

Your

WORD

Is

Strength

VOLUME THREE

A LIFE-APPLICATION DEVOTIONAL

BY BROTHER JONATHAN

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1. FROM DREAM TO DESTINY

“And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they hated him yet the more” (Genesis 37:5).

Dream is a mirror to destiny. While it inspires some, it threatens others. Young Joseph the dreamer was determined that his dreams do not simply remain as dreams but dared to believe God to develop them as opportunities for destiny.

Often the demonstration of a God-given dream will be tested by deterrence and despising from some people. When we do not divert from the dream and vision God gives us, in spite of difficulties in the natural, we deny access to the devil’s deception and open doors to the fulfilling of our divine destiny.

Sometimes speaking of the dreams we have provoke jealousy in the hearts of our hearers. Do not expect everybody to delight in our dreams. When we are despised, we are not to depend on natural discourses for deliverance. Instead, we must be disciplined still to remain devoted to divine direction and not be distracted by delays or disappointments, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive” (Genesis 50:20).

The destruction of dreams brings death, “Where *there is* no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy *is* he” (Proverbs 29:18). But declaration and dedication to live for Kingdom purpose determine a destiny of dominion to defeat the devil’s devices, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

“Holy Spirit, birth in me dreams and turn them into destiny. I ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

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2. A REVELATION OF GOD IN THE WILDERNESS

“But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I *am* not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise *and* eat. And he looked, and behold, *there was* a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise *and* eat; because the journey *is* too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Hor’-eb the mount of God” (1 Kings 19:4-8).

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After the victory at Mount Carmel where the 450 prophets of Baal were defeated, Elijah experienced a time of discouragement, loneliness and exhaustion. Though he stood for God’s righteousness and truth, he felt alone in the task God assigned him. Afraid of Jezebel’s intention to kill him, Elijah fled and went into the wilderness. He was so despondent that he even asked God to take his life.

Instead, the Lord visited Elijah with an awesome revelation, nourished him with food as well as touched him with His power and presence. Even though God’s revelation was accompanied by wind, earthquake and fire, it was in a “still small voice” or “gentle whisper (NIV)” (1 Kings 19:12) that he was encouraged and strengthened.

Likewise, when a person is mightily used of God, there are times when he or she will still feel despair. Persecution can be intense when an

individual follows the Lord wholeheartedly. In moments like these, God usually responds in gentleness.

What is our situation? Are we dry? Do we feel deserted? In the wilderness, God wants to reveal Himself to us. As we seek Him, we can receive a fresh anointing, a new revelation of the Father heart of God.

“Lord, draw me nearer to You. Purify and refresh my heart. I long for the touch of Your hand. In Jesus name.”

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3. A PRIESTHOOD OF PASSION, POWER AND PURITY

“My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense” (2 Chronicles 29:11).

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Intimate worship is the heart of true ministry. As a royal priesthood, we need passion and purity of heart in offering up “spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

As we grow in our worship of God, we will walk in purity and experience power in life and ministry. We are chosen to “shew forth the praises of him who hath called [us] out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

Worship releases the anointing of the Holy Spirit to advance the ministry of the Kingdom, “The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18).

As we are continually refilled with the Holy Spirit, we have delegated power “*against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease” (Matthew 10:1).

“Father, enlarge my heart for You. I need the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit within and upon me to bring forth Kingdom ministry. In Jesus name.”

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4. THE WEALTH OF WISDOM

“The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD *are* upright, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether. More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward” (Psalm 19:7-11).

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The wages of wisdom are material, physical and spiritual wealth. Many religious people believe that financial riches do not belong to the righteous. But God’s Word says, “A good *man* leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children: and the wealth of the sinner *is* laid up for the just” (Proverbs 13:22).

When God appeared to Solomon and said to him, “Ask what I shall give thee” (2 Chronicles 1:7), his reply was, “Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, *that is so* great? (2 Chronicles 1:10). As a

king, he needed wisdom above all else for the work God has assigned him.

With a heart committed to the Lord, the Source of wisdom Himself blessed Solomon not only with the gift of wisdom, but also “riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that *have been* before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like” (2 Chronicles 1:12).

A person may be rich but not wise. However, a truly successful person is one who seeks God’s wisdom as the key to material, physical and spiritual prosperity, “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 2). God knows whose hearts are wholly seeking Him and will honour the requests of such, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

“Father, keep my heart with affections for You. Let wisdom be the crown of my life. I ask this in Jesus name.”

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5. THE POWER OF PERFECTED PRAISE

“One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple” (Psalm 27:4).

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The word “praise” occurs many times in the Bible, especially in the book of Psalms. Praise is more than just words and music, it goes beyond lyrics and tunes. It is active, dynamic, eruptive, explosive, powerful and volcanic in the realm of the spirit.

Praise propels and releases the Power and Presence of God which will ultimately prevail over the problems in our lives, “LET God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, *so* drive *them* away: as wax melteth before the fire, *so* let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him” (Psalm 68:1~4).

I believe that if we will actively apply the Biblical principle of “one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight” (according to Deuteronomy 32:30), the strong man will be bound and defeated in many areas of our lives, families and nations. If there is already tremendous power as one individual praise God, just imagine the level of corporate anointing and glory of the Holy Spirit when a group of people gather together to lift up the mighty name of Jesus. Hallelujah!
“Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered. In the powerful name of Jesus.”

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6. SACRIFICES OF JOY

“And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD” (Psalm 27:6).

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Sacrificial giving is one of the greatest measure of our love and worship of God. What should characterize our giving to God? They are sacrifices and joy.

The hand of giving must spring forth from a heart of worship. If we say that we love and worship God, then our affection and treasure will be “on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2) and “where [our] treasure is, there will [our] heart be also” (Matthew 6:21). Contrary to popular opinion, money within itself is not evil; it is the love (or worship) of it which is (according to 1 Timothy 6:10). Therefore, when Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24), it has everything to do with the root of our hearts. When the root of our hearts is seeking “first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33), then we will spontaneously bring forth the good fruit of giving. When David said, “ ... I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing... ” (2 Samuel 24:24); giving was the fruit, but it was worship which was the abundance (or overflow) of his heart. As partakers of God’s grace and righteousness (NOT of works, for we are spiritually bankrupt and depraved on our own), just as David was, giving is a grace as well as the fruits of righteousness, that we, “always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8). Now, the “good work” mentioned here (according to 2 Corinthians 9:8) is NOT cause for our justification or qualification for salvation, but the effects and fruits of the grace and righteousness of God.

On the other hand, when we quit giving, we are in essence not abiding in Jesus, the true vine and hence, not bearing fruit (according to John 15:1-16) and spiritually, we could end up withering, being cast into the fire and are burned (according to John 15:6). To be certain, there is NO way we could earn God’s grace or righteousness by giving or any other good works whatsoever, but what is being talked about here is in the contexts of “The Vine and the Branches” (read John Chapter 15), “A

Tree and Its Fruit” (read Matthew 7:15-23), “The Wise and Foolish Builders” (read Matthew 7:24-27), “The Parable of the Talents” (read Matthew 25:14-30) and “The Sheep and the Goats” (read Matthew 25:31-46). These portions of Scripture concern the great responsibility of true discipleship, where obedience, faithfulness and fruitfulness to the Father are expected of us. Wake up! Church! It is time we allow the Holy Spirit to give us a revelation of these very powerful words of Jesus Himself!

Not only should our giving be fruitful and generous, it must be offered with joy as well, “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full” (John 15:11); “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7). If we are not constantly joyful, could it be that we are only receiving but not giving out freely? Remember the words of Jesus, saying, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:25) and “...freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8).

One of the most familiar verse of Scripture, “For God so loved ... that he gave ... ” (John 3:16), shows the powerful connection between loving and giving. It is within the heart of God’s *agape* love that “though he was rich, yet for [our] sakes he became poor, that [we] through his poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9) and “...who for the JOY that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God” (Hebrews 12:2). True, there is certainly a cost of giving, but there is also such a joy unspeakable of being anointed “with the oil of gladness” (Psalm 45:7) when we bring tokens of our love for Jesus “because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19), as “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Are we, in essence, bringing our present-day equivalent of “an alabaster box of very precious ointment” (Matthew 26:7), as what a woman actually did before Jesus so long ago

that “Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her” (Matthew 26:13). Amen! Can Jesus say this of us today as was said of the woman then, “Wherefore I said unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she LOVED much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little?” (Luke 7:47). Notice that as much as she was a giver and have done a beautiful thing (which was the fruit), Jesus said above all else that “she LOVED much” (Luke 7:47), which was the root and heart of worship. As well as it is tremendous for any Christian today to be a great giver to the work of God, it is probably even more excellent if he or she is known for being a passionate lover and worshipper of Jesus too. Giving to God is no doubt important, but even then, is only a demonstration and manifestation of our love and worship of God. It is not a form of religious taxation, but a tangible expression of a relationship-based devotion. Otherwise, it becomes law (or if you prefer, self and works righteousness), not the fruit of the grace of God.

Even though it is impossible for us to outgive God, we reap a harvest of grace in our lives when our giving of tithes and offerings flow out of a heart of devotion and worship, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*” (Malachi 3:10).

The bottom line is, “Are our hearts captivated (or captured) by the grace and love of God?” If so, then our hands of giving into the house of God become “tokens of love” and “sacrifices of joy” (Psalm 27:6).

“Lord, I receive the grace and love You have freely given. As I give, I want to partake a portion of Your heart. In Jesus name.”

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7. PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

“Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. *When thou saidst,* Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek” (Psalm 27:7~8).

Prayer is essential to fulfilling our destiny in life, the church and the nation. Personally, I consider prayer an even higher calling than preaching or singing. Without devoting time to prayer, we are just playing games with our life, ministry, church and nation.

If Jesus tarries, the history of tomorrow does not belong to the leaders of the world, it belongs to the secret intercessors in the Church. Not everyone is called to become a president, parliamentarian, prophet or pastor, but everyone that is a child of God is a prayer partner with the Priest who is “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

In Matthew 6:9~13, commonly referred to as “The Lord’s Prayer”, (or as others like me prefer, “The Disciples’ Prayer” or “The Model Prayer”), Jesus gave us the principles of prayer that we ought to pattern after, not as “vain repetitions” (Matthew 6:7), but one that is personal, powerful and purposeful in developing an intimate relationship with the Heavenly Father, experiencing victory over the enemy, the flesh and the world and then discerning His will for our lives, family, friends, church and nation.

For example, the prayer begins with, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9), which is appropriating God’s personal name and promises, both for who He is and what He can do.

Next, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as *it is* in heaven” (Matthew 6:10) declares the priorities of God in our personal lives, family, church and nation.

Then, “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11) is to be in dependence on God for our provisions, be it emotional, physical, spiritual or whatever we know is in accordance to His will.

Also, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matthew 6:12) speaks on the importance of walking in the light, love, forgiveness and in right relationships with people in our lives.

And finally, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. A’-men” (Matthew 6:13) is to put on the complete armour of God (read Ephesians 6:10~18), be protected from “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16) and proclaiming the praises of God as His spiritual priests (read 1 Peter 2:9).

Why not apply the principles of prayer, develop personal relationship with the Father, appropriate the power, presence and promises of God and prevail in the destiny of our lives, family, church and nation!

“Lord, teach me to pray with power and purpose for my personal life, family, friends, church and nation. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ.”

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8. DWELLING IN DELIGHT, DESIRE AND DEVOTION

“Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass. And he shall bring forth

thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday” (Psalm 37:3-6).

To delight in someone or something is to take pleasure in her, him or it. We find ourselves having a desire to draw near to the person or object whose attractiveness captures our attention.

Desire is a powerful passion. Depending on whether it is evil or good, it is the seed to death or life respectively. If it is evil, it gives birth to sin, “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:14-15). But when it is Godly, it produces the fruit of divine opportunities. I want to burn deeply and intensely with holy zeal to where the desires of my heart agree with the will of God, “Thou hast given him his heart’s desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips” (Psalm 21:2); “He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them” (Psalm 145:19).

As we commit our ways to the Lord and delight in His faithfulness and goodness, we have a special place in God’s heart, “Then I was by him, *as one brought up with him*: and I was daily *his* delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights *were* with the sons of men” (Proverbs 8:30-31); “And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers” (Deuteronomy 30:9).

I want to delight and rejoice in the Lord so much that He actually rejoices over me!, “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee *is* mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (Zephaniah 3:17).

Are we devoting our love and taking joy in the Lord with all our innermost being? Then we will “dwell at ease; and [our] seed shall inherit the earth” (Psalm 25:13) and “shall delight [ourselves] in the abundance of peace” (Psalm 37:11).

“Father, I delight myself in You. Give me the desires of my heart. In the name of Jesus.”

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9. WALKING IN WISDOM

“For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: *He is* a buckler to them that walk uprightly (Proverbs 2:6~7).

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Wisdom is the application of knowledge and truth. In the Book of Proverbs, wisdom is the Word of God.

True spiritual wisdom begins with having “the fear of the Lord”, “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7). The “fear” here is not the frightening kind of fear, but the expression of awe and obedience to God our Father who wants to bless us, His children, with the best regarding our lives.

As we grow in the fear of the Lord, we will experience wisdom that is “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17; NKJV).

Are we lacking in joy and peace? Then we need to ask and choose to fear the Lord, hate evil and love righteousness. As we do, we not only receive godly wisdom, but with it results in purity, peace, gentleness,

willingness to yield, mercy, fruitfulness, faithfulness, joy, meekness and wholeness as well.

“Father, fill me with holy fear and exciting love for You. I want to hate evil and love righteousness. I seek godly wisdom, joy and peace. I ask in Jesus name.”

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10. Pride Results In Destructive Evil

“The highway of the upright *is* to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul. Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:17~18).

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Pride is a spirit of self-sufficiency and the root of rebellion. It was the fundamental sin that caused the downfall of Lucifer (read Isaiah 14:12~14 and Ezekiel 28:12~19).

The most destructive attitude of life is pride. Pride is the heart of the hidden thoughts of evil and self-centredness, resulting in the destruction of peace in all relationships, with God and others. It is only when we realize the ugliness of pride, turn to God in contrition and repentance that He extends His grace to us, “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble” (James 4:6).

Let us recognize our spiritual poverty, repent of self-dependence and receive the spirit of grace, “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15).

“Father, I need Your grace and mercy. Revive this heart. In Jesus name.”

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11. REPENT AND RETURN TO REST

“Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth *if* he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; *even* a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?” (Joel 2:12-14).

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How can we draw near to God? More than anything, it is having a broken spirit and a contrite heart, with a yielding child-like faith in Him. Unless and until we receive a revelation of God’s passionate desire to relate to us as a Father, all outward religious rituals and church activities will actually destroy our spiritual life. Why? Because religiosity without relationship reaps rebellion. Really, religion itself is rebellion, a rejection of God’s remedy of redemption.

Rebellion results in racing toward the judgment of God, which is never cruel or vindictive. Rather, it is meant to rend our hearts and lead us to run to Him in repentance. Repentance is returning to God and be restored in a right relationship with Him in response to His grace, ready to receive the rain of revival. Revival is the rekindling and resurrection of a ruined reed, “A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth” (Isaiah 42:3).

We can enter into an intimate covenant relationship with God and experience the rest of faith (read Hebrews 4:1-13). Dependence on the grace of God, not our efforts to be justified by works, is the fruit of

righteousness. When God's abiding glory and presence is upon us, we will dwell in "peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isaiah 32:17~18).

Are we enjoying God's rest? If not, we are in danger of being justified by works, trying to live the Christian life in our own strength. We must understand that good, godly works will flow out of a living relationship with Christ (read James 2:18~26), but never as attempts to merit or keep salvation. We are to consciously draw near to God and receive the grace and power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill our plans, "Trust in the LORD, and do good; *so* shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass" (Psalm 37:3~5).

"Lord, I want to be a vessel You work through. Do it through me. But let me be concerned with being with You first, receive the power of the Holy Spirit and then do the works of the Kingdom best Your way and will. In Jesus name."

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12. WAKE UP AND PREPARE FOR WAR

"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up" (Joel 3:9).

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Understanding the times we are living in is critical for advancing the Kingdom of God, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12).

Since the opening of the twentieth century, the Holy Spirit has been poured out in an unprecedented way, just as was spoken by the prophet Joel, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17-18). (Also read Joel 2:28-32 if you can).

Friend, we are approaching the end of this present age of grace (or as others call it “The Church Age”) and Jesus is coming back soon! He is returning in judgment for those who reject Him but between now and that day, He desires to redeem those who will turn to Him in repentance and faith and receive Him as their Lord and Saviour, “And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21).

There is a real violent war going on in the spiritual realm right now! The effect of this conflict is that you are either a victor or victim in the “coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD” (Joel 2:31; NKJV). To be a victor, you must have a relationship with Jesus Christ. The choice is yours. If you say “yes” to Jesus, here’s what you must do NOW, Admit the fact that you are a sinner, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23);

Be willing to repent from disobedience and rebellion against God, “...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3);

Believe that Jesus is your only Saviour, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16);

Confess, trust and receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9-10).

Please pray this prayer and do mean it with all of your heart:

“Dear Lord Jesus, I now recognize that I am a sinner and I am in need of salvation. I accept the sacrifice You paid for me on the cross of Calvary and I allow Your precious shed blood to cleanse me. I now surrender myself to You and invite You to be my Lord and Saviour. Please come into my heart. Take full control of my life and help me to live and serve You from this moment forward. I ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.”

If you prayed this prayer in all sincerity, you are now a child of God. We encourage you to find fellowship in a Bible-believing, Spirit-filled church and obtain a copy of the Bible and that you read it diligently so that you will be the kind of Christian God wants you to be.

“Father, I pray for the harvest of souls who will call on You and be saved. In the mighty name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

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13. THE VOICE OF VISION

“For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Habakkuk 2:3).

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When a vision is authored of God and birthed in the Spirit, it will not always be immediately fulfilled but is set for an appointed time.

The prophet Habakkuk faced difficulties in the natural, but his decision to praise and worship God was the key in bringing forth the purpose of God in the final outcome. Confidence in God’s promises is to rejoice in spite of negative circumstances, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither *shall* fruit *be* in the vines; the labour of the olive shall

fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and *there shall be* no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Habakkuk 3:17-18).

Some of us have received spoken promises of God’s Word and are awaiting fulfillment. Others of us are carrying a call of God in our lives which has not yet been demonstrated in its fullest potential.

If we go forth prematurely right now, we would be going ahead of the Lord. But as we wait on the Lord by receiving an impartation (read 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6), He will thrust us forth and we will run with a vision and passion that will “not be weary, *and* [we] shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

“Father, let me catch the vision and press toward the mark of Your high calling. In the name of Jesus Christ.”

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14. REJOICING IN REJECTION

“Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matthew 5:10-12).

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The longer we live and serve God, the more uncomfortable we will be with the spirit and system of this age, “that the friendship of the world is enmity with God” (James 4:4); “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust

of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15-16).

When we are chosen and ordained of the Lord, we will experience, in little or much, degrees of persecution and rejection by the world, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:18-19). It should come as no surprise because “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). But thank God! Jesus has not left us comfortless! He said that we are “[His] friends; for all things that [He has] heard of [His] Father [He has] made known unto [us]” (John 15:15). When we experience hatred and unpopularity from the world as we stand up for God’s will and ways, we can run to the One who has overcome, “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good CHEER; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33); “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, *even* our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4-5).

Beloved, if we can still love God, pray and seek to win those who insult us to Jesus, then we are living the values of “The Beatitudes” (read Matthew 5:1-12) and practising Kingdom living, “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:19-21; NIV).

There is a special anointing, glory and Presence of the Holy Spirit on the lives of Christians who suffer and yet, remained steadfast to the call and cause of Christ, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding JOY. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, HAPPY are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" (1 Peter 4:12~14). As we receive the comfort, joy and peace of the Lord, we are victors, not victims; winners, not wimps! Hallelujah!

"Holy Spirit, let Your Presence fall on me like a dove. I want to catch a glimpse of heaven's glory. In Jesus name."

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15. ANOINTED, APPLIED ARTS FOR JESUS

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candle-stick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14~16).

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God is the Artist of all artists, "the Creator of the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 40:28). Nature is the work of His hands, a revelation of Himself, "THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day after day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun. Which *is* as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth *is* from the end

of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof" (Psalm 19:1~6).

In the face of the history of our world, art in its various expressions such as literature, music and painting have played a powerful role in communicating and representing values of generations of people. With the advent of new technology in the mass media in recent times, I believe that the arts will become even more significant in the lifestyle of many people. In countries with relatively higher standards of living, people have more resources and time to devote to pursue leisure activities such as attending concerts, exhibitions, movies and theme parks. Through the multi-media of computer, Internet, music and television, many have access to the world of business, entertainment, news and information even without leaving their homes.

The integration of arts with the fabric of society is unprecedented in proportion. In the godless and secular society of ours, it is time we Christians make a stand for arts that bring glory to God. Through media like Christian drama, literature and painting, we can influence the society in a positive way. There is no inherent glory in the media or the tools within themselves but when they are anointed of the Holy Spirit and based on the Word of God, they become invaluable treasure in earthen vessels.

"Father, we pray for Your anointing and wisdom in applying arts to communicate the gospel. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

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16. MOUNTAIN-MOVING MIRACLE

"And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and

nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:20~21).

God specializes in things that are humanly impossible. With Him, "all things *are* possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23).

What is the mountain in our lives? Brokenness, loneliness, sickness, unemployment? Some other problems? With a measure of faith as the mustard-seed, we can speak to the mountain and see it removed in the mighty name of Jesus!, "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*" (Mark 11:23~24). Meditating and mouthing the Word of God are the metamorphoses for moving mountains. Meditation is planting the seed of the Word of God (FAITH) and mouthing is harvesting the fruit of the tree of life (WISDOM), "But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:2~3).

"Father, I ask that You pour out Your wisdom as faith comes alive by hearing Your Word. In Jesus name."

17. IS YOUR WOMB FRUITFUL?

"But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in

my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!” (Luke 1:43-45; NIV).

As God’s Word came to Mary, saying, “ ...you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus... ” (Luke 1:30-31; NIV), she asked, “How shall this be ... since I am a virgin?” (Luke 1:34; NIV). I am thrilled that the answer given back in reply to Mary was, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you... ” (Luke 1:35; NIV).

Just like Mary was in the natural; spiritually-speaking, we may feel like we are barren or sterile, but the Lord is developing the “fruit of [our] womb” (Luke 1:42), which is faith and grace within our spirit.

Ministry begins when we recognize that it is not us, but it is the Holy Spirit at work. We are no doubt vessels but like Mary, we must be reduced to the realization that we are nothing but a “humble state of his servant” (Luke 1:48; NIV).

Unless the Seed touches our womb, we are barren. What is the Seed that will fertilize the fruit of our womb for a successful ministry? I believe it is when we devote ourselves to “the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42; NIV) and “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17; NIV).

What about us? Are we manifesting much fruit? Spiritually-speaking, can we say what Rachel said in the natural, “Give me children or I die?”. The process of giving birth to a natural child is painful. It is an experience of much travailing. But once born, he or she brings joy to the parents. Likewise, and perhaps even more so in the spiritual realm. If we discover that we are spiritually barren but that the Holy Spirit wants to overshadow us, what will our response be?

Can we say in essence what Elizabeth and Mary said respectively, “For nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37; NIV) and “I am the Lord’s servant ... May it be to me as you have said” (Luke 1:38; NIV). Yes and Amen!

“Lord, I believe what You have said will be accomplished. In the powerful name of Jesus.”

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18. RUNNING THE RACE

“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

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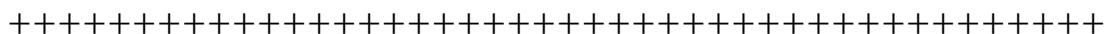
Commitment to Jesus Christ is to not only start well but also to complete the race of faith we are called to run, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

Besetting sin must be conquered or else we are burdened with the weight we are never meant to carry, “WHEREFORE seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:3-4); “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (1 Corinthians 9:24); “And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. Now therefore perform the doing *of it*; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have” (2 Corinthians 8:10-11).

The Christian life is likened to a race of faith. Faith does not deny the existence of difficulties or provide immunity from trials. Rather, it focuses on the power to overcome the obstacles. In the race, winners do not look back but ever keep their eyes on the finishing line as they run, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:12-14).

Sometimes people who are in the ministry for a long time talk about the good old days. While there may be a place to “remember the works of the LORD: ... remember thy wonders of old ... meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings” (Psalm 77:11-12), to overemphasize them can actually hinder present and future progress. We must avoid boasting in *our* spiritual accomplishments or living in the glory of the past. We must believe and expect that the best days of life and ministry are yet to come. No, they are not going to be easy but I believe that with the testing of our faith, we will experience triumphs despite trials, grow from faith to faith and move in glory to glory. Hallelujah!

“Father, let us be the generation who will run with the heavenly vision and be faithful to finish the course of the race of faith. In the mighty name of Jesus.”



19. DAUGHTERS AND HANDMAIDENS OF GOD

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17-18).

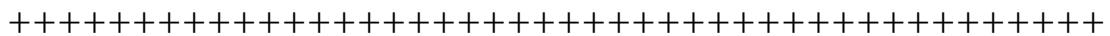
Women are important to God. While the feminist spirit of the world should be rejected by the church, God does not tolerate chauvinistic males who subjugate women either.

Women are not second-class citizens in the church. The difference between man and woman is not a case of importance or subordination. Rather, it relates to function and responsibility.

The Biblical headship of the husband speaks of spiritual accountability. As a steward of God, man has a heavy responsibility in providing spiritual leadership in the family. The woman plays a supportive and submissive role not because she is less important, but because she is obedient to the plan of God and willingly yields to the protection that a man provides. Wives are to complement, not compete with their husbands, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord” (Colossians 3:18).

When there is proper fear, holiness and worship of God, there will be interdependence and unity in a marriage partnership.

“Father, raise up Spirit-filled women who will take the nations by storm. In the mighty name of Jesus.”



20. NOT JUST A VISITATION, BUT HABITATION TOO

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God ~ this is your spiritual act of worship” (Romans 12:1; NIV).

Worship is the expression of our relationship with God, characterized by love and passion for Him, “because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Having been bought with a price, the presentation of our lives as living sacrifices and vessels of worship is a “reasonable service” (according to Romans 12:1). As the temple of the Holy Spirit is in us, we are therefore to “glorify God in [our] body, and in [our] spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20).

True worship is a lifestyle, not just an activity. It is more than simply turning up for church services, but is a reflection of loving “the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength... ” (Mark 12:30).

We are called to experience not only the visitation of the Holy Spirit, but to be His habitation too, “In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22).

“Holy Spirit, You are welcome in my heart, soul and mind. I enthrone You with all that is within me. Take Your place in my life. In Jesus name.”

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21. HOLINESS IS TO HAVE THE HOLY GHOST HONoured IN THE HOUSE

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans 14:17).

Holiness is to have the rule and reign of the Holy Spirit from within, allowing Christ to live in and through us. It is an inward spiritual experience of resting and dwelling in the grace of God.

Genuine holiness stems from the heart, mind and tongue that is yielded to Christ. It is far more than just conforming to some external and outward performance of good works. It is concerned with “being” instead of “doing”.

While good fruits and practical works will manifest when a person is holy, it is only a reflection and result of a living relationship with Jesus. If we are “trying” to be holy by practising good works, it will not work, “EXCEPT the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it... ”(Psalm 127:1). Only the glorious resurrection power of Christ within us can produce true holiness in the house God is building in and with us!

Beloved, in this age of grace, we are the spiritual house “builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22); “But in a great HOUSE there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, *and* prepared unto every good work” (2 Timothy 2:20~21); “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual HOUSE, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

Are we the habitation of the Holy Spirit? In the spiritual house God is building in and through us, are we vessels of honour? As a holy

priesthood of God, are we offering up spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ?

“God, build Your Church in us through the Spirit. In Jesus name.”

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22. TO BE STRONG OR WEAK?

“AND I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and in him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:1~5).

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More than words can express, we need a revelation of the Holy Spirit to open our spiritual eyesight and awareness to understand this most difficult subject.

Most of us are taught to be strong. Weakness is not considered to be a virtue in the world or even in most church circles. However, I feel that unless and until we are overwhelmed by the exceeding weakness of the flesh, we will not walk in the power and victory of the Spirit, “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Corinthians 12:9~10).

Let me give this little illustration from my own life. It is not a pretty picture but as long as I depend on the flesh, difficulties with lust or pride will occur. Within myself, I recognize that there are inherent evil and I am capable of any sin, “the heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). I am utterly helpless in overcoming “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16) in *my* strength. I have no strength to stand up to Satan and his temptations. Realizing my weakness, I can never hope to overcome in *my* strength. As I call on the Lord for His strength, the power of Christ rests upon me. This is the only way to have victory over sin. Hallelujah!

Yes! God wants *His* strength to be evident in our lives but this is only done when we acknowledge *our* weakness and want the power of Christ to be paramount. When we recognize the weaknesses we have, we will detest pride and self-righteousness and will rather glory in the Lord. His strength is then made perfect in our weakness and we become “strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Ephesians 6:10) and “the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do *exploits*” (Daniel 11:32).

“Lord, I am weak on my own but I want to be strong in You. Let the power of Christ rest upon me. In Jesus name.”

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23. WINSOME WOMANHOOD

“ ...woman is the glory of the man” (1 Corinthians 11:7).

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Unless God gives a person the gift to remain unmarried (read 1 Corinthians 7:7), man is not complete without woman and woman not independent from man. However, this in no way diminishes the

distinctiveness and uniqueness of each gender, “So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27).

The root identification and wholesome satisfaction of any male/female relationship still lies in God, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Ephesians 3:14~15).

A man’s source of delegated authority comes from God above, not within himself or on the basis of his abilities. He is to exercise leadership with humility, love and servanthood, not lording it over the woman or treating her like a slave. When a man realizes the way Jesus demonstrated His authority with sacrificial love, he will provide his wife with emotional, material and spiritual provisions.

Likewise, when a woman voluntarily respects and submits to the godly leadership of her husband, she inspires confidence in him and can expect to receive protection in a dynamic way.

“Father, let woman be the crowning glory of the man. In the matchless name of Jesus.”

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24. THE PROFIT OF PROPHESY

“He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying” (1 Corinthians 14:4~5).

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Prophecy communicates and confirms the counsel of the Word of God. It brings conviction and consolation to hearers.

Even though we are to desire the gift of prophesy to edify and strengthen fellow believers, not every one who operates this gift stand in the office of a prophet. The gift of prophesy (as one of the nine gifts of the Spirit according to 1 Corinthians 12:10 and 1 Corinthians 14:3) is for building up, comforting and exhortating the saints (forth telling) whereas the ministry of a prophet (as a designation of the fivefold ministries according to Ephesians 4:11) will in addition, speak concerning future events (foretelling). This simply means that individuals who have the gift of prophecy (forth telling) are not necessarily prophets but prophets will both forth tell and foretell.

While there are prophets anointed and appointed by the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ today, their ministries must be qualified and can only be equal to the Word of God. In other words, the revelation they give, the message they utter and every experience they manifest must agree with the Word of God or else it is false. Never are they to add to the Word of God.

Not every one serves in the ministry of the prophet (it is commissioned by God and flows from a particular call on an individual's life), but many have the gift of prophecy given for “the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7; NIV). Do we have a passion for prophecy or other gifts of the Spirit? We should earnestly covet them but our motivation must be love for God's people.

“God, let Your power flow through me, operating in the gifts and developing the fruit of the Spirit. I ask this in Jesus name.”

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25. WE ARE EARTHEN VESSELS CONTAINING AN INVALUABLE TREASURE

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7). (Also, 11:30; 12:5, 9).

As earthen vessels, we are frail and weak. In other words, we lack the ability to fulfill our calling in ministry on our own.

But when we realize that the supernatural power of God is working in and through us, we have an invaluable treasure within, “greater is he that is in [us], than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Sealed by the Holy Spirit, we can release the resurrection power of Jesus Christ and exercise healing by faith’s confession as Peter did, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6).

“Lord, let Your resurrection power flow as we exercise authority over sickness and demons. In the mighty name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.”

26. THE FRUITS OF FAITH

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Faith must accompany every aspect of our relationship with Jesus, including acts like giving, prayer and fasting. Otherwise, it becomes bondage, law and dead religious works, “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Galatians 2:21).

There are plenty of religious people that are filled with fear, doubt and unbelief. Any good works that are performed apart from the spirit of faith is still an abomination unto God. For example, the Pharisee who “fasted and gave tithes” (according to Luke 18:12), “trusted in [himself] that [he] was righteous, and despised others” (Luke 18:9) had a semblance of religion but was abased by God (according to Luke 18:14); “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (James 4:6).

Likewise, self-righteousness is still one of the greatest enemies of faith today. Whenever an individual takes pride in works of self-righteousness rather than dependence on God, it becomes law, setting aside the grace of God.

We cannot please the Father through works of the flesh but only as we abide in the vine, Jesus Christ, walking in faith and in the Spirit, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1) and “...because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Romans 5:5).

As Christians, our giving, prayer and fasting must arise primarily because we love and trust God and want to see His plan and purpose accomplished through the church and the nation. Otherwise, even all these deeds can become bargaining and negotiations with Him, treating Him like a prayer-answering machine or promises-dispenser rather than having a close and intimate relationship with the Father. Motives of the heart is what distinguishes religion from relationship.

A solid and secured relationship is built on love, trust and faith. Just as there is a real spirit of fear (not just an attitude or disposition but an actual power of darkness involved) in most religion, faith is the spirit of prevailing power in appropriating the promises of God based on a relationship with Him. The fruits of faith are “power, love and a sound mind” (according 2 Timothy 1:7).

The questions we need to ask ourselves are, “Are we living in faith or fear?”; “Are we trusting the grace of God or works of self-righteousness?” and “Are we in an intimate heart relationship with the Father or practising a head knowledge religion?”

“Father, let me listen to the voice of faith, receive the Spirit of faith and yield the fruits of faith. I ask in Jesus name.”

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27. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17).

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The principle of Positive Confession is the key to partaking the power of the Holy Spirit and possessing the precious promises of the Word of God in our lives, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge

of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power” (Ephesians 1:17-19); “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:3-4).

The written Word of God is not just a textbook so that we can accumulate more and more Bible knowledge. As precious as this is, true spiritual life is to commune with the Lord and Spirit of the Bible, the Living Word, Jesus Christ Himself, “ ...the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life” (John 6:63). Using a poor and unworthy human illustration, it is one thing to read the letter of a good friend but quite another to communicate face to face with him or her in person. Likewise, we must not only read the written words of the Bible, but also speak with and listen to the voice of the Author Himself. Hallelujah!

When we are in constant fellowship with the Holy Spirit, the greater the anointing of intercession (NOT accusation) will be on our words, which must flow out of the truth of the Word of God. The time has come for the Church to embrace both the Word and the Spirit, which is the power which bears lasting fruit as well as release spiritual gifts.

The power of the Word of God must be anointed by the Spirit to become the “sword of the Spirit”, which is “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12) and we “overcame

him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of [our] testimony” (Revelation 12:11).

Spiritual timing is also important concerning the flow of the Spirit. There are moments when the anointing of the Holy Spirit come in waves but at other times, it ebbs. Which is why sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and wisdom of the Word must be connected or else we either grieve or quench the Spirit (read Ephesians 4:30 and 1 Thessalonians 5:19). There is probably nothing worse in a church meeting than when the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit are beyond control and out of order, “And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1 Corinthians 14:32~33). Moreover, spiritual gifts are to be motivated by love or else we become as “sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal” (1 Corinthians 13:1). (Better still, read the entire 1 Corinthians chapter 13 if you can).

When Jesus was in the wilderness (read Matthew 4:1~11), He employed the sword of the Spirit, which is the spoken, *rhema* Word of God, in having victory over the enemy and the flesh. Likewise, there are generally three main categories of temptations that all of us face and they are “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16) and we resist them by speaking to the mountain of fear, lust, shame or whatever areas of temptation and see them being removed. Yes! There is power in confessing the Word, which is the sword of the Spirit and the word of our testimony. Speak in faith now!

“Lord, let the words of my mouth, and the abundance and meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Your sight. In Jesus name.”

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28. THE MESSAGE, METHOD AND MOTIVE OF MINISTRY

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Philippians 3:10).

There is a proper pattern for a successful ministry that we must discover and enter ~ or else we will miss the mark of God’s true Kingdom purpose!

First, the focus of our message must be on “Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). We must have such a relationship with Jesus that the message of the cross is not only proclaimed, but actually demonstrated all over our lives ~ “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: *Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart” (2 Corinthians 3:2-3). The message of Christ crucified, “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3), however, is not complete without the important truth of the power of His resurrection, “And he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:4). This is the basis for our faith, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9-10).

Then, like Paul, our method of ministry is to be “in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit

and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:3~5); “And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Corinthians 3:4~6). In other words, we must not base our dependence solely on our abilities or gifts but in yielding to the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit.

Also, faithfulness to God is the motive of ministry, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). To walk in the pleasure of God, not the praise or popularity of people, is the price of the priesthood, “I CHARGE *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Timothy 4:1~5).

“Master, let me be faithful and fruitful, to make full proof of the ministry. In Jesus name.”

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29. VOTING AS THE VOICE OF VICTORY

“I EXHORT therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Timothy 2:1-6).

Voting as a Christian is important for the victory of the eternal souls of the citizens in our country. It is both an awesome responsibility as well as a legitimate right to register our choice for the proper candidate.

As all authority has been ordained by God, we can influence our nation when we vote both with knowledge regarding the policies which the candidates stand for and prayerful consideration. What the candidates stand for is extremely important. Issues like education, the economy and the freedom to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ deserve utmost thought for the believer. We should consider whether the key policies are biblically and morally correct, instead of merely being politically correct. The factor of determination is the Word of God. That is, what does the Bible say concerning the political policies and programs presented?

Appropriately, we should pray for our governmental officials. Instead of engaging in political demonstrations or joining the opposition as the first means of effort, we should approve or oppose only by peaceful means. Through prayer and the proclamation of the Word of God, these two powerful weapons can put to effect the purpose of God more than any political pro-action can ever produce.

“Father, we pray that You will place politicians with proper policies in positions of power in order that Your Word will prevail and the Prince of Peace preside over the hearts of the people who will come and call on the name of Jesus Christ.”

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30. THE PERFECTING OF PATIENCE

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:2~4).

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I believe in Positive Confession and the power of the word of our testimony, but I also believe that a balanced faith life must also be accompanied by the virtue of patience. Faith and patience are like a couple who walk and work together to possess the promises of God’s Word and produce powerful results.

Meditate on the following verses of Scripture and see how faith and patience are combined to inherit the promises of God:

“And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised (through FAITH), he was able also to perform (through PATIENCE)” (Romans 4:21);

“Cast not away therefore your confidence (or FAITH), which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of PATIENCE, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Hebrews 10:35~38);

“NOW FAITH is the substance of things hoped for (or PATIENCE), the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1);

“WHEREFORE seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with PATIENCE the race (of FAITH) that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* FAITH; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1~2).

To illustrate the combined working power of FAITH and PATIENCE, I encourage you to read the entire Romans chapter 4 and see how Abraham “Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of [his wife] Sara’s womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God” (Romans 4:18~20).

Perhaps, like Abraham and Sarah, we may be experiencing a barren area in our lives that we need a breakthrough miracle (For some of us, it may very well be a physical need, others of us spiritual). But whatever our needs are, if God has spoken and promised, it shall come to pass as we stand on His Word and not give place to complaining or murmuring, “*I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD” (Psalm 27:13~14).

“Lord, let me be still and know that You are God. I wait on You to hear Your voice. In Jesus name.”

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31. THE ANOINTING AND THE FRUITS

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:27).

As much as we thank God for “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers” (according to Ephesians 4:11) to help us grow in faith and knowledge of the Lord, it is the Person of the Holy Spirit who will “guide [us] into all truth” (John 16:13).

We can attend meetings after meetings and listen to one preacher after another but without a revelation of the Holy Spirit to learn the Word of God ourselves, we have no power to recognize truth from error. Unfortunately, not every preacher or prophet is relating the whole and true counsel of God’s Word. Listen to what various portions of Scripture say concerning (if you will pardon these expressions), “popcorn preachers and puppet prophets”, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15); “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15); “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:6~7) and “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they

heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Please do not misunderstand. We are NOT to be judgmental or skeptical about personalities in the Church. We should NEVER judge the motives of individuals. We only look at the fruit of doctrine and ministry. Sadly, the enemy has used Christians with a Pharisaical spirit (clothed in religious pride and self-righteousness) as voices of accusation to cause disunity and division in the Body of Christ in recent years. Unless there is a Christ-like spirit of love, meekness and intercession, it is still “evil” to speak “the truth without grace”, “Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?” (James 4:11-12). Except under the most unusual circumstances, we should NOT name names or talk about someone (whether it is alleged personal failure or doctrinal error) unless and until we first go (or call, write, etc.) to the person in private, “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault BETWEEN THEE AND HIM ALONE: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained a brother” (Matthew 18:15). Even if this is not possible for some reasons, we need to pray and ask God to restore him or her back in grace (read Galatians 6:1). Some preachers may preach the truth and still be proud and self-righteous, lacking in love and grace. On the other hand, there are others who promote false doctrine, wink at sin and yet appear kind and gracious. What then is the answer to these problems? How can the average Christian be discerning without judging?

I believe having a strong foundation in the Word of God, hungering and thirsting for the anointing of the Holy Spirit is the answer. We need the Bible as the Revealed Book of Truth as well as the Person of the Holy

Spirit as the Author and Spirit of Truth so that we will “study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15) and “BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of an’-ti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world” (1 John 4:1-3). Good fruits in our lives and ministries are bore as we abide in the Word of God and yield to the anointing of the Holy Spirit! Hallelujah!

“Holy Spirit, let me hear Your voice and do the will of the Father. I ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

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PRAYER COMMITMENT LIST:

PERSONAL STUDY REFERENCES/SERMON NOTES:

Your WORD Is Strength

The Bible is the most important book in the entire world. Though authored by men, it is the Holy Spirit who inspired every thought and word, “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*” (2 Peter 1:21).

It is God’s letter to us, the book of divine instructions. Through its pages, we find rebuke for our sin and comfort in times of sorrow, “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It is the means to know the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, “IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

As we walk with the Lord, we will learn to hear His voice and seek to do His will, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

Unfortunately, many believers neglect faith, prayer and the study of God’s Word. This results in boredom, dryness and emptiness, etc. There are no “quick fixes” in receiving from God. We need to wait in His Presence and devour His Word, not just read “how to” books on Christian living. I ask that the Holy Spirit will awaken you to “draw nigh to God” (James 4:8) and know the true source of strength for your every need as I say this, “As precious and as important as it is, it is not enough to just hear sermons from some great preachers or read books of some dedicated men and women of God telling us about their experiences, we need to be lost in the awesome wonder and glorious riches of Christ ourselves as we feast at His table in the secret closet of prayer”. He is the manna from on high, the Bread who satisfies us completely.

Birthed out of my own desperate cry and need for more of Him, I pray that this volume of writings will encourage you to enter into “the school of the Holy Spirit” yourself. Don’t depend entirely on some book, tape, counsellor, shepherd or pastor for answer and wisdom. Instead, get on your face before God and the Holy Ghost will be your true Comforter and Preacher. It is He who brings the Scriptures alive to you and enables you to apply His truth in your everyday life as you hunger for Christ and Christ alone.

Jonathan

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