



Unlocking the Treasure Chest of God's Gifts

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Anonymous

*“An amazingly simple way for anyone to radically increase their faith
...from the Master, Himself”*

To Be Read Again and Again



Unlocking the Treasure Chest

Introduction

I am probably half way through writing this little book. The question looms, why am I writing it? Why indeed? The fact is, I don't really seem to care whether I finish it. I am convinced that very few will read it. Only six of the twenty or so people to whom the draft of what feels like the first half has been sent have even read it so far. I have felt encouragement from these six, but wonder if part of the encouragement doesn't come out of their love for me rather than any real appreciation for what is written.

One of them, a former church pastor and his wife have both encouraged me to write it without really knowing what the final content will be. How could they know? I don't know what the next chapter will contain... not a clue. Yet the book now has a life of its own and I intend to finish it. I don't know which is the most arrogant... to say that "I" am not really writing it... or to take full credit for writing it? So far I don't intend to even attempt to answer my own question.

On one hand, what is written so far reveals a belief system that goes cross current to mainstream thought about anything. This certainly does not make for a broad audience. When it flies in the face of traditional religion I do not withhold the slap on that face as I travel by trampling on beliefs. I doubt very much that those outside of a fairly narrow religious experience will pay any attention to it. I know of a few religionists, both lay and clerical, that will be angered by it and want to argue with many of my perceptions and at the very least think violent thoughts upon my person.

On the other hand it is salted with real life experiences, my own, that are verifiable by the other participants in those experiences. Some of these experiences are a bit unbelievable, to say the least! I suppose that is the reason why I trot out the fact that the experiences can be verified by others.

Now that I have finished the book... I asked the aforementioned former church pastor to write a forward... without further adieu...

A Retired Preacher's Forward...

Unlocking the Treasure Chest

Some of the stories the author relates in his current writings are well known to me -- not by his much telling of them, but because I was there as a direct participant in and/or a witness to the events detailed.

The author changes names to protect the privacy of individuals. I wonder if it is necessary to do so, if only first names are used? From the author's recounting of the stories to which I was a participant or witness, I can say that they are not embellished in the slightest; he relates them quite accurately.

From what I personally know first-hand, what the author has written is 100% real -- and I don't mind looking as inept or as foolish or as "converted" as I may have been or am. You see, I am the preacher the author refers to in chapter six. The psychiatrist he refers to elsewhere in the book is known to me and has verified everything the author has reported.

Are the author's doctrinal conclusions accurate? From what I know by first-hand experience, I would say that his related conclusions are all but inescapable, whether they are doctrinally accurate according to theologians and other spiritual experts or disowned by them. And if the conclusions are disowned by theological experts, shouldn't we re-evaluate any of those doctrinal belief systems we may have adopted personally -- or are our systems of doctrinal belief more sacred to us than the truth of how the spirit realm can be tested and proven to operate? I know that I have had to re-evaluate many of my previously and tenaciously held to doctrines.

This was the very crux of Jesus' oft-stated point to the theological experts of his day -- experts who disowned the in-person evidence of the one to whom signs most definitely followed. It's time to get past that and move on.

Van A. Brink
Kampala, Uganda

The Real Me (*about the author*)

Reportedly, Jesus was asked a question that began with... “Good Master...”

Jesus didn’t get around to an answer that was satisfactory to the questioner, but challenged him rather with, “Why call me good? Only One is good, God!”

Not only does a like response from me end all need to justify what I do... it puts “good and evil” in a perspective that allows me to go beyond the meaning of my own behavior. One of the times I felt freedom come over me is when I responded to a verbal attack by saying: “Look, why don’t you understand that I am ten times worse than what you think you know about me... then do me a favor and ask God to deliver me from the evil I really do – not just what you perceive.”

What has kept me farthest from God has been when I have tried to defend myself in the midst of verbal attacks about a perceived wrong I may or may not have committed. ”The good I do is not I, but Christ within me” gives me a balance on the other side of the ledger when people (admittedly rarely) heap praise on me for doing something that seems “good” to them.

Good and evil are relative terms... what got Adam and Eve into trouble is that they *thought* they understood the difference after eating the fruit from *that* tree... what bothered them after eating it when they were able to “see” had not bothered God one whit prior to their eating. The truly “evil” thing they did was to then hide from God. Instead of crying out for mercy for their stupidity in succumbing to their desire to “know” they entered into judging that which their new sight showed up as evil... and hid... and missed God. The good news that Jesus brought was contained in the story about the two men who went up to the temple to pray... one grandly thanked God for how good he had made him. The other beat on his chest and cried out... God be merciful to such a screw-up as I. The amazing thing is that Jesus said that this admitted sinner went home in a state of righteousness INSTEAD of the other religious guy who was concentrating on his being “good.” Go figure.

Freedom comes from understanding at my depths that the body I occupy is capable of doing all kinds of nonsense... and is the chief of screw-ups. The real “I,” however, is served best by the awareness of Christ within and letting him do the talking, acting and in this case the writing. Be careful, therefore, about the things you may wish to either praise or criticize that I do... before there was anything else... I AM

... and the point of remaining “anonymous.”



I

The Treasure Chest (locked)

Jesus says that *anyone* who truly believes in him will be able to perform the same miracles, in the same manner as he himself performed them *and* even greater miracles than he performed. He said this would be the case for true believers in the future as well.

Is what he said true? If it is not true, why do those who claim to believe in him pay so much homage to him if this is a lie? If, as many that refer to themselves as believers say, all of what Jesus is reported as saying in the New Testament is true, why do so many of these same “believers” never reach the point of being able to do what he did and what he said that any believer in him would do?

Worse yet, why do these same “believers” make highly complex excuses why they can do nothing Jesus said true believers would do and be nothing that Jesus said believers in him would be? Among the excuses that are provided by myriad teachers are that miracles aren’t all that important, but being “Christ-like” (with all the many facets these same teachers put on *that* interesting term) is the important thing. Question: Wouldn’t being “Christ-like” include doing what Jesus so clearly stated believers in him would do?

Kept in the locked treasure chest is what Jesus clearly said, *i.e.*, that we could be who *he* was and that we could and would do what *he* did – IF WE BELIEVE. Jesus also provided the *combination* to the lock on this treasure chest. Arguments abound about a singular *key*. The focus on a singular key along with other problems of religious tradition and easily recognized mistranslation has kept us from discovering the combination to the lock. Is this what has kept “believers” in the state of DIS/UN-belief that is generally referred to as “Christianity?”

Let’s deal first with the obstacles that keep us from finding the combination to the lock... then let’s look at each part of the combination *in its proper order*. Imagine having the proper numbers to a combination lock and using them out of sequence and because *that* doesn’t open the lock coming to the conclusion that the lock cannot be opened or the combination is no good.

Imagine someone using a recipe for making a certain dish, but refusing to use one of the



key ingredients because they didn't believe it was necessary... and then making the excuse that it flopped because the recipe is no longer any good.

Both the recipe and the combination lock analogies are fitting. Why? Because Jesus really did provide a sequential process for how we can get to both being *and* doing who and what we are supposed to be about. Yet whole belief systems are based on the denial of what Jesus said by clinging to distorted recipes and combinations while the teachers in those belief systems insist on complex doctrines (excuses) that in order to follow require that they ignore or worse actually deny the words of the One whom they call "Lord."

Back to the metaphor of a combination lock. Trying to speculate about what the complete treasure in the chest might be before it is open... is just one of the obstacles to using and understanding the need to use the combination in its proper sequence! Let's look at a few of the other primary obstacles and then we'll look at Jesus' own prescription for how to overcome them.

II



1) Anti-belief:

That is, most believers put energy into their belief systems that what Jesus said they would and could do is simply not possible. In other words it isn't just a lack of belief, but actually a system of *non*-belief, or even active *anti*-belief. There is no point in picking examples of the myriad man-made doctrines that support anti-belief. They all boil down to the same thing: *Impossibility thinking*.

Jesus said that *nothing* is impossible to the person who believes. Now ask the question: Do I believe that *nothing* is impossible if I believe? If I don't believe what he said is true, then don't I have a problem with what I believe *about* Jesus Christ?

What is the point of making an issue of WHO Jesus was/is (as important as that may be) if I don't do what he says to do? This is precisely what Jesus said, "What is the point of calling me, 'Lord,' if you don't also do what I tell you to do?" What is the point, indeed? Before we can overcome the obstacle of anti-belief we have to face it squarely and realize that anti-belief is what we are caught in. It will also be helpful if we begin to realize just how we got caught. We will get to this in the next chapter (III) called *Overcoming* (the obstacles).

2) Lack of Understanding of One of the Primary Conditions Necessary for Operating in Spiritual Authority and Power -- *humility*

An interesting phenomenon that causes many religious folks to miss the fact that there really is a treasure chest available to them is self-justification and self-righteousness, or perhaps better said self-satisfaction in their lack of Holy Spirit presence and power. "Having a form of godliness but lacking in His power, and from such people turn your back on as if in hatred" (quoted from the original language in a letter that Paul wrote to Timothy).

Jesus told a story about two men who went up to the Temple to pray. He related the story as a means to underscore religious self-satisfaction that actually leads *away* from God. Here's the story in a nutshell: One man was giving thanks to God that He had made this man better than most men -- *particularly better than the other man* who was standing nearby praying as well. The former was going over all the good things he did... went without eating twice each week; gave ten percent of everything he had; didn't lie, steal or cheat in his business affairs; didn't commit adultery, etc.

Remember that this first man had given God all the credit (as do most religious folks of our day) for being that way! Try understanding “there but for the grace of God go I” in its true light of religious pride.

In contrast, the second man (a Roman tax collector, who as a group were notorious for being cheats and “taking it out in trade” from widows who couldn’t pay the tax) was standing with his head down, beating on his chest. He was crying out to God for mercy because he recognized what a miserable sinner he was.

The amazing part of this story is what Jesus had to say about these two men. Jesus actually said that the latter went home justified (same root word as “righteous”) in the eyes of God *instead* of the other man. Do we see this key word *instead*?

Instead of the one most people would consider to be the “good” man! How many people who refer to themselves as “believers” go through the same litany of their own list of perceived “good” things they do in contrast to their sinful neighbors? And thus miss out on the valuable things waiting for them in the treasure chest. We must see that the lack of understanding of the need for pure humility is a major obstacle to operating in the power and presence of God’s own Holy Spirit.

3) Lack of Understanding of the Faith Necessary to Operate in Spiritual Authority and Power and How to Acquire it

Most religious people have “bought-in” to the tradition that the word “faith” means an intellectual belief system. Here’s a scene to consider: A man brought his son to Jesus’ disciples to be cured of epileptic-like seizures. When they couldn’t do it – Jesus angrily called them a bunch of faithless perverts (this is exactly what the original words mean, sadly diluted in English mistranslation). Then Jesus rebuked the demon that was causing the problem and he came out of the boy and he was immediately cured.

The narrative continues... the disciples came to him afterward in private and asked him, “Why couldn’t we cast him out?” Jesus said, “Because of your lack of faith.” They had believed that they could do it and had tried, most likely, because they had cast out many demons before, but this particular demon was beyond their level of faith. Why had Jesus called them a bunch of faithless perverts? Because they had not prepared themselves as he had already taught them and from the context of the narrative obviously he had assumed they had.

In other words they had expected to be able to do what he did AND that he *also* had expected them to be able to do it. They had not prepared. He went on to tell them exactly that and he clearly explains for all that will see it just exactly what the preparation is.

Because Paul refers elsewhere in the New Testament to such “miracle” wielding faith as a “gift” (which it is), all too many believers fail to realize that it is one of many gifts in

the treasure chest of gifts *already* provided. We are not talking about earning entrance into the treasure chest... we are talking about breaking out of the traps in our thinking caused by religious tradition and muddled translation and thus failing to open the chest to get the gift that has already been given. The gift is already there... it has already been given and is awaiting everyone who has the combination to the lock – which is also already given.

Hopefully the following little story will underscore the problem. A bridal shower was scheduled and held for a young lady about to be married. She didn't show up! Instead of following through with the plans of a large, formal wedding the bride and groom decided to elope. Further they moved permanently away to a different city to begin their lives together.

The gifts were taken to the home of the bride's parents. Her mother sent her a note saying that the gifts were there. The bride missed out on the gifts not because they weren't for her... she just never read the note because when she saw the envelope she threw it away because she thought it was a rebuke from her mother for eloping and thus never claimed her gifts. She never even realized that they were there waiting for her!

We must see that a huge obstacle (“mountain”) in the way of our operating in the same power and presence of God's own Holy Spirit, just as Jesus operated, is the lack of *faith* as Jesus used the term -- the gift of faith that is readily available in the treasure chest to all who will use the combination to open the lock.

4) **Lack of Desire, Discipline and Determination.**

“Ya gotta want it” is an axiom that people in sports recognize as an absolute must if they are going to achieve anything beyond mediocrity. Once the lack of desire has been overcome *then* the necessary discipline and determination follow *naturally*. Without a deep down desire even the words discipline and determination are burdensome and seem to be oppressive legalism. In other words, we are not urging discipline... we are urging that we see the need to have a deep desire to be what Jesus said true believers in him would be and that includes *doing* what he said true believers in him would do.

Before we can receive the desire to do what Jesus did and said any believer would do... we have to realize that we have the innate desire NOT to have the responsibility for doing anything that Jesus said we would do. A clear understanding of the word *desire* will help us here. The prefix *de* denotes “of the” and *sire* denotes “father.” Desire means of, or from, the father.

Herein lies the key to understanding... Jesus referred to our enemy in the spirit (unseen) realm as the father of lies and the “destroyer.” Destructive desires come from the father of destruction. Creative desires come from the Father of creation. It is our enemy's will to keep us mired in the natural desires “of the flesh” so that we miss our heritage of operating in the power and presence of God's own Holy Spirit to do his perfect will.

Our natural focus is supplying the body we occupy with what we believe it needs to be comfortable and happy. Is this, in itself, “wrong?” Not at all, but this focus leads us to all kinds of conclusions that are set *against* living in spiritual power. Once we see how simple it is to overcome this lack of desire to live according to God’s will... we are set to receive de-sire (wanting what the Father wants). The first step is simply to know and admit that it simply is not “natural” to want to live in God’s will. Now what? The antidote is simple. Start where we are... I want to *want* to live in God’s will! Got it?

III



Seeing Them For What They Are

The foregoing four stated obstacles need to be seen for what they are. We could have stated them from the opposite or “positive” view. For example we could have listed them as requirements, *i.e.*, the primary ingredients for operating in the same Holy Spirit, *δυναμις* (miracle working power) that was operational in Jesus, such as:

- 1) Belief
- 2) Humility
- 3) Understanding of the kind of faith that is required.
- 4) Desire, Determination and Discipline

However, listing them in this manner reduces them to a recipe of ingredients which misses the point of the insidious and diabolical nature these spiritual obstacles (“mountains”) actually are. They are deadly. They are the under-pinning of religious complacency and false spiritual pride that Jesus ascribed to the religious of his day as painted grave markers... warmed over death covered up with a coat of white paint!

Here are some questions that will bring us to an honest evaluation of our current walk in life. Do I have the desire, determination and discipline that is inspired by God’s own Holy Spirit to want His will in my life no matter what? Do I really know what God’s will is for me? Do I care? Do I tend to accept religious doctrine as an excuse for not doing what Jesus said true believers in him would do? Do I rest in pride of my church affiliation, the fact that I am not a “bad” person as the prime prerequisite for being in God’s perfect will?

Do my answers to these questions trouble me? Here is a hint. If my answers indicate spiritual pride and complacency... Wonderful! Why? Because now I am in a position to *do* something about it. The Biblical injunction “If we confess our sins He is just and faithful and will forgive us and cleanse us from all un-righteousness...” If I understand that I am trapped – and say so – (confess) then I don’t have to “work” my way out of it – God’s promise is that He will not only forgive, but *cleanse*. The removal of the soil and stench (Isaiah likened it to filthy rags... *literally* discarded cloths used to stem the flow of menstrual period fluid) of the religious righteousness of his day. The King James Version dilutes it in this manner... “Your righteousness is as filthy rags.” It is a dilution because we fail to see the spiritual significance of what Isaiah was actually saying. Can we begin to be awakened by a crude truth? Religious righteousness has (according to Isaiah, now, be careful how you might be tempted to react to me – I didn’t say it... Isaiah did) the same value to God as used Kotex thrown onto an open pile of garbage. Even this

bit of crudity fails to capture the essence of what Isaiah was writing, because of the lack of understanding to our modern minds of just what the religious significance of the menstrual flow defilement meant in Hebrew terms.

Here is a simple prayer that can put us on the path to God's righteousness instead of our own "filthy rags." "Father, I know that your will for me, as your own child, is to be filled with Your own Holy Spirit to want to be able to do whatever it is that you lead me to do with excitement and joy. Thank you now for your forgiveness and that you will set me on Your path."

Once we understand that the word "sin" is an old English word that the King James translators supplanted for both the Hebrew and Greek words that simply mean to "miss God and His will for our lives" we can begin to move in new freedom. "Sin" was an archery term used in the foggy bogs of England going back to the 14th century where the bows-men could see the target, but not clearly enough to see where their arrows went. A meet official would call out "sin" when the arrow missed the target completely. The King James translators new that the "common" people of the day would understand the term – too bad we've missed it!

Let us see clearly that any activity or lack thereof that takes our focus off God is "sin..." and this can mean even seemingly "good" activity such as going to church, Bible study and any number of things especially if these lead us to false spiritual pride and complacency. As we begin working to overcome specific obstacles, we must not allow the Accuser to snatch away our direction with guilt. We begin overcoming obstacles by simply confessing whatever Holy Spirit brings to our minds and knowing that our one and only perfect Father has both forgiven and cleansed us and welcomes us back to Him.

This is the backdrop of Jesus' story about the "prodigal" son. When the Prodigal son "came to himself" and saw what a wreck he had made of his life... he said, "I will go back to my father's house and be a slave." Before he got there his father ran out to him and restored him fully. We have to "come to ourselves" in the pig pen of our religious righteousness and go back home to Dad... who will restore us. He'll even throw a huge party in our honor.

If we go back and revisit the story, we'll see that the older brother who had never done anything "wrong" missed out on the party that his father had thrown for the younger brother. He also missed the point that his father was trying to make with him... he could have had a party for himself and his friends anytime he wanted! When we focus on our "goodness" particularly in contrast to what we perceive as evil in others... we miss out on the celebration God has for us. We must see this religious, self-righteousness for what it is: A primary obstacle to operating in the fullness of God's own Holy Spirit... His presence and power among us.

IV

REAL GOALS... REAL OBSTACLES

Before we can begin to make our preparation to become *over-comers* we need to understand that obstacles in the spirit (or unseen realm) really do exist and we need to know the extent to which they keep us from moving forward.

First of all, we need to see that for an obstacle to reaching a goal to be real -- the goal must also be real.

If I have set a goal that I want to be and do everything that God wants me to be and do, what does such a goal presuppose? Such a goal presupposes that it is attainable. Such a goal requires that I believe it can be achieved. Who/what would be against my achieving it? Who/what would be against my believing it is possible?

Anti-belief is a spirit. Before we get into specific ways to rid ourselves of this spirit we will look at some of the ways that the spirit of anti-belief gets a *stronghold*. Before we can understand the Biblical injunction to “bring every thought captive to Christ” we have to follow Jesus’ command to tear down the strongholds that contain this and other spirits that create the thoughts that grow into unbelief and complacency.

I am going to tell a true story “on myself” to illustrate the negative power of the words that we speak. If we can remind ourselves of the truth that words have a power of their own... both in the positive and the negative... we will begin to understand how demons gain strongholds.

I had bought a second car from the couple who had originally purchased it. The car was twenty-one years old, but it had only 63,000 miles on the odometer and was in “mint” condition. I had been looking for something inexpensive to drive between my home in the country and my office in town... about a 20 mile one way commute. My business partner saw this particular car in the newspaper and we went out to look at it together.

We took it for a test drive and it seemed mechanically sound as well as having a very nice appearance. The couple told us they were buying a mini-van and already had two cars and didn’t want a third... and to make them an offer. I told them that the car was beautiful and worth more than the seven hundred dollars they were asking. I told them, however, that I was looking for something that would be more economical to drive and that their car which was a 1968 model, large “gas hog” and, therefore, I really couldn’t afford to pay that much.

They asked me to make an offer. I told them no because I thought the car was worth even more than their asking price and I was sure that someone would buy it for their price. The man asked me if I liked the car. I assured him that I did, but again did not want to pay that much -- especially considering the high expense of gasoline. He asked me again to

just go ahead and make an offer. They needed the room in the garage for the new mini-van. I again refused to offer them less than their asking price.

I left my business card with them and told them to keep trying to sell it... and if they couldn't sell it to give me a call and tell me what they would take for it. About three hours later the man called me and said they wanted me to have the car and just to make an offer with which I was comfortable. I told him to just tell me what he wanted for it because it wasn't worth it to me to feel that I had cheated them. He again insisted that I just make an offer.

I told him that I always prayed before I bought anything... and that I would call him back. When I prayed about it the amount of one hundred and fifty dollars came clearly in my mind. I argued about it because it just didn't seem fair. I told my partner what I had gotten and he argued that the car was probably worth at least fifteen hundred dollars "easy." I readily agreed. I asked him what he thought I ought to pay... he was sure they'd take \$500 and that under the circumstances it would be a fair price.

I prayed again and "heard" \$150. I told my partner that I would just keep looking for a smaller car and forget about it. The couple called me again and asked me if I had come up with an amount that was comfortable for me. I said yes, but I didn't want to insult them. They asked me what it was. I told them \$150... "Okay, the man immediately replied, we'll drive it to your office and go pick up the mini-van."

"Are you sure?" I asked, "I really don't want to take advantage of you." They reassured me that they felt good about me having the car and that they would deliver it. My partner exclaimed, "Gee, you stole it!" I said, "Well, for one hundred and fifty dollars it could burn to the ground and it would be no big loss."

When we closed the office I headed for home to pick up my wife to show her the "new" car that I decided would be used for going to the store (about two miles away) and for other errands near our home. "You're kidding me," she exclaimed, "It's beautiful. How much did you pay for it?" I told her to guess. She said, "It must have been \$3,000 -- I thought you told me that you didn't want to pay any more than \$500 and that you wanted a small car."

I told her the story and repeated what I had said to my partner... "For one hundred and fifty dollars it could burn to the ground and it would be no big loss." She readily agreed.

We stopped on the way back to the office to pick up the other car to show off our car to some friends. "Wow, I thought you told me you were going to pay \$500 for some little "junker!" the man exclaimed. They looked over the car and said how beautiful it was. They talked about how clean and well kept it was both inside and out. The man said that he'd always wanted this particular model. I asked him if he wanted it because I really did want a smaller car. He actually offered me \$1500 -- I laughed and asked him if he wanted to know what I had paid for it. He was amazed.

Again I repeated the story and the words, “For one hundred and fifty dollars it could burn to the ground and it would be no big loss.” My friend rebuked me soundly and told me that I was always preaching not to say things like that because it gave the enemy permission to attack. I agreed and thanked him for reminding me. We said our goodbyes and got in the car. As we were pulling out of the rather long driveway... my wife said, “I smell something burning, and I hope it’s outside.”

“Must be,” I answered. Within minutes smoke was billowing out from under the hood. I drove it to a fire station and yelled for my wife and 9 year old son to get out quickly and get away from the car. I ran into the fire station and yelled that my car was on fire. One of the men put on an asbestos suit and told me to go across the street. When he opened the hood the car burst into flames. By the time the firemen extinguished the fire it had burned almost completely “to the ground.”

Coincidence? Perhaps, but consider the fact that I had just got the car from the original owners who had never had any mechanical problems with the car for twenty-one years! The only work that had ever been done was routine oil changes and service. In fact they made a point that they had only had one tune up with changing the spark plugs and ignition wires only about 5,000 miles earlier.

I said it could burn to the ground and it did.

An aside... a fellow who was standing there watching the fire be put out... asked me what I was going to do with the shell. I asked him why and he told me he’d tow it to his shop and give me \$300 for parts.

We made the deal and in less than five hours from the time I first saw the car I made \$150 dollars profit! It took me two more days to find an 8 year old Toyota Corolla for \$300 which I kept for two years.

Our words are more powerful than we believe. Every time I have shared that story with people it invariably stimulates similar stories. Why? Because what we speak with our mouths tends to come upon us... both “good” and “evil” and experiences of this truth are all around us. What does this story have to do with overcoming the spirit *anti-belief*?

Is it possible that the spirit called *Anti-belief* not only works to keep us from believing in what our true destiny is, but also works to keep us from believing how devastatingly destructive our words can actually be?

Seeing the truth of this leads to an awareness of the battle that is continually going on for our minds... in the unseen realm of the spirit world. As someone has said, knowing our enemies and how they work prepares us to defeat them.

Hint: Knowing further that these enemies are *already* defeated and understanding how we can just walk in and possess the territory that we have allowed them to take over by

what we think and speak is our primary objective. How will we be able to accomplish this? By the *renewal* of our minds.

V

REAL GOALS... REAL OBSTACLES (continued)

We have to open our minds to what goes on in the unseen realm of the spirit. Part of our non-belief is sown by spirits. When we take the modern day approach that what used to be referred to in “Jesus’ day” as “spirits” or “demons” are merely negative thoughts and “they just didn’t know any better back then.” If that is true, then we have to throw out reams of what Jesus not only taught, but also discard all the experiences that the writers of the Gospels say surrounded him.

Let’s take the issue of modern day psychological training of which most seminary students get at least a smattering and the leaders of most churches have read about considerably. This training generally feeds the intellectual under-girding “proof” that demons aren’t real. I am going to tell two true stories that can be corroborated by the people involved.

For many years a medical doctor and I were very close friends. We met in a small evangelical church in Northern California, where we both later became members of the Board of that church. After several years of teaching math and being a coach in a high school in Portland, Oregon, Jim decided to go back to school to get his medical degree so that he could become a psychiatrist. He was finishing his residency in a large State mental hospital in the town where we met. I was managing a fairly large forest products trucking company.

The first day I met Jim was in an adult Bible class during my first visit to that church. It came up that he was in his last few months of residency at the State mental hospital and would soon be starting in private psychiatric practice back in Portland. I asked him if he could tell the class what percentage of the patient population at the hospital were Christians. He replied that his answer would depend on how narrowly I was defining the term “Christian.” He went on to ask, “Do you mean, how many patients come from homes where there was a strong emphasis on believing in the Bible and the deity of Jesus Christ?”

I decided to be on safer ground and said... “No, I think I mean how many people that profess to have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior at some point in their lives?”

I was not prepared for his estimate. Better stated, I was thoroughly *shocked* by it!

He said, “About ninety percent and if you include my definition of a strong Bible-based upbringing along with believing in the deity of Jesus Christ, the figure is probably closer to ninety-eight percent.”

I caught him as he was going out the door with his family and said that I would like to get together with him some day to discuss what he had said. He and his wife invited us out to

their home for Sunday dinner. The friendship began. That was in the summer of 1962. For the next 16 years we saw each other several times a week... in the early seventies we formed a ministry called *Christian Interaction Center*. One of the purposes was to provide counseling training for church leadership. We wrote a syllabus together entitled, "How to Counsel in the Power of the Holy Spirit" and held seminars for ministerial associations in various cities and areas.

Through this we began to get people referred to us who were so emotionally disturbed that they were beyond "counseling" and were disruptive as well as dysfunctional.

Some of these had been told and were convinced that they were "demon possessed." Jim and I had many discussions about our belief systems related to "demons." At that time we both were of a mind that we didn't know what we were up against... but were both convinced that demons indeed existed and we felt that some of the people we were seeing did seem to be demon controlled. We finally hid behind the story in the book of Acts (the fourth book in the New Testament), about the seven sons of a Jewish Priest named Sceva. These brothers would go out and cast demons out of people and were widely known for the practice. They finally came up against a demon possessed man who overpowered all seven of them and beat them severely and ripped off their clothes! We decided not to play around with such things.

Because of our involvement with many different churches we were exposed to a number of people who engaged in what they referred to as "deliverance" ministries. Some of what we heard that happened in these sessions bothered us considerably. We also heard of some rather interesting "successes." But we were still somewhat smug because these same ministries would refer their "failures" to us for our own brand of "counseling" and we saw our own "successes" compared to their failures. Talk about being bound in spiritual pride!

It was about this time that I moved away from the area for nine years. Jim and I kept in touch with occasional phone calls, but were unable to be together.

In the new area where I lived, I met an evangelist who was with the Seventh Day Adventist organization. We got past our doctrinal differences and fear of each other's belief systems and decided that in Jesus Christ we could become friends. He invited me to go with him to a home from which the couple had made an urgent call because they heard that he had a gift of healing for asthma. Their seven year old son was chronic. He had to go the emergency room of the local hospital often to get oxygen. He was on heavy medication which apparently wasn't doing any good.

What I saw that night astounded me. It started innocuously enough. With the parents explaining how bad the boy's asthma attacks were. They asked Ralph (not his real name) what he could do. He told them he didn't know, but Holy Spirit did and he would just ask for His guidance. He quoted Jesus' statement that "he was going to send the Holy Spirit and that he would guide us into all truth." He began to pray silently. Then he prayed out loud. His words went something like, "Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, send angels to

surround us. I thank you that you have given me all authority over the works of Satan. I bind every demon attacking this house, I come against you with the blood of Jesus Christ. You cannot communicate, you cannot call for replacements and you cannot transfer.”

He then had the boy lay down on a couch in the living room while the rest of us sat in chairs around him. He told the boy that he wanted him to just focus in his mind on Jesus and not to pay any attention to what was being said by Ralph. The boy agreed.

Ralph began speaking to demons. He would command them to manifest so that we could see them. Strange looking lumps on the boys face would come and go... and Ralph would motion us to come closer so that we could see each manifestation. Strange noises came out of the boy, and one by one, each demon would be told to come out and go the place “Jesus Christ had assigned for him.” This took about three hours. Ralph had set up a tape recorder and it was all on tape. The boy was rid of asthma. (I had occasion to meet the family about five years later. Their son looked tan and healthy and was still free of asthma.)

I went out with Ralph several more times. Finally at one home he told me to take over. I basically did the same things that he had been demonstrating. The particular night he went with me and a lady in her late sixties who went with him quite often just to sit in the room and pray. We’ll call this woman Arlene.

We got to the front door and Ralph told us... “Okay, I have another home I need to go to, so you take care of this one.” He promised to be back before we were “finished.”

The husband answered the door and we told him that Ralph had sent us. About two and a half hours later we were through – the woman had severe arthritis in her hands and neck and was getting cortisone shots from her physician. I had commanded the spirit that was causing the arthritis to come out. Her fingers were straightened and she could move her neck freely.

Arlene who had been sitting in an overstuffed chair got up. And exclaimed, “Look, I was able to just stand up!” I had noticed in previous sessions that she sat down and got up out of chairs with great difficulty. Seventeen years prior she had been in a car with her son-in-law that had rolled over three times and had broken her back. Arthritis had settled into her lower back.

I told her to bend over and touch her toes. She said she couldn’t do that even before her back had been broken. I felt led to insist. She finally did it and was able to go all the way to the floor... after seventeen years!

I said, “Praise God!” while clenching my fists... and I was amazed to see that my hands would go all the way into a tight fist. For several years I’d had swollen knuckles and my hands were in constant pain particularly in cold weather. Well, this was an awakening for both Arlene and me. As an Adventist she believed that you could not have Jesus Christ in you and have a demon. In my “Full Gospel” training... I basically had the same belief

system. Yet I had just commanded demons to go that had been causing arthritis in the woman we were visiting... and Arlene and I were “delivered” as well. There are all kinds of doctrinal positions about demons... none of which seem to hold up against my own personal experiences. So I simply leave it at that... and let those who have ears to hear... hear.

It finally dawned on me that Ralph’s purpose had been to recruit me into the “deliverance ministry.” He felt that this was God’s call on his life. I moved to another area and Ralph and I have been out of touch ever since.

I began to pray about “deliverance” in general and the way Ralph had taught me in particular. My attention was drawn to the story in the seventeenth chapter of Matthew... where Jesus merely rebuked a demon that had been causing epileptic like seizures and the demon went out and the boy was immediately cured. “Why,” I asked, “does it take me three hours?” The answer was right in the story, *i.e.*, because I had so little faith. The remedial preparation that Jesus provided was *much* fasting and prayer.

I prayed and saw a glass of clear water. I asked for an interpretation and sensed that I was supposed to go without food for three full days and drink only water. At the end of those three days my faith had an enormous increase. I found that I no longer had to go through all of the speaking to demons... they did what I commanded them to do... without me having to listen to their lies and go through all what I had come to see as legalistic nonsense and gibberish.

I would just depend on Holy Spirit and I would know what to do step by step. The more I fasted... the next time for seven days... the more my faith grew. The more I realized that food is not even necessary! I met a man on an island in the Pacific who goes for six months at a time while eating nothing and drinking only water... and who was frustrated with the fact that he couldn’t go without water for longer than two or three days! He was certain that he should be able to get water out of the air. Extreme? Of course, but it does underscore the fact that we have been “educated” to our own detriment in believing that we *need* food.

There has not been one person that has argued with me over the fact that their doctor had told them it was dangerous to fast... who later, when they decided to do it, has ever had a negative experience – except when done for weight loss or other physical reasons.

As a discipline of focusing on God and praying to be closer to God and in God’s will... fasting, in my experience, has always been highly beneficial.

One I remember clearly was a diabetic young lady ... who finally fasted for ten days and was cured of her diabetes!

Back to my psychiatrist friend. After nine years I visited Portland and called Jim. He wanted to get together for dinner so we could share our experiences. (I wasn’t too sure how he might take mine... but I was anxious to see my close friend again.)

As close friends who have been separated for a long period tend to do... I asked him what he was doing. He told me that he had accepted a position as the medical director for a private psychiatric hospital and was able to also maintain his private practice at the hospital half-time. He told me that the hospital was rather famous for its emphasis on patients with "Multiple Personality Disorder." He must have seen a reaction on my face... because he asked me what I knew about MPD. I told him, "You don't want to know."

"Come on," I know you better than that... tell me what you have heard or read about MPD. I responded that I wasn't sure he was really ready for my answer. "Try me," was his answer.

"Okay," I said hesitantly – "all I can tell you is the only times I have ever encountered multiple personalities... they were demons and not the person at all."

"Oh no, you haven't become one of those people who look under a rock for demons." I lamely told him that I had already said he didn't want to know.

"Well, it is a highly controversial diagnosis, he stated flatly... "But let me tell you something. There are nine psychiatrists at the hospital including me... and everyone of us admit that there is an evil influence present that you can feel when we deal with an MPD. So I'm not all that opposed to what you are saying."

"Are you ready for something?" I asked... "Yeah, what?" he answered suspiciously. "Every time I cast the demons who were the real personalities out of one of these people, the other personalities ceased to manifest."

I could tell he wasn't convinced. Then he said, "Why don't you come down to the Coast this Friday night and spend the weekend at our place. I've got the duty this weekend, but we'll still have plenty of time." The "duty" he explained was that each of the doctors took one weekend every two months to cover for the rest of them. In that way they all had almost two months of free weekends. When nurses needed a doctor's orders for restraints or medication they would just call his home on the Coast. The legal requirement was simply that he had to respond within an hour of the call.

That Friday night was a nightmare for me. Always a light sleeper anyway, I heard the phone ring all night long... the hospital calling Jim for one thing or another.

We were sitting at the table sharing breakfast while looking out at the beautiful Pacific Ocean off the Oregon Coast. I asked what were all the phone calls last night? He muttered, "Dang MPDs... full moon -- happens every time. We have several in the hospital this weekend and they were all acting out."

About that time the phone rang again and he had to leave the room. He came back grumbling again about MPDs.

I said, “How would you like to learn to pray in a way that will stop them from doing that?”

“Yeah, right,” he responded sarcastically.” I merely shrugged.

The phone rang again and off he went again. When he came back he had a New King James Version of the Bible in his hands... “Can you show me what you are talking about in here?” He asked, while pointing at it with one hand while holding the Bible in his other. “You bet,” I answered.

“Hon,” he called to his wife, “we’re going to take a walk up the beach,” he said pointing to the north... so that his wife could come to get him in the event the hospital called.

We talked about the “authority of the believer.” I told him that I had discovered something about praying “in the name of Jesus Christ.” The word in the original for name in that passage is literally taken from two words that mean character and authority... of Jesus Christ. I told him that the first step to praying in power was to understand what is/was the character and authority of Jesus Christ. He was listening intently.

“Jesus’ character was personified by the fact that he only wanted his Father’s will. So in order to pray effectively, what you are praying or speaking must line up with the will of God. Jesus’ authority is in the fact that he is the Creator of the universe and everything in it.” I showed him Colossians Chapter 1, verse 15 & 16 and John 1: 1-3... and asked him what he saw. He told me that he was amazed... “I have never seen that before!”

“Where is Jesus Christ this moment, Jim?” I asked.

He responded, “At the right hand of the Father.” I told him that that was a Biblically correct answer. Then I pointed to the verse in Colossians that says, “Jesus Christ *in you...*”

“When you understand at the depths of your being *who* lives inside you... you can begin speaking God’s will and expecting it to take place and it will. Let me tell you something else about authority. As Medical Director of the hospital, don’t you have legal and practical authority?”

“Absolutely,” he immediately replied. “Under Oregon State Law I have total responsibility over the hospital as related to the medical practices of the nursing staff, other physicians and policies that might even remotely effect patient care.”

“In other words,” I replied, “what you say there goes.”

“Wait a minute, I see where you are going with this.” He had an amazed look on his face... “Nobody at the hospital can understand how I can tell MPDs, when they are in an alternate personality, that when I tell them I want to talk only the primary personality,

which I call by the patient's given name, they always obey me. Nurses try it, but can never do it."

I told him that I could show him how he could empower nurses as well. Jim will tell everyone who asks him that he never again got a phone call at night concerning an MPD!

VI

More of the same: (*REAL GOALS... REAL OBSTACLES*)

I'm going to relate another true story, remember the car that burned to the ground? In the preface to that story we hinted at spirits. This story will get into an "eye-opener" ...not for purposes of self-aggrandizement, but for purposes of illustration of spirits in general and the "principality of darkness" called *anti-belief* in particular.

Because, if we do not see that many of our obstacles to overcome are spirits – we miss much of what Jesus taught about being able to do what he did in that realm. Blaming everything on spirits is not our purpose... but learning to open our minds to their existence and how to get control of them *is* our purpose.

I had a preacher friend who thought I had a "gift of faith" for healing certain maladies. He telephoned one Sunday afternoon and asked me to drop by their home because a friend of his wife was visiting them and she had asthma and arthritis and they had been telling her about me because they had told her they had seen me "perform miracles." I had met them about five years prior at a Friday night gathering at which he led a Bible study and taught on a variety of Bible themes.

I had been invited and quite frankly very reluctantly attended with someone who told me how great was this fellowship that met regularly. During a time of worship and singing, a little lady in her sixties who had a serious deformity in her back – she walked around bent at a 45 degree angle from her waist – asked for prayer because she wasn't feeling well. So several people stood around her and prayed. I felt "led" to say, when they had finished, that there was something more to be done and asked her how long she had been bent over like that. She replied that it had been ten years. I asked her if she wanted to be free from what was causing it. She said yes and I cast the spirit that was causing it out... and she immediately straightened up. Well, that started the relationship with this Bible teacher/preacher and his wife.

They would invite me from time to time to come to their home and "pray" for some parishioner or visitor. Invariably I would tell them if they wanted to "pray" they should do so. They would insist that I had the gift of faith and I would tell them that it was untrue. I told them I had the same authority that any true believer had and simply understood what it was and had learned how to use it.

Now, back to the subject Sunday afternoon. The preacher and I got into our usual exchange. He asked me on the phone if I would please come over and pray for his wife's friend. I told him, as per usual, that if they wanted somebody to pray they should do it and that they didn't need me... they needed to acquire and exercise their own authority.

"You know what I mean," my friend insisted, "will you please come over?"

When I arrived, his wife and her friend were chatting around the kitchen table. He brought me into the room and introduced me to her. They promptly went back to their conversation. I was sitting on a stool nearby. He looked at me and said, “why don’t you do something?” I asked him just what it was he expected me to do? Well, she wanted you to come over and pray for her to get rid of her asthma and arthritis. I replied that it didn’t look like she wanted to do much of anything.

He interrupted their conversation somewhat impatiently and said that the reason they had invited me over was to pray for “Corrine” (not her real name). They stopped briefly and went right back to their conversation. He again, this time with no little frustration said, “aren’t you going to *do something*?” I just shrugged my shoulders and gestured with my arms spread with my palms of my hands held upwards.

This time he interrupted their conversation with exasperation. “Look you guys, what’s going on? Corrine, I thought you wanted to get rid of your arthritis.” She responded that it was much better since their son had prayed for her the previous night. She tried to demonstrate the improvement by lifting her hand awkwardly and got about shoulder high and winced with pain. Then strangely they went right back to talking.

He looked at me and exclaimed that he couldn’t believe it. “Donna!” (not his wife’s real name), he almost yelled, “Shut up! I don’t believe this, we had talked it over and you guys agreed that (I) would come over and pray for Corinne. What is going on?” Immediately Donna went into a glowing report to Corrine telling her how many people they had watched me heal over the previous five years. “He really has the gift of faith.” I gave my usual rejoinder which was just, as usual, ignored.

I sat there and prayed quietly asking Holy Spirit what I should do. I said to Corrine that I assumed that at some point in her life she had invited Jesus Christ to come in and take over her life. Her response was, “Oh I love the Lord” (a response quite typical to someone who is under bondage to a “religious spirit”).

I told her to close her eyes. When she had done so, I told her to repeat after me the following words. “Father,” (she repeated each few words as I paused) “I want you to cover me – from my head to my toes – with the blood of Jesus Christ.” She calmly repeated each of the words until she got to the word blood... “bl....” a loud and low pitched guttural male voice came out of her moaning the word “No-o-o-o...”

She reached for her throat with both hands and her face turned red... as the strange, loud moaning continued. Donna told her husband to close the patio door while she closed all the windows. I started laughing and then told the spirit to get out of her. Corrine’s face and neck were quite red as she gasped for air... and said, “that hurt.”

Donna was still standing having just closed the windows. “Why did you do that?” she asked me accusingly. “You always say, ‘I bind every spirit in the name of Jesus Christ, you can’t communicate, you can’t call for replacements and you cannot transfer. You will

leave when I tell you to go and you will not cause any pain, discomfort, smells vomiting or any other manifestations.’ How come you didn’t say those things this time?”

I replied that I didn’t know, I just had prayed and asked Holy Spirit what I ought to do... and did what He had led me to do.

The preacher was bowed over with his nose just barely above the surface of the table. “I know why you did it,” he said very quietly. “All these years I’ve watched you do this and, while I believe that demons exist... I had never once ever seen anything like this. I’ve listened to some of your stories... but just figured that it was how you believed and God honored your faith. I needed to see this so I would believe.”

I asked Corrine, still very red in her face and neck – looking like she had just exercised vigorously, how she felt about having to go through all that discomfort just so the preacher could learn a lesson?

She said that she was glad that it happened because she needed to learn too, “but it still really hurts.” I assured her that we would get rid of the discomfort... but told her to lift up her arms. She was excited that her arms could go fully extended all the way over her head. I asked her if she recognized that she was no longer wheezing.

“Wow!” she exclaimed. Donna quickly told her that she and her husband had seen this many times over the past five years.

I told Donna that since she knew all the right things to say, when was she going to take the necessary preparation so that she could quit calling me all the time. Her husband interrupted... “Oh, now you’re going to tell us that we need to fast.” I responded that I supposed that it might not be necessary, but I had never seen anybody that walked in and understood their authority unless they had learned to go without food for several days.

He then said an amazing thing... “I cannot fast. Every time I try I get an allergic reaction that is almost like asthma.” I told him jokingly that here he was always calling me to come over to take care of somebody else’s asthma problems and now he was admitting that he had a problem. “Only when I try to fast,” he quickly responded.

At that, Corrine asked me a question that comes up frequently... “Is asthma always caused by a demon?” I told her that the evangelist who “recruited” me into understanding “deliverance” (a term often used to describe the phenomena of casting out “evil spirits” or “demons” effecting cures of disease and so on) had told me the first time I had witnessed him doing it -- when I asked the same question... “I wouldn’t say that,” he said, “I just know that every time I cast a demon out of a person who has asthma that the asthma goes too.”

“That has certainly been my experience,” I told her. By the way, my preacher friend went on to fast and pray and has learned to walk and speak in tremendous authority.



VII

Taking Pause

Remember, back in the list of obstacles... number three on the list was: **Lack of Understanding of the Faith Necessary to Operate in Spiritual Authority and Power and How to Acquire it**. We told the story about the disciples being unable to do what Jesus had expected them to do, and for that matter what they themselves had also expected to be able to do. That story is found in the 17th chapter of Matthew.

There is some controversy surrounding the passage. The King James Version clearly states Jesus saying that this kind (in context and easily seen in the original language) of demon goes out only by a person who has spent much preparation through fasting and prayer. Some contend that this part of the passage was added and wasn't in the original text. Some argue that it was in the original and most likely was removed by some translator that didn't believe it.

I am not going to get into that argument. I do know that every person who I have ever shared this principle with who wanted to have all that God had for him or her (to open the locked treasure chest) never entered into the full presence and power of God's own Holy Spirit in this arena... *until* they got to the place they could go ten days or more in concentrated prayer *and* fasting.

I have also never known anyone to continue in this operation of God's power who did not learn to pray as Jesus prayed daily and go without food periodically to renew their focus. I firmly believe that is why Jesus called his disciples a bunch of faithless perverts... because they had grown slack in the discipline of prayer and fasting and therefore did not have enough faith.

Arguing about it gets nowhere. I am not proposing this as doctrine... simply stating what I and others have experienced because of it. But we've gotten ahead of ourselves... let's go back to anti-belief and look at a few of the possible, perhaps better said, *probable* causes of its hold on people.

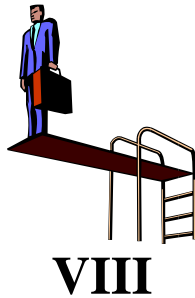
Remember my preacher friend? He didn't believe until he witnessed a demonic manifestation. His belief system didn't allow for such a thing until he saw it. I generally do not let demons manifest... I believe it gives rise to sensationalism, egocentricity and a distraction from our focus on God to the relatively weak power of the enemy. By the way when Jesus said, "Behold I give you all authority over all the works of the enemy," the words in the original are better and more accurately translated to our understanding as,

“authority over all the negative miracles of the enemy.” Invariably when people see green vomit (for example) filled with parts of a cancerous growth laying on the floor – they tend to remember that gross manifestation of what the demon caused rather than the glory of God’s miracle of getting rid of the cancer.

Disgusting? Of course... everything the enemy does is disgusting. But shall we look at some of the underlying causes? Remember Corrine? “Oh, I love the Lord.” A religious spirit causing unbelief, complacency and powerless-ness. How did it get there? Because of her “correct” religious training in a “Bible believing church!” Like it or not, that is the truth.

When you have witnessed all kinds of “incurable” diseases, such as epilepsy, cancer, diabetes, asthma and other afflictions leaving when demons are cast out... you begin to understand just what the negative miracles of the enemy are. Do you believe that, “Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world” (?) Are you ready to tackle the spirit, *anti-belief*?

One of the writers of the Gospels states very clearly in the original language that Jesus was (literally) unable to perform miracles in his hometown because of the unbelief due to the fact that the people there thought they knew all about him. Christians today who believe they know all about Jesus Christ do not realize how much they limit His work in and through themselves because of their unbelief. The very place that miracles should be taking place as a common occurrence don’t take place because of the rampant unbelief... engendered and perpetuated by the spirit of anti-belief.



Taking The Next Step

If we begin to understand how *anti-belief* took control of so much territory in our minds, we can begin to protect ourselves from future onslaughts from this insidious spirit.

A friend and business associate and I were traveling for several hours in an automobile recently and we were sharing true experiences. They were faith renewing for both of us as we both recounted things in the realm of what some people would describe as miracles or the supernatural.

We talked for a moment about how some of these stories simply would not be believed by many people... particularly by people who refer to themselves as “believers” and regularly attend church in the current tradition and meaning of that term.

Why bring this up and in this manner? It always amazes me that people who think they have faith and believe in God make the craziest sounding excuses for not taking steps to increase their faith. *Faith* in the sense we are using the term, *i.e.* as Jesus used the term *faith* in explaining to his own disciples why they had been unable to get rid of a demon causing epileptic-like seizures. I feel the need to digress here to underscore his discussion.

Even my description of what many scholars insist was actually the disease commonly referred to nowadays as *epilepsy*... as “epileptic-like seizures” has its (my description) root in religious reaction. I was writing an article for a missionary organization about faith and using the story in Matthew 17 and simply referred to the incident as Jesus’ disciples inability to get rid of a demon causing *epilepsy*. The editor came to me and said, “Brother, we can’t leave this as-is... in our organization we have about 300 missionaries who have epilepsy.”

To my amazement, he was going to cut the entire article! He went on to explain that it was a very sensitive issue in that organization because epileptics were routinely barred from missionary service in most main-stream Christian organizations. This particular organization had become a haven for those suffering from epilepsy... and they strongly resisted the notion that the disease was caused by demons. Understandable? Of course.

The solution to the problem of the article was easily solved... I simply changed the word to the word used by King James translators... *lunatic* (note: other translations, notably the *New King James Version* use “epilepsy”). As with the story about “Corinne” when she asked if I believed that asthma was always caused by a demon. Do I believe, or am I implying that epilepsy is always caused by demons? Absolutely not! But my experience is that every time a demon goes out of an epileptic... the epilepsy goes too!

I really want to emphasize my point here. My argument with the editor was that if we left the word *epilepsy* in the article... with a foot-note that clearly indicated that the word in the original simply meant affected by moon cycles ...maybe some of the three-hundred missionaries who were afflicted with the problem might see that there was a very simple reason and a simple cure for the problem and get “delivered.”

I could (but won't) use example after example of the same problem. Religion becomes the hiding place for demonic activity... oftentimes under the guise of etiquette – not wanting to offend a certain group of people. And Anti-faith gains a stronghold. So, that is why I have come to use the term *epileptic-like* seizures – just so I don't have to get into arguments about translation or accusations that I am offending epileptics.

I was introduced to a very successful businessman by a friend. I will call this businessman “Marvin.” Marvin started to accompany a few of us in our ministry visits. About three days after a rather dramatic incident at a large university hospital, at which Marvin was present... where a fifteen year old girl was “delivered” from a debilitating recurring illness that the doctors were unable to diagnose... (and now, about six years later, she is still free and interning as a missionary in the Pacific). Marvin called me at my office and asked if he could meet with me.

We chose a restaurant nearby and I brought a business associate with me who had also been at the hospital. I told him that I felt that Marvin was about ready for a breakthrough and I thought it would be good if he (my associate) came along.

Marvin was very serious as we sat down... I explained that I felt I knew why he wanted to meet. He was amazed at the insight I had been given.

He expressed it this way: “I feel like a spectator sitting at a sports arena watching everyone else participate in the game while I just sit and watch the action. I watch you guys do things that I am unable to do and don't understand why I cannot do them.”

“Marvin,” I said, “I am going to say something to you that will probably shock you, but I believe you are ready to hear it. Do you want God's will in your life, no matter what the cost?”

“Absolutely, yes, yes, yes!” Was his immediate and emphatic response.

“I will tell you why you are a spectator and not a participant. You are under a covering... somebody has authority over your life who does not believe that what you have seen with

your own eyes and know is real is of God. That person is also under the covering of spiritual authority. He does not realize that ultimately he is under the leadership of a religious and unbelieving spirit.

“Here is what I got while praying on the way over here.” The associate who accompanied me... was nodding his head because I had already shared what it was... and had told him that this would be the issue. I continued, “Jesus referred to all of us as sheep and that he was the only true or rightful shepherd. He said that all other shepherds were ‘usurpers’ the word actually means those who take power and authority that are not rightfully theirs to take. What most people don’t realize is that the English word “pastor” comes from pastoral... and means one who tends the flock in the pasture, in other words is a *shepherd*.”

Marvin had brought his Bible with him and I asked him to open it to the 23rd chapter of Matthew. I pointed to a passage I wanted him to read and then asked him to listen to an interpretation that I believed that God had given me and to pray to see if he believed it to be true. I said:

“Jesus is saying here that all of us are to be equal... in the same sense that brothers are equal and all of us are to minister to one another in that equality.”

We are not to refer to anyone else as our spiritual father because there is only one Father in the spirit realm... and that we have only one Teacher, “the Christ,” and that we are not to allow anyone to refer to us by any titles that would imply spiritual authority or superiority.

NOTE: While I am trying to avoid cluttering up this little work with volumes of Scriptural foot notes... I feel the need to digress. Invariably in a seminar or conference setting, one or more professional clergymen in attendance will bring up the fact that Paul referred to himself as the young minister Timothy’s “spiritual father.” The question I usually ask first is, “why do you bring that up at this moment?” Usually a vigorous discussion ensues, often with the clergyman being amazed at having been caught in self-justification about his position. During a one evening session, one clergyman became so disruptive that it was impossible to continue.

About one year later we happened to pass one another in a busy shopping mall. He exclaimed, “I’m so glad I ran into you, do you have a minute?” After we seated ourselves on a relatively private bench... he said, “I’ve wanted to ask for your forgiveness for my behavior that night.” After I asked him why, and told him that I had never held anything against him... he said, “About six months ago I left my church to start in-home fellowships where we emphasize that the only leadership is God’s own Holy Spirit. I’ve wanted to see you since then and have you come and make one of your presentations. God has shown me that I was really under the control of a religious spirit.” He then asked an astonishing question? “Are you aware that the same kind of spirit wants to take control over in-home groups?” I assured him that was my experience as well... and we had an interesting discussion about the things the groups with which he was involved did to make sure that such spirits did not gain a stronghold.

“Marvin, you refer to some man as your ‘Pastor’ -- don’t you.” Marvin readily admitted that was the case.

“I am going to make a suggestion, but I want you to carefully consider it... and not just agree to do it unless you believe that it is God’s will for you, okay?” Marvin simply nodded his head once.

“I suggest you simply tell Jesus Christ that you want him to be your one and only pastor and teacher and that you want God to be your only Father in spiritual matters.”

We were in a booth in a crowded restaurant. Marvin looked back and forth at my associate and me for just a few seconds... then closed his eyes and said, (a bit loudly for my comfort)... “Jesus Christ, I want you to be my only pastor... God, my Father in heaven, you are my only Father.” He opened his eyes, looked at us and asked excitedly, “Did you feel that? It was like a blanket that ‘whooshed’ off from the top of my head!”

We laughed and I told him that I hadn’t felt anything, but he obviously had. “What do I call John now?” he asked?

“Who’s John?” I asked, not yet getting it.

“John is the pastor, uh, that is... ah, er I guess leader of the church I attend.”

“Why not just call him John?”

“This is amazing.” Marvin said, shaking his head, “I see clearly why I am not to call him ‘Pastor John’ any longer... I need to go see him and tell him what has happened to me.”

Marvin later told us an amazing story. John was the pastor of the largest church of a well-known denomination in that city. John resigned from the church and told his congregation that Marvin had had an experience with God and that he had given him an understanding of something Jesus had taught and to which John felt he had to be obedient. Marvin and John began fasting and praying together and started planting home worship groups that emphasized that the only Teacher and Leader was God’s own Holy Spirit.

About a month later, Marvin invited me to lunch. He told me that God was moving in his life in ways that he had never before believed to be possible. He told me that just the day before one of his secretaries came to him and told him she was quite sick and had to go home. He related that he asked her if she would rather be well and work. She told him she’d rather be well and work, but was just too ill.

He put his hand on her stomach and said, “In the name of Jesus Christ be whole!”

She looked at him in astonishment and said, “What did you do?”

He said, with a grin on his face, “I was immediately afraid that I was going to be accused of sexual harassment... and asked her what she meant...”

“She told me that she had been very nauseated and weak and felt that she had had a fever and that now she felt as good as she remembered feeling in her whole life.

“This kind of thing happens all the time now... and I just thought that God is telling me to encourage you to keep allowing Him to work through you... to do what you did with me... don't stop the flow because of opposition. John says it is a wonder the church doesn't rise up and crucify you.!”

I laughed, but he assured me that John had been serious.

Marvin went on to tell me that John was being severely criticized by the denomination and members of his former church for leaving... especially since some of the other members had left with John and Marvin. Marvin had been an “elder” and we heard the largest single monetary contributor. Could John and Marvin have left in such a way that would not have been so disruptive? Probably. But Marvin assured me that they did what they did in obedience to Holy Spirit.

I believe God is telling me not to make any judgment about the organized church. I do feel that I am supposed to provide the following to help those who “have ears to hear” to understand something.

Related to the hierarchy of organized Christianity. In Paul's letter to a group of believers in the region of Ephesus, he (4:4 and onward) “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says...” then in verse 11...

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.”

What God has shown me (and you are free to either believe or reject His message) about this “five-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit” is that it has been inverted by hierarchical organization that has stifled the flow and power of God's own Holy Spirit.

Those upon whom the mantle of apostleship rests exist today as do prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers... are to be operative in the presence and power of God's own Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ today... not in any position of authority or superiority, but “with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing the burden with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:2,3).

A quick note about the word “longsuffering” in the above quoted passage. The original language makes it clear, in context, that it means engaging in extended battle with spiritual entities. This is why some choose the term “spiritual warfare” rather than “deliverance ministry” to depict the activity of getting rid of demonic activity.

In other words the Scriptures that give life to this “five-fold ministry” are also in complete harmony with what Jesus said in Matthew 23, but religious tradition and misinterpretation have given rise to the stifling of the operation of this five-fold ministry through man-made organizational hierarchy.

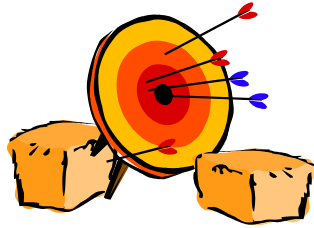
When Marvin was freed from the bondage of being “under the covering of a pastor” he was freed to watch Holy Spirit minister through him in miraculous works, healing and evangelism. While John was freed to operate in the apostolic role and vision of planting house churches.

Could they, *should they*, have operated in this power in their former denomination and church? Seems doubtful. It seems as though a huge possibility exists that they learned what they were supposed to learn both through that church and their removal from it. Others will undoubtedly learn what they are supposed to learn from staying there. In the meanwhile we do not have to either deny or run away from the truth.

I remember, at a missionary conference at which I happened to be a featured speaker, a church pastor coming up to me and saying: “I’d really like to have you come to my church and speak... but my people aren’t ready for some of the things you have to say.” Therein lies the problem in a nutshell. “His people” were under his protective covering. On the other hand... some people may need such protection. It is not for me to judge, but each of us to submit ourselves in love to one another... and to learn to disagree in love and separate just as the original apostles themselves had to learn the same lesson.

And now ...finally... to end this chapter with a challenge: “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection.”

(Hebrews 5:12 – 6:1)



IX

“Moving on to perfection” is a bit difficult for many reasons. First of all, the human tendency is to resist change. In the past ten years I have seen many men in traditional church pastoral roles come into the truth we have been exposing in this little book – only to get such heavy resistance from wives (less true when husband and wife are “co-pastors”), other family members and members of the congregation, that they sadly turn away from the truth.

They give themselves over to rationalization and self-justification that only serves the ends of the enemy. I believe if some of these would face the truth squarely and simply announce to God that they need His own Holy Spirit’s guidance as to what to do, He would show them how to rest in His own presence and power to “move on from the elementary principles of Christ to perfection” – instead of making excuses and trite little doctrines to hide behind as to why they continue to do what he expressly said not to do... and for why they cannot do what he said true believers could and would do.

Does “moving on” necessarily mean leaving the traditional church? I don’t know the answer to that question in general terms. I know specifically that I have heard the call to come out of her. I have also heard the call not to judge or criticize the traditional church. I also know that I have left situations from which I could and should have learned lessons that I have had to learn in the new situation. I have also stayed in situations when I should have left. The key to operating correctly? Follow the promptings of Holy Spirit.

If I am angry and bitter about how people have treated me and leave because of it... I have not learned the lesson Holy Spirit has for me. I need to learn how to be “delivered” from this so that I am free to hear Holy Spirit’s guidance to be in His presence and power whether I leave or stay. Leaving ahead of this means delaying the lesson and having to learn it in a harder way. We will deal with this in a later chapter.

Make no mistake about this. Jesus called us to love our enemies... I have had difficulty loving my own family and friends because of my expectations of them instead of trusting God. Leaving before loving has created personal disasters for me. Staying when God was prompting me to leave has created much complacency and lack of faith.

I have often seen “house churches” which are infected by the same religious spirit that oppressed the church from which they split away. Meeting in homes is not the antidote for the poisons that have crept into the traditional church unless Holy Spirit himself governs such meetings.

For those who are seeking truth for their own lives and have restless feelings about their own church involvement and would like some scriptural reference and perhaps some historical perspective... here goes:

Some suggested reading is the 17th chapter of John's Revelation, the last book in the New Testament. Digest the entire chapter carefully and prayerfully – ask Holy Spirit to remove any preconceived notions. Most certainly do not take a message that was given to me unless Holy Spirit confirms that it is also for you.

Reformation scholars believed and wrote that the Mother of Harlots in this passage refers specifically to the Roman Catholic Church. Whether this is merely intellectual justification to shore up “Protestantism” is for each individual to find out for her/himself. There are convincing arguments particularly based on some of the symbolism found in the passage that are rather astounding.

What I saw when I first began to look at this chapter prayerfully... was that the word “mother” of harlots seemed to jump off the page at me. Immediately I saw that if the Roman Catholic Church was the harlot, as so many protestant scholars hold, then the daughters... her protestant offspring “daughters” -- were much craftier and much more seductive than the mother.

I am neither asserting the above to be true or untrue. I offer it only as a steppingstone for awareness.

A significant step in my own spiritual awareness came as a result of being a delegate from the church I attended to its denomination's annual central gathering, this particular time under the theme, “church renewal.”

The speaker on this particular evening was focusing in on the “church of the Laodiceans” (Rev. 3: 14-21). He was talking about the need for renewal of the denomination that could come only as a result of each church being renewed and that renewal could happen only as individuals were renewed. He centered his remarks around verse 16 and pointed out the difficulty with the word “spewed” which sounded as though Christ were spitting the lukewarm out of his mouth... when the word in the original actually means “vomit.” His point was that vomiting is generally an involuntary convulsion as opposed to the voluntary “spitting.” He pointed out that people in the Middle East particularly understand that water there that is neither hot nor cold... but lukewarm... tastes vile and often produces nausea.

The vividness, with which I saw my own lukewarm religious experience, brought me to great conviction. As the speaker began to focus on Rev. 3: 20, he pointed out that the passage was intended to shake the lukewarm out of their complacency, but unfortunately was used almost exclusively by evangelists to elicit initial “decisions for Christ.”

As he kept talking I began to visualize myself going back to my hotel room that night and saw myself kneeling by my bed inviting Jesus Christ to take over my life for renewal.

Then, it dawned on me... Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and forever... he was there with me right then and I didn't need to wait until later. Silently I confessed my need to him and asked him to come in and take over my life completely in every area.

From that night more than thirty years ago to this... I have had deeply impressed on my spirit that Jesus Christ is always available to me for revival. Jesus Christ come into me now... with power and force so that I am not writing this as some intellectual exercise... but am open to Holy Spirit's own presence and power that will make an impact on all readers open to receiving more directly from Him... and you.

One of many other reasons we fail to "move on to perfection" is the word itself. The word translated as *perfection* in the original is also translated variably as completion and salvation depending upon the context. The word translated into Greek is *σοζο* -- pronounced *sozo*' -- I asked the owner of a Greek foods grocery in South San Francisco what the word meant... he was also a fisherman and caught most of the seafood sold in his store. He told me that the word is used when repairs to a boat are completed. It means joined together again and finished. In heavily accented English he brought his hands together flat and said, "broken apart, back together... sozo!"

Later that night, I saw it clearly. Separated from and then joined together again with God! The English words *salvation*, *perfection* and *completion* don't begin to tell us the story.

Telling someone that he or she is a sinner and needs to be "saved (*σοζο*) from his or her sins" by believing in Jesus Christ doesn't begin to have the impact of the fact that Jesus Christ wants to come into our lives so that we can be joined together again with the Father!

We are going to examine several words that will begin to completely change our awareness, but first let's take a look at who, what we are inviting in so that we will live our lives in the presence and power of God's own Holy Spirit.

When I began to understand how and why religious tradition had robbed us of our heritage... I began asking gathered groups two simple questions. 1) Who is Jesus Christ? 2) Where is Jesus Christ right now?

A traditionalist Christian will answer: 1) The Son of God, and 2) At the right hand of the Father. These answers are not incorrect, but they are incomplete! In my experience, before anyone can begin to operate in the presence, power and authority of God's own Holy Spirit, they need to first understand just who Jesus Christ is and what he did in his pre-existent state... and where he is NOW.

Both the author of the New Testament Gospel of John and the author of the New Testament book, Colossians, believed and wrote that the man history refers to as Jesus Christ was, before he became a man, the Spirit who created the Universe and everything in it.

Repeat this a few times and let it begin to permeate our minds. “Jesus Christ is the Creator of the entire Universe and everything in it.”

We are going to look in the coming chapters at praying in the same way Jesus prayed. The teaching based on Jesus’ words, “Whatsoever you ask in my name, believing, you will have” has millions of Christians ending their rather trite “prayers,” – “In the name of Jesus, amen.”

The word in the original language translated into the English “name” in this passage literally means “the character and authority of.” Let us ask what is the authority of Jesus Christ? He is the Creator of the Universe! What is the character of Jesus Christ? He wanted only the will of his Father in heaven.

Do we begin to see something here? When I “pray” in the name of Jesus Christ and I understand and know that it will come to pass... I am praying as the Creator of the Universe... wanting only God’s will and nothing else and speaking it into existence!

Who is Jesus Christ? “He is the image (what we see) of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell...” Col. 1:15-19

Then onto *where* he is... “...Christ in you!...” (Col. 1:27)

Going through a checkout counter in a supermarket, the young lady asked, “How are you this evening, sir?”

“Perfect,” I replied, how are you?”

“Don’t ask,” she said with a frown.

“Why not?” I returned...

“Well, I’ll tell you one thing, I’m certainly not perfect!”

Without thinking, I blurted out, “Oh -- Who lives inside you?”

She straightened her shoulders and looked me right in the eye and said, “Jesus Christ!”

“Then,” I said, matching her straight-on look, “Why don’t you let him do the talking?”
“Oh,” she said with an astonished look on her face... “That’s what you meant, Oh!”

She followed me out to the door and kept exclaiming... “I’m so glad you came in, thank you so much for sharing that!”

Why is it that we allow the enemy to do our talking for us instead of the Creator within? Who lives in me? Jesus Christ lives in me. Jesus Christ is the ultimate... the Creator and he is perfect. Be committed to letting him speak the truth through your lips. Next time someone asks how you are? Say “perfect!” This isn’t hackneyed religious palaver... this is spiritual dynamite... let it permeate your spirit and renew your mind!

In the next chapter we are going to look at more ways to bring the Biblical injunction to “bring every thought captive to Christ” in order to renew our minds. But first, let us begin to understand that when we invite Jesus Christ into our lives that the Creator of the Universe and everything in it is within us. The foregoing passage (Col. 1:27) is not the only place in the Bible where this is found... but we don’t need to memorize twenty different scripture verses to hang onto this truth. Have you told him that you want him to take over your physical life... to come in and change you completely? He says, “I tell you the truth, I am standing at the door, if anyone opens the door, I will come in and have intimate fellowship with them, just as friends would in sharing a meal.” This is a truth obscured by antiquated translation and tradition.

Jesus Christ, come into my life now. Baptize (immerse) me afresh with God’s own Holy Spirit... remove all my preconceived ideas about you and what it means for you to completely take over my life. I want God’s own Holy Spirit to rule every facet of my life.

As an introduction to the next chapter... “renewing our minds.” One of the most powerful things we need, in order to change our focus from the physical (seen) to the spiritual (unseen) side of our lives, is to understand what the word “ask” really means in places that Jesus teaches about how to pray. It is translated from a word that means to demand impudently without awe. Our religious conditioning and inadequate translation keeps us from following what Jesus actually said to do. Let’s move onto the next chapter and begin the process of changing into living our lives in his power and presence by simple obedience to what he himself taught. Ready?



X

Renewing Our Minds

Jesus gave an illustration about how to pray. In the New King James Version it goes like this...

“Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey and I have nothing to set before him...’ “and he will answer from within and say,” ‘Do not trouble me, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed, I cannot rise and give to you’ (?)

“I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. So 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.”

In the original King James Version, the word rather than “persistence” is *importunity*. That word in today’s dictionaries is defined as *persistent demanding or imploring*. In the 1600’s, when the King James Version was translated, the word *importunity* meant impudent... in other words without respect or awe. The problem with the translation here is twofold. In the original language the word translated as *importunity* in the King James Version and *persistence* in the New King James Version, and most other “modern” translations, did mean impudence and a lack of respect, but in the original language the tense of the verb indicated repeatedly, over and over again... *i.e. persistence*. Remember also, that the word translated as “asks” literally means, *demand*s without respect or awe.

Here’s the story in plain, everyday English. A friend comes in the middle of the night. Simply and clearly a metaphor for an unexpected problem that comes into our lives. We have nothing to feed this *friend*. A metaphor for the fact that we have no solution for the problem. We take our problem to a neighbor, in this case a very good friend – a friend so good that we know we can bang on his door in the middle of the night even though he and his whole family are asleep. At first, it is as if we are told to go away... refused. Even though our neighbor is a good friend (an obvious metaphor for God) he does not give us what we need.. Yet because of our persistent, impudent demands, totally without respect for our relative positions, He will finally give us the solution.

Jesus underscores this understanding of “prayer” by repeating it for emphasis... “So I tell you, impudently and persistently demand and you will get what it is you are impudently and persistently demanding. Do this until you see it come into the physical realm as an accomplished thing. Knock on God’s ‘door’ continually and don’t stop until it is accomplished.”

Jesus doesn’t leave it alone... He further emphasizes the point by saying: “For I tell you that everyone who does keep on demanding and knocking until the problem is solved, it will be solved on the physical plane where he will see it solved.”

We need to pause here and see something. The grammatical structure or syntax of the original language creates no small problem for those who demand a word-for-word and word-by-word translation into English. This demand creates a distortion for an English speaking person and causes the impact of the words in the original language to get lost.

For example, the old movie title, “Throw your mother from the train a kiss” is humorous to a person that speaks only English. This is true just because of the seeming improper order of the words. To most people for whom English is a second language the humor is missed. The title itself, I am told, comes from an old Hungarian adage that basically could be translated into English as, “Before you go on a journey be sure to give your mother an expression of honor and affection so that she knows you love her” (something like that). A person whose primary language is one of European origin, for example, but speaks English fluently does not have to go through the mental gyrations that an American does to readily translate this in his or her own mind, “Throw your mother from the train a kiss.” That person, whose primary language is not English, also misses the humor because the sentence structure is comfortable and doesn’t seem at all odd.

Let’s be ridiculous for a moment to emphasize the point. If I am a person who has a tendency to be legalistic and demand of myself a strict obedience to the “letter” rather than the spirit of something... here is what will happen. If the maxim “Throw your mother from the train a kiss” is handed to me as words to live by... the following scenario might take place. I am on a train. I see my mother, who I thought couldn’t make it to see me off, standing on the platform waving to me. I jump off the train, run over and grab my mother and drag her onto the train. I then throw her off the train and run over to her and kiss her broken, bleeding body. Then I jump back on the train to get on with my travels. All the while believing I was following perfectly the demands of a code of honor for treating my mother.

Ridiculous? Of course. Ridiculous enough to get us to see that this is exactly what happens to us through holding to traditions born out of archaic English translations of the Bible? I certainly hope so.

Jesus gave his instructions not only allegorically and metaphorically... but with long, illustrative stories which don’t meet the cultural thought patterns of an average American. Additionally, the syntax of Aramaic, the Hebrew derivative in which he spoke, and the Greek in which the authors of the Gospels who recorded his words wrote, come out like:

“Throw your mother from the train a kiss.” A word for word, and word by word translation that doesn’t quite “get it.” Further the subject of an allegory in Greek and Aramaic comes at the end. In English it comes first.

This entire passage is missed for a couple of rather obvious reasons. “Obvious” only after you begin thinking about it in the light of the difficulties of transferring thoughts from one language to another. This is especially true if we disregard the culture and thought patterns of the former.

The subject of this passage in American English would be, “When you want God’s own Holy Spirit for help... here is how you go about getting it.” Nowhere, in the above, “seek, knock and ask,” narrative do you see even the mention of Holy Spirit. Why? We haven’t got there yet! ...And we are only two thirds through the passage! We have some important stuff to cover before we get there.

So, Jesus has told us to be persistent and demand the solution to our problem. I have already hinted at the fact that the solution he gives is to quit searching for the solution to our problem with our finite minds and get God’s own Spirit involved. Now, let’s look at how he tells us to approach getting Spirit involved instead of our minds.

In the New King James Version, “If a son asks for bread from any father among you, 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!”

The word “Father” Jesus uses for God here is a very personal intimate word... not at all one of respect. To an American, “daddy” is an accurate and appropriately correct translation, or perhaps, “papa,” if that word is comfortable. We are talking intimacy! Intimacy with God is a difficult concept for most religious people whose minds simply cannot grasp what Jesus is saying here. We are talking about the renewal of our minds, remember?

The point Jesus is making is that a child does not go to his father asking for something he or she wants, saying, “Oh deeply respected, all wonderful, father... if it pleases you, will you give me such and such? No, a little child has not yet learned such a concept. He simply wants and lets his wants be known and doesn’t give up until he gets what he wants and gets what he wants because he is relentless until he gets it. That’s the point. But what is the “it” for which we are impudently, continually demanding?

Our one and only perfect Daddy’s own Holy Spirit for solving every problem that comes into our lives. Jesus is not saying... God has given you a mind, now use your experience and maturity and your mind to solve your problem. NO! NO! NO! That concept has been fed to us by religionists who themselves do not know how to pray to get the results that are God’s perfect will for us and how Jesus taught us to get such results.

Not only are we to come as little children, consistently demanding because we know our Daddy will give us anything if we ask long enough... but consider this with simplicity: Our perfect Daddy won't give us anything that will harm us.

Ever heard the axiom, be careful what you ask for because you might just get it (?) Our problem in the spirit (unseen) realm is that we don't understand that there are two "fathers" – one who will give us anything we want, particularly if it will ultimately destroy us, because Jesus says that is what that "father" is bent on doing. If we will consider the word "desire" for a moment, we will begin to see our problem. The prefix "de" means "of the." Sire, as we all know, denotes the father. Desire simply means "of the father." So called "evil" desires come from whom Jesus referred to as the "father of lies." Pure, Holy Spirit derived desires come from our perfect Daddy. Both of these fathers are in the spirit realm.

Now, are we ready to "see" the key that will renew our minds?

The passage we have been looking at comes from the eleventh chapter of Luke, verses 5 through 13. Let's recap what Jesus is saying in American English.

When you have an unexpected problem for which you have no solution... or a problem that finally gets your attention... go to your perfect Daddy, just as a child would, and keep on demanding that he gives you His own Holy Spirit to get the solution. Don't stop demanding and knocking on His door until you see the solution. Your Daddy will not give you anything except His own Spirit if that is what you really want.

Do we want only Holy Spirit to guide our decisions in this life? The simple answer, because of our conditioning, is no. This chapter is about *renewing* our minds remember? Our conditioning is to believe that our minds came from God. In the beginning that was true. What happened? Our minds got separated from God... remember "sozo?" Joined together again. This is what Jesus is showing us... how to get re-paired, joined together again with God.

Just a brief look at the separation and how it gets perpetuated today. Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and saw that they were naked and that is what separated them from God. They hid from Him, because they now knew the difference between good and evil! Wait a minute! They became aware of something that had not bothered God one whit seconds before their great understanding of the new morality. Will we see this? Religion's emphasis is education to get us to see the things that are revealed by eating fruit from the same tree that the serpent in the garden got Adam and Eve to eat. This is what separated them. This is what separates us today. We need to be re-paired with our one and only perfect Dad.

What we haven't looked at yet is that this passage, Luke 11: 5-13, the point of our discussion, is a continuation of what Jesus was teaching his disciples that tradition has brought to us as, "The Lord's Prayer." Until we begin to understand the insidious distortion of "The Lord's Prayer" caused by religious tradition we will not have our

minds renewed in the manner it was intended. We will not become what God wants us to become. Are we ready to make the leap? Luke 11: 5-13 even in its truest form cannot be taken in a vacuum. Jesus sets the stage for this amazing truth about how to have God's own Holy Spirit.

What caused Jesus to teach the "Lord's Prayer?" How has its meaning been so distorted and diluted... robbed of its power?

First things first. Jesus' practice was to go off by himself every morning to pray. After his usual "prayer" session one morning, his disciples demanded... "How come you don't teach us to pray like you pray? After all, John (a first cousin of Jesus), taught his followers to pray." So Jesus told them the following... in American English. The problem, if we remember, "Throw your mother from the train a kiss," gets even worse through repeating what is a meaningless passel of words over and over and even making a song out of it. A song that is sung or chanted in sonorous tones in solemn assemblies that make us feel like we are accomplishing something – when such practices accomplish NOTHING, but the perpetuation of a dead, religious practice!

Let's take it the way we've learned it (from the New King James Version) "Our Father in heaven. Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Without getting into the cumbersome act of dissecting each word... here is a very accurate translation of both spirit and letter... Remember this is Jesus trying to get his followers' minds renewed... so that they could pray the way he prayed daily...

Literally, "Our one and only perfect Daddy..." what follows is demanding emphatically like stomping one's foot down or using one's fist to emphasize the desire that this be done and demanding that it be!

"The place from which You alone rule is firmly established in me now. This so that I will speak into existence on this physical plane what you have already decreed in the spirit realm are Your own desires and purposes. I want your own perfect food... the bread of life, Your own Holy Spirit so that I can speak your desires and purposes into being now. I release and send away all judgment and criticisms of those I perceive rightly or wrongly to have abused me. Lead me away from the temptation to judge anyone else. Deliver me from all the works of the evil one to get me to focus on the wrongs of others."

I can tell you from personal experience that understanding verses 5 – 13 and then employing verses 2 – 4 as just stated above, on a continual basis... is a mind re-newer and changer.

What's more, it is the will of God. God wants us to be filled with His own Spirit. Everything in our "nature" rebels against this and religion reinforces the rebellion in the name of "good."

Thank you, Daddy, for revealing this to me. Thank You that I am in and of Your will by doing this. Thank you that Your own presence and power are upon me and that I want and have nothing else and no other thought or feeling shall have a place in me. I AM!

Is this outlandish? Do we understand just what it is that Jesus is calling us to do and be?

One of our primary obstacles to having a major breakthrough, from practicing religion to living in the presence and power of Holy Spirit, in "*Christ-like*" fashion has partly to do with what we think being *like* Christ might actually appear like. Some have the picture of a fairy-like figure in a long white robe, whispering and lisping through life with his toes barely, if ever, touching the ground. Certainly never showing impatience with people, never arguing, never saying bad words, nor ever verbally attacking anyone. Always being a messenger of blessings and peace and ultimate politeness.

Well, he called his own handpicked group of followers a bunch of "faithless perverts" in obvious impatience because they hadn't done what he had expected them to do. He told the religious leaders of his day that their mothers were snakes and that, at best, they were nothing more than grave markers painted white to hide the fact that they were ugly, gray and dead. He told the religious of his day that their worship was worthless.

He apparently forgot to read what Christ-like meant! Further, he spent time in the equivalent of today's bars with whores and Roman tax collectors. The latter being notorious for being thieves and worse. One religious group was irritated with him enough over this fact that they referred to him as a glutton and a drunkard. Wow, did the guy party?

Where on earth did we get the other pictures? What good do these pictures do? Especially since they dilute the truth of what Jesus was like as a man and what he said we would do when we lost our identity to become like him.

It is on this note that we finish this chapter. In the first chapter of Acts, the fifth book of the New Testament, we have Jesus telling his close group of followers what they would be like when Holy Spirit came upon them. Some of us believe that the same holds true for us today.

"When Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will receive *δυναμις*, that is, the ability or power to perform miracles." The word is pronounced doo-nah-meese. It is the word from which the English word *dynamite* was derived. The next part of the verse is very strangely translated... "and you shall be witnesses to me..."

The word in the original language translated into English as "witnesses" is *μαρτυς*. The word is pronounced mar-toose. It is the word from which the English word "martyr" was

derived. *Martyr* in English means somebody that is so dedicated to a principle or a cause that he or she is willing to die for it. But that is the English word... the other word literally means to be so taken over by another power that an individual loses his identity and becomes someone else. That is the literal meaning of the word. In context, what Jesus is actually saying is that when someone is baptized in, with, or by (scholars seem to have a proclivity to argue about the milk of which preposition is actually in this passage rather than to discuss the meat) God's own Holy Spirit -- that person will lose his own identity and people will see or witness Jesus Christ in him or her. This is very clear in the original language. How and why did it get so diluted in the translation into English? How and why is this notion perpetuated?

How on earth will we recognize Jesus Christ in another person if we have only the picture of some long-robe-garbed, prissy man with long hair waltzing through life touching everyone with a giant rosebud?

Remember, the purpose of this chapter is the renewing of our minds. The first thing with which most people agree that needs to happen before anyone can change... is to recognize the need for it. If the foregoing has made you uncomfortable enough to begin to at least question some religious preconceptions and seek your own revelation from God and to keep seeking until you know for yourself what is truth... this chapter will have served its purpose. God, through the prophet Jeremiah, said a beautiful thing...

“You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your being.”

Because of my focus on the power Jesus said believers in him would have to do the very same things that he did... and even greater... some religious preacher-teacher types have accused me of having the wrong focus. That is quite possible. I suggest to anyone that is having a problem with what I have written... burn it. It is not worth getting upset over. Next, draw a circle around your body and begin demanding from your own perfect Daddy that He give you the truth that He has for you... and don't get out of the circle until you know you have His truth. Jesus promised it... Jeremiah promised it... most people go to some preacher to have their ears tickled so they don't have to face the discomfort of truth.

Not that truth is uncomfortable... truth is pure joy... it is just shocking to us most of the time because it is so seldom that we get it!

Finally, the truth you get *for you* from your perfect Dad, may differ from the truth I have received from the very same perfect Dad. Why? Because, as any earthly father well knows... to be effective in child-rearing... each child has to be treated as the individual that he or she is. What one is ready for, by virtue of maturity (or lack thereof) another may not be ready to receive.

XI



Real Faith (and obtaining it)

Suggestion... review Chapter 2. Particularly the last paragraph on page 6. Now ask this question: Am I willing to begin to follow Jesus' instruction in Luke 11: 5-13, that is, to keep on *demanding* to receive more of God's own Holy Spirit... to keep on knocking (try knocking physically on the floor or other surface while demanding to receive *more* of Holy Spirit for more faith), UNTIL I begin to notice or "see" evidence of significant increases in my faith.

After I discovered that this was literally what the passage says in the original language and started to share it... I was amazed that some people were actually getting angry about it... because it flies in the face of tradition. There is a pervasive doctrine, sometimes denomination wide, that once Jesus Christ is invited into our lives we have all of everything we need.

This, of course, goes counter to what Jesus clearly said, that is to consistently and impudently demand to get ever more of Holy Spirit... because that is what God wants for us.

Here is what I am saying... if somebody brought a child to you that was manifesting demonic interference ...would the demon causing the disturbance leave immediately at your mere rebuke, and thereby the child would be immediately cured?

Remember Jesus said that anyone who believes in him will perform the same "miracles" that he performed. While those of us who understand and use our authority to get rid of demons, don't classify it as performing miracles... perhaps it is a good beginning that will lead to do the will of God in other areas of healing. Causing the deaf to hear... (believe it, listening to a man who has been deaf for forty years shouting at the top of his voice, "I can hear, I can hear" is just one of the exciting things we as believers can witness... and know it was the power of God and that you were the mere instrument). Being God's instrument of making the blind see... one incident I clearly remember was a woman in her sixties who had what her doctors had called irreversible nerve blindness, due to chemo therapy. The night that it happened, she too was shouting... "look at the stars, they're beautiful!" She hadn't walked or been able to see for over six months! There she was walking up and down the sidewalk in front of her home shouting out how beautiful the stars were that night.

I haven't raised anyone from the dead that I know of... so I still have plenty of work to do myself. This isn't about comparing ourselves with one another, this is about comparing our *lack of being able to do* -- with what Jesus said *we would do* if we believe. In the next chapter we will begin exploring some practical things to do (just as Jesus did) for preparation of increasing our ability to exercise real miracle working faith.

A disturbing question to me is why would someone who says they believe in Jesus Christ and that they believe that what the Bible says is true and yet who also cannot do what the Bible and Jesus said we will do if we believe... refuse to even try to do what Jesus said... on the basis of church doctrine and tradition?

Let's look at another faith building passage. Jesus is walking down a road in an area called Bethany. He's hungry and sees a fig tree some distance away. He walks over to it and sees that there are no figs (the author, Mark, adds: because it wasn't the season for figs). Disgusted, Jesus said, "no one will ever eat from you again."

The next day Jesus and the twelve are passing along the same road. Peter sees the same tree and exclaims, "Hey look! The tree you cursed yesterday, it's withered from the roots all the way to the top."

What follows in the original language is simple and clear. What happens in translation is nothing short of amazing. Let's go to the King James Version (it is almost universally translated the same in the "modern" versions).

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered.

Whoa! For years I didn't even question the response. I mean, why should I have questioned it? Jesus performed a miracle and he is just telling them not to be amazed and, "have faith in God," is a rather natural response. Right? Wrong! Because **THAT IS NOT WHAT HE SAID!**

Don't take my word for it... You will be given an easy way to prove it for yourself. What he spoke in his own language, literally, is (don't forget the little example of "throw your mother from the train a kiss") "have the faith **OF** God." In context, Jesus is saying, "You too can do this, *i.e.*, have the same faith you have just seen me exercise."

Let's ask ourselves, why has this been mistranslated? Again, this is a clear and provable mistranslation.

And, again, why? Also, why do modern translations perpetuate the error? One striking example is that it is the same in the New World Translation... the Bible version of the Watch Tower Society (Jehovah's Witnesses organization). Sure enough, "Have faith *in* God." Why is this a striking example? Two reasons, First, The Watch Tower Society takes great pride in its own ability to correctly translate from New Testament Greek into English. The fact is, that in most instances many scholars insist that the Watch Tower

Society does a credible job of such translation. The second reason is that in their own Greek-English Inter-linear (showing the English text, one word at a time, directly above the Greek text), they correctly translate the preposition *OF* God rather than *in* on the English line above the Greek, but over in the uninterrupted English text printed on the margin... they revert to, "Have faith *in* God." Next time you run into a Jehovah's Witness... ask where you can buy a New World Translation Greek Inter-linear... usually they will give you one or sell it to you for a nominal price.

Go to Mark 11:22 read the portion where it is translated, "have the faith *of* God." Now look over to where the verse is translated into their version of the same verse... sure enough, "have faith *in* God." Some Greek/English inter-linear versions translate it "have God-faith" – same, same – changing it from an action to an object of a belief system.

Again, let's ask the question, why? Could we at least pose the possibility that there could be a conspiracy here to distort truth and dilute the message that instructs us how to go about getting the "God-faith" that Jesus told his disciples and us by extension to have?

Wait a minute... rather than speculate as to why... let's ask why am I making such a big deal out of such a little thing? As a preacher acquaintance told me I was doing when I first discovered it. I asked if I was right or wrong. He told me, indeed, that there was no other way to translate it. When I asked him why he thought that the translation so subtly yet insidiously diluted the power of the message? He leaned back in his chair and smiled -- and said something to the effect that perhaps the translators of the King James Version were afraid that if a lot of people got hold of the concept they would go around killing fruit trees... and, again reiterated that I was just making a big deal out of nothing.

Why *am* I making such a big deal out of a changed preposition? Because it *is* no small thing. To realize that Jesus is saying to his disciples (and to us by extension) that they could and should do the same thing. Then he gives them instructions immediately following that are directly tied to the example of killing a tree by simply telling it that no one would ever eat from it again.

The instructions that follow this incident lose a bit of their intended punch when not directly related to this fig tree incident. Let us reconsider these instructions right after his response to Peter's exclamation of wonder over the tree being dead. "Look at that!"

In American English (correctly translated from the original language) "You too can do this, if you have the same God-faith you just saw me exhibit. For I tell you most assuredly that whoever says to his mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says."

The words in the original language indicate a lot of imagery... and in fact the word from which we get imagery or visualization in English is contained in the original language in this passage.

“Mountain” in this passage is a metaphor for “spiritual obstacle.” Jesus is literally saying that we are to visualize lifting this obstacle over our head and slamming it violently down into the sea. The next sentence creates difficulties for us in most English translations. The word *doubt*, for example in 16th century English meant to waver in opinion between two opposing views. Today in our American culture it basically means to not have faith that something is going to take place.

Doubt in your heart is a paraphrase used by the King James translators for the word, *διακρινωσ*, which means divided by two different spirits. The King James translators rendered the same word as “double minded” in the New Testament book James. In practical as well as literal terms, the word here simply means to stay focused on getting rid of the spiritual obstacle and do not let any other idea or spirit dissuade us from continuously commanding that it be gone, while visualizing casting it violently down into the sea, until it is gone. An obstacle to what? To operating in “God-faith.”

Let’s take an obstacle that very seriously limits anybody’s ability to operate in the same fig tree-killing authority and see how to apply what Jesus is teaching us here. At the end of the passage we see the object (another example of “throw your mother from the train a kiss”).

Jump ahead to verse 25... (Mark 11) “And whenever you stand praying” [in the same manner I am teaching you here], “if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses” [and there will be no point to your praying this way].

The obstacle here is un-forgiveness... with all kinds of syntax difficulties. It literally should read like: Whenever you become aware that you cannot get rid of this obstacle, [what you are holding against somebody else] – it is important to note here that the two words in the original that are translated as “forgive” literally mean to send away and to release. How many people are bound by their own words... well I can forgive, but I cannot forget. In the sense of what Jesus is talking about in the original... if we cannot forget, we are not “forgiving” and therefore cannot live in the forgiveness that God has already provided.

He is telling us *how* to do it. By the imagery of lifting the emotion of this held onto disappointment and anger against another person for a perceived wrong – and lifting it over our heads and casting it by name violently down into the sea... by commanding it over and over without ceasing UNTIL the anger and disappointment is no longer there. It is important to attain the realization that our disappointments with other people are simply that they did not live up to our expectations. In other words, we have succumbed to what Jesus said not to do... judge anyone else.

There is an offshoot of this idea in a mental-health therapy called Gestalt (German for “completion”) which was in vogue about twenty years ago. One variation used by a therapist was to have the client who was disturbed by repressed anger at a parent... to

visualize that parent sitting in a chair and shout obscenities at the pictured parent. Another the way of getting past the anger and bitterness was to spank or even kick at the chair. Hardly what Jesus was saying to do. Cast the mountain of anger down... not the object of the anger.

Remember my psychiatrist friend, Jim? He rejected that particular therapy after experimenting with it, because he said that, in his experience, it created too many conflicts and actually exacerbated the problems of some of his patients.

Occasionally Jim would give me a call when he was dealing with a particular patient that happened to be a Christian. His private practice was limited almost exclusively to patients with a Christian background. In fact, he kept a copy of a J.B Phillips New Testament on his desk and would tell newly referred patients that unless they had an orientation to take what the Bible said as truth... that they would probably be better off going to someone else.

Jim's preparation to getting me involved was generally to tell a patient that he had this friend who was "kind of a kook" that generally felt that certain problems were caused by demons... and if the patient was willing he'd have me join their therapy session. Sometimes to ease the introduction he'd simply invite me to have a meal with him and the patient.

One evening he called me and asked if I was available. When I said yes he told me that he was with a patient who had been coming to him for about twelve years and had just told her about his "kook" friend and that she was willing to meet with me. "Why don't you come by and bring your Bible," he said over the phone.

After a brief introduction they went back to talking. I took a few notes and said nothing. Jim finally turned to me and said, "I see that you are taking notes... why haven't you said anything?"

"I didn't want to interrupt your session," I responded.

"It's why we invited you over... Mary (not her real name) is becoming aware of some things like what you've just heard about her grandmother and I have been sharing your concept of forgiveness out of Mark 11."

"My concept?" I asked.

"C'mon, stop nitpicking," he said a bit irritably, "this guy always does this," he said to her, with a dismissive wave of his hand.

"It's why you love me," I rejoined, and we spent a few minutes teasing one another... and finally I turned to her...

“Are you willing to take the responsibility for what happened between you and your grandmother?”

“Are you crazy?” she asked with her eyes blazing. “She’s the one who abused me.”

“I understand that... now, are you willing to take the responsibility for it?”

“What are you talking about? This doesn’t make any sense.”

“Well, you’ve been playing around with this for years, you’re in your fifties and you’re still very angry with your grandmother. You do see the need to forgive her for your own good... right or wrong?”

“Well, Doctor Jim has been talking about it... that is when he asked me if it was all right to call you?”

“I’m going to ask you a rather strange question, Mary. Do you want God’s will in your life, no matter what the cost?”

“Of course, what else is there?...”

“Do you believe that it is God’s will to completely forgive your grandmother for what she did?”

“Yes, Doctor Jim showed me that.”

“Jim, I asked, do you care if you lose Mary as a patient and she becomes just your sister and friend?”

“Of course not... that’s what she is anyway.”

“Mary, are you willing to give up calling Jim, ‘Doctor’ and just seeing him as your spiritual brother and friend?”

“Wow, that’s kind of hard, is that what I should do, Dr. _____?”

“What he is saying, Mary,” Jim responded... “Is that Jesus told us to be like siblings and to minister to one another as equals and not to refer to one another by any title... and a good place to start is just to call me Jim.”

“Does that mean I can’t come and see you any more?” she asked with no little fear showing in her expression.

“It means that you can call me anytime you like and we can get together as friends and brother and sister... and both look to Jesus and not to me as the physician.”

“Really, Doctor Jim?”

“Look at him, Mary,” I interjected, and simply say, ‘Jim, thanks for being my friend and ministering to me. I want to be your friend and minister to you as well.’”

“I don’t think Dr. Jim needs my ministry...”

I held up my hand to cut her off... “Mary, just say it now... ‘Jim, thanks for being my friend and ministering to me. I want to be your friend and minister to you as well.’ ”

With no little encouragement from Jim... she finally did it.

“Now, let’s get back to you taking responsibility for your relationship with your grandmother, Okay?”

“I still don’t see it as my responsibility to take when *she* was the one that abused *me*.” She said this with intensity and anger.

What had happened to Mary when she was quite young and had apparently blocked the memory until just recently... was that her grandmother took care of her while her mother went to work. Two things that she had recently become aware of were that her grandmother took her to a Satanist church where the Satanist Priest had cut her heel to draw blood and then offered the blood as a sacrifice to Satan. The second thing that had become vivid in her mind after more than fifty years... was that her grandmother gave her enemas daily for her own (the grandmother’s) sexual gratification.

“Mary, I’m going to say something that I know... and I bet Jim knows from his training and experience. I just know it. The reason I am asking if you are willing to take responsibility for the relationship... is so that you will see the practical as well as the spiritual need to forgive her... and you will be able to forget as well... after all, you haven’t remembered it for over fifty years. So if you can forget it in an unhealthy way that has caused you emotional problems... you should be able to see that forgetting it in a healthy way is not at all impossible.

“Here’s the picture that I am getting. One of the reasons you repressed the memory of these things is, one, as a little child, you enjoyed all of the attention. Two, you got some sort of thrill out of the fact that your grandmother was getting sexual gratification. I believe that the reason you have forgotten it for all of these years is not just the horror of being abused... but also that you had guilt feelings for feeling partly responsible.”

“Bingo,” Jim said, barely above a whisper.

“On the spiritual side, you need to see that because your grandmother had authority over you, a spirit was given permission to get a stronghold and I believe is the cause of your emotional problems. Do you want to get rid of this stuff and are you willing to have Jim be a friend instead needing a doctor?”

“Oh yes!”

I am going to say some things that I want you to repeat after me... but only if you feel right about it. You interrupt me anytime you think we are going down a path you don't want to go, Okay?”

“First, just let me pray for a moment. Father, thank You for your own Holy Spirit that Jesus promised would guide us into all truth. We don't want to depend on our minds, but on You. Holy Spirit, thank You for your presence and your power. Thank you, Jesus Christ, for giving me all authority over the works of the evil one. I bind every spirit that is in this room. All of us, Mary, Jim and I acknowledge that we want only the will of God. Can you both join me in saying, ‘yes,’ to that.”

They both agreed.

“Now, Mary, say after me, “Thank you, Jesus Christ, for your promise to never leave me nor forsake me. I want you to take over my life completely...”

“I want only the will of God, and I take back all of the ground that I ever gave to Satan. I am going to command that all spirits named and unnamed leave me and when I do all of you will leave and go to wherever Jesus Christ assigns you to go. You will not cause any discomfort of any kind when you leave. Thank you, Jesus Christ, that you gave me all authority to do this...”

“I specifically say to the spirits that have caused me guilt, anger, bitterness, depression, I refuse to have such emotions any longer – leave me now and do not come back! ...

“Grandmother, I totally release you from any responsibility for the things I remember that you did to me. I love you and forgive you completely. [it was at this point that Mary interrupted to tell me her grandmother had died some years before. I told her that what we were doing was not for her grandmother, but for Mary.]

“All spirits that have been attacking me in ways of which I am not even conscious, get out now by the blood of Jesus Christ.” Mary repeated each of these phrases, step by step.

“That's it, Mary. Let's just go over a few things. First of all, how do you feel about your grandmother now?”

“You, know, that's really interesting. I don't feel anything but God's total love for her. I guess I feel a bit of regret that I couldn't have told her face to face that I loved her and forgave her. For years, I have just had these strange feelings about her and didn't want to be around her. Now I actually think we could have been great friends. This is wonderful, I feel at such peace. I can't believe that I have been blaming her. It is what the enemy does. He causes the problems and then gets us to blame ourselves or someone else so that he remains hidden as the real culprit.

“Bingo,” Jim said again... but not at all in a whisper this time.

“Mary, I want to tell you a couple of things that I have learned from experience. If any of the things that you have been coming to Jim for seem to be recurring... particularly feelings of depression... at the first tinge it will most likely be accompanied by the thought, ‘Oh no, it’s back.’ If that happens don’t make any excuses or try to intellectually do anything about it... simply say... ‘No... that is a lie, get out now and leave me alone.’ I want to explain the dynamics on a spiritual level.

“The spirits that were causing your emotional problems are gone. As strange as this may sound it is true. Other spirits are often dispatched to take their places. They have no stronghold. As long as you maintain your position --they have no authority nor permission to mess with you. So what they will attempt to do is lie to your mind... and get you to say... ‘Oh no, they are back.’ It is important that instead, you say to the thoughts and those causing those thoughts, ‘That is a lie. Get out in the name of Jesus Christ... I want only God’s will and God’ own Holy Spirit to lead me. You have no place in me!’

“I realize that this must sound bizarre, but it is true,” I said to her.

“Well, if you had said those things to me yesterday, I would have probably thought you were crazy. But from the way I feel, I know that whatever was causing it has left... and it all somehow makes total sense.”

“Ah,” I chided, “that’s only because the good doctor introduced us, right?”

“That’s another thing I understand... well I guess *understand* is the wrong word... but I understand the need to take responsibility for my own relationship with God.”

She called both Jim and me the following day... with some interesting information. When she entered her home after leaving us, she was immediately overwhelmed by the high volume of her stereo. It was connected to the light switch so that it went on at the same time when she first entered the door. She had a hearing loss which had been estimated at about 60% -- her hearing was completely restored. She had to turn the volume switch down considerably.

Mary worked as a vocational counselor for seniors at a high school... and became aware that her glasses were bothering her... and had to remove them. On the way home from work she had to drive without her glasses because she couldn’t see with them anymore... and she noticed that her sight had improved to the point that it was better without glasses than it had been with them!

I laughed at her telling me that she almost took a cab home because her driver’s license required corrective lenses in order to drive.

Remember when Jesus rebuked the demon and he (the demon) left the boy who was having epileptic like seizures... and he was cured? Not only was Mary's long term bout with depression over... Jim had told her the night before that the medication he had been prescribing for her depression would probably no longer be needed. She had thrown it away and felt "wonderful," but her hearing and eyesight were also restored. We have seen these kinds of things happen over and over.

Go and do likewise!



XII

Applying Jesus' Instructions

We now turn to ways how to put into practice what Jesus says to do. Let's go back to my friend, Jim, the psychiatrist.

After Jim began to see some rather dramatic results from learning to pray in the manner Jesus taught... he would invite me to small groups of friends and family members to share. One evening a group of teenage friends of his son, who attended the same church together, was gathered in the living room of Jim's home.

I was talking about the benefits of fasting and Jim interrupted.

"You often bring fasting up... do you really think it is necessary?"

"I don't know," I replied, "but I can tell you from my own and the personal experiences of others that no real breakthroughs of operating in faith ever occurred until we learned that we didn't need food for several days."

Jim looked over at the boys, mostly who were sitting or sprawled on the floor and explained that what I meant by fasting was going without any food whatsoever and drinking only water for several days.

"I'll tell you this," he told them, "I've watched this guy," pointing at me off to the side with his thumb, "do some things that I can't do." Then turning to me, "Are you attributing your abilities to fasting?"

"First of all, I can't do anything. Let's stop and I'll show you all something that I bet you've never seen before." I asked one of the boys who had a Bible next to him to read John 14:10 out loud. I asked everyone what they saw in this passage. We had a very animated discussion about the surrounding verses for several minutes.

"Jim," you've said that I have the ability to do things you are not able to do. Do you believe that what I do is of God?"

"Without question..." he said thoughtfully...

"Well, guess what?" I asked and paused for a few seconds to really let what I was going to say "sink in."

“Jesus didn’t perform the miracles that people saw him do. Didn’t we just see that? *The Father in Him performed the miracles.*” I said with as much emphasis as I could muster without trying to sound too dramatic. “Then we looked at verse 12 where he said any who believe could perform the same miracles that he performed. If he didn’t perform them, but the Father in him performed them... any believer in him will do the same thing... then... how do I do these things?”

“Are you seeing it yet?” All of them including Jim just stared at me... “The Father in me does what Jim has seen me do.”

“Okay, okay,” Jim said, I get that... and he engaged the boys in a rather incisive discussion on what it meant to receive Jesus Christ (John 1:12) and what becoming a child of God and being a joint heir with Jesus was all about.

“Okay, you,” he said to me, “What does this have to do with fasting?”

“Well, I’ve already shown you that Jesus said that was the preparation to be able to get rid of demons that do not go out easily...” I stopped and it dawned on me that he was having a problem. So, I asked him, “okay Jim, something’s eating at you, what is it?”

“I have hypoglycemia and every time I try to go without food for any length of time, I have problems.”

“Do you want to get past the problems?” I asked.

“Of course. I’ve been told that it is dangerous for me to fast and that I could even have a fatal reaction from it. What do you say about that?”

“That it is a lie. Do really believe that Jesus would tell us to do something that would kill us? Here is what I am going to suggest to you... You have learned to pray in power and have seen much from your newly found prayer life. Right?”

“Sure have,” he said with a simple nod.

“It is so simple Jim... pray and demand to have God’s own Holy Spirit direct you as to whether you should fast. If Holy Spirit says no, you think I’m going to argue with him? But I will tell you at the bottom of every problem with fasting usually boils down to that it is done half way. People drink a little juice or take supplements and so on. Eat nothing and drink plenty of water... and I have yet to see anyone have anything more than a little discomfort from the withdrawal from the addiction, for surely that is what it is.

“But *I* don’t want to convince you, pray about it! One more thing, though, the reason I believe that fasting is so important is that once you go several days without food, you become aware of just how much we are tied to being dependent upon the things of this

earth. I will tell you that the things of this earth bind us to this earth. We are in bondage to these bodies. Fasting is one of the beginnings of freedom.”

We changed the subject and had a time of playing and talking with the boys and I went home.

Four days later, I received a phone call. It was Jim telling me that he was on the fourth day of a fast... and was having no problems at all except with his wife (he said with a laugh) who thought he shouldn't be doing it. “When I get through with this, I'm going to tell you something else, hypoglycemia is going to be gone!”

“Wow, how long do you intend to fast?” I asked.

“Until I know I have gone long enough. I'm not even hungry... I feel great!” He was almost yelling in my ear.

Here is my point: Jim will tell you that there is no way that you can break through into doing what Jesus did and said we will do without fasting. I am not saying it... I am merely relating what an M.D., Jim, said.

I have heard so many people tell me that it is dangerous to fast, or that fasting isn't necessary. Maybe it isn't. But if you truly need food and other bodily “necessities” you are not living like the one who said, “I have food that you know nothing about.”

Is eating wrong? Of course not. Jesus ate and drank to the degree that the religious of his day referred to him as a glutton and a drunkard. Must have eaten a bit and drank a bit. We get to too! It's fun. He even instituted having a meal together while we keep him in mind. Reduced by men to a religious ritual of sitting solemnly while we sip a bit of grape juice to wash down a communion wafer.

Yes, Paul was giving a corrective to a practice that had gotten out of hand at the gathering in Corinth. He lambasted them for making a mockery out of the “Lord's party” by getting drunk and overeating.

You want to have fun... really good, wonderful fun? Eat a meal with our elder brother present... honor him and eat and drink and enjoy one another's company in his power and living presence... and live the rest of life that way. In his presence and power... and in his promise by following a few of his simple instructions. Cast out demons, kill fig trees, raise people from the dead, watch a person born sightless get vision... get REAL!

And stop trying to open the treasure chest without following the sequence of the combination.

I once spoke to a group in Tulsa, Oklahoma. A man came up to me afterward and said that he had fasted for forty days and nothing happened to him. “What was the purpose of your fast,” I asked.

“I wanted to prove that it could be done.” This he said in a quite matter of fact tone.

“What else did you expect?” I asked.

“Well, you’re talking about all these things you and others with you can do... why can’t I do them...?”

“Because it wasn’t your purpose. Your purpose was to prove that you could do it and you did it. Pretty significant achievement if you ask me. You are the first person I have ever met that decided to go without eating for forty days just to prove it. I think that’s great!”

He looked at me with a rather stunned expression on his face. So I asked him if he wanted to be living in God’s will, doing and being whatever God wanted him to do and be.

“I guess so,” he answered lamely.

“Have you ever heard of being on an ego trip?” I asked.

“Sure, what’s the point?” He actually asked with a shrug of his shoulders.

“In my experience it takes two things to break through and live on the spirit plane rather than from ego. First is the desire to change... I mean a deep down, wanting more than anything else longing to see God work in your life. The second thing is to demand that it happen and keep demanding *until it does* happen. Not because God doesn’t want to give it to you... but because the god of this world is trying to keep you from it with complacency and lethargy and ego. Your forty day fast was a classic ego trip.”

I looked at him for a moment and finally asked, “Did I get you mad at me?”

“Nope,” he said. I have never gotten anything in life that I didn’t really want. I have excelled in sports and business because I want to be successful. What an idiot!” He actually started laughing. “How ridiculous can it be? Going on a forty day fast because I wanted to prove that I could do it. Thanks brother, God just used you to change my life... and I want it changed and I know that He is the only one that can do it.”

He walked away shaking his head still chuckling at what he had seen. I have no doubt that he has fasted and prayed many, many times for God to prepare him to be used in Holy Spirit presence and power. Does it get any more exciting than this?

I hope so... because if you are still on the fence, reading this with your intellect... here is the sequence of the combination.

Remember the word de-sire? Of the Father. If I cannot say I want God’s will no matter what the cost... I am going to go nowhere. If I cannot say it, then I have a block... an

obstacle that is keeping me from living the fullest in His presence and power. The first step is to simply admit that I don't really want God's will all that bad. That usually takes a heap more honesty than the average professing Christian can muster. But that's okay... we can get by that as well.

Let's understand what the problem is. If I cannot say with all my being that I want God's will no matter what the cost... I don't understand who God is. I have had a false image of who He is and what He is and what His perfect will for my life means.

In the proper translation of the "Lord's Prayer" and I strongly resist the notion that this is any "private interpretation..." Jesus is telling us that God is our one and only, unique, Daddy. This is exactly what the words in the original mean. One more time... "Throw your mother from the train a kiss," remember?

"Hallowed" was translated from a word that simply means unique and perfect... the one and only. "Father" was translated from a very intimate word that can legitimately only be translated as "Daddy." Our one and only, perfect Daddy who lives in the unseen realm of the spirit world wants his children to be free from the bondage of this earth. He wants us to rule over it and overcome all the works (literally negative miracles) of the evil one. We are meant to be victors, over-comers and rulers of God's kingdom on earth. We are to bring His kingdom and his will into existence on this plane. That is exactly why we came here. We are here to heal the sick, cure diverse diseases and get rid of the demons who perpetrate this "stuff."

We did not come here to be trapped in the bodies we occupy, but that we control and overcome the ridiculous nonsense the enemy puts in our path to distract us. Our one and only perfect Daddy made a provision for us... to inherit the earth and enjoy the fruits of it. We have learned from religious teachers that living in God's will is a struggle. Here is the point... the only struggle is to get into the presence of our Daddy so that he can empower us to live in joy. This is not a sad journey, but one of power and joy. Learning to be in his presence is only a struggle because we have to shift our paradigm and realize the enemy keeps us away.

We did not receive the Spirit of God to sit once a week to listen to powerless teachers tell us how not to do what Jesus came to tell us to do. Break through NOW. The first step in the combination is to admit that I don't want to live in my Daddy's perfect will because I've been duped by agents of the enemy that living in His will is going to entail the equivalent of sitting in a dark closet and eating spinach and turnips all day.

The next part of the combination sequence is to simply begin following Jesus' instructions to emphatically speak what will become the truth as if it already is the truth. I want Your will, Daddy, I want Your own Holy Spirit and I want nothing else. Begin speaking this over and over and over, day by day until it becomes part of the inner you.

Here is the secret to all of this... you won't have to concern yourself over arguments about fasting and praying. As you speak this over and over you will know what to do and

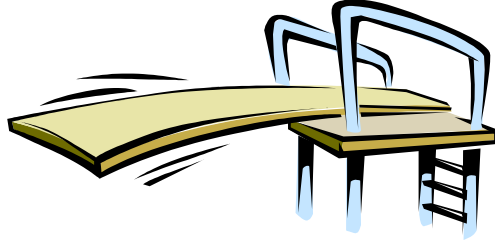
when to do it. When you find yourself thinking that you don't want to enter this discipline... tell the spirit that is lying to you to get out because he is stealing the only pure joy there is on this earth.

My one and only, perfect Dad... I want more and more to be controlled by Your own Holy Spirit. You give me more desire. I want this desire to be more than anything else to me and I demand that the enemy gets away from this, my most important treasure!

Just a quick confession... a brother with whom I am in business and with whom I pray... had to beat me up today... the very day I wrote about all this power for living. It wasn't pleasant to hear the truth about how I was missing God in an area of my life. Why am I bringing this up right at this moment? Because Holy Spirit is guiding me to do just that. You see, Jesus' half brother, James, said if we confess our faults one to another we will be healed. My problem is that I often stumble and fall and hide it from everyone, because I don't want them to know how bad I am... and thus avoid being healed. I've just confessed and I am healed!

The prayer Jesus insisted that always gets answered is the one where the guy beats on his chest and says Lord be merciful unto such a sinner as I. My chest is pretty concave... but I know I finish this chapter in the righteousness of God. Hallelujah! If there is hope for a sinner such as I... who will He refuse?





And then... (postlude)

It is the desire of the author to give encouragement to any who seek to walk in the presence and power of God's own Holy Spirit...

Remember, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." (Heb.13:8) and Jesus says: "All that the Father give to me shall come to me and he that comes to me I will never turn away."

If you have comments or questions about the contents of this book you may write to the author at the following e-mail address of a pseudonym –

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