on his face indicated otherwise. I said: "Friend, I wouldn't touch that woman with a ten foot pole. You know, she might be an angel sent here just to check on our profession that we minister to people anytime and anywhere. And, now that you bring it up, it would really be a good thing if all the church members followed her example--come every morning to the church building, pray, sing and read, then knock on my door and I would come out and take an offering."

Was Hazel Borden an angel?

Who was the stranger in the dark overcoat?

As I started preaching the message on "Practicing the Presence of Jesus" at Salina Heights Christian Church in Salina, Kansas, a stranger wearing a black overcoat held up his hand. I acknowledged him and he asked to speak for a

moment. He said, "I used to be a Preacher but not anymore." He sat down. I continued. After a few minutes his hand went up again. This is what he said. "I grew up in a Christian home but nobody loved me." He sat down. I assured him of God's love and mine and continued speaking. A third time his hand went up requesting to speak. "I used to come to church all the time but nobody cared about me as I wore poor clothing." He sat down. At this point one of the deacons came and took the man by the arm and ushered him to the back.

After the service was over, I inquired about the man. "Did you get to counsel and pray with him?" The deacon gave me a blank stare of amazement. He said, "COUNSEL? PRAY? THAT MAN WAS DISTURBING THE SERVICE. I SHOWED HIM WHERE THE DOOR WAS."

Who was the stranger in the black coat?

"And since Christ is so much superior, the Holy Spirit warns us to LISTEN TO HIM, to be careful to HEAR HIS VOICE TODAY, and not let our hearts become set against Him, as the people of Israel did." (Hebrews 3:7,8 - Taylor's Living Bible paraphrase)

#10 - GOD SPEAKS THROUGH JESUS!

Hebrews 1:1,2

God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days SPOKEN TO US BY HIS SON, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, and He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. (Hebrews 1:1-4)

Asserting that **GOD SPEAKS THROUGH JESUS** is the understatement of the universe. The entire sixty six books of the Bible stand as a living testimony--that **JESUS IS GOD'S CHIEF MEANS OF COMMUNICATION!**

A statement that has blessed me over and over is this one showing how **CHRIST** speaks out of every **BOOK OF THE BIBLE!**

In GENESIS He is the "Seed of the Woman."
 In EXODUS He is the "Passover Lamb."
 In LEVITICUS He is our "High Priest."
 In NUMBERS He is "The Pillar of Cloud by Day, the Pillar of Fire by Night."
 In DEUTERONOMY He is the "Prophet Like unto Moses."
 In JOSHUA He is the "Captain of Our Salvation."
 In JUDGES He is our "Judge and Lawgiver."
 In RUTH He is our "Kinsman-Redeemer."
 In I and II SAMUEL He is our "Trusted Prophet."
 In KINGS and CHRONICLES He is our "Reigning King."
 In EZRA He is our "Faithful Scribe."
 In NEHEMIAH He is the "Rebuilder of the Broken Walls" of our shattered lives.
 In ESTHER He is our "Mordecaia."
 In JOB He is our "Ever-living Redeemer."
 In PSALMS He is the "Lord Our Shepherd."
 In PROVERBS and ECCLESIASTES He is our "Wisdom."
 In the SONG OF SOLOMON He is the "Lover and Bridegroom."
 In ISAIAH He is the "Prince of Peace."
 In JEREMIAH and LAMENTATIONS He is our "Weeping Prophet."
 In EZEKIEL He is the wonderful "Four-faced man."
 In DANIEL He is the "Fourth Man in the Fiery Furnace."
 In HOSEA He is the "Eternal Husband" forever married to the backslider.
 In JOEL He is the "Baptizer with the Holy Spirit."
 In AMOS He is our "Burden Bearer."
 In OBADIAH He is "Our Saviour."
 In JONAH He is the great "Missionary."
 In MICAH He is the "Messenger of Beautiful Feet."
 In NAHUM He is our "Avenger."
 In HABAKKUK He is the "Evangelist pleading for Revival."
 In ZEPHANIAH He is "The Lord Mighty to Save."
 In HAGGAI He is the "Restorer of the Lost Heritage."
 In ZECHARIAH He is the "Fountain Opened in the House of David for Sin and Uncleanliness."
 In MALACHI He is the "Sun of Righteousness," rising with healing in His Wings.
 In MATTHEW He is the "Messiah."
 In MARK He is the "Wonder-worker."
 In LUKE He is the "Son of Man."
 In JOHN He is the "Son of God."
 In ACTS He is the "Crucified One."

In ROMANS He is the "Justifier."

In I and II CORINTHIANS He is the "Sanctifier."

In GALATIANS He is the "Redeemer From the Curse of the Law."

In EPHESIANS He is the "Christ of Unsearchable Riches."

In PHILIPPIANS He is the "God Who Supplies All Our Needs."

In COLOSSIANS He is the "Fullness of the Godhead Bodily."

In THESSALONIANS He is our "Soon Coming King."

In I and II TIMOTHY He is the "Mediator between God and Man."

In TITUS He is the "Faithful Pastor."

In PHILEMON He is the "Friend of the Oppressed."

In HEBREWS He is the "Blood of the Everlasting Covenant."

In JAMES He is the "Lord who Raises the Sick."

In I and II PETER He is the "Chief Shepherd Who Will Soon Appear."

In I, II and III JOHN He is "Love."

In JUDE He is the "Lord Coming with Ten Thousand of His Saints."

In REVELATION He is the "Alpha and The Omega - King of Kings and Lord of Lords."(34)

Three beautiful testimonies by the young and the old tell of spirits that have HEARD the Lord calling and ANSWER BACK in beautiful ways!

Troy Finlay of Kendall, Kansas was two years old when he was blinded by an eye infection. His vision was 10/300 and he required strong glasses to correct his vision.

When Troy was eight years old, in response to what James said-- "*Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.*" (James 5:14,15)--he was healed!

While eating dinner in their home I said to Troy's father, Larry, "I suppose that left 'fingerprints' on Troy's life?" His dad said, "No sir, it left 'footprints.' Troy went to school the next day saying--"**LOOK WHAT JESUS DID FOR ME!**"

An old Saint at Minneola, Kansas, BRO. ED COMBS, was hardly sick a day in his life until the age of about 78 when he

developed a hernia. Dr. Trekell of Dodge City said, "We ordinarily do not operate on people this age for this kind of hernia. However, Ed will die if we don't and probably will if we do." So, the Church prayed and Ed came thru the operation! Twice more he was operated on after this. The last time I saw Ed he was about 94 years old and said this to me--**"Preacher, if the Church doesn't quit praying for me, I never will get to see Jesus."** He left this world to be with Jesus at about the age of 95.

Ed's wife, IVA COMBS, was 99 when I asked her what she was going to say when she saw Jesus. Instantly she responded--**"I'LL SAY. 'HALLELUJAH JESUS! I'M HOME TO STAY!'"**(35)

Just recently, BRO. RAY BLASS, a 95 year old active Elder here in Bible Christian Church of Arkansas City, Kansas said to me:

"IT IS WONDERFUL TO READ AND TALK ABOUT THE LORD, FOR HE IS WONDERFUL AND DOES WONDERFUL THINGS. PRAISE HIS NAME!"(36)

GOD'S VOICES are all about us! We need to tune in that we may hear.

The railroads played an important role in the settling of America. They brought people and supplies from the East to settle the West. With the railroads came the telegraph. During that period of history one station in a western town advertised for a telegrapher. Three men arrived at the appointed hour for the interview. They were all seated in the Station Waiting Room ready for the interview. The telegraph receiving unit chattered away with the dots and dashes of the Morse Code. Suddenly over the wire in code came this message--**The man who has his ears tuned to Morse Code in this Station Waiting Room may get up from his seat, walk past the Clerk and into my office for an interview.** One man did just as he was instructed. As soon as he walked thru the office door, the Station Master said, **"YOU'RE HIRED!"** "We want a

man who is tuned in to Morse Code at all times.”

There is a valuable lesson in this simple true story for all of us in relation to hearing God's Voices--**BE TUNED-IN ALL THE TIME!**

“And since Christ is so much superior, the Holy Spirit warns us to **LISTEN TO HIM**, to be careful to **HEAR HIS VOICE TODAY**, and not let our hearts become set against Him, as the people of Israel did.” (Hebrews 3:7,8 - Taylor's Living Bible paraphrase)

May the words of this old hymn be a fitting commitment for each of us as we seek to hear God's voice.

Lord, I have shut the door, Speak now the word, Which in the din and throng I could not hear. Hushed now my inner heart, Whisper Thy will, While I have come apart, While all is still.(37)



Our Real House
The Lord provided thru
Bro. C.O. Britton in 1976
Arkansas City, Kansas

FAITH ALIVE IN HEART, HOME and CHURCH
NOTES - Chapter 8

1. Hymn - "In The Garden"
2. Hymn - "I Am Thine O Lord"
3. Hymn - "Where He Leads Me"
4. Hymn - "He Lives!"
5. Book - The Spiritual Man, by Watchman Nee (1903-1972)
Used by permission of Christian Fellowship Publishers,
Inc., New York, Vol. I, Pgs.21,22
6. Ibid. Chapter 2, Pgs.31,32
7. Genesis 1:27,28 New American Standard Bible - The
Lockman Foundation, 1960.
8. Hebrews 4:7 as quoted from Psalm 95:7,8
9. Hebrews 4:12
10. Romans 12:17-19 - New International Translation
11. The Lamplighter, published by Faith Alive Days, Inc. of
Arkansas City, Kansas. Vol.9, No.82 - March, 1982.
12. Professor Don DeWelt has served forty years as a pro-
fessor in San Jose Bible College of California and Ozark
Christian College of Joplin, Missouri. He is now founder
and now editor of College Press Publishing Co. of
Joplin, Missouri.
13. Psalm 19:1-4 - New International Translation
14. Poem - "The Outdoor Son of God" by William L. Stidger.
(Public domain.)
15. The Spiritual Man, Vol.1, Pg.32,33
16. II Kings 6:1-7
17. Isaiah 8:11
18. Billy Sunday (1863-1935) - The Man and his Message by
William T. Ellis, C.1959, Pgs.20,21, Used by permission
of Moody Press, Chicago.
19. The New Testament in Modern English -1958- by J.B.
Phillips.

20. The New Testament in Modern Speech -1943- by Weymouth.
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34. Out of my file. Author unknown.
35. From my visit with Iva Combs of Minneola, Kansas, March of 1988.
36. Words of Bro. Ray Blass, Elder of Bible Christian Church, Arkansas City, Kansas. (Sunday, August 7, 1988).
37. Hymn - "Lord, I have Shut The Door" by William M. Runyan.



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Jimalee, Wilbur and Rebecca

Part 9

Faith Alive Through--

MOVING THE MOUNTAINS OF LIFE

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While sharing in a Faith Alive Revival with Gilbert and Barbara Forest, ministers of the Panther Creek Church of Christ in Southeastern Oklahoma, I asked their five year old son this question: "Jason, what do you want to be when you grow up?" His reply, "I want to be me." I commended him for such a wise answer and offered encouragement that he would be satisfied with this all his life. Many of us do not make nearly that wise a confession. We want to be somebody else, or a super-star. Making the right confession as we face the mountains in life is of much importance!

Jesus' own words are--

And the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps he might find something on it. And when he came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And Jesus answered and said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you anymore forever." And His disciples heard it. (Mark 11:12-14)

And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." (Mark 11:20-24)

My first response to His invitation to speak to a mountain often was: **IMPOSSIBLE!** My second response was: **WHAT IF** the mountain doesn't move? Thirdly, I began to look for a loophole by suggesting that it is figurative language. I submit to you a fourth possibility that I pursued. Accept what our Lord said at face value and get on with the business of speaking to the mountains, allowing my faith to include both literal mountains and the very real mountainous challenges and obstacles I face on the Road of Life.

Let's face the mountains by giving attention to what Jesus advised.

1. "Have faith in God." Vs.22

Let's not get hung up on this point. It only takes a mustard-seed faith to speak to a mountain. Science has examined the tiny mustard seed and asserts there is enough atomic power in one seed, if harnessed, to move the Empire State Building off its foundation. Jesus constantly called forth even "Little Faith." Look at Matthew 8:26.

And He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea. And there was a great calm.

In trying to make the Greek language speak English, the translators did us a great dis-service. There are NO Greek words in the manuscripts for "ye" and "of" and the word "faith" is in the plural. This is true in all six places (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; Luke 12:28) in the New Testament where this clause is used. Left alone with no words added it reads--"O LITTLE FAITHS." Since it would be entirely out-of-character for Jesus to put people down for the little faith they had, I suggest the phrase, "O LITTLE FAITHS", was a pet name that the Master used when someone had tried and failed. He was seeking to draw out the little faith they had. In this place, to encourage them to replace their fear of the storm with just a little faith.

2. "Whoever says to this mountain," Vs. 23

At this point Jesus said "Say." He did not say "pray." There is a *difference*. In other places He taught us to PRAY. Here he teaches us to address an obstacle-challenge ("mountain") with words. When praying, we call upon God in Jesus' Name to bless, provide, help, etc. There are matters the Lord expects us to handle in His Name simply because He has delegated authority to us through the Word.

Examples include--

*"Go into all the world...preach...teach...baptize in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)

*"In His Name" we are told to--**Give a cup of cold water to drink. (Mark 9:38)

*Do a miracle in His Name. (Mark 9:39)

*Resist the devil in His Name. (James 4:7; Matthew 16:23)

This is the expectation here, that with mustard-seed faith we will SPEAK to the mountains under the canopy of His sovereign power, and rejoice as the mountains move!

And W-H-A-T shall we say to these mountains?

3. "Be removed and be cast into the sea." Vs. 23

His Word applied is His power supplied! The very **BEST WORDS** to say to a mountain are **GOD'S OWN WORDS**. This way, the will of God is known and applied. Let a promise of God from a proper Bible context be addressed to a situation in Jesus' Name and watch the mountain move.

EXAMPLE #1:

It happened at Rossville, Kansas with Bob and Vickie Seih. The Wednesday night "Dealing With the Devil" Class was nearly concluded. I began to feel deathly ill with nausea, headache and extreme weakness. There would be no evening preaching by me unless a remedy was forthcoming to remove this "mountain" blocking my path. Using Bob Seih's office as a Prayer Room, I came against this "mountainous problem" with the truth of God's Word. I began to resist the devil in Jesus' Name and S-A-Y (confess) the truth of Isaiah 40:

But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

Just as quickly as this "mountain" had blocked my path, even so, confronted with the truth of God's Word it dissipated. I praised the Lord and preached the evening message with no further symptoms.

EXAMPLE #2

Naively, I believed an IRS (Internal Revenue Service) Agent in 1963 when he told me that as a "Clergyman" I could get out of the Social Security program. He gave me the proper procedure (?) to follow. I did as he said and assumed the case was closed. It was not until 1977, when the IRS notified us that our 1975 Social Security report was to be audited, that I realized there had been an error. As this audit was being completed we received a

second letter advising us that our 1976 S.S. report was to be audited. As this audit drew to a close, we received a third letter stating that our 1977 filing was up for audit. By this time the auditor had begun to talk of us owing several thousand dollars in back payments, penalties and interest. We needed help to surmount this "mountain!" Help came on a hot August afternoon as Imalee and I knelt together and spoke--confessed the truth of Psalm 27 towards this social security mountain. Verses that were especially relevant are these:

(Vs.1)The Lord is my light and my salvation:

Whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the defense of my life;

Whom shall I dread.

(Vs.3a)Though a host encamp against me,

My heart will not fear;

(Vs.4,5)One thing I have asked from the Lord,
that will I seek:

That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all
the days of my life,

To behold the beauty of the Lord,

And to meditate in His temple.

For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in
His tabernacle;

In the secret place of His tent He will hide me;
He will lift me up on a rock.

It was as if someone had hired auditors and lawyers to deal with this "mountain." Like an invisible shield the Presence of the Lord could be observed as the audits continued. Completed in October of 1978, the total due was \$3,100. A small amount to some, but an astronomical figure of impossible proportions to us.

On a cold winter morning in November, a Christian brother we had known for many years at Minneola, called from Wichita to ask if we would be home that morning. He drove down to our house at Arkansas City from Wichita where his wife, Dorothy, was having knee surgery. We visited, shared dinner and prayed together. While Ellis Wears had no knowledge of our need, yet he handed us a check for \$5,000 just because he wanted to share in this ministry. The investment of this in the Savings and Loan made possible funds to pay the Social Security assessment plus providing this Ministry with a Travel Trailer. The "mountain" moved upon our speaking the truth of God's Word towards it! We PRAISED JESUS!

EXAMPLE #3:

Friday night was approaching in Senior High Week of our Ashland (Kansas) Christian Service Camp. It had been a week of unusual challenges as early on in the week three young men had been caught smoking marijuana after the evening service. The faculty met briefly and I promised we would meet the next morning for a final decision. The devil seemed to be winning in that Tuesday morning faculty meeting as someone suggested that we should notify the Sheriff and send the three young men home. I reminded the Brothers and Sisters that these young people had come to camp needing help and that I had signed on as Dean for the same reason--to help young people forsake self and sin and find the Saviour. And if they chose to send the young men home that I would be going home too. We knelt and prayed. The vote was 18 to 0 for the three boys to stay.

The fireside consecration service was always the highlight of the week. Now black clouds out of the southwest with increasing wind was threatening to stop the outside night service. As rain-drops big as half-dollars began to fall, I walked out to the bonfire and spoke to this "mountain" of a storm saying--

"Clouds, wind, rain: Jesus made you and He made me. He told me to speak to mountains in His Name and they would move. Therefore, I speak to you--Clouds, wind and rain in Jesus' Name you will not hinder this campfire consecration service. Blow away, move over this camp service because Jesus is Lord!"

Of course I REJOICED GREATLY when the rain drops stopped and the storm moved over. It did dump five inches of rain and hail on points just East of Ashland and thru the Protection area. But, the campfire burned bright that night as we moved around the circle, each one telling how they were going to serve Jesus better. Surely it flamed up highest when the three young men said. "WE WANT JESUS AS OUR LORD!"

EXAMPLE #4

MOVE THE "DEVIL'S MOUNTAIN TRAP" by SPEAKING GOD'S WORD against it.

Many of the "mountains" of life are stumbling blocks erected by the devil. We deal with these "mountains" using the Word of God.

The devil is resisted with--*

*SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4:4,7,10

*WORDS spoken against him in Jesus' Name: Matthew 4:10; 16:23

***THE BLOOD OF JESUS: Revelation 12:11**

The above procedure is the same plan Jesus used of whom it was said "leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps." (I Peter 2:21)

Here is a sample statement that I use in confronting this "mountain."

"Father in Heaven I desire to resist the devil:
Devil, in the Name of Jesus the Christ, I reject you as
Scripture says--

'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.'

Therefore, in Jesus Name be gone out and away from
----- (name of person)-----.

Jesus, cover----- (name of person)----- with your Blood
and minister strength and victory through Your Holy
Spirit in Your Name. A-men."

While sharing a Faith Alive Revival with Barry and Stella Walker in the Bucklin (Kansas) Christian Church in 1976, we were challenged by a "MOUNTAIN" erected by the devil.

While visiting people in their homes one afternoon, Barry told me before we arrived at a certain house that the lady kept a pet boa constrictor in her house. "Most of the time it is in a cage," he said. I assured him that it would be in the cage if I entered the house. We knocked on the door and the lady invited us in. I could see the cage at the corner of the fireplace and the snake **was** in it. The lady cradled a very tiny Rat Terrier dog in her right arm. Barry introduced me and as I reached to shake hands this squirrel size dog bit my thumb. Blood started running down my hand. The lady said--"Did that dog bite you? He has never bitten anyone before." I responded--"Well, he has a record now."

At this point you can see how very quickly the devil erected this "mountain trap." I could have let the "mountain" fall on us by saying--"Is this dog mad? I've got to get a tetanus shot." Instead I discerned with my spirit what was happening and wrapped my handkerchief around my wounded thumb.

While doing this and finding a place to sit, I came against this "devil's mountain trap" with the Name of Jesus and the Word of God. The trauma passed. We talked to the lady about

Jesus out of Acts 8:26ff and she received Jesus and was baptized!

**WHAT SHALL WE SPEAK TO LIFE'S MOUNTAINS?
Speak the everlasting Word of God.**

God says:

I watch over my word to perform it. (Jeremiah 1:12)

4. "and does not doubt in his heart," Mark 11:23

It's easy to doubt simple words spoken against a difficult or impossible problem; but, the WORD OF GOD forever stands! I saw a "mountain" move by the strong Word of God in September, 1984, while sharing a Faith Alive Revival in Walterboro, South Carolina. Hurricane Diana was moving up the coast. The weather service was announcing "Hurricane Warnings" to the people--Get extra food, tape windows, stay inside. Hurricane Diana would strike sometime after midnight Sunday. That evening BOLD Preacher, Mark Bowers, led in prayer. In this prayer he spoke to this hurricane rebuking it in Jesus' Name, advising it of what Jesus said about speaking to a mountain. He told it to turn aside and not hinder the Revival. The Sunday evening service was over and Mark, not doubting in the least, advised me we would be calling the next day. He ordinarily would have been busy during the day teaching high school English. But, when the school officials became convinced Sunday evening that the hurricane would strike Charleston and move inland to Walterboro on Monday, they cancelled school. I was surprised the next morning when the National Weather Service announced that sometime during the night Hurricane Diana had taken a sharp turn to the northeast and was moving up the coast out into the ocean? That "mountain" did move! PRAISE GOD!!!

Personally the Lord has blessed us by switching headwinds to tailwinds on the highways we travel. Some will ask--"Does this always work?" No, but 80% of the time it does. I surmise with the other 20%, some other Brother out on the highway has already spoken to the wind and its course is established for the day. This doesn't bother me. I like to say--"First come, first served." Long ago I quit trying to "play

God” and simply follow His Word and let Him handle any conflicts that may arise from opposite prayers, etc.

All “mountains” that affect the executing of His Will must m-o-v-e at the power of His Word!

We learned to apply this great “mountain speaking truth” without doubting in 1981 and 82. It was the night before we were to leave for a Faith Alive Revival at Oberlin, Kansas with Bill and Carol Duncan. Stormont Vail Hospital of Topeka, Kansas called, advising us that our daughter, Rebecca, had been admitted as the result of an overdose of aspirins. How often we had seen the devil try to prevent us from getting to a scheduled Revival. Thus, we made the hard decision to talk with Rebecca on the telephone, proceed to the Revival and come back by Topeka on the way home.

According to my spiritual calendar diary it was on December 3, 1982, that we began to speak to this “mountain” with the promised truth of II Timothy 1:7:

For God has not given..(Rebecca).. a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Some seven years later, when I visited with Rebecca about her illness, she wrote down these words:

“Stay in Stormont Vail Hospital: December, 1981:

Attending counselor/psychologist, Rick Selig, along with the staff of psychiatrists.

Rick Selig, along with the psychiatrists, began looking for a diagnostic label. They decided to apply the label of “Manic/Depressive.” I was started on all the drugs that are supposed to help someone suffering from that disorder. Almost immediately, I began to experience every uncomfortable side effect in the books.

During my stay in this hospital some strange things came out. In retrospect (because I certainly didn’t know it at the time), I was carrying around guilt because of the condition of my sister, Lisa, and the death of my brother, Lynn. Rick didn’t help me deal with anything and certainly didn’t provide me with any hope or comfort, nor did he encourage me to be around people who could. Furthermore, Rick informed me that I would be in continuous counseling for at least the next seven years. I would

never be able to handle stress and I should seek some type of manual labor. He was wrong on all three counts.”(1)

Meanwhile at home we continued to confess Paul’s statement towards this “mountain.”

For God has not given..(Rebecca)..a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

At the same time, here at home on my spiritual calendar I wrote:

2/8/82-Rebecca vastly improved. Started a new job!

3/26/82-Rebecca called on Saturday evening to say she was again in the psychiatric ward of Stormont Vail Hospital suffering from hallucinations.

4/10/82-Made a quick trip to Topeka to see Rebecca in the Memorial Hospital. Some improved. Will be there three to four weeks.

4/20/82-Rebecca called to say she is entering the Topeka State Hospital for treatment.

To the II Timothy promise we added Jesus words as recorded by John as we spoke God’s truth to this “mountain.”

The thief does not come except to steal and to kill, and to destroy. I HAVE COME THAT..(Rebecca)..MAY HAVE LIFE, AND THAT..(she)..MAY HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY. (John 10:10)

Rebecca continues her description of these events:

“Finally, relief came. I was transferred from Stormont-Vail Hospital to the Topeka State Hospital. At that time the psychiatrist assigned to oversee the ward I was on did me a favor, actually several. He refused to allow me to see Rick, my psychologist, during my stay there and he took me off of every tranquilizer other doctors had considered important. When I questioned what was happening, he simply said, ‘I see no reason for you to be here. You have been under Rick’s counsel for six months and have seemingly made no progress. I see no reason for you to continue seeing him. As for the drugs, they only mask the real problem’ ”(2)

During this time we had engaged our “Faith Alive Prayer Band” to pray for Rebecca. Also, on Saturday night, June 19th, we attended a Revival service at the Ashland, Kansas Assembly of God church. I had come to know the preacher

thru the caretaker work at our campgrounds. Knowing of Rebecca's problem, the preacher called us forward for special prayer at the close of the service. This group prayed like they had a hold of God's hand. It was one week later Rebecca was released. So, we received the phone call of June 26th from Rebecca that she was being dismissed from the Topeka State Hospital with GREAT REJOICING!

At last the "MOUNTAIN" had moved!

Rebecca tells about her dismissal in her own words.

When the invitation came from my parents to assist them in the manager's work (cooking, cutting grass and repairs) at the Ashland (Kansas) Christian Service Camp, the doctor was in agreement that this would be a very good thing.

On that drive from Topeka to Ashland, I felt as though I was being released from darkness and despair into hope and hallelujah times ahead!(3)

Now, six years later, all symptoms are gone and Rebecca is happily employed by Boeing Aircraft of Wichita, Kansas.

5. "but believe that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says." (Mark 11:24)

New American Standard Bible grasps the right verb tense in saying--"believe that you have received them." Vs.24. And, **HOW shall we manifest such an attitude? When someone gives me a gift, my natural response is to say, "Thank You!" Just so, we show forth a positive TRUST, after speaking God's truth to a problem or challenge by THANKING GOD FOR THE COMPLETED FACT!**

Many other Scriptures express this same truth.

When Jesus met the ten lepers and told them to go and show themselves to the Temple Priests, it was in their GOING that they were healed. When they started for the Temple, their leprosy was still on them but Luke 17:14 records it this way:

"And it came to pass, THAT AS THEY WENT, THEY WERE CLEANSED."

An illustration of this truth applied happened to me beginning in June of 1980. During that summer I was laboring as Camp Manager (custodian) at the Ashland (Kansas) Christian Youth Camp. While installing a battery in the camp bus I tipped the battery, spilling acid onto my cloth gloves. After the project was done, I removed my gloves to discover a red burn on my right middle finger. As the months went by this grew into what looked like a callous. One year later it cracked open and refused to heal. I tried all the home medicine--Compound W, Aloe lotion, rubbed it with castor oil and turpentine--with no healing. In August of 1981, I went to a Doctor who burned it off with an electric needle; but, it promptly returned twice as big as previously. So, in mid-November, Dr. Bruce Smith burned it off again. The cure now became far worse than the disease. I asked two other doctors their opinion. They said it looked like I would lose my finger up to the first joint. It was now so sore and inflamed that I could not even use the typewriter.

However, on Sunday evening, November 19th, in the home of Bob and Rose Osburn here in Arkansas City a prayer circle consisting of Bob and Rose, my wife, Imalee and Junior (an Elder) and Nell Lewis of Oregon anointed me with oil according to James 5:14ff and prayed over me and for this finger. I made request of our 100 member Faith Alive Prayer Band to pray for my finger in particular.

Now comes the APPLICATION of Mark 11:24 "believe that you have received." Right during that prayer circle I began to THANK GOD for healing my finger. There and in the days to come I spoke these phrases over and over--**

- *Thank You Jesus for a healthy finger like the other seven!
- *Thank You Jesus for filling up the hole in my finger.
- *Thank You Jesus for the return of my finger prints.
- *Thank You Jesus for healing this hurting finger!

I was acting with POSITIVE FAITH and GOD MOVED THAT "MOUNTAIN!" He made my wounded finger whole with no problems since!

SALVATION is also a LARGE MOUNTAIN! HOW DO I KNOW I AM SAVED?

By the same principle that Jesus stated in Mark 11:24--*Believe that you have received*. There are three principles involved in the application of this truth:

1. FACTS
2. FAITH
3. FEELINGS

#1. FACTS--The Word says it! That settles it!

John 3:16--For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Acts 2:38--.....Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

#2. FAITH--The Word said it! I apply it by acting on it (obeying). Therefore I am saved!

#3. FEELINGS--are like the caboose on the end of a train. They make a great caboose but a bad engine. How often do I hear people saying--"I don't f-e-e-l like I'm saved. I don't f-e-e-l like God is real, I don't f-e-e-l like I have the Holy Spirit. I don't f-e-e-l like I'm healed, etc., etc.."

When in FAITH we act on the FACTS, then the FEELING will follow. Feelings are dangerous because the devil can sway them back and forth like tree limbs in the wind.

Many years ago a dear Saint, Lottie Downs, of Minneola, Kansas called me over to the hospital. She said--"Wilbur, come in and close the door."

I did and next she said, "Now bend down close so you can hear my whisper."

I did and these were her words--"Preacher, I am dying and I don't know whether I am saved."

Immediately I responded--"Lottie, you told me that you've been a Christian 80 years. Isn't that right?"

"Well, yes, that's what I told you," she whispered.

"Lottie, tell me if these words are true--

*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1a)

*Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven.? (Matthew 10:32)

*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)

*John 3:16

*The Lord is my Shepherd..and..Yea though I walk thru the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me. (Psalm 23)

To each of these promises, Lottie answered "YES! I BELIEVE THAT!" I encouraged her to focus her thoughts on the FACTS of God's Word and not on her feelings.

Lottie didn't die at that time. A few months later we were at the Ashland Nursing Home sharing songs, Scripture and meditation on a Sunday afternoon. Lottie invited me to her room. "Come in and shut the door." Then she said, "I have some good news. I'm not afraid to die anymore since I started looking at Jesus and His Word!" We rejoiced together and thanked Jesus in prayer for that certain assurance that comes when we TRUST HIM and HIS WORD. At that time I asked permission to use her story in days ahead. She said, "Fine, if it will help someone else." She did depart this life at the age of 88 just a few days after that conversation.

MUCH RESPONSIBILITY goes with "mountain moving."

One person said to me "If I had that kind of power I would empty all the nursing homes, hospitals and cemeteries."

My answer was and is:

Friend, you do not know the Mind of God, the Word of God or the Power of God. For you are suggesting that which Jesus Himself never did--restore health to all the infirm, heal all the sick or raise all the dead. In particular our Lord performed 35 miracles according to the Gospels. These miracles fall into four groups: #1) Power over nature-7; #2) Power over demons-7; #3) Power over disease-16; #4) People restored to life-3. I add this further interesting note regarding "faith" and Jesus'

Miracles: When "faith" is mentioned, who is it attributed to? The recipient-six times, Others-13 times; Jesus own free will-15 times.

The responsibility that goes with exercising God's power against the mountains of life is VERY GREAT. My first BIG LESSON in "mountain moving" came following our son, Lynn's death, in 1971. I engaged the Lord in a conversation concerning Lynn's body.

"Are all things possible with You God?"

The Lord answered with a verse of Scripture: "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." (Mark 10:17)

"Lord, is what You said in Mark 11:22-24 about speaking to mountains to be cast into the sea still possible?"

The Lord said--"I watch over my Word to perform it." (Jeremiah 1:12)

"Lord, if I speak to my son's body believing in your Name that he will come forth, will it happen?"

The Lord's answer--"Forever...(My Word)...is settled in heaven." (Psalm 119:89)

Then I said: "Lord I'm ready to do so."

The Lord replied--"First roll away the stone." (John 11:29)

I wrestled for many days with His request:

1. Would He if I did? My conclusion beyond the shadow of a doubt--YES HE WOULD!
2. What would it take to "roll away the stone" of this ground-level mausoleum?--hammers? chisels? dynamite?
3. Would my son meet obstacles on this Road of Life that would totally trip him up? The Lord reminded me of a prayer I had prayed on the night of Lynn's departure--*Lord, whatever the cost, please don't ever let any of our children be lost.* I could clearly see that I would have to play God if I followed this "mountain

moving venture" through. I wasn't equipped to play God.

MY ANSWER: "No Lord, I will NOT roll away the stone."

Here are some **GUIDELINES** and **SAFEGUARDS** in attempting to speak to life's mountains:

- #1. Discern by searching the Bible what God's Word says about this "mountain" that I want to move. Find the promise, the command in context that speaks to it.
- #2. Discern by prayer and meditation the Will of God in this matter. Questions to ask--How will this further the Kingdom? How will this glorify God?
- #3. Discern by prayer and contemplation my personal motive in the moving of this "mountain."
 - 1) Self-serving?
 - 2) Ambitious?
 - 3) To tempt God?
 - 4) To trust God?
 - 5) To glorify God and extend the Kingdom?

Personal motives one, two and three above will bring defeat. Proper motives are suggested in numbers four and five.

- #4. Practice much privately before ever attempting to use in a public way.
- #5. Don't "cast your pearls before swine" (Matthew 7:6) by bragging or much talking about your victories before non-believers in the world or unbelievers in the church.

George Muller of a century ago was a mountain moving man for God. Most of us remember him for feeding and clothing over 2,000 orphans in Bristow, England by prayer and faith. There are many vivid prayer-faith stories of how he moved mountains for God. This one has blessed me much.

On one occasion Muller traveled to Canada for a speaking engagement. Dense fog settled upon the ocean and the uncertain vessel floated motionless on a silent sea. Soon Muller knocked on the captain's door expressing "I must be in Toronto by Sunday." The captain quickly replied, "In no way can this vessel move without assuming great danger of colliding with another"

"I understand" said Mr. Muller, "but in forty years of Christian service I have not failed to keep an appointment. I must be in Toronto Sunday!" He then asked the captain to join in a special prayer of faith to speak to this fog in Jesus' Name that it would lift. Embarrassed, the captain agreed. They knelt and Muller calmly asked God to lift the hindering fog. Somewhat intimidated, the captain started to say a simple prayer to please his anxious passenger. He no sooner began when Muller stopped him. He gently touched the captain's shoulder saying: "You need not pray. You do not believe."

Startled, the seafarer rose to leave the cabin with this unusual passenger. Walking out on deck, a look of sheer astonishment spread over the captain's face. The fog had completely lifted. George Muller silently stood by with a "Just as I expected" look.(4)



Our Wheel House
The LORD PROVIDED in 1979
Thru Dr. Bob & Donna Starr

FAITH ALIVE IN HEART, HOME and CHURCH
NOTES - Chapter 9

1. Penned by Rebecca S. Johnson of Wichita, Kansas on December 27, 1988.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. A page out of my file, author and source unknown. George Muller's life spanned almost a century from 1805 to 1898.



"Follow the Leader"
Miss Elizabeth - Age 5

Part 10

Faith Alive Through--

**PRACTICING
THE PRESENCE OF JESUS**

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A few years ago, when Detroit was being burned and riots plagued the city, a lone Policeman is credited with saving-the-day. It was an explosive situation downtown. Everyone was tense! One spark of a wrong word or false look could start a whole riot. The ring-leaders were spotted and watched. As they began to gather on a particular street corner, a policeman sauntered up to these men casually and said: **"If you men want to stand here, you'll have to move on."** The guys shook their heads as though to clear their ears. Again the Policeman looked directly into their faces and said, **"I say, if you want to stand here, you'll have to move on."** They laughed and went their separate ways. No one ever found out what caused the Policeman to use the particular awkward words that saved the day.

In the same vein, I remind myself that IF I WANT TO STAND WHERE I AM, I'LL HAVE TO MOVE ON! The great spiritual truths of God's Word we have been sharing in this book, can only remain a reality in our life as we practice-exercise-apply them moment by moment.

Spiritual power cannot be stored up for a rainy day, so-to-speak. Corrie Ten Boom was a person that experienced the power of God at work in and thru her life from the strange bottle of vitamin pills that never ran out as she shared them with the women prisoners in the ill-famed Ravensbruck Prison of Germany during World War II, and across the years as God led her around the world to tell people about Jesus. She was asked this question in later years. "Corrie, with all the miracles you tell about, I suppose you have faith stored up for years to come?" Corrie in her broken Dutch-English brogue replied instantly. **"NO SIR!, FOR EVERY NEW DAY IT TAKES A WHOLE NEW FAITH!"**

How very false is the assumption that reading, memorizing and studying the Bible brings victory. We Americans couple this with listening to lectures and lessons on tape, attending seminars and services and yet the quality or quantity of faith applied in American life does not increase. We lampoon the Athenians of ancient Greece of whom it was said:

For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.(1)

I ask myself--"How far removed are American Christians from this mentality?" The only *real difference* is the subject matter. For there must always be a new truth via a new seminar, new sermon, new lesson, new workshop, new tape recording or film, add infinitum. The point is that neither the Athenians or Americans are intent upon APPLYING WHAT THEY HEAR. They are forever hearing some new thing that becomes a mental, spiritual wheel-spinning, clutch-slipping activity. Herein Paul's words to Timothy come to fulfillment:

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves...having a form of godliness but denying its power...always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.(2)

In response to this, one lukewarm church member said to me--"But, the Bible says 'And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' "(3)

From this question I made a study of this verse and in particular the words--"know" as related to "truth."

The Greek word for "know" - *ginosko* - has a different meaning from our usual thought that it means truth stored in our mind.

W.E. Vine says of this word "know":

In the New Testament *ginosko* indicates a relation between the person knowing and the object known;...such knowledge is obtained, not by mere intellectual activity, but by operation of the Holy Spirit consequent upon acceptance of Christ. Nor is such knowledge marked by finality; e.g., II Peter 3:18.(4)

This same word in the verb form is used to describe the intimacy of marriage when the Scripture declares "Then Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I do not KNOW a man?' " (Luke 1:34; Matthew 1:25)

So, our understanding of these words--know and truth, signifies a hearing of Truth and receiving it into our mind followed of necessity by application to life. When this is

accomplished we have reversed Paul's prophetic statement in that we **HAVE COME TO A KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH.**

By the Grace of God, the Holy Spirit delivered me out of this deadly--*hear something new, do nothing about it*--syndrome. **JESUS** now became **real** in my life as I put into practice the simple truths that were as old as the Bible. This is what the Lord indicates when He said:

"The person who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who (really) loves Me, and whosoever (really) loves Me will be loved of My Father. And I (too) will love him and will show (reveal, manifest) Myself to Him--I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.

(John 14:21 - Amplified New Testament)(5)

Substituting Bible study, church attendance and other church busy work for **PRACTICING THE WORD OF GOD** is like two gas wells on our farm. I grew up with wood burning stoves and kerosene lamps. It was not until we moved to a farm near Cherryvale in southeast Kansas that I was introduced to natural gas. Our farm had two gas wells. One that provided fuel for heating, cooking and lights. The spare well simply sat there blowing out gas and salt water. Deciding to conserve this loss we installed some pipe and shut this well in. In due time when needed, it was dead. Later we were told we should have installed a "drip" on the well that allows the salt water to blow out while the gas is conserved. This is a parable of life for many church members. They kill God's Power by attempting to store up power.

It is **WHAT WE PRACTICE** that is a continuing source of power. This is the reason that James records those oft quoted words--"Faith without works is dead." Like many of you, I memorized the axioms and postulates of high school Geometry. I can still repeat four of them. Such as "if two things are equal to the same thing, they are equal to each other" and "the shortest distance between two points is a straight line." **WHY** do I know these and not all the others?

Because I have USED THEM in various ways across forty years. On a spiritual plane I have attended several of Bill Gothard's "Basic Youth Conflict Seminars." I have a BIG red notebook full of many, many truths. The only ones that have blessed me are the ones I EXERCISED in my daily living.

In the previous chapters I have shared how the Presence and Power of Jesus comes alive in life as we begin to walk and talk in faith thru being filled with His Spirit, living by faith, praying always, praising God in all things, lifting up Jesus' Name and listening for God's Voices to direct us. This chapter is a simple sharing of how we can c-o-n-t-i-n-u-e to keep our faith alive by--*practicing the Presence of Jesus.*

"A whole is equal to the sum of its parts" is another of the axioms of Geometry I learned. This is also a spiritual axiom in that a life is equal to the sum of its parts. Jesus' home in Nazareth must have been a perfect example of what life in a home ought to be. Thus, Luke 2:42-52 records the story of Jesus at age 12 going with Mary and Joseph to the temple to celebrate the Passover Feast. He stayed behind asking and answering questions of the Teachers of the Law. The conclusion reads as follows:

"And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." Luke 2:51,52

Jesus' four-fold increase was complete. I suggest that his home had much to do with His development and further that our homes-families are an excellent place for practicing the Presence of Jesus. I consider our home to be a spiritual gymnasium. Thus, in conferences, camps, seminars, conventions and church assemblies we receive instructions from the Bible teaching coaches. In the "gym of our home" we put this knowledge into practice. Using the four statements concerning Jesus--*wisdom, stature, favor with God and man*--let us

realize THE PRESENCE OF JESUS in our hearts thru PRACTICE IN OUR HOMES.

I WILL PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF JESUS BY BEING--

#“in favor with God.” Luke 2:52

Using a thought picture of building a house, this statement-“in favor with God”-makes an excellent FOUNDATION.

To establish and maintain this “in favor with God” foundation in my life, I suggest Job’s example.

Sanctify **self**, even as Job did--

“There lived in the land of Uz a man named Job--a good man who feared God and stayed away from evil. He had a large family of seven sons and three daughters, and was immensely wealthy, for he owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 teams of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and employed many servants. He was, in fact, the richest cattleman in the entire area.

Every year when each of Job’s sons had a birthday, he invited his brothers and sisters to his home for a celebration. On these occasions they would eat and drink with great merriment. When these birthday parties ended--and sometimes they lasted several days--Job would summon his children to him and sanctify them, getting up early in the morning and offering a burnt offering for each of them. For Job said, “Perhaps my sons have sinned and turned away from God in their hearts.” This was Job’s regular practice.”(6)

Every day self must be dedicated to God even as it says “this was Job’s daily practice.” This concept of PRESENTING SELF to God and GOD TO OTHERS is called “The Priesthood of Parents” by Larry Christenson:

“Writing to Christians in general, St. Peter says, ‘You are a royal *priesthood*...’ (I Peter 2:9). This was one of the doctrines recovered by Martin Luther during the Reformation, ‘the priesthood of all believers.’ Protestants have usually emphasized the fact that this gives every believer personal access to God, without any intermediary; a person may act as his own priest.

This is true enough, as far as it goes. The tradition of the priesthood provides for a ministry of the priest to himself (See Leviticus 9:7). But both in the Old Testament type, and in the

New Testament application, the primary emphasis is upon the priesthood's ministry to others. Whatever ministry a priest does on his own behalf is a preparation for his ministry to others. We are called into the priesthood of all believers not merely that we might have our own private line to God, but in order to 'declare the wonderful deeds of him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.' (I Peter 2:9)—in other words, to minister God's grace to others.....

What a field of service the Christian home affords for this privileged ministry. Parents--priests of the Lord! Called and ordained by God as priests unto their children."(7)

Every morning before I get out of bed, I take prayer time to--*

***Resist the devil in Jesus' Name in behalf of my family-- Imalee, Lisa, Teresa, Rebecca, Galen, Kim, Elizabeth and myself.**

***Ask God to fill each of us with His Holy Spirit.**

***Request Angelic assignments for each of us through the day.**

I pass these blessings on to my family through a family altar. For some thirty years, Imalee and I and our children have set aside a time each day to read a chapter from God's Word and join hands and hearts to pray. In earlier years we had our family altar just before the kids left for school. Now, that they are grown, our appointed hour is immediately following the 10 p.m. news.

A home without a family altar is like a ship without a rudder. The late J. Edgar Hoover spoke of the prime importance of a family altar in a radio broadcast.

The memory of those mornings at home kept me going straight.

If there is hope for the future of America, if there is to be peace and happiness in our homes, then we as a nation must return to God and the practice of daily prayer. Can we have eternal peace without morality, can we build homes without God, or have worthy parents who do not know and practice His teachings? Our nation is sadly in need of...a return to the days when God was part of each household...My hope for the future nation is predicated upon the faith of God which is nurtured in the family.

Family worship will help to cure the religious ignorance in our day, the weakness of many churches, and the growing secularization of modern society.

How influential in the life of a child are these daily times of worship?

When I was chaplain in an Arkansas penitentiary, out of seventeen hundred convicts, I found only one who had been brought up in a home where they had an old-fashioned family altar. I heard since that he was pardoned as he was found innocent of the crime with which he was charged. There is an atmosphere in the Christian home which makes it impossible for skepticism or atheism to live there.(8)

In recent years when the Supreme Court made its ill-famed ruling about prayer and Bible reading in the public schools of America, a concerned parent said to me--"If they don't get prayer and Bible reading in school where are they going to get it during the week?" My answer, "In the home around the family altar." The Court ruling caused quite a stir in the whole country, unduly I perceived. My conclusion may seem unwise. But after the Court ruling, I began to make a survey among church people I met in the Revivals across the country. My survey was conducted at dinner tables where I was a guest during a Revival and sometimes on the night I preached on the "Home-family altar", I would ask a whole congregation to raise their hands according to the following three questions:

#1. "When you attended public school did you have prayer and Bible reading in the classroom?"

Less than 10% said "Yes."

#2. "When you attended school did you have prayer or Bible reading in your class?"

Only 20 to 25% said "Yes."

#3. "When you attended school did you recite the pledge to the flag in your classroom?"

The collective answer: 90 to 95% said "Yes."

Here are three factors you will be interested in about this simple survey of the last 15 years.

1. The answers from the central Bible belt of the U.S.A. were always higher. The East and West coasts, always lower.

2. The people who gave the answers covered almost a whole century of school attendance from 1900 to 1988.
3. Regretfully, these answers are what I had surmised from my observation across many years. One must return to the previous century and primarily to the seventeen hundreds to find anything like universal prayer and Bible reading in our public schools.

Israel of the Old Testament taught their children God's Word in their homes. Thus, the words from Moses:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you to-day shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."(9)

Do we suppose that the church, which is "spiritual Israel," can accomplish transference of the Word in some other way?

Exciting it was while visiting our son and family-Galen, Kim and Elizabeth-in Georgia to participate in "Follow The Leader." It takes place every evening as the sun is setting when everyone-family, friends and house guests-gather 'round for the reading of a Bible story from a pictorial New Testament. This is followed by our granddaughter, Elizabeth, selecting a song--Scripture chorus, hymn or praise song. At this point everyone stands and begins to sing as the group FOLLOWS THE LEADER, Elizabeth, into her bedroom. Here she calls on the group one-by-one to pray--some sit, daddy kneels, some stand. This is followed by honey-time--hugs and kisses--all around.

Let us PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF JESUS - *be in favor with God* - by BUILDING our hearts upon a FOUNDATION of God's Word and prayer.

May it be as a wise man once said:

BY SEEKING GOD'S WORD, WE GIVE OURSELVES TWO THINGS--ROOTS AND WINGS!(10)

We can build a hedge of protection around our home by confessing the Truth of God's Word over it.

My Christian brother and sister, Keith and Linda Dellenbach, now ministering at Sawyer, Kansas, say-speak-confess God's Word every day over their children, Charity and Josh.

Keith and I have worked together on many facets of the Kingdom since our first Revival together at Greensburg, Kansas in 1975. When our water pipes froze and burst in 1982, Bro. Keith was our repair plumber. Last Spring Keith came to install our kitchen cabinets and appliances. How exciting to begin a plumbing or carpentry project with PRAYER and to walk down the street to the hardware store with Keith while he confesses the following truths for his family:

Our children shall love the Lord our God with all their heart, soul, strength and mind, (Luke 10:27) and shall have no other gods before Him (Exodus 20:3). The Holy Spirit, who is upon us, and God's Words in our mouths shall not depart from us or our children or their children from now and forever (Isaiah 59:21).

Our children will be recognized as the children whom the Lord has blessed (Isaiah 61:9). They are disciples, taught of the Lord and obedient to His will and great is their peace and undisturbed composure (Isaiah 54:13-Amplified). The Holy Spirit is poured out on our children (Isaiah 44:3-5). They will grow in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man (Luke 2:40,52). Like trees by streams of water (Psalm 1; Isaiah 44) they shall be oaks of righteousness (Isaiah 61:3), like olive plants around our table (Psalm 128:3). They will confess "I am the Lord's" (Isaiah 44:5). They have the heart in them to love and fear the Lord and keep His ways always; and it will be well with them and their children forever (Deuteronomy 5:29).

The Lord is their Shepherd, they shall not want. He leads them in paths of righteousness. They fear no evil. Goodness and mercy shall follow them all their life, and they will dwell in God's house forever (Psalm 23). The Lord is their keeper. He protects them from all evil and keeps their soul (Psalm 121:7).

Our children listen to their Father and follow Him in all they do. His blessings shall come upon them and overtake them. They are blessed in the city and the country, in the offspring of their bodies, of their ground and of their herds and flocks. They are blessed with abundance of food (never to beg for bread Psalm 37:25). In their cupboards is abundance. They are bless-

ed when they come in and go out, before their enemies and in everything they put their hand to. God makes them abound in prosperity. He opens His storehouse to them. They lend, but do not borrow. They are above and not beneath; the head and not the tail, and serve their God diligently (Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

Our children will know and receive the truth and the truth shall make them free (John 8:32). Christ will dwell in their hearts through faith and they being rooted and grounded in love will comprehend the length, height and depth of God's love and know the love of Christ that passes all knowledge. They will be filled up with the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:17-19).

Now the peace of God Himself sanctifies them entirely so that their spirit, soul and body may be kept blameless and complete until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 5:23). Our God will watch over our children, working both His will and to do His good pleasure in them and bring to completion the work He has begun (Philippians 2:3; 1:6).

The One who has called us to learn and do His will is faithful and He will do a work of glory in us and our children (I Thessalonians 5:24).

I WILL PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF JESUS by--

#Increasing in stature.--Luke 2:52

Continuing the thought picture of PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF JESUS to building a house, the statement--"Increased in stature,"--Makes two great side walls for the building.

Paul tells Timothy:

"...bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things...." (I Timothy 4:8)

There is little need in America to remind us to eat three nutritional meals a day and brush our teeth regularly. However, it is good to be conscious that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 3:16)

Rather, in PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF JESUS, let us give spiritual meaning to physical matters including our body.

In the book "The Christian Family," Larry Christenson shares a first person story, how matters on a physical plane can be transformed to higher ground.

“Without experience, faith becomes cold, dead, formal, legalistic. We must not only teach our children to believe that God is, but also go the second step which the Bible calls for, and help them experience that ‘He rewards those who seek Him’. (Hebrews 11:6)

This will have an immediate effect on the way we pray with our children. It will lead us beyond the ‘God bless *Mommy and Daddy...*’ bedtime offering...prayers into real prayers of *faith*, prayers that ask for and expect a definite answer.

Our youngest son once lost an honor pin which he had won at school. He was supposed to wear it on his tie, and to have lost it was looked on as a great disgrace. We ransacked his room looking for the pin, but couldn’t find it anywhere. So, in our morning prayers, he prayed that he would be able to find his honor pin. Two days later, when I came home for supper, he met me at the door all abeam: ‘We found my honor pin--*just like I prayed!*’ A dozen sober and theologically correct pronouncements could never have conveyed so convincingly the love of God to that six-year old boy as that one simple answer to prayer.”(11)

Exercise! Exercise! Exercise!

“Exercise yourself rather to godliness.” (I Timothy 4:7)

I don’t believe we become all that God wants us to be in a moment of time; but, we become God-like through spiritual EXERCISE. In theology this is called “Progressive Sanctification.”

Spiritual gym equipment that provides opportunity for daily exercise includes--*Bible reading..*Whetting the appetite..*Walking by faith..*Loving..*Praying..*Dealing With the Devil..*Witnessing..*Praising The Lord.

In our home we seek to PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF JESUS by exercising spiritual truths. While it is true that our children and ourselves were different in chronological ages; yet, in Jesus, we all grew up together.

EXERCISE Whetting the APPETITE.

Jesus said:

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.” (Matthew 5:6)

I always tell folk that I am hard to please when it comes to

food. I only like two kinds of pie--hot and cold. Any kind of food will do, but not spoiled food. I like cabbage slaw but not spoiled cabbage--kraut. You see, my appetite dictates what I eat. Life is like that. Our appetites determine what we devote our life to. As parents we have much to do with our children's appetites. Our children participated in school events. Lynn played in the band, Teresa played basketball and debated, Galen played basketball and was a track runner, Rebecca was in drama and music. They also were active in church youth rallies, area 5th Sunday conventions, youth camps, on campus Bible College days, local youth groups, Sunday School, Revivals, Daily Vacation Bible School, Church assemblies, and prayer meetings. Imalee and I never drove through any ice, snow or high winds to attend out-of-town school events. Appetite dictated that we drive through storms to get to various church events. So without saying a word we passed on to our children our evaluation of that which is of lasting importance by what we did.

I have always had a personal rule to judge all things by--**WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL IT MAKE A HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW?** If the event can pass that test, that it pointed me towards God and played an important part in building character, then it is **IMPORTANT!** I know many ball fans that cannot tell me who played in the Orange Bowl two years ago much less the scores. A bit of poetry says it all.

Only one life.

It will soon be past.

Only what's done for Christ will last!

Paul spoke the solution to appetites when he said.

This I say: "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16)

EXERCISE living by FAITH.

The Scripture God used to open the eyes of Martin Luther was one phrase out of Romans 1:17:

"The just shall live by faith." (12)

As I shared previously, *living by FAITH* is meant to be the

norm for all Christians. And, like all the graces of God, FAITH must be taught. When we decided to go God's Way in **all** of life's activities, there were numerous opportunities to EXERCISE WALKING BY FAITH. The following story is one of those examples.

For many years we had taken our family on a very inexpensive (\$100 or less) vacation up in the Rocky Mountain National Park near Estes Park, Colorado. Some of our fondest memories as a family have been our summer camping in the Rockies. After sharing in a Sunday Service at the Campground, we would seek out a beautiful mountain stream where Lynn, Teresa, Rebecca, Galen, Lisa, Imalee and I would sit down to sing the Songs of Zion, join hands together in a circle of prayer and Break the Bread of communion.

Year by year we increased our expertise in selecting a campsite, building a campfire, and setting up a tent. S-e-l-f was well entrenched and did not want outside interference.

SELF had taught me the formula for getting a good camping spot: Leave after the Sunday evening church service, drive all night, and when the sun came up on Monday morning we would be pulling into Rocky Mountain National Park. It worked every time. So, when it came to August of 1971 and one more trip--why should we PRAY? I knew the way.

But our hearts were heavy since our firstborn son, Lynn, had gone to be with Jesus just a month prior a-n-d we were leaving at the wrong time of day.

Tired, we elected to leave early Monday morning. Joining hands together to pray for the trip, I prayed, "Lord, we are tired and leaving late, please reserve us a campsite." SELF died when we reached the National Park in late afternoon. Signs were out at the entrance--"Sorry Folks, Campground Is Full." The Ranger said, "I can't stop you from driving in." So, we purchased our "Golden Eagle Pass" and drove down to Glacier Basin Campground on the Bear Lake Road. A big FULL sign greeted us again. This campground has four loops--201 campsites in all. We drove Loop A and B, with all

sites taken. When we came to C-130, it appeared to be vacant. We left our middle daughter, Rebecca, to sit on the picnic table as a sort of down-payment to claim the spot if it should happen to be unclaimed, then drove the rest of C and D. Only one spot, maybe? Back at the Office, the Ranger said "Yes, the campground is full." When we inquired in particular about C-130, he jumped on his three-wheel cycle and was back in a moment. "It's O-P-E-N! The folk left this morning and won't be back." The pure mountain air at 7,500 feet elevation often produces goose bumps, but these goose bumps were on the inside of me. God did know something about campsites. He had answered our prayer. We were learning to let go of self and walk by faith by praying together. We hiked the trails and climbed the mountains but this exercise in trusting the Lord was even better than ascending the Continental Divide and climbing over Storm Mountain Pass.

In living by faith, we taught ourselves and thus by example our children, that God knows how to direct the buying of cars, providing gas, bless highway travel, heal bodies and supply our daily needs. I repeat here that simple formula for an "ACT OF FAITH."

1. Willfully commit any act to God in prayer.
2. Lean not on our own understanding to make it happen.
3. Look to and wait on God for the answer.

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths."*

(Proverbs 3:5,6)

EXERCISE the Lordship of Jesus--PRAISE HIM!

Paul taught us with these words:

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing;
in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God
in Christ Jesus for you." (I Thessalonians 5:16-18)

GIVING THANKS IN ALL THINGS is both a tool and a test of the Lordship of Jesus in our living. It is a tool in that PRAISING THE LORD for the events of life makes Jesus Lord over

each matter. It is a test in that if we recognize Jesus as Lord in each event, there will be no problem in praising Him for all things.

I shared extensively about praise in chapter 6. The subject came alive even more as our children began to thank God in all things.

Our oldest daughter, Teresa, began her pre-med studies at Emporia (Kansas) State College in 1973. The Lord supplied her needs, which did not include a car for many years.

During her Freshman year, she called home to say someone had stolen her bicycle.

I inquired: "Are you praising the Lord for this?"

She replied: "I hardly think so. I see nothing in it to praise the Lord about."

"Don't look for reasons," I encouraged her, "just give thanks as the Scripture says."

She went out and purchased another bicycle and parked it under the stairwell in the dormitory.

The next year she called home and announced: "My bicycle has been stolen."

"PRAISE THE LORD!" I encouraged.

"I'd like to, but?....Maybe I'll try."

She purchased bicycle #3 along with a heavy cable and lock. She graduated in 1977 and moved on to the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City.

That fall she called home to say someone had stolen her bicycle. The Police said it was probably taken by a gang of thieves out of St. Louis that move thru cities with vans, bolt cutters with three foot long handles, etc. They take the stolen bicycles to another city and sell them for a profit. Down at the Police Station they took the bicycle I.D. marks and indicated it was highly unlikely that she would ever see the bicycle again.

I inquired: "Are you PRAISING THE LORD?"

"Yes!" she said, "I am!"

In a few days the Police called to say--"Come down to the

Station and see if this is your bicycle." She did and it was! PRAISE paved the way for God to work.

Now a physician practicing General Surgery in Winfield, Kansas, this lesson still lingers to remind that GOD WORKS when WE MAKE HIM LORD through PRAISE.

EXERCISE dealing With The devil.

James encourages us in our spiritual EXERCISE with these words.

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

While learning the three-fold Bible principle of dealing with the devil, that in prayer we--*

- *1. Come against the devil-demons-evil spirits with a command for them to depart in JESUS' NAME. (Matthew 16:23; Acts 16:18)
- *2. Confront the evil forces with Scripture just as Jesus did. (Matthew 4:4,7,10)
- *3. Plead the Blood of Jesus to cover and keep you as the early Christians did. (Revelation 12:11)

While learning this in my own life, I began to exercise dealing with the devil in others. I shared previously about our youngest daughter, Lisa, and her emotional handicap. One of her problems in early years was screaming and biting the back of her hand until it looked like hamburger. At first tranquilizers, and nerve pills had a temporary calming effect along with restraining her hands in a physical way. In due time the effect of the medication ceased. We learned two things when these attacks came upon her.

#1--Come against the enemy (devil-demons-evil spirits) with a command of words for him to depart in JESUS' NAME.

#2--Sing the song, "Jesus Loves Me" in a personalized way to Lisa.

This was the best medicine by far and the effects did not wear out. After exercising God's Power against the enemy many times, he got the message and left her alone. It has now been many years since an attack.

I sum up the importance of giving spiritual meaning to "increasing in stature" in these lines of poetry the Lord blessed me with.

Four things a Christian can do to have victory true;
Talk with Jesus in prayer moment by moment thru the day;
Invite His Holy Spirit to fill us as we travel that Narrow Way;
Resist the devil by the Blessed Name we say;
Be filled with joy by praising Him in all things along the Way.

I WILL PRACTICE The PRESENCE OF JESUS by--

#3 - Increasing in wisdom.--Luke 2:52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2:52)

Continuing the thought picture of PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF JESUS to building a house, the statement--"increased in wisdom,"--makes two more great side walls for the building.

Solomon names the beginning place of WISDOM when he says:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. (Proverbs 9:10)

"Fear" as used in this verse by Solomon does not mean to cower or walk around afraid but a worshipful respect for God and His Word. It is the Spirit given ability to weigh the true nature of matters and apply knowledge to vexing problems.

This being true, Jesus *increased* in wisdom by applying knowledge (facts, truths) to the challenge of life.

As we practice fear (worshipful, obedient respect) for the Lord, even so, we pass on to those around us this same wisdom.

My dad was not a religious zealot, however, he was a member of the Baptist church in Medicine Lodge, Kansas. I learned great lessons of wisdom from his unspoken attitude lived out in life. Those lessons include--*

*Don't work on Sunday.

Wheat harvest was a BIG TEST. Our harvest with a tractor-

pulled combine lasted for two to three weeks as we cut some 500 acres. Always there was the question: "You're not going to cut wheat on Sunday, are you?" The answer: "Yep, we sure are for it might rain, hail or blow and ruin the crop." To produce more wheat for the War effort we purchased a new John Deere combine in 1944 and started to cut wheat on Sunday. This combine was driven by high speed chains. One of those chains slipped from the sprocket wheel and got caught with some more chains. It shut the Sunday cutting down for the day and we had to call a welder out from Hardtner, Kansas to make repairs besides ordering certain parts. It was Wednesday before we got back in the field. That was the last time we harvested on Sunday. I heard Dad say while making those repairs--"Maybe God is trying to tell me something about working on Sunday." That was a lesson in wisdom that I will remember forever.

*Be honest!

On November 23, 1945, my Mother and Sisters, Patsy and Janet and I were on our way to see the eye doctor in Alva, Oklahoma. Going south out of Hardtner, Kansas we met a large fruit truck on a one and one-half lane long river bridge. Attempting to miss the truck, my Mother drove ultra close to the huge steel beams on the right side. The truck sideswiped our car pushing it into the steel beams. The car was ruined and I spent a night in the hospital with a slight concussion plus losing eight front teeth. My estimate is that our loss equaled about eight hundred dollars. In due time we had an appointment in Enid, Oklahoma with the Insurance adjustor for the Trucking Company. Here I learned an indelible lesson in the wisdom of fairness and honesty. The adjustor offered my Dad two thousand dollars. He replied:

"No! That is more than our expense."

"How about fifteen hundred?" the adjustor countered.

Dad said: "No, that is too much considering the cost of the car, and the hospital and dental bills."

The adjustor now took advantage of an ultra honest man and said--"How about nothing?"

Dad responded with these words--"If that is your final offer then we have no choice but to say thank you and go home."

It was and we went home with a satisfied mind.

*Be patient in suffering.

The Bible has much, much to say about suffering patiently under adversity and distress.

"Love suffers long and is kind." (I Corinthians 13:4)

"patient in tribulation." (Romans 12:12b)

"If we endure, we shall also reign with him." (II Timothy 2:12)

My Dad left me a life-long lesson of wisdom in suffering patiently even though--#

#His lungs were damaged by poison-gas while serving in France during World War I. This produced breathing problems and finally emphysema. The Army denied him a disability pension, yet, through all the remaining 58 years he suffered quietly.

#While others were constantly complaining, harping, and criticizing; my Dad reacted with patient suffering.

***Work hard!**

"Whatever your hands find to do, do it with your might."
(Ecclesiastes 9:10)

There is a WISDOM in WORK that is often missed in our generation. Well-meaning parents determine their children must not pass through the same challenges and obstacles that they did. This unfortunately often includes w-o-r-k to earn funds to go to college, buy a car, etc. WORK is God ordained and helps to build character into the fiber of our being.

I share a poem that illustrates the wisdom of work in my Dad's life.

I was at the Christian Church in Stronghurst, Illinois preaching a Faith Alive Revival with Gene and Sharon Moorehouse when the news came that Dad had taken his final journey at the end of eighty four years. I finished the Revival and Sunday night, as I drove the miles home to Cherryvale, Kansas, memory expressed itself in lines of poetry that speak about the legacy of WISDOM that my Father left me. Here is that poem that our Minister for the memorial service, Leon Weece of Fort Scott, Kansas, read:

I remember Dad in the Springtime:
With fences to mend and boys to bend
It seemed like his task would never end.
I remember Dad thru Depression fears and
Dust Bowl Days and War time years.
I was just a lad but I remember Dad in the
Springtime years.

I remember Dad in the Summertime:
His presence then was hardly seen
For the yellow wheat that was bending low
Must be reaped to become our winter clothes.
He labored hard from dawn to dusk for all of us.
With barely time for a movie or two
And maybe a day at the Hardtner Fair.
These were the days of Summertime
When our hearts were light and cares were few
There on the Home Place nestled in the Gyp Hills
It seemed like We'd never finish the Race.
I was just a youth but I remember Dad thru
Summer years.

I remember Dad in the Fall:
With wheat to drill and a silo to fill
He gave his hands with a ready will.
Yes, I remember well the years of Fall--
One by one we left the nest, to wing our
way to another day,
To test our wings and soar high to do
our best.
Just a youth, yet, I remember Dad in the
Fall years.

I remember Dad in the golden Winter Years:
Up at five to milk the cows,
Thru falling rain and blowing snow to feed
the stock he went.

With noses pressed against the frosty
window pane,
we waited for the gleam of lantern light to
signal Dad was coming up the hill and
Christmas Day had begun.

Golden days of retirement years pass by.
At last Curtains fall with bugle taps and
roll call.

But that's not all:
For as the years shall come and go
I still remember Dad.
He never set the world on fire
But struck a match and lit a candle in the
night,
To show us what was good and right.
That's the way I remember Dad.(13)

All of us need to have a will. Most of us do not have a million dollars to leave; but as stewards of God we ought to make arrangements for our earthly treasure after we are gone.

I drew up my first will when I was twenty eight years old and Jim Williams, Attorney at Dodge City, Kansas, drew up my final will in 1975. However, by far **THE GREATEST LEGACY** that I have for my children has already been given in **MY WILL OF WISDOM** in that--*

- *I led them to know Jesus.
- *How to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- *To seek the Lord with spiritual appetites.
- *How to confront the events of life with faith.
- *To talk with God in simple conversation: to pray
- *Praise the Lord in all things.
- *Deal with the devil in Jesus' Name.
- *And, let the light of their lives shine brightly for God!

I WILL PRACTICE The PRESENCE OF JESUS by--

#4 - Being in Favor with Man.--Luke 2:52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2:52)

Concluding the thought picture of building a house, this statement--"**In favor with men.**"-- makes a fine roof for the building. It would make a shaky foundation and far too many individuals and families use it to build on. They start out wanting a BIG house, an expensive car, children that are social climbers and all the other things that money will buy. They end up personally and collectively with a life or family that is not in favor with either God or man.

Marshall Leggett said it this way:

It is an enigma that modern Western man, who is experiencing an unprecedented era of prosperity, should be characterized by emptiness. But Dr. Karl Jung, successor to Freud in many areas of psychiatry, was asked to diagnose the great spiritual illness of our age. He replied, "The central neurosis of our age is emptiness," This is what T.S. Elliot referred to when he called

our contemporaries "hollow men." He says that lives are empty and hollow; nothing fills the void in their hearts.

Young people sense this. They call it hypocrisy. They see the father who preaches to them about smoking marijuana, drinking a cocktail. Or, the mother who lectures a daughter on chastity, cheating on her husband. This is no doubt exaggerated. Not all adults imbibe and indulge in extra-marital relationships. It is the opinion of this writer these Christian adults are the "salt of the earth." And if you take them out of American society, it would probably collapse. But the spiritual emptiness of most of our age is obvious.

People need values on which to build; they need ideals for which to strive, and character with which to structure their lives. As one man said, "You must be yourself PLUS -- plus that in which you believe; plus that for which you stand; plus that to which you are willing to dedicate your life." For it is not a matter of who you are, or what you are. It is a matter of whose you are.(14)

The person who PRACTICES THE PRESENCE OF JESUS, starts out seeking to be in favor with God, increases in wisdom, learns to use the physical side of life for God's glory: the end result will be a heart and a home that is--in favor with man.

A member of the congregation where I preached over-emphasized the matter of BEING IN FAVOR WITH MAN. In 1958, while ministering at the West Lebanon (Indiana) Christian Church, I announced a series of four sermons on "Stewardship." On Monday after preaching the first message, one of the Elders, Fred Bonebrake, came to my study inquiring if he had understood me correctly about preaching on money for four Sundays straight. I assured him that was the plan and that the subject was "Stewardship." Teaching about money would be included along with time and talent. He reminded me that we had a rich man in the church who might be offended by so much preaching on this subject. The question was--Should I bow to the FAVOR OF MAN? I continued the planned course and the rich deacon came every Sunday. The main thrust of the sermons was that we can send our earthly treasures on ahead into eternity IF we invest it in eternal matters of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

On December 23, 1960, I preached the memorial service for this rich brother--Ura Seeger. His will was probated shortly after this. It was then that I learned of his changing his will. Prior to 1959, his will had left the bulk of his estate to various individuals. On November 6, 1959, his new will left his million dollar estate to various Christian institutions--Milligan College, Johnson Bible College, scholarships for those students who graduated as members of his Sunday School Class--The Loyal Sons and Daughters, and many more along with the church building fund.

It was wise to yield to the FAVOR OF GOD over BEING IN FAVOR WITH MAN.

In our seeking to practice the Presence of Jesus in our home by being in FAVOR WITH MAN, we placed BEING IN FAVOR WITH GOD at the top of the list. Imalee and I never had a long list of "Thou shalt nots." We sought to avoid the error of sin and follow the Truth of God's Word, which is more than a full time job. There were four negative factors for our children which were taboo. I called them the four D's.

1. No drinking of alcohol.

I saw early on in my teenage years that every kind of confusion and evil comes from drinking.

2. No experimenting with dope.

3. No early dating.

Dating is for mating. The reason I was counselling eighth grade girls that "had" to get married was because they started dating when they were fifth graders.

4. No dancing.

Play games, have fun but NO dancing. I learned early on that what the boys talk about on their side of the gym at a dance would make an elephant blush.

Some may say, "With a list like that people will be 'wall flowers.' They can't be in FAVOR WITH MAN, be popular!"

Paul gives Timothy and us the formula for being in "favor with man."

Let no man despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.
(I Timothy 4:12)

And, still it is true that the really popular people are the ones who take a stand for the right!

EXAMPLE: When our oldest daughter, Teresa, was a Senior in High School, she was elected "Sweetheart Queen". Her convictions would not allow her to dance. She reigned over the banquet and the program; but when the lights were turned down low and the dance started, she slipped out and came home.

EXAMPLE: Our oldest son Lynn, planned far in advance to attend a Kiamichi Mountain Men-Boys church Clinic in Oklahoma. Two days before he was to leave, the band instructor, scheduled the band to appear at a neighboring town. Lynn said: "I won't be able to march with the band, I have another engagement." The Instructor said: "Don't you know that others come before self?" Lynn responded, "Sir, with me God comes 1st., Others 2nd., Self-last. I'll be down in Oklahoma learning how to make my life count more for Christ!" And, he was!

A lawyer left home to go to college and law school. Finally he hangs up his shingle to practice law in Louisville, Kentucky.

He came to his office one day announcing that he would be away. His secretary was to cancel all appointments until he returned. There was no forwarding address or telephone number.

He drove down the free-way, got off on a state highway which led to a county dirt road and finally a little tree lined lane. He stops in front of an old white frame house.

A little white-haired lady, bent with the years, comes down the path, peers through the slats on the gate and says: "Big John is that you? What are you doing home? It isn't Christmas or Mother's Day or the Fourth of July."

Big John gets out of his car and says: "Mother, I bring you sad news. I've lost God somewhere along the way."

"Well son, that's terrible; but, why have you come back here?"

"I want us to do the things we used to do when I was a boy."

His mother said, "Well yes, I guess. What do you mean?"

"Could we pray at mealtime like we used to? Read a chapter from the Bible at bedtime and say night prayers like we used to? And, start the day with prayers just like we used to many years ago?" "Sure, we can son! Anything to help you."

And, that is the way it was.

At suppertime it was the old familiar prayer:

For all we eat. For all we wear. For all we have
everywhere. We thank Thee Father, A-men.

When the sun had set and a cool breeze was blowing through the trees, Big John said--"Mama, it's time for bed. You haven't forgotten how it used to be have you?"

"Of course not, Big John!" His mother said. "You get upstairs get your pajamas on and I'll bring the family Bible up."

Up the stairs she came and laid the Bible on the bed. They knelt together and read a chapter from the Psalms. Mama tucked Big John in one more time and listened as he prayed:

"Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. Bless Mama and Uncle Fred and Aunt Mary and Brother Bill and....."

A week later, Big John came bounding down the stairs with a smile from ear to ear, shouting as he came. "Mother! Mother! Good news! I've found God again!"

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" she said, "But, how did you do it?" "Just by doing the things we used to do. The things the years had caused me to forget to do."

Just so, Jesus becomes real and genuine to us as we exercise doing godly things. Thus, we increase in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man when we remember to do His things.

I started this chapter by quoting the Detroit Policeman "IF YOU WANT TO STAND HERE, YOU'LL HAVE TO MOVE ON"--even so, if we want to continue to stand in the midst of life, we must move on by--*

*Dying to self to begin again in order to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

*Determine to make the events of life acts of faith by praying about everything.

*Make Jesus Lord by praising Him in all things.

*Lifting up Jesus' Name in word and deed while we listen for the voice of God all about us.

*Moving life's mountains by speaking the truth of God's Word to them.

*And exercising ourselves unto Godliness as we onward go.

KEEP FAITH ALIVE!

Seek the Lord, not your own understanding.

Quit your fretful, prideful demanding.

Leaning on the Lord. He is ever strong.

You are His child. With Him you belong.

Nurture and strength and comfort you need?

He can abundantly impart. He is the seed!

According to your faith, He will supply,

If on Him you will continually rely.

Have the devil's enticements caused your faith to be weak?

Rebuke the devil and your heavenly Father seek.

Christ's strength can be your strength to overcome.

Hesitate not, lean on Jesus and the Victory is won!

Does the toil and care of the day cause your faith to sag?

Does the weakness of the flesh cause you to fret and lag?

Be always in prayer talking to God with true belief,

And you'll not faint for His solace brings peaceful relief.

Keep your faith alive all the day long!

Praise Him in all things in word and song!

Faith is the victory that brings us to the end

When Christ and His mighty angels will descend.

Then faith will be replaced with glorious sight

In the Land where all is day and no night.

Then the greatest of all that comes from above

Will remain and over shadow all--GOD'S LOVE!(15)

Let us Pray:

JESUS:

I pray in Your Name that the Holy Spirit will cause the seed sown thru the words of this book to be far more than leaves in the wind. Anchor fast the truths of Your Word in the soil of hungry and honest hearts. Bless the planted seed with the warm sunshine of God's Love and may the Holy Spirit cause new life to spring up and bring forth much fruit to Your Glory and the victory of each reader! --A-MEN!--

I leave you with a tune that the Lord gave me many years ago. I pray it will match the melody in your heart.

Let's Just Praise The Lord!

PRAY AND TRUST AND PRAISE

Words by Wilbur S. Johnson 1-2-78 Music by The Brocks

1. PRAY THE DOUBTS AWAY, NIGHT WILL TURN TO DAY; IF YOU PRAY AND
 2. TRUST THE LORD TODAY, IN BIG AND LITTLE WAYS; IF YOU TRUST AND
 4. PRAY AND TRUST AND PRAISE, VERY SIMPLE WAYS; IF YOU DO JUST WHAT

PRAY & PRAY, YOU'LL WALK THE VICTORY WAY.
 TRUST & TRUST, HE'LL GUIDE YOU ALL THE DAY. 3. PRAISE THE LORD TODAY,
 HE SAYS, YOU'LL WALK THE VICTORY WAY.

D. C. 4th Verse
 PRAISE & PRAISE & PRAISE, WHEN YOU'RE SAD OR GLAD, PRAISE THE LORD ALWAYS

FAITH ALIVE IN HEART, HOME and CHURCH
NOTES - Chapter 10

1. Acts 17:21
2. II Timothy 3:1,5,7
3. John 8:32
4. From Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Pg.298
5. John 14:21 from The Amplified New Testament, (1975) Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Copyright The Lockman Foundation (1958).
6. Job 1:1-6 - TLB
7. The Christian Family by Larry Christenson, Cp.7, Pg.157. Copyright Bethany Fellowship, Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.
8. Out of my file quote by the late J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the F.B.I.
9. Deuteronomy 6:4-7
10. Out of my file. Author unknown.
11. Christenson, Cp.6, Pg. 152.
12. Romans 1:17 as quoted by Paul from Habakkuk 2:4.
13. Original poem by Wilbur S. Johnson in memory of my father, GALEN O. JOHNSON - 1891-1976.
14. Quote from Marshall Leggett, minister of the Broadway Christian Church, Lexington, Kentucky from the "Christ in Youth" News sheet of Tulsa, Oklahoma.
15. An original poem by Rollin Stewart. From Meditations from the Heart, Page 5. Copyrighted by Rollin Stewart of Arkansas City, Kansas. Used by permission.
16. The Lord blessed me with the lyrics of this chorus on January 1, 1978. The music score is from the old chorus, "Sing and Smile and Pray," by Virgil P. Brock. Copyrighted in 1934, it is now in public domain.

I Salute....

GOD'S MIGHTY WARRIORS!

From the beginning of the Faith Alive Ministry, there has been a group of praying people known as the "FAITH ALIVE PRAYER BAND." These people volunteered for prayer duty and without them I would surely falter.

Many years ago the Lord blessed me with a poem to honor these beautiful people. In saluting these servants, I share one verse of that poem.

BECAUSE YOU PRAYED - FAITH WAS ALIVE!

The meeting started slow...souls lacked the Spirit's glow..but in the night I spoke to God--please send angels to tell the Prayer Band Warriors to PRAY!...And, by the breaking of day, new power was on the way. Faith was alive because YOU PRAYED!

These are the IMPORTANT SILENT SERVANTS that have prayed during the last two years while this book was being written.

**Les & Elaine Ashdown...*Phil & Janet Ashley...*Lois & Robert Austin...*Roy & Blanche Barnes...*Raymon & Ina Barrick...*Beaver & Dee Dee Bell...*Ray & Maudelene Blass...*Betty Bourdette...*Donna & Rod Burd...*Hazel Burghardt...*David & Kim Camp...*Elmo & Mildred Chastain...*Grace Crow...*Talbot & Virginia Cunningham...*Merle & Maxine Darst...*Keith & Linda Dellenbach...*Zereta Dodson...*Helen Durfey...*Don & Judy Faunce...*Craig & Peggy Faucett...*George & Christine Ferguson...*Gilbert & Barbara Forrest...*Max & Rose Foster...*Margaret Glaze...*Clyde & Nancy Goff...*Irene Grimmatt...*Elva Olivia Hain...*Marian Hamman...*Steve & Virginia Hensley...*Al & Virginia Hickerson...*Galen & Evelyn Hickerson...*Floyd & Evelyn Hopper...*Ron & Haven Howard...*Kevin & Jane James...*Galen & Kim Johnson and Elizabeth...*Pat & Eileen Johnson...*Rebecca Johnson...*Russ & Shirley Johnson...*Teresa Johnson...*Jerl & Dani Joslin...*Benny & Sharon Kennedy...*Etta Kerr...*Dean & Phyllis Lavelle and Grant...*Ellena Mast...*Mary Maupin...*Emogene McBee...*The late Homer & Ruth McKinley...*Howard & Kay Messer...*John & Marcia Messer...*Mary Jo Meyer...*Dave & Carolyn Mostek...*John & Ruth Nawn...*Tim & Cathi Newton...*Dale & Marcia Powell...*Betty Prewett...*Hank & Diana Ricketson...*Mary Ellen Riner...*Don & Gary Rock...*Roger & Vikki Day...*Jay Ruttman...*Paul & Ruth Snyder...*Chiz & Judy Stevens...*Stan & Susan Stockton...*Roy & Joyce Sturdy...*Jim & Sharon Sumner...*Doyle & Donna Terry...*Marie Trissel...*Cletus & Virginia VanDolah...*Tom & Melody Walters...*Wednesday Night Prayer Group of Cove, Arkansas...*Leon & Cynthia Weece.*

A Recommendation.....

It was November 9, 1975, when Bible Christian Church opened a one week meeting with Brother Wilbur Johnson. He called it a "Faith Alive Meeting." We called it a meeting. It began several weeks before he arrived as letters and tracts, bathed in prayer, were mailed to every member of the congregation. Prayer Band Members in other cities and towns were asked to pray for every prospect, member and person involved in the special Faith Alive Meeting. The meeting was set apart with a Day of Prayer and Fasting on Saturday. Each session of the meeting was presented to Him with prayer and praise. As the week progressed, FAITH began to come ALIVE in hearts, homes and the congregation as Brother Wilbur shared with us the WAYS and LIFE PRINCIPLES that God used to quicken his life and home.

Brother Johnson has been writing this book - Faith Alive in Heart, Home and Church all of his life. The book came about from a prompting of the Holy Spirit and through the fires of testing in the author's own heart, home and church. For more than 15 years now, Brother Wilbur has been sharing and collecting LIFE examples of how these principles and ways of God really work to make Faith come ALIVE!

If you take seriously the principles and ways of God that are recorded in each chapter of this book--a Faith that is ALIVE to prayer, worship, praise, meditation, study and an intimate walk with JESUS CHRIST--will result. For which we must say "PRAISE THE LORD"

H. Dean LaVelle, Minister
Bible Christian Church
Arkansas City, Kansas

WHAT IS A--*"Faith Alive Revival?"*

A young man at a Christian Camp said: "WHAT I NEED MOST IS JUST A FRESH BREATH OF GOD." His desire is the need of every heart and home, and can be a reality when FAITH IS ALIVE. A LIVING FAITH is the result of two factors: #1 Learning to be FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT according to Ephesians 5:18 and #2 - Knowing how to RESIST THE DEVIL as Ephesians 6:10-18 teaches.

A "FAITH ALIVE DAYS" Crusade is not just another run-of-the-mill quote "Revival Meeting." IT's a spiritual type of 'SHOW-AND-TELL.' Christ directed, Holy Spirit powered and Bible centered. The daily class on "DEALING WITH THE DEVIL" and evening messages on FAITH, POWER, PRAYER, PRAISE, TRUST and THE HOLY SPIRIT S-H-O-W H-O-W T-O-GAIN AND KEEP THE VICTORY MOMENT BY MOMENT.

G-O-A-L:

1. To cause faith to be alive in our hearts by equipping us with both defensive and offensive weapons named above.
2. To realize the fruit of a faith alive--the seeking and saving of the lost.

The DAILY CLASS on "Dealing With The Devil" offered each morning and/or evening provides the followers of Jesus, thru a search of the Scriptures, with applied knowledge on how to resist the devil.

The EVENING MESSAGES are pointed toward equipping the Christian to continue walking in the Spirit. These chart MESSAGES by title are--*

- *"RESTORING THE JOY OF SALVATION"
- *"HOW TO WALK BY FAITH?"
- *"HOW TO BE FILLED WITH GOD'S POWER"
- *"44 BLESSINGS OF THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE"
- *"THE POWER OF PRAYER!"
- *"THE POWER OF PRAISE!"
- *"PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF JESUS"

The Secret Servants

are a group of people who have been called of God to minister with their gifts. "Faith Alive Days" has never asked for any support but we are blessed as men and women, sensitive to God's Spirit, minister to our needs.

I wrote this poem in honor of these special Silent Servants.

I SUPPLY

The Lord has said:
I WILL SUPPLY!
(Philippians 4:19)
NO NEED TO SIGH,
or be depressed.
COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS
not your needs.
JUST LEAN ON ME;
not yourself.
IN YOUR WALK:
"Trust" is the key.
I AM YOUR SOURCE:
You will not lack.
MY SPECIAL PEOPLE,
heed the need.
THEY ANSWER BACK
with gifts of love.
SO, NOW YOU SEE
I DO SUPPLY!

Wilbur Johnson-1983

This list covers those who have shared during the labor of writing this book. The asterisk (*) by a name indicates those who have shared since the beginning of "Faith Alive Days Ministry" in 1974.

*Helen Adams...Fort Smith Albert Pike Christian Church...Melvin & Christine Anderson...Les & Elaine Ashdown...Gary & Rachel Ball...Raymon & Ina Barrick...*Roy & Blanche Barnes...Beaver & Dee Dee Bell...*Arkansas City Bible Christian Church...*Ray & Maudelene Blass...*Vernon & Ada Bogart...Inez Bottorff...Betty & Loyal Bourdette...Brenner Well Drilling of Indiana...Jim & Ethel Brenner...Ray & Sally Brisco...Rod & Donna Burd...*Hazel Burghardt...Dennis & Debbie Byrne...*Dodge City Central Christian Church...*George & Rose Cloutman...Grace Crow...Dan & Audrey Cravatt...Talbot & Virginia Cunn-*

ingham...Marshall Cusick...*Merle & Maxine Darst...Dean & Glenna Dellenbach...*Keith & Linda Dellenbach...Zereta Dodson...Craig & Peggy Faucett...*George & Christine Ferguson...Fishing Creek Chapel of Indiana...Patsy Fithian...*Rose & Max Foster...*Forest & Vera Glasco...Margaret Glaze...*Clyde & Nancy Goff...*Irene Grimmert...Marian Hamman...Tuffy & Catherine Heiland...Clifford & Pearl Hensley...*Steve & Virginia Hensley...*Al & Virginia Hickerson...Jeff & Debbie Hiers...Highmore, S.D., Christian Women's Fellowship...Cliff & Virginia Johnson...Galen & Kim Johnson...Marie Johnson...Pat & Eileen Johnson...*Rebecca Johnson...Russ & Shirley Johnson...Tempest Johnson...Teresa Johnson...*Benny & Sharon Kennedy...Emogene McBee...Don & Nancy Mahan...Elwood & Pat Marshall...Ellena Mast...*Lillian McClain...the late Homer & Ruth McKinley...Thelma & Tim Meek...*Brian & Kelly Messer...*Howard & Kay Messer...*John & Marcia Messer...Minneola Christian Church...Linda Mullins...John & Ruth Nawn...Minnis & Helen Nelson...*Ed & Ruby Olson...*Carrie Spahr...Charles & Anna Petty...Betty Prewett...Minnie Pullen...Joe & Joy Ragsdale...Arkansas City Random Road Chapel...Don & Gary Rock...Joe & Kathy Rush...*Cecil & Dorothy Shelton...Junior & Janet Shorter...*Mercedes & the late Leroy Smith...*Paul & Ruth Snyder...Chiz & Judy Stevens...Stan & Susan Stockton...*Roy & Joyce Sturdy...Stronghurst, Illinois Christian Church...Henry & Irene Seubold...Howard & Marlene Temple...*Chuck & Anita Thomas...Wayne & Eula Thompson...*Marie & the late Gene Tickle...Cletus & Virginia Vandolah...Woody & Penny Watson...Mike & Cynthia Weece...Ray & Gloria West...W.A. & Charlotte Wheat...*Dale & Jeanene White...Bill & Alma Wilson.

