

SEVEN SIMPLE SECRETS

(Of acquiring dynamic faith and powerful prayer)

This is another series out of the archives of "Brad Cullen." A pseudonym I used for several years. This one begun in March of 2004. Please ignore any references made to www.ministryofspirit.com this web-site is no longer available.

SIMPLE SECRET ONE

(Approach God with impudence and persistence UNTIL)

Here is one of those strange but absolutely true paradoxes: Without learning to pray powerfully we cannot acquire what we are going to refer to here as dynamic faith. Dynamic faith is defined as forceful, effective, get-it-done, earth shaking faith. Without dynamic faith we cannot pray powerfully – it is only a paradox until we look at it as a whole. That is, a synergy created by two separate things that are joined together as ONE POWERFUL UNIT -- released in CREATIVE ENERGY and purpose.

How do we engage in powerful prayer? By employing dynamic faith. How do we acquire dynamic faith? By engaging in powerful prayer. The seeming contradiction ends when we understand that engaging in powerful prayer *is* dynamic faith. Dynamic faith *is* praying powerfully.

We cannot begin to understand any of this if we hold onto our traditional, religious understanding of what we refer to as "prayer."

Reality check: What is the picture some of us have in our minds when we see or hear the word "prayer?" Is it safe to assume that it is something quite different than the tradition-destroying instructions Jesus provided?

The traditional image is someone reverently and respectfully beginning to address the Almighty with, "Oh God, if it be thy will" – followed by some vague request or another. Yes I am mocking this. Why? Because the essence of this **SIMPLE SECRET #1** is to approach God as we would a good friend, a friend close enough that we are not afraid to go to him in the middle of the night to wake him up and help us with a problem. A friend close enough that we do not have to approach him with any awe. Jesus said to be forceful with this friend – to the point of impudence – totally lacking in respect for his position. We are to pound on his door, and tell him impudently what it is we need! We are to continue demanding and pounding until we get everything we need. I didn't say this – Jesus said it. He emphasized this by saying that the "friend" didn't get up and give us what we needed because he is our friend, but because of our impudence (lack of awe) and persistence. If we have any respect for Jesus, wouldn't it make sense if we began to follow his instructions about how to pray?

I have told the story (and it bears repeating) about the daughter of the president of a Christian University on the west coast of the U.S. who became angry with me because of how I had answered a question she asked among a group of about fifty students in a class with which I was sharing. Her question essentially was, "Why should I pay any attention to what you say about praying? How do you pray that is any different from the way I pray?"

After several seconds of waiting for guidance I replied something to the effect, "The difference is that when I pray I know that it will be answered exactly the way I prayed."

The point of bringing up the story here is – she went home locked herself in her bedroom and prayed, asking God, "if that nasty man (that would be me) can get answers to his prayers, why can't I get answers to mine?"

As the story unfolded several days later from a phone conversation with the professor of that class – she stayed in her room praying like that for a couple of hours. The result being that she was healed of mononucleosis! Mind you, she didn't learn to pray from me, she got angry and went home and impudently and persistently prayed to the Source UNTIL she got the answer to her question.

I only wish that half the people that write to me trying to correct me, would instead just get angry at me and go to God and impudently and persistently demand to know why I can get answers to my praying and they don't. Because, frankly, they never write to me telling me that they have a better way, they just write telling me that I am wrong! Of course there are many more on the other side of things that write telling me how their lives have been changed because they've followed Jesus' instructions. By the way, these are not just Jesus' instructions – it is the way *he* prayed.

People often write to me asking, "How can I make sure that what I want to pray for is in God's will and timing *before* I pray?" That is an excellent question – after all, who wants to be praying against God's will? Not I! A partial answer is found by considering something in the foregoing story.

Think about the fact that this young woman didn't mess around. She went directly to her one and only perfect Daddy and said, "how come I can't?" You see, there were several things that happened in that class that day that proved to her that I wasn't just talking – I knew from experience what I was talking about and there was ample proof of it demonstrated in the class.

Here is a question that will help you to understand where I am "coming from." Do you think when she asked her Daddy, "How come I can't" that a big booming voice would come to her and say, "BECAUSE IT IS MY WILL THAT YOU HAVE MONONUCLEOSIS and you are not ready to pray like he prays" (?)

She was/is His child and had no doubt that He would answer her and He did! That was Jesus' point in the instructions – if we as imperfect parents aren't going to allow our children to get mononucleosis or any other disease if we can help it – there is no way that our Perfect Parent is either and He will always respond – if we approach Him in the same kind of dynamic faith and powerful praying with which this young lady approached her one and only perfect Dad.

Back to the question "How can I make sure that what I want to pray for is in God's will and timing *before* I pray?" There are some things that I know are God's will and the timing is *always* now. For example I know that it is always His will that we are completely and thoroughly immersed in His Holy Spirit. I know that it is always His will that everyone find eternal life by being completed in Him NOW.

I know that it is always God's will that everyone be healed from every disease NOW. God's timing is NOW. However, I also know that sometimes people are not ready to receive healing and deliverance because of conflicts in their own minds. Also there is the fact that sometimes people are causing or perpetuating their own diseases through any number of thinking problems. Just last night somebody sent me the following questions by e-mail:

"My question to you is this Brad; is it your experience that sinful strongholds such as bitterness or unforgiveness must be repented of before authority can be exercised in the spirit over whatever it is that is causing the affliction? I know that you've mentioned in your articles about spiritual conflicts that can hold up healing or deliverance. Do these things generally need to be first discerned and then dealt with before any healing or deliverance can happen? Am I putting God in a box with this line of thinking or are there spiritual laws that somehow pertain to this?"

The fact is that usually the bitterness or unforgiveness is the cause of the illness. Until we deal with the underlying causes the person cannot avail himself to God's healing. It really is that simple. Does that change God's will, or God's timing? NO! There are issues that need to be dealt with – issues that need to be dealt with NOW. The reality is (and this is only one simple example) that if a person controls people in his or her situation through bitterness and doesn't want to give it up – and IF bitterness is the cause of disease, as it so often is, then the bitterness must be dealt with first before any healing can take place.

Back to the question, "How can I make sure that what I want to pray for is in God's will and timing *before* I pray?" First understand that it is always God's desires and purposes ("will") that everyone walks in perfect health. Second it is always within His timing. He does respect individual choices, however, and if someone is getting some secondary benefit from the illness – we had better uncover it and see if they are ready to choose a

better way – before we pray. Or perhaps better stated, we'd better pray to be able to discern the underlying cause.

How do we pray for discernment? By applying Simple Secret #1, that is: Approach God Impudently and persistently UNTIL we have it.

SIMPLE SECRET TWO

(You can acquire and use the same faith Jesus had – “God-faith”)

Note: If you did not receive the first installment it can be accessed at the website -- www.ministryofspirit.com click on “Articles” and it will be near the top of the list.

SIMPLE SECRET #2 is simply that you can acquire and use the same faith Jesus had – “God-faith”

One of the most amazing passages in the Bible (in my view) is the following statement Jesus made in the original language: “Have God-faith!” In context he was actually saying that we can and should acquire and use the same kind of faith that he had exhibited in order to do the same kind of thing he had done. What had happened is that he had spoken forcefully to a fig tree and it withered and died because of it! I’m getting something, this moment, more strongly from this passage than I have ever gotten before.

The story in a nutshell was that on the day before, Jesus was hungry and walked over to a fig tree to see if it had any figs; it had leaves – but no figs. With a bit of evident irritation he said, “Nobody is ever going to eat from you again!” His disciples heard it and remembered him saying it. The next day they were passing the same fig tree. “Look,” Peter said with obvious surprise, “the fig tree you cursed yesterday is withered from its roots all the way to the top.”

What Jesus was saying to them is,

“Don’t be so amazed, you can do the same thing as well, here’s how: Acquire and use the same faith you saw me use by learning to speak forcefully into the spirit realm and you will be able to do the same kinds of things.”

The foregoing just became an inescapable conclusion to me due to the context of the four verses that immediately follow this incident and Jesus’ statement, “Have the faith of God” – or “God-faith.”

Here is a question we may want to consider: Why do so few of us believe some of the things Jesus said? Example: “Anyone that believes in me will perform the very same miracles you have seen me perform?” Here is another question: What did Jesus say was the reason that his disciples could not cast out a particular demon that was causing seizures in a little boy? Answer: He said, “Because you don’t have enough faith.”

Jesus’ disciples were able to get the correct answer from him because they were honest enough to go to him and ask why they couldn’t do it. What continually amazes me is how many people that say they believe seem to hide behind doctrines that justify their unbelief and their own inability to do what Jesus said we would do if we believe – and unlike the disciples they are not honest enough in their relationship to ask, “Why can’t I do it?”

Perhaps we should take a symbolic look at the fig tree incident.

Is it possible that what Jesus was demonstrating with the killing of a fig tree that had no figs on it, by merely speaking forcefully to it, was to show us how to get rid of the “trees” in our lives that are adorned with leaves (that look good), but upon closer inspection produce nothing? Well,

Jesus didn't actually say that, so I'm not going to speculate. However, that particular thesis makes as much sense as some of the man-made doctrines that the passage seems to generate from others, so what's wrong with a bit of speculation?

What Jesus was clearly saying is that we can have the same kind of God-faith that he had and in context when he used it to kill a tree! Let's review: He walked over to a fig tree because it had leaves on it and he was hungry. As he got closer he saw that it had no figs. So he spoke to it in a manner that his disciples later referred to as a "curse" and the tree withered and completely died from the roots up.

As we more closely examine the lack of "fruit" (in this particular instance "faith") in our own lives, should we not look for the obstacles, the "trees," so to speak, that are taking up space in our garden and curse them? If we carry this allegory further by examining the trees in our lives that bear no fruit – we may begin to see that they have "leaves," *i.e.*, religious traditions and activity that look promising (just like the leaves on the fig tree did to Jesus at first), but produce nothing. Perhaps it is time to curse them and say, "That's it, you are totally unproductive and I am not going to eat from you ever again!" Then sit back and watch them dry up and die. Is this so far-fetched? The ongoing essence of operating in God-faith is to ask the Source; ask the One Jesus said he would send to lead us into all truth.

Let's end this Simple Secret #2 with a bit of spiritual logic straight out of the Bible. Jesus said, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth." So let's be bold enough to ask Him for that guidance. "Spirit of truth, Jesus said if we believe – we would be able to do everything he did. Is that true? Furthermore, Spirit of truth, Jesus said that we are to acquire the same faith Jesus had, which he referred to as God-faith. Are we supposed to have such faith?"

I have chills running up and down my spine, literally, as I am writing this. Do you know what the Spirit of truth's answer to these questions is? An emphatic "Yes!" Do you know how you can verify that is His answer? Because the very same verse in which Jesus is recorded as saying that the "Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth;" confirms it – "For He will not speak on His own authority--" and the next verse says, "He will glorify me." Can't we see it? The Spirit of truth, the One Jesus sent is not going to contradict something that Jesus said. *

NO! The contradiction comes from those that say they believe in the Bible and yet refuse to come to Him. Jesus said, "You study the Scriptures for in them you believe you have eternal life, but all the time they give their testimony about me, but you refuse to come to me so that you can have that life!" (John 5:39,40)

What is the "life" Jesus promises? The life of the Spirit of truth poured out in us. Here is a verse to remember and tuck away in your memory: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will

teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:27)

Let's also see that Jesus said the very same thing in different ways: "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me." (John 15:26) "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you." (John 16:7)

Shall we ignore such a destiny? What is the destiny? To be what Jesus was on earth and to do what he did – by applying SIMPLE SECRET #2 – that is, by acquiring the same faith Jesus had, God-faith.

*All the quotations in this paragraph are from the 14th 15th and 16th chapters of John quoted directly from the New King James Version.

SIMPLE SECRET THREE

(Avoid spiritual conflicts – go to Him!)

Many years ago I made what was for me a startling discovery. One of the primary interferences to walking in dynamic faith and powerful prayer is the presence of spiritual conflicts. There are a variety of conditions that allow spiritual conflicts. Spiritual conflicts can fester in the conscious mind and also can be suppressed or repressed so that there is no evidence of them on the surface while they raise havoc subconsciously. Part of that discovery came as a result of working with a psychiatrist whose practice was limited to those who professed to be Christians and believed that the Bible was something more than simply a collection of "inspired writings."

When a new or prospective patient came into his office he would point to a "J.B. Phillips Student Edition of the New Testament," and say, "Everything I do related to the treatment of a patient revolves around a relationship with Jesus Christ and this book. If you don't believe at some level that Jesus Christ and this book should have an influence on your life you will want to see someone else. I can refer you if you like." That was his opening speech to a new patient and he delivered it without variation.

I first met him over forty years ago at a small Evangelical church in Northern California. He was in his last year of psychiatric residency at a large state-operated mental hospital and I was managing a forest products trucking company. That initial meeting grew into a close, life-long friendship. One uncanny thing about him was that he "knew" if a patient was destined to commit suicide. Further, he knew of no therapy, drugs or of any other physician that could avert the eventual act of suicide, until he discovered how to pray for them. No more suicides! More of his story and our relationship can be found in the little book called, **"Unlocking The Treasure Chest of God's Gifts."** The same kinds of spiritual conflicts that cause emotional problems and mental illnesses can severely limit one's ability to acquire dynamic faith and powerful prayer. On the other hand, dynamic faith and powerful prayer can get rid of the conflict – a seeming paradox.

Seeming irresolvable differences in a relationship; bitterness; unresolved anger or guilt; acting contrary to one's own value system are just a few things that open the door to spiritual conflicts. Here are four things that are directly spiritual and limit our ability to function in faith and power:

1. Hanging onto religious dogma and refusing to "look" at truth. Jesus said, "You have rendered the Word of God as worthless by your many traditions and many such things do you do."

2. Being under a blanket of spiritual authority that is both powerless and stifling. I discovered this "accidentally" one night while I was ministering in an inner city church. The membership was comprised of people that had been "converted" or "saved" at a skid row mission nearby. The pastoral husband and wife team were old time, humble, spiritual warriors for whom I had the deepest respect. I had just been introduced and out of my mouth came these words: "Knowing you two, I suppose I don't have to ask for permission to say or do whatever the Holy Spirit leads me to do or say?" They both nodded affirmatively and emphatically. Something clicked in me that, at the moment, I didn't quite understand. There were miracles and healings in that church that night – the likes of which I had not seen before in any church, including the one I had formerly (ugh) "pastored". From that point forward for as long as I ministered in churches as a visitor after that –

I never again experienced a lukewarm time, why? Because I would not go unless the leadership of that church gave me permission to say and do whatever God had anointed me to say or do (period).

3. Apparent Scriptural or Biblical conflicts when one part of the Bible seems to be saying something in direct conflict with another part. The following is just one of many notable examples and being caught in it will quench the ability to receive dynamic faith and the ability to pray in power. In the 23rd chapter of Matthew, in the original language, Jesus quite clearly expresses that there should be no leaders or teachers except one, "The Christ," as he put it. He gave emphasis to this by saying that we should neither allow ourselves to be called by any title that implies spiritual authority or superiority nor should we refer to others by any such title.

"You are to minister to one another in the same kind of equality as brothers and sisters are equal. And don't refer to any human being as your spiritual father – you have only one Father and He is in the unseen realm of the spirit."

This seems to run head-on into several passages in the letters of Paul. In one of his letters to young Timothy whom he is mentoring Paul refers to himself as Timothy's spiritual father. He provides instructions as to how Timothy should go about leading and managing his "flock." In Ephesians, Paul lays out the framework for what has been called the "five-fold ministry of church," *i.e.*, apostles (a title by which Paul makes reference to himself), prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers." Only someone intellectually or spiritually dishonest could claim that there is not an apparent scriptural conflict here. Note the word apparent in the foregoing sentence. I don't feel called to deal with this in detail in this treatise – I simply offer my views on an individual basis to anyone that would like to write and ask for them – as Paul says, "I thank God that there is a way out through Jesus Christ," over just such conflicts at which we are looking.

4. Missing God, by refusing to go to Him. We dealt in the previous installment with the fact that the one Jesus Christ referred to interchangeably as the "Holy Spirit" and the "Spirit of Truth" is always available to lead or guide us through every situation. The end of all conflict begins in taking it to HIM. Some would say that Bible study is the answer. My experience with dealing with emotionally disabled people is that Bible study if it doesn't lead someone to the Spirit of Truth can be deadly. A perfect time to bring up the woman in Houston, Texas that not all that long ago who studied the Bible incessantly and became convinced that she should kill her five children and did so in rather dramatic and gruesome fashion.

SIMPLE SECRET FOUR

(In order to get more faith – exercise what you already have.)

From my perspective, many of the “faith statements” that people make to me in e-mails are downright silly. Please hear me – I said, “From my perspective.” What that should mean to any particular reader is that I may be wrong. But it is my perspective – a perspective grounded in my own experience of taking what Jesus said seriously and putting it into practice and discovering that it WORKS!

Implied in the foregoing is a challenge. If we are going to put the “Simple Secret #4” into practice, it will be far more effective if we begin by exercising only the faith we actually have. I need to back up and explain why I say that some of the “faith statements” people make are downright silly. They are silly (again, from my perspective) because they are based on intellectual acquiescence to religious doctrine and tradition (“beliefs”) and not “faith” at all. If we go back to “Simple Secret #1” and look at how “dynamic faith” is defined it becomes easy to see the difference between an intellectual belief and dynamic faith. Here it is: “Dynamic faith is defined as forceful, effective, get-it-done, earth shaking faith.”

Saying “I know God can heal” is intellectual, meaningless and powerless to accomplish anything. Remember the woman with the twelve-year menstrual flow? She heard about Jesus and that he had healing

powers. She believed what she heard. She could have stayed at home and her belief would have been intact. She could have even made a statement such as, "I know Jesus can heal" and nothing would have happened. No action would have been taken that would have turned her belief system into FAITH!

But instead of staying home – she said to herself, "if I can only touch the edge of his clothing I will be healed!" Then she put actions with her words and went to where Jesus was. She pushed and shoved her way through the crowd until she touched his clothing. BANG! She was instantly healed. She accessed the miracle working, healing power of God resident in Jesus. What did Jesus say to her after he found out what she had done? Did he say, "Yes, you were healed because of the power in me" (?) No, he most emphatically did not. He told her that it was her faith that healed her. Again, what was her "faith?" She went to where Jesus was, she pushed and shoved her way through the thick crowd of people until she could reach out and barely touch his clothing – and she was instantly healed!

Now, here is a simple truth that we "can take to the bank." We can read and believe Jesus' words in the 14th chapter of the Gospel of John that reveal that anyone that believes will perform the very same miracles (giving eyesight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, healing all kinds of diverse diseases, raising people from the dead, turning water into wine, casting out demons, having the resident healing power of God within us – yes EVERYTHING Jesus did), and yet do nothing to activate Jesus' promises into dynamic faith and none of his promises will come into being. Or we can begin to put our belief into action and actually begin to do the same things Jesus did in the same manner. HE DIDN'T DO THEM! He said, "The Father in me does the works." That's the secret with anyone that does what Jesus did – they don't do the works, the Father in them does.

What is the bottom line difference? Instead of making statements of unbelief and no-faith such as, "I know God CAN heal" or "If God wants me to have that kind of faith he can give it to me," etc. – we can begin doing what Jesus said it takes to get to the point of being able to do what he did. Which shall it be?

Let's take the version found in Matthew of an incident that happened with Jesus and his twelve closest followers and talk about how we can begin to exercise the faith we already have – faith that many of us don't realize we have.

A man brought his young son to Jesus and said, "Please help my son. He has seizures that cause him to fall into the water and even the fire. I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn't cure him." Jesus responded by hollering at his own disciples. In the original language he called them (literally) a bunch of faithless perverts. He called them this because they had not been practicing what he had taught them. The narrative states that

Jesus then rebuked the demon causing the seizures and the boy was immediately healed.

Later, the disciples went to Jesus privately and asked why they were unable to cast this particular demon out. Jesus' answer in the original is really quite simple, "Because you don't have enough faith!" Then Jesus went on to give a phenomenal promise – "If you do have enough faith nothing will be impossible to you." Then he tells them (and us by extension), "However, this kind of demon responds to your words only if you have gone through a sufficient time of preparation through much fasting and prayer."

Part of Jesus' instruction in the original language, about how to pray, and indeed how he said he prayed, was to persistently and impudently demand what we want to come into existence on the physical plane while pounding on our one and only perfect Dad's door. We are to do this UNTIL what we are demanding comes into existence. If you are tempted to argue with what is stated in this paragraph, may I gently remind you that these instructions did not originate with me, they originated with Jesus.

The following is an excerpt from an article I wrote back on October 3rd 2003. **"THEN THERE IS..."**

I write a lot about the fact that the word "ask" is often translated from a word in the original that can mean "command" or "demand" depending on the context. Probably sixty percent of my audience admits to having considerable difficulty getting past their religious training that, "you cannot demand anything from God."

Here is a simple rule that I follow. I DO NOT DEMAND ANYTHING FROM GOD UNLESS I KNOW THAT WHAT I AM DEMANDING IS GOD'S WILL. If I have clarity about God's will concerning any particular thing, then I demand with an air of impudence because I know that I am agreeing with God. Here is the key... when I know something is God's will then I know it has already been provided. If it has already been provided, why don't I already have it? What I am demanding is something that Jesus so clearly taught in the original languages and is obscured in the translation to English. I am demanding that the obstacles, to my getting what God has already decreed to be His own will, get out of the way. I am demanding that the enemy's agents get their hands off what already belongs to me.

How do I find out what is God's will for any particular situation? Let's step back for a moment. There are two things I already know that God wants for me. One, He wants my life to be guided by His own Spirit. A bit of digression is in order here. Since we know that God is a spirit ("to be worshiped in spirit and in truth") I recognize the redundancy in saying, "God's own Spirit. I also understand the preconceptions in the minds of many people – and this phraseology seems to make the transition from religious preconceptions to deep understanding far easier. The second thing I know God wants for me is that I live in His perfect will.

What has been revealed to me is that the primary reason to demand that I want God's own Spirit to take increasing control over my life, moment by moment, day by day and that I want only God's will... is to serve notice to my mind and the entities in the spirit (or unseen) realm that I mean business about this.

Then I take Jesus' instructions seriously about knocking on my Father's door and impudently demanding that I be in His will and have MORE of His own Spirit – UNTIL I know His will and sense the increase of His Spirit upon me. I realize that this is all quite subjective, but as I have shared several times in other articles, it allowed me to respond to the following question from a young lady in a group of students at a university class at which I was sharing. "Why should I listen to whatever you say about praying?" My answer, after a few moments of silence: "Because when I pray I always get what I am praying for. Because I never pray for anything until I know that it is God's will."

So, specifically what I do is to physically knock, tap, tap, tap, on the floor, the steering wheel of my car, the side of the bed, my desk, or anything else that is handy and tell my Father that I want more of His Spirit and to know His will about a particular situation. I continue to tap, tap, tap, (the answer may take days or it may come in a flash of instant insight) and continue demanding that I get more of His Spirit until I have clarity and know how and what to pray. It really is that easy.

I also have learned that I may have many preconceived ideas that limit my ability to pray effectively, meaning, that is, for results. For example, I find that often I am locked into thinking that things can only be resolved in one way. When in fact there may be many ways for God to work out any particular situation. My preconceived ideas tend to limit me to seeing only one way – I have found it to be very helpful to ask God's Spirit to take away my preconceived ideas and to give me His vision. It is truly amazing, just as one example, when I have been steeped in looking at some Bible passage in one particular way that all of a sudden I see it in an entirely different light after asking Spirit to get rid of my preconceived notions.

Another thing I have found to be of importance in demanding to know God's will for a specific situation is to realize that I have preconceived ideas that may have their foundation in the Scriptures, but the timing may be way off for realization. Let's take healing for a physical malady, just for example.

I know that it is a truth that God generally wants us to prosper and be in good health. I never, EVER, pray for somebody to be healed simply because it is God's will. Just because it is God's will for us to live in *perfect* health does not mean that some of us do not live in *ill* health. We know that many do. Often their ill health comes as a result of poor habits and their attitude. Sometimes other factors such as deep-seated conflicts exist. Sometimes, as with the boy having the epileptic-like seizures, the underlying cause is demonic. So, when I am praying about a particular situation such as

a request that I intervene on somebody's behalf for healing – I demand to be in God's will and demand to have His own Spirit so that I will know what to do next. Usually what I "receive" while praying is borne out by probing with the person to find out what is going on behind the scenes from their perspective.

I had it on my fingertips just now to write, "For the life of me, I do not understand why all of the foregoing is so troubling to some people and causes so much argument."

I just heard, "Oh yes you do." Twenty years ago the foregoing two pages would have scared the dickens out of me. The first time I witnessed a demonic entity manifesting before my own eyes... and knew that it could be nothing else... especially when it was dispatched in rather dramatic fashion – my whole life turned upside down. Prior to that experience if I had read anything like what I have written here, I would have been filled with fear. That seems so silly now. Way back, a couple of paragraphs before I began inserting the foregoing excerpt I wrote: "and talk about how we begin to exercise the faith we already have. Faith that many of us don't realize we have."

Here it is: Ask the following of God: "I want to know if I should be demanding more faith? I want to do nothing that isn't your perfect will for me. I want to know." While asking rap with your knuckles on any surface and keep on rapping while you impudently and persistently insist upon an answer.

Some religious teachers will tell you that the immediately foregoing borders on witchcraft and that you better be careful because an evil spirit can give you an imitation and lead you into deception. Or some may say that this is presumption and not faith. My retort is that teaching that what Jesus taught is presumption, or worse yet going to lead to your being deceived by evil spirits is presumption of the highest order! How dare they?!!! Consider the fact that such teachers are standing in opposition to what Jesus said. That could provide us with a clue as to how they dare to do it, could it not?

Let the following seep through your consciousness. Jesus' allegory for doing this knocking and demanding as a little child – was the reminder that we as imperfect human parents know how to give our children what they ask for. Would we give them a poisonous snake (a symbol for an evil spirit) when they asked for a fish? (a symbol for Christ). Of course not – his finale of this teaching was, "how much more of His own Spirit will your perfect Daddy (the proper translation from the word he used in the Aramaic) give to those who persistently demand to get more?"

Exercise what faith you do have in pursuing His answer as to whether you should get more. Jesus said get it! Or do we prefer listening to religious teachers that do not exercise dynamic faith or powerful prayer themselves?

SIMPLE SECRET FIVE

(Begin NOW)

Begin what NOW? We'll come back to what after we deal with NOW.

To me, one of the most intriguing English terms in the Bible is "eternal life." The reason that it is intriguing to me is that the words in the original language actually mean "no beginning as well as no ending." Many of us have grown up with the understanding that "eternal life" meant going to heaven after these physical bodies we occupy go through what we term "death," when the words in the original actually mean, THIS MOMENT. Some eastern religions and "new age" philosophies have captured the correct meaning and they emphasize it by referring to the "perfect moment of now." Christianity, for the most part, has rejected this "perfect moment" as so much cultic mumbo-jumbo, when it is quite (and properly) Biblical!

When Jesus used this term, again, translated into English as "eternal life," he was talking about life in the unseen realm of "spirit" that can be accessed now – this minute – and never end from this minute forward and has also always been. By the way, in the original language Jesus said to not look for this eternal habitat "here or there" for it is within you.

In the reality of the spirit realm there is only NOW – in this moment. We that occupy these human body bags have a proclivity to put off anything until later except what feeds the physical senses pleurably at the moment; those things we rush toward. Anything that means change or growth to our spiritual side is something we want to do tomorrow, next week, next month or next year – and hopefully NEVER. We are practiced procrastinators. We allow ourselves to be cheated – swindled out of the perfection and excitement of being in the NOW with our one and only perfect Dad.

Part of the swindle comes from our being hoodwinked into believing that seemingly good religious activity such as regular church attendance, Bible study and what the religious refer to as "prayer" coupled with "good" moral behavior and telling others about Jesus Christ (or at least inviting them to church) are the necessary ingredients to "eternal life" and that given as a reward after we suffer and die; then we get to go "home."

Jesus had a much better plan. Avoid death altogether and come home to live in the "kingdom of God" NOW – this moment! Living in continual

excitement and, yes, real peace and real joy – not as the world (including the “church”) gives, but as Jesus Christ gives. Am I saying that church attendance, Bible study and “prayer” are without any spiritual value? Not at all, but I am saying if they are not contributing to continual excitement, peace and joy, perhaps a change in focus is in order.

Here’s a bit of Bible study that will help us to, “Begin now,” each and every day. Jesus said, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and we will have a time of intimate fellowship together.” (Rev. 3:20)

Now that I have just invited him in again – another passage comes to LIFE: “The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles: Which is CHRIST IN YOU!! (Col 1:26,27) How do we make this into a reality in the NOW? By speaking it several times daily and allowing the one in us to do our talking. Whenever anyone asks us, “How are you?” It is a simple thing to respond in faith by saying “I AM” or “perfect” because the perfect one is in you!

Maybe the following excerpt of this e-mail from a brother in Canada I found in my inbox this morning will be helpful to some:

(Quote) I guess I should be ashamed of myself, but I also hope that it may encourage you to never give up on anyone. It’s been over a year since the first time I read Treasure Chest, and just two weeks ago I decided to put into practice what you said about allowing the perfect one who lives in us do the talking. Saying “perfect” was very difficult at first. I have to admit that many times I slipped back into the old habit of replying, “Fine, how are you?” “Perfect” is now a habit – and I wanted you to know (I’m sure you already do) what a difference it is making in my life. I just KNOW Jesus is in me now – I really know it. Better late than never, eh? My wife and I also started fasting a few months ago and it has been very beneficial. We thank you for your continued work.” (End quote)

I’m going to make a suggestion – that you invest thirty minutes reading something called “Living Excited.” As I was going through all the foregoing I realized that I have said this all before in many ways – so I went back through some of the articles posted on the website to see if I couldn’t find an excerpt that captured the essence of Beginning NOW, which Jesus introduced, but Christianity has perverted into “when I die I will go to heaven.” I finally “landed” on Living Excited. I have read Living Excited many times even though “I” wrote it – and am always amazed at how I am newly touched by it each time that I read it.

Granted it tells some of the story about my own exit from the organized church (and why) – so it has a lot of personal meaning to me from

that perspective. But the scriptural foundation I was given is there as well – and I am stirred to urge all that have ears to hear to read Living Excited – because it will effectively underscore this Simple Secret #5 Begin NOW.

SIMPLE SECRET SIX

(Practice “forgiveness” and gratitude continually)

Everyone knows that we’re supposed to forgive, but few of us know *how* to forgive.

Few of us that call ourselves Christians understand that Jesus gave clear and actually quite simple instructions as to how to forgive – the only challenge is in the translation.

For example, the English word “forgive,” as used in the Bible is translated from two words in the original language. One of these words means, literally, “send away forcibly,” the other word means, “release,” or as we would say, “let go of.” Therefore, the word “forgive,” with all the traditional baggage that is tied to it, is wholly inadequate to express the concept of “sending away” and “releasing.” We are also still left with the question, sending away and releasing what?

Another challenge is the habit of some English-speaking people to say, “I can forgive, but I cannot forget.” On a practical and emotional level if I am unable to forget a wrong (either perceived or very “real”) that somebody perpetrated against me – I can say that I forgive, but in a very real sense, unless I have forgotten the incident, I am only kidding myself when I say, “I forgive.” I am holding myself in bondage to judgment.

I have seen the lives of people profoundly transformed (even healed from long term sickness and disease, as well as all kinds of emotional ills) when they get rid of such memories of wrongs perpetrated against them by following Jesus’ instructions. Not by suppression or denial, but by actually getting rid of the memory of such incidents.

What Jesus said in the original language in the Gospel of Mark is crystal clear – but how it has been translated into English has left us with some fuzzy thinking. The syntax of the original language makes it almost impossible to make an understandable (to modern American ears) translation – particularly if we insist upon a word-by-word and word-for-word translation from the original language.

We are going to look at Mark 11:23 – 26. The following is an American English version of what Jesus was saying in this passage that is very accurate and in keeping with the original language – in context as well as literal content.

“You must get rid of spiritual obstacles by authoritatively commanding them to be gone while holding a picture in your mind that you are lifting them up over your head and throwing them down into the sea. If you will do this without allowing contrary thoughts to cause you to waver from continually and emphatically speaking this while visualizing them as being already gone – they will be gone if you do not stop doing this until they are gone. But don’t think you can do this if you are holding anything against

anyone. If you are holding onto any judgment or criticism toward anyone for something you perceive they have done to you, you must send away and release these thoughts of judgment and criticism in this same manner (throwing them down into the sea), so that you can live in the perfect release from all judgment and criticism that your heavenly Dad has already provided for you. But if you do not release everyone from your judgment, you cannot walk in your perfect Dad's release."

That there is a lot of verbiage that is at first difficult to "wrap our minds around" in the foregoing is apparent, but going through the exercise of reading it repeatedly until the concept and the words are thoroughly digested is recommended.

Again, this is a literally accurate translation from the original language. Jesus spoke metaphorically about a "mountain." "Mountain" is the literal English equivalent of the word he used in the original language. From the context, however, it is obvious that he was talking about a "mountain of stuff" that stands in our way of something and how to get rid of it – not getting all tangled up in discussions about "moving mountains."

Another word used in almost all translations is "doubt." The word in the original means divided in thought or interrupted by dividing spirits. Our religious preconception about "doubting" is that it is wrong to doubt. NOT SO! Honest doubt will drive us to persevere in pursuing God to get answers unless we get mired in feelings of guilt. But the word here as stated is not "doubt" – it is the very same word used by James about righteous prayer accomplishes much if we are not "double minded." Again the KJV translators mistranslated the word as "doubt."

The temptation to acquiesce to certain religious traditions was powerful and powerfully resisted when I wrote this. For example, some people have extreme difficulty not using the traditional, more respectful term of "Father" when addressing God. Frankly, I was sorely tempted to pander to their perceived need – and avoid silly arguments based on tradition. The challenge is that in the original language Jesus was using a very intimate word that can only be appropriately and properly translated into English as "Papa, Dad, or Daddy." He was demonstrating that we have a unique, perfect, loving Daddy Who is thoroughly approachable and to whom we can take every problem just as a trusting child does with his mom or dad. The more austere word "Father" defeats the very purpose of Jesus' instructions. If we are going to begin to understand Jesus' instructions to us, we must resist religious traditions perpetuated by archaic language and mis-translation.

What objective was Jesus setting before us in these instructions? The truth is a striking example of just how insidious a force that religious tradition and muddy translation have been to dim our ability to see what Jesus was telling us.

This passage, Mark 11:23 – 26, contains his instructions about how to acquire and use the same kind of faith with which Jesus had amazed his disciples through the use of this kind of faith. You have to go further back in Mark to see it. Jesus and his disciples were walking down the road from Bethany to Jerusalem. Jesus was hungry and saw a fig tree off in the distance. So he walked over to it only to find that it didn't have any figs. Mark explains that the reason there weren't any figs is that it wasn't the season for figs! But Jesus, with no little irritation said, "Nobody is ever going to eat from you again!" His disciples heard him say this.

Note: Someone recently explained to me that figs are always present at the same time leaves are on a tree. This draws me to several symbolic conclusions about fruitless ornamental adornment – for example in people that busy themselves about looking spiritual, but bear none of the fruit that God's Spirit produces.

They continued on toward Jerusalem – where Jesus drove the merchants and the moneychangers out of the temple. It was quite late when they headed back toward Bethany so they stopped for the night to sleep on the ground. In the morning they started walking again and as they passed the fig tree – now withered from the top down to the roots – and Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Wow! Look at the tree you cursed yesterday. It is completely dead!"

Now we're back to the verse (22) just prior to the referenced text (Mark 11:23-26). In plain American English Jesus responded, "Yeah, I know. You could do the same thing. Get and use God-faith, the same kind of faith you saw me use." Yes, I've resorted to paraphrase, necessary in my mind to shake us loose from some very ridiculous religious traditions that keep us from seeing what Jesus was actually saying.

Any reliable Greek New Testament renders Jesus' statement as, "Have the faith OF God" or more literally, "God-faith." Then he goes on to explain how to get this God-faith, by removing the obstacles to having it. By learning how to speak authoritatively – to the point of even killing "poor innocent" fig trees no less!

Now it may seem like I am getting way off the point of talking about "forgiveness" here, but I'm not. Many physicians and mental health practitioners say that at the root of many illnesses including mental illness is unforgiveness, *i.e.*, unresolved anger and bitterness. I believe it is also the reason for the lack of the kind of faith Jesus is talking about here in the "church." Jesus is clearly stating that we cannot get and use this kind of faith if we don't send away and release our judgment and criticism of others, no matter what they've done. Please pay careful attention here; one of the causes for spiritual anemia and powerlessness in the "church" is judgment and criticism. Jesus is saying to send such thoughts and feelings away and to release people from our judgment – and he has provided us the instructions for HOW to do it!

The King James Version and almost all subsequent translations rendered the words in verse 22 as, "Have faith IN God." There is

considerable scholarly commentary available as to why the translators of the King James Version (KJV) may have deliberately mistranslated "faith OF God" or "God-faith" into the diluted, "have faith IN God." But the question that goes begging is why have subsequent translations continued the tradition, which dilutes the impact of the entire passage?

When I first stumbled onto this passage as written in the original language, I went to a friend of mine who was a leader in the Assemblies of God organization who, at the time, was known as an accomplished scholar of New Testament Greek. He told me I was making a mountain out of a molehill. I had to keep repeating the question as to whether I was correct before he finally admitted that I was indeed correct. He was also the one that pointed me to a commentary about this particular verse that indicated the translators were literally afraid to translate it correctly due to the legitimate fear that King James might give the order to cut off their heads!

We need to understand the "faith" that Jesus was urging us to acquire and use. We need to understand that NOT FOLLOWING HIS INSTRUCTIONS is the primary "mountain" or obstacle. We need to daily remove spiritual obstacles especially our negative emotions of anger and bitterness about being wronged and our thoughts of criticism and judgment of others. What are Jesus' instructions, again? Cast them down violently into the sea! Not doing so is the prime obstacle or mountain standing in the way of acquiring this faith!

The destiny that Jesus proclaimed for each of us as believers is that we would be able to do everything he did while he walked on this planet as a man. We'll never get to the point of doing what Jesus said we would do until we clearly see and remove the mountains of stuff in our way. "Unforgiveness" and stubborn adherence to religious tradition, that has nothing to do with what Jesus said is our destiny, are two of the primary obstacles.

One final thing that will help us to see the utter and complete scope of Dad's release of us for all of our own transgressions is what Jesus said to Peter.

Peter asked Jesus, "When a brother has wronged me, how many times must I forgive him, seven?"

"No," Jesus responded, "seventy times seven." In the original language it is quite obvious that Jesus is saying to release a brother from our judgment not only 490 times (to be literal), but for the very same wrong committed over and over. If that is Jesus' instruction to us, can we not see the infinite amount of times our Dad has already released us from his ultimate judgment? We are declared free! But only as we free our brothers and sisters from our own thoughts of judgment and criticism! I didn't say that, Jesus said it! (Mark 11:26)

Once we go through this process it is a natural outgrowth to be grateful and the wonder of God's perfect release splashes over us. Thank

You, Dad, for showing us this amazing truth – that as we “forgive” (and forget) we walk in Your perfect “forgiveness.” Bless you and praise You Daddy for working things out so perfectly for us!

SIMPLE SECRET SEVEN

(Choose to use your authority and use it relentlessly.)

When I first understood that every believer has authority, and I began to use it, some people began saying that I had “the gift of faith.” I corrected them and said that I did not have faith the way they were using the term, I just understood my authority in Jesus Christ and knew how to use it.

Here’s how it came about. As you recall, Jesus appointed seventy disciples in addition to the twelve. He sent them out with specific instructions (Luke 10:1-24). When I came across this passage I was impressed by the

clarity with which he spoke to these seventy. No parables here, just straight talk about what to do and how to go about doing it.

When the seventy returned they excitedly told Jesus, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!"

I did a word study in the original language and discovered that Jesus' response was very precise: "Yes I know," Jesus answered, "I saw Satan fall just like lightning from above. I am telling you that I give you all authority and miracle working power to trample on these agents of the enemy and they will not be able to harm you. You will be able to undo their negative miracles."

"What does this mean and is it for today?" I asked, and received an inner assurance that indeed it was for today. I knew that I had much to learn, but I also knew that what I had been recently witnessing and knew from experience was real, was for ALL believers. I knew that demons were real because I had seen them manifest. I now understood what the "negative miracles" were; they were diseases of all sorts as well as mental illness caused by these enemy agents. I had seen dramatic evidence that when you get rid of the demons causing these problems the problems went away as well. I also understood clearly that the ability to wield this authority over enemy agents, was not something to "get off on," or be particularly excited about – no, our excitement is to come from the knowledge that our names are recorded in the kingdom of God!

During this period I met a few people that were part of different groups that went by the name, "The Seventy." They had no connection with each other, but they took their instructions from this same passage in Luke – and they had the same understanding that I had received. They had no apparent human leadership, but always went two by two according to those same instructions and they each knew of others in "the seventy," but again, there was no apparent organization or connection.

Also, it was during this period that my "eyes were opened" to what Jesus practiced himself regularly and said was the only way to adequately prepare for using this authority and *dunamis* (pronounced doo-nah-meese and literally meaning the ability to perform the apparent miraculous) against enemy agents.

I learned that to build on the authority that each of us have, I had to be relentless and not give up because of apparent failure.

Jesus told a rather long story about a judge that didn't care too much about administering real justice. But there was a widow that wouldn't leave him alone. Somebody kept stealing her stuff. She kept on bugging him and bugging this judge. She kept crying out, "I want justice for me from my adversary!" Over and over and over again she would go to the judge. For a long time this judge didn't pay any attention to her.

Then it finally dawned on him... "This woman is going to wear me out," he said to himself, "So I am going to avenge her."

Jesus said, "Pay attention to what this unrighteous judge said. Now then, do you think God will not avenge those that belong to Him... even though they are far from perfect? I tell you that He will avenge them and speedily so. Yet when I come, will I really find this kind of faith in operation?" What kind of faith? This faith of relentless pursuit!

This is the kind of faith Jesus is talking about. It has nothing to do with how good we've been or how righteous we are – it has to do with continually demanding that we be avenged for all that has been stolen from us. We have been bought and paid for, but our adversary has stolen what belongs to us, *i.e.*, perfect health, prosperity and liberty – yes abundance in all things including faith and the authority of our Dad.

Every day I get e-mails from people that are having horrific problems, and are filled with all kinds of theological and doctrinal understanding about what they call "faith." Yet they miss the essence of ***this kind of faith...*** the kind of faith Jesus is looking for. Crying out day and night to the ultimate Judge of things, "avenge me of my adversary!" and doing so relentlessly.

One of the things that some people miss is that faith comes by relentlessly going after it. In other words faith is obtained through the relentless application of this kind of faith. It builds upon itself.

Some write to me saying that they have not seen what I have seen – therefore it isn't for everyone. What they fail to realize is that the reason I am able to share these things, is because I took Jesus' words seriously and relentlessly pursued what he said was for everyone that believed. I didn't receive my first understanding of the authority we all have until I was in my fifties. That understanding grew and continues to grow today as I relentlessly pursue the ONE that gives it – the ONE that avenges my adversary so that I am able to do what Jesus said each of us would be able to do if we believe. To begin to see and believe the extremes to which anyone can take this message please go to March 14, 2003 article entitled "**The Storm**" (part one). It may well open your eyes to your own potential, the destiny Jesus said is for ANYONE that chooses to believe.

This, remember, isn't about me doing anything. It is about *anyone* being able to do the seemingly impossible by taking what Jesus said seriously, that is, that we can do all the things Jesus did IF we believe. Getting rid of all kinds of diseases and maladies, making the blind see, the deaf hear, getting rid of demons and the problems they cause – and yes calming storms. It most likely won't happen the first day that you choose to believe and begin to actively and relentless pursue it, but it will if you keep pursuing the One that gives authority and faith.

In the 1960s I remember meeting an older man who was a Pentecostal preacher with a small "storefront" church. After chatting for several minutes and getting quite comfortable with him, I admitted that something was troubling me. I had been wondering if "speaking in tongues," healing the sick, casting out demons and other such manifestations that occurred in

Pentecostal churches and the basis for which is found in the 16th chapter of Mark were for everyone.

"Oh my no," he said easily, "Jesus said these would be signs that would follow them that believe. So if you don't believe there is no reason to be bothered because they won't follow you, it's as simple as that."

And so it is – *just* that simple. The good news is that if we don't believe – there is a remedy for it. Don't forget Jesus said nothing is impossible to them that believe. If we make excuses for not doing what Jesus said we would do, or argue against what Jesus said we would do IF we believe -- don't worry about it – nothing will happen.

I feel compelled today, on March 22nd 2006, to add a postscript. The road to acquiring more faith is not paved with logic, reason and study. It is a simple path. Tell Dad over and over and over again that you want His will including more faith. Keep doing this UNTIL you become aware that your faith has increased. You will find that the more you have, the more you want. The more you want the more you will continue demanding that the obstacles to acquiring more faith get out of your way. It's simple and defies all the logic and reasoning of man.