

Victorious Living ~ God's Design

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Not By Might
Nor By Power
But By My Spirit
Faith Of The
LORD Hosts

Zechariah 4:6

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Introduction

God's design for us is victory. It's imperative we understand that real victory can never be achieved in the flesh, but by God's supernatural power and that alone. Our flesh and the works of the flesh can never bring about victory in our lives. True victory is only wrought by the work of the Spirit of God and His power.

“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the Word of the Lord... Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” ~ Zechariah 4:6
The arm of the flesh can never bring about victory. Anything and everything done in the flesh is destined to fail. All that is wrought through the working of the Spirit produces victory!

The Apostle Paul, while in Athens, attempted to reach the people there through the wisdom of man rather than the working of God's Spirit and power.

He quoted thus,

“For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.” ~ Acts 17:28

It's interesting that is used often by believers today but was actually a quote from a philosopher of that day. Notice he says, “as certain also of your own poets have said.” Seeing just a small amount of fruit there, he went on to Corinth determined to allow the Spirit of God do the work. He said to the Corinthians,

“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 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

When combating the world, the flesh and the devil, we must use spiritual weapons and not carnal weapons or weapons of the flesh – human and man made wisdom and the strength of man rather than the strength and power of the Holy Ghost.

When David approached Goliath, he approached him in the strength of the Lord and not in his own might. David to the Philistine,

“Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.” ~ 1 Samuel 17:45-47

We are in a spiritual battle and engaging in spiritual warfare, therefore, we must use spiritual weapons,

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.” ~ 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” ~ Ephesians 6:10-12

Are We a Victim or a Victor?

It's not God's design for us to become the victims of things that happen to us. Biblical examples of people who went through devastating circumstances which they overcame include Peter (Mark 16:1-7, Acts 2), Paul and Silas (Acts 16), Job (James 5:10-11), and David (1 Samuel 30:1-6). There are also countless examples in both history and in the lives of people in our day.

God's design is that we make the things life throws at us into stepping stones to victory. We need to allow them to take us to higher ground, not allow them to become stumbling blocks making us victims (1 John 4:4, 1 John 5:4-5, Romans 8:37, Revelation 12:11).

Essentials to an overcoming life are:

1. The New Birth

The world, the devil and the flesh are the battlefield to everyone born into this world, especially those who have been born again. If we are to be an overcomer, the first thing we must do is be born again. This is the first step in an overcoming life. The Bible says,

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that 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)?

2. Choose Life

“See, I have set before thee this day life and good - life and prosperity, death and evil – death and adversity. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:15 and 19).

In these verses we are told that we all have set before us life, prosperity, and blessing, and at the same time death, adversity, and cursing. When life throws

things at us we must choose life in order that we may live. We must choose life not only in order that we may live but also our descendants.

Some people have gone through many negative things and have been so beat down by life that you feel there is no way out. Let me encourage you that there is a way out. Our God is the God of all hope (Romans 15:13). We must get up everyday proclaiming with a loud voice "I choose life!"

Once you have made this a habit write a list of things that you can choose to do everyday to begin to turn your life and situation around. The list should consist of spiritual things that will strengthen your inner man as well as practical things that will help your situation and circumstances.

3. Be Convinced of God's Immutable Love for You

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39).

In all that Paul went through as a believer and a minister of the gospel he was persuaded, without a doubt, that God was always for him and that He loved him. God's love doesn't change with our circumstances, it remains the same. We must have the conviction that God loves us as an individual not just the world in general.

A strong persuasion of His love does three things:

- It makes us unstoppable (2 Corinthians 4:7-15, 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, Acts 14). No matter what Paul went through nothing stopped him.
- It subsides stress (1 Peter 5:7). When we are persuaded Jesus really cares about us then we can give Him our cares, concerns, and anxieties and leave them with Him (Matthew 11:28-30 and Philippians 4:6-7).
- It gives us victory (Romans 8:37). Notice it says “in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loves us.”

4. Have Faith

It takes real faith to overcome the things the enemy and life throws at us. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, “We walk by faith and not by sight.” Hebrews 11:1 tell us faith is the “substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.”

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that 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)?

According to Hebrews 11:3, God by faith framed the world so that what we see in the natural was not made out of anything in the visible realm. It’s interesting that in our first point about choosing life is preceded by Deuteronomy 30:14 which says, “The Word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart that you may do it.” The verse is quoted in Romans 10:8 and referred to as the Word of Faith.

Three things that activate faith:

- **See and believe** (Hebrews 11:1, 2 Corinthians 5:7). Believe and hope for what does not yet exist in the natural before it can ever materialize. We must see it happening in the spiritual realm before it can ever take place in the natural.

“The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he sees the Father do: for what things soever He does, these also does the Son likewise” (John 5:19).

- **Speak in faith** (Romans 10:8-11, Deuteronomy 30:14, Mark 11:22;). This doesn't mean we lie but begin to say what we are believing God is doing or going to do. There's something about speaking or testifying what we believe that produces life and gives us the power to overcome.

“A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled. Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof” (Proverbs 18:20-21).

“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony” (Revelation 12:11).

- **Act on what you believe** (Hebrews 11). Throughout Hebrews chapter 11 it constantly injects that by faith they did something. They overcame insurmountable odds by acting on what they believed.

“And Jesus seeing their faith” (Mark 2:5).

“The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it” (Deuteronomy 30:14).

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble” (James 2:17-19).

5. Encourage and Strengthen Yourself in the Lord.

“Moreover David was greatly distressed... But David encouraged and strengthened himself in the Lord his God (1 Samuel 30:6).

This also has to do with focusing on and speaking the positive in the midst of devastation. When everything seems to be against you, all hope is gone, we must encourage ourself in the Lord, finding our strength and hope in Him.

“I have overcome bad situations before with God’s help and I will overcome this too.”

“I may be going through a difficult time and have failed miserably, but I will overcome this too with His help.”

“I will come out on top, prosper and be victorious over this too.”

After talking about prayer and thanksgiving in anxious times, Paul stressed for the Philippians to think about or focus on the positive and of good things.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

David had lost everything, his men were blaming him for what had taken place, even to the place of considering stoning him and he was in great distress. Instead of following this downward spiral of defeat, David encouraged himself in the Lord, sought His face, received direction from God, followed His guidance, pursued the enemy and took back all that had been stolen.

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (John 10:10). When the devil has hit us with everything he has, all seems to be lost, and like Job, even those that are suppose to be on our side are saying it's all our fault and we're the cause, we must encourage ourself in the Lord. Find your strength in Him and go into battle determined to take back all that the enemy has stolen. The devil tells us we're defeated and all is lost – He's a liar! God promises us victory and its incumbent upon us to stake our claim and take back all that the enemy has stolen.

We have the promise of God to remove our enemies far off from us and restore all he has stolen.

“I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done monstrous things.

Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, My great army which I sent among you. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you” (Joel 2:20, 23, and 25-26).

It's interesting, shortly thereafter, in 2 Samuel 2, David is inaugurated as king. What would have happened if he had given in to defeat. What would have happened if he had not encouraged himself in the Lord? When it seems you've lost all, and all hope is gone, it's at this point that you just may be on the precipice of victory and entering into your destiny.

The choice is ours! We can either give up in defeat or encourage ourself in the Lord, find renewed strength in Him and press forward and lay hold of our destiny in Him.

“Let us not be weary.... in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” ~ Galatians 6:9

6. Praise Him with all the Fervor You Have

“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name” (Hebrews 13:15).

There's power in praise! Prayer focuses on the problem while praise concentrates on the solution. Praise always preceded victory in scripture. Read Joshua 7, 2 Chronicles 20 and Acts 16.

7. Forgiveness

Job went through devastation and difficulties on more levels than you can imagine. He lost everything. All of his friends said it was his fault and criticized him constantly. At the end, once he had forgiven his friends and prayed for them, God gave him back twice of all he had lost.

“The Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the Lord increased all that Job had twofold” (Job 42:10).

Some of you have gone through struggles, difficulty, abuse, and betrayal. You are still experiencing defeat in part because you haven't forgiven those who hurt, abused and betrayed you.

Forgive! Forgive! Forgive!

8. Focus on the Spiritual Realm

“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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

“They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:5-6).

“The flesh lusts – wars against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would” (Galatians 5:17).

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1-3).

The new birth takes place when you look to Jesus as your only hope of salvation. 1 John 5:4 says, "Whatever is born of God overcomes the world."

We are made up of three parts: flesh, soul (mind, will, intellect and emotions), and spirit (the part that relates to God). When we are born in the flesh (natural birth) our priorities are placed on our flesh first, then soul, and last of all, the spiritual.

When we are really born again by the Spirit of God our priorities change completely. They are first set on the spirit, then the soul, and last, the flesh. This doesn't mean the flesh is ignored altogether, but our priorities have changed. This produces an inner strength that enables us to overcome the things this life may throw at us.

This is why we must "keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind – affection on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:1-2 NASB).

9. Refuse to Quit or Give Up

Some of you have simply given up. Let me urge you to not give up. The devil knows the only way he can win is if you give up. If you will keep pressing on and refuse to quit you will overcome and be victorious.

Endurance and perseverance is the key to victory.

"My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. We count them blessed - happy who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful (James 5:10-11).

"Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:3).

"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.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your mind" (Hebrews 12:1-3).

Winston Churchill ~

"Never give up on something that you can't go a day without thinking about."

"Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm"

"If you're going through hell, keep going."

"Never give in--never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."

"Never, never, never give up."

Victory Through Trials and Suffering

Suffering is a very real issue in the body of Christ. It's something that affects everyone in one way or another. It may come in the form of financial hardship, physical problems, relationships and a myriad of other things. In the midst of hardship victory can be found. Right in the middle of mentioning a host of things Paul writes, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

Jacob, though very prosperous, went through so much in his life that he cried out in Genesis 42:36, "All these things are against me." This is an issue that is seldom addressed in the body of Christ. Peter wrote an entire book in the Bible about it. In fact, there is at least one verse in every chapter in 1 Peter dealing specifically with suffering. In these verses we see a path to victory through our sufferings.

Victories of Trials and Suffering

1. Suffering Results in Praise and Glory

1 Peter 1:6-7 – "Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations: The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Peter states that as we endure suffering in life it will result in praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus. Wow! Think of it, when Jesus returns He will give you praise and honor and glory for enduring trials and suffering in this life.

James says we will be rewarded with the crown of life (James 1:12). Paul says, we are joint heirs with Christ "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together with Him." Most fail to mention this phrase in the context with our being joint heirs with Christ. He goes on to say "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed" (Romans 8:17-18).

2. Suffering is an Acceptable Offering and Finds Favor with God

Do you desire the favor of God to be upon your life? Many have no doubt prayed at one time or another for God's favor. God's favor is manifest in a special way and especially when we encounter and face times of trial and suffering in life.

1 Peter 2:20 – “What glory is it, if, when you be buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently? But if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable (finds favor) with God.”

We know that we are accepted in God's sight because of our standing and relationship with Jesus (Ephesians 1:6). However, God seems to have special favor toward followers of Jesus who go through times of sufferings. If you are going through a time of suffering, it's like an acceptable offering with God. You have found and come into a place of special favor with Him.

Mary, the mother of Jesus was highly favored. “The angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee. Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God” (Luke 1:28 and 30).

You may say, yes but what does that have to do with suffering? Of course she was favored, she was to give birth to the Son of God. Yes, but she was a young woman who was not yet married. In those days, a woman who was pregnant out of wedlock was looked upon with shame and disgrace.

She would encounter emotional and and social pain and suffering. Beyond what she would be facing in her immediate future, there would also be the pain of watching her firstborn son crucified thirty-three years later. After His birth, Mary was prophesied over saying, “Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul” (Luke 2:35).

3. Suffering is a Special Calling

1 Peter 2:21 – “For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.”

When God appeared to Ananias, after Paul met Jesus on the Damascus road, God said of Paul, “For I will show him how much he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:16).

What a calling! How many would like to have a calling like that? Paul’s life proved to be such (2 Corinthians 4:7-18, 11:23-28). You may wonder why you are going through the things you are. It may just be because God can trust you. Not everyone can be trusting with adversity. God has placed you where you are because He trusts you.

4. Sufferers Follow Jesus’ Example

1 Peter 2:21 – “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps.”

1 John 2:6 – “He that says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.”

We talk of following Jesus’ example but seldom mention this aspect. You are following the example of Christ when you remain faithful to Him during times of trial and suffering.

5. Sufferers Have the Blessing of God upon Them

1 Peter 3:14 - “If you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed.”

We don’t normally think of suffering as a blessing.

James 5:10-11 - “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy (blessed) which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

He uses Job as an example. Job went through a major time of suffering. He lost everything materially, as well as his health and tragedy striking his children. One of the reasons he went through what he did was because God could trust him. God actually boasted of Job before Satan (Job 2). Can God trust us?

Job continued to trust God in all he went through. He said at one point, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15). At the end of His suffering in Job 42:10 he says, "The Lord restored Job's losses, twice as much as he had before."

If we'll be found faithful God will restore our losses as well. Jesus said,

"Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30).

6. A Special Anointing Rests Upon Those Who Suffer

1 Peter 4:14 – "When you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rest upon you."

There is a special anointing that rest upon the lives of those that suffer for His sake. Paul says when we go through things in life it equips us to ministers to those who may be going through something similar.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 - "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

After a time suffering and difficulties, the Spirit of God rests upon your life in a way that you never could have experienced without it. You'll find that each time you minister the anointing of the Holy Ghost resting upon you in a way you have never experienced before. Suffering precedes the anointing of the Holy Ghost!

We referred to Mary having the favor of God upon her but it didn't stop there. She needed the anointing of the Holy Ghost for the task that was set before her. We read, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:35).

7. Suffering Produces Stability in the Life of the Sufferer

1 Peter 5:10 – "The God of all grace, Who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, make perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you."

When we are in the middle of a trial we may feel like we are about to fall apart and buckle under the pressure. It's during these times that we are actually brought down to the very bedrock of our faith. As a result, we come to a place where our faith is unshakable.

It's interesting that this verse says, "the God of all grace." It's an act of divine grace (favor) that allows us to go through times of suffering. In 2 Corinthians 12:10 during Paul's thorn in his flesh, God told him His grace was sufficient for him. Also note this verse says, "after that you have suffered a while." Real and lasting stability only comes after we have gone through a time of suffering.

Prayer: "Lord help us to endure and continue to trust you in all we may be going through. Help us not to quit or become fainthearted but to remain faithful to you. Thank you Jesus for seeing me through to victory! In Jesus name, amen."

Bitter Root Expectancy

We are warned in scripture of a bitter root expectancy. “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.” – Hebrews 12:15

If we are going to be victorious in life, we must rid ourselves of any and all bitter root expectancies. We receive what we expect and more so. Bitter root expectancy is a sort of faith in reverse. We must begin to reverse all bitter root expectancy in our life to an expectancy of God's goodness and favor if we are to experience victory in life.

When negative things happen over and over again, we start to expect the worse. This bitter root within us not only affects us but those around us as well. Our bitter root expectancy can even cause others to act or behave in ways that are contrary to the way they would normally. We project our expectancy upon them – “and thereby many be defiled.”

Most of us have spent a lifetime building a negative expectancy, and I can tell you from experience, it won't go away easily. However, we can start the process of removing it from our lives. If we are going to rid ourselves of it, we must “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12).

Remember the lame man in Acts 3? He had no way of providing for himself. His entire life was filled with negativity. When he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he looked at them expecting to receive something, and he got more than what he was expecting. We usually get much more than we expect as well, be it negatively or positively.

God wants to give us much more than we expect to our benefit, but we must stop expecting the negative and begin expecting His goodness and abundance within our lives (John 10:10, Ephesians 3:20). Let's rebuke any and all negative expectancies from our life and begin to expect God's best.

Jeremiah 29:11 NIV – “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11 KJV – “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil (not of calamity), to give you an expected end.”

Isaiah 14:24 and 27 – “The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?”

Jesus was sent as the “high priest of good things to come” (Hebrews 9:11). “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness” (Romans 11:22).

There’s nothing in our Lord but pure unadulterated goodness toward us. As children of God, we mustn’t expect God’s severity because we are under the blood of Christ. Let’s look to, expect and be determined to walk in all of His goodness.

James 1:17 – “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

Exodus 33:11 says, “The Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend.” This is the type of relationship God desires with us (John 15:13, James 2:23).

Exodus 33:13 and 33:17-19 – “If I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You. The Lord said to Moses, I will also do this thing of which you have spoken, for you have found favor in My sight. Then Moses said, show me Your glory! And He said, I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you.”

Let’s long for, expect and ask the Lord to cause all of His goodness to pass by us as He did Moses. “Sovereign Lord, we ask You to show us Your ways and to cause all of Your goodness and glory to pass by us that we might know you intimately.”

In these days of turmoil and anxiety, God wants a people that will long for and expect all of His goodness and glory to pass by His chosen once again. Let’s

expect nothing but God's goodness in our life, crying out to know Him, who is pure unadulterated goodness (John 17:3).

Psalm 23:6 – “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.”

1. Resist Negativity

We must resist all negativity. Be determined you won't let it in your life. The devil's job is to keep us down, but God promises when we resist the devil he must flee.

James 4:7 – “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

The word resist means to stand up against. You must stand against all negative expectancies with everything you have. Fight it and refuse to ever let it have a foothold in your life or thoughts.

1 Peter 5:9 – “Whom resist steadfast in the faith,

Ephesians 4:27 – “Neither give place to the devil.”

When speaking of giving our anxiety to God in prayer Paul ends by exhorting us to dwell on the positive.

Philippians 4:8 – “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Praying isn't enough to release us from negativity, anxiety and bitter root expectancy. It takes prayer, praise and positivity (Philippians 4:6-8). Prayer focuses on the problem, the negative, which we must do, but to leave it there keeps us bound to the negative.

Praise causes us to look to the one who alone has the answers and solutions to all our problems and needs (Psalm 121:1-2). Positivity causes us to dwell on that which ushers in peace and a new expectancy to our heart and life.

Psalm 40:1-3 – “I waited patiently for the Lord and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my ways. And He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it and fear and shall trust in the Lord.”

Notice the progression of the psalmist. He goes from the negative in his life, to praise for the answer to his troubles, then to a positive expectancy of things to come.

2. Renew Your Mind

We must retrain our minds to dwell on positive things until they crowd out all the negative things in our life.

Romans 12:2 – “And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Proverbs 23:7 – “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

Our battlefield and the enemy’s attack against us begins in our mind. In 2 Corinthians 2:11 Paul said, “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” Devices or schemes is *nóēma* (“to exert mental effort”), the mind, especially its final output (systematic understanding).

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 – “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

3. Watch What You Say

When something goes wrong we tend vocalize it negatively. We must retrain, not only our thinking, but also our speech.

Proverbs 18:20-21 – “A man’s belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth, and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled. Death and life are in the power of the tongue and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.”

Luke 6:45 – “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil, for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

We must resist this tendency and speak what is positive instead. Allow grace to flow from your mouth. “No, I am going to succeed. I will overcome and be victorious over this. God has promised me success and victory.”

When tempted to speak negatively, speak the Word of God instead which is filled with grace and favor. It lifts up, strengthens and edifies. It never returns to God empty or void but accomplishes the purpose for which He sends it (Isaiah 55:10-11).

Matthew 12:36-37 – “But I say unto you that every idle word that men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Ephesians 4:29 – “Let no corrupt communication (unwholesome word) proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear” (Ephesians 4:29).

Negative words affect us greatly, whether speaking or hearing them spoken. Study and memorize 2 Kings 6:16, Isaiah 43:2, 54:17, 59:19, Romans 8:37, 1 John 4:4, 5:4-5, and Revelation 12:11.

4. Watch Who You Spend Time With

We become like the people we are around.

1 Corinthians 15:33 – “Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners.”

Make no mistake about it, we are influenced by those we spend the most time with. If you spend time with people who don't seem to care about life and don't try to better themselves, you will little by little fall into the same trap. On the other hand, if you hang out with people who pursue success and try to better themselves, you will move in that direction.

This applies in so many areas of our lives. If people you fellowship with drag you down in anyway you need to make a major change in who you spend your time around.

Proverbs 13:20 – “He who walks with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”

5. Forgive

In John 20:23 Jesus said, “If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.” This has nothing to do with us having authority to withhold forgiveness from people's lives. It has more to do with us.

When we harbor bitterness and unforgiveness within our heart, we retain that particular sin to ourselves. If we forgive someone who has sinned against us, we release ourselves from any hold that sin or situation might have on us.

When we hold things against someone, we often have the same things happen to us. If someone has sinned against or offended us and we don't forgive them from our heart, we may find ourselves in bondage to the very sin that we hated and that

offended us. We also project our negative expectancy on others because we never forgave the offense or offender.

The only way to free ourselves is to completely forgive. In Matthew 18:21-35 Jesus said we often must forgive up to 490 times or levels before getting something completely out of our system. This means we must choose to forgive an offense every time it raises its ugly head, until there's no bitterness or unforgiveness left in us.

Ephesians 4:31-32 – “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

Colossians 3:13 – “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.”

Bitterness and unforgiveness is like drinking a cup of poison then hoping it kills the other person.

Doers of the Word: An Exposition of James 1:22-25

Are we doers of the Word? Do we put into practice what we hear and read from God's Word? What's our response when we hear the Word of God preached? Do we implement the Word into our life, or do we give a big amen and go our way?

If we are going to be victorious in life we must put the Word of into practice. We must become "Doers of the Word." God's Word is our pathway to victory!

James 1:22

"But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

How many of us remember, at one time or another, hearing the Word preached from the pulpit and saying, "Amen, I really hope brother or sister so and so was listening. They really needed to hear that." We often think the Word applies to everyone but us. Let's maintain the attitude, "Lord, Is there something you want me to get from this? Is there something you want me to do?"

I'm reminded of a story I heard of a young minister just starting out. He took his first pastorate. On his first Sunday he preached a really powerful sermon. The people were so excited. The leadership of the church thought, we made the right decision choosing him to be our pastor.

His second Sunday service came around and the people were excited as to what they would hear this Sunday. He stood in the pulpit and began to preach the same message he had preached the previous Sunday.

The people and leadership in particular were a bit perplexed but thought it was surely an oversight on the pastor's part. His third and fourth Sunday sermons turned out to be exactly the same. Being a bit frustrated, the leadership asked to meet with the pastor.

In their meeting, they confronted him that he had preached the same message at each service. The young pastor looked intently at them and said, "Have you put it into practice yet?" They were pierced to the heart and convicted by the young pastor. They had not been doers of the Word.

The Word of God only benefits us if we put it into practice in our daily lives. The writer of Hebrews said, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:2).

The Word of God only profits us if we mix it with faith, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

I remember a story I heard of a businessman who went on an extended journey. He left one person in charge and said he would be sending him daily instructions on what he was to do. He did as he had said and sent regular directives. He expected responses and updates on how things were going but heard nothing. This went on for some time.

Finally, he decided he had better return and find out what was going on. When he arrived back at his business, he saw people at their leisure and hardly doing anything. As you can imagine, he was not only extremely frustrated but very angry.

He approached the man he had placed in charge and immediately began to vent his frustration toward him. The man looked at him as if to say, "What is wrong? Why are you so upset?" The businessman asked, "Did you not receive all the instructions I sent you?"

The man replied, "Yes we did. They were wonderful. Each set of instructions were read over and over, I even put portions to memory. Once I had thoroughly studied them, I shared them with the rest of our employees. In fact, we took time daily to study and discuss them together. We all really enjoyed your directives."

The businessman looked at him and said, "If you thought so much of the directives I sent, why didn't you do what I told you?"

Isn't that like many of us? We study God's Word regularly and have Bible studies on a weekly basis, but do we give heed to what God says? Like the businessman, the Lord is going to return one day and we will have to give an account for what we did with God's directives. He will ask, "Why didn't you do what I told you?"

James 1:23-24

"For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror, for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was."

He gives us an analogy of a person looking in a mirror. We see ourselves clearly while gazing at ourselves in the mirror but as soon as we walk away we forget what we saw. Try it some time. Look at yourself in the mirror, walk away, and try to remember exactly what you saw. It's really hard to do. We can look at someone else and after they are gone we can remember specifics about what we saw when we looked at them.

We can remember exactly what they looked like. Yet, we can hardly remember a thing about ourselves. What a spiritual truth! It's so easy to see and remember imperfections in others but how easily we forget the imperfections we see in ourselves. We can hear a message preached from the Word, God clearly speaks to us and we walk away and so easily forget what He revealed to us.

The word "observes" or "beholds" in verse 24 refers to a glancing look. To best understand this, let's illustrate it with a picture of a young boy out playing. He's playing as hard as a boy can, goes inside briefly for something, looks in the mirror and sees the reflection of himself. He notices dirt all over himself. His face is filthy and his clothes are a mess.

Does he get all concerned about what he looks like? Do you imagine him getting in a frenzy trying to clean himself up? No, of course not. He's a young boy. All he wants to do is hurry up, get back outside and play more. Yes, he saw he was caked with dirt all over but he hardly flinched over it. It was just a glancing look in the mirror and right back out to play.

Isn't that like most of us? We see ourselves in the mirror of God's Word, we see the imperfections, we may see something God is requiring of us but it's just a glancing look and we are quickly back out to play forgetting all about it or we simply

rationalize it away. We never get around to putting into practice the revelation God has given us. We are forgetful hearers.

James 1:25

“But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in all he does.”

The word for “looks into” is *parakypso* in the Greek which means to stoop over and look into, to gaze carefully by the side of, to peer or to peep into, to bend over for closer look, investigation and examination of something. This is not a passing glance as in verse 24.

Unlike verse 23 and the illustration of the young boy who simply made a passing glance of himself in the mirror and quickly runs back out to play, this can be illustrated by the boy a few years later, a teenager about to go on his first date. While preparing for his date, he looks into the mirror and sees a pimple on the end of his nose.

Do you think he gives a mere glance at what he sees in the mirror as he did when he was a young boy? I think not. Worried about his upcoming date, he picks at it and covers it with makeup so it's not as noticeable. There's no way he gives this a passing glance. On the contrary, he gazes carefully at the imperfection he sees in the mirror, bends over for a close look, investigation and examination in hopes of finding a remedy before his date.

This can also be illustrated with the story of the disciple's investigation into Jesus' empty tomb. There are three words in the original language which will give us tremendous insight. One of those words has a similar meaning to our word *parakypso*.

Mary went to Jesus' tomb early Sunday morning and saw the stone had been rolled away. She quickly ran to tell Peter and John. They ran to see what had taken place. John being a little younger and faster arrived at the tomb first. Peter followed closely behind.

John, “stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there yet he did not go in” (John 20:5). The word used here is blepo and means to glance at something and indicates only that the object impressed itself on John’s eyes. He didn’t examine what he had seen or quite grasp what had happened.

It goes on to show how Peter looked at everything in the empty tomb, the linen clothes, the handkerchief that had been around Jesus’ head, and he even noticed how it had been neatly folded, in a place by itself.

John 20:6 – “Peter came, following him, went into the tomb and saw.”

The word used in verse six is theoreo and means to take careful notice, to contemplate, to behold with intelligence, to scrutinize over. Something caused Peter to puzzle over what he had seen (like an empty cocoon retaining the shape or contour of Jesus’ body). How could the body get out of the clothes without unwrapping them?

Then John, “went in also and he saw and believed” (John 20:8). The word used here is Noida which means to see with understanding and believe, to get a mental picture of, to realize what has taken place. John now understood the meaning of what he saw, that Jesus was alive and therefore believed that He was risen from the dead.

John initially looked in the empty tomb first, but only glanced at what was inside. It merely made an impression on his eyes. Peter went in afterward scrutinizing and puzzling over all he saw. Because Peter so pondered over all he saw, John went in the second time, saw and believed.

If we will look into (parakypso), stoop over for a closer look, gaze carefully into, and investigate the Word of God, we will pave the way for others to see and believe. Let’s not simply give God’s Word a passing glance. When we look intently into the Word of God and put it into practice, we will be blessed in all we do. We will also pave the way for others to see as well.

Joshua 1:8 – “This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is

written in it, for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

Psalms 1:2-3 – “But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he does shall prosper.”

Luke 11:28 – “Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it.”

God is Able

Do you believe God can do anything? Is there something you're facing that makes you wonder if God is able to handle it? Faith in God's ability is requisite to experiencing victory in life.

Six Accounts Where it's Declared Nothing's too Difficult for God:

1. When Confronting Abraham about Sarah's Laughter and Unbelief

Abraham was entertaining three persons who appeared to him (A Theophany – God appearing in human form) and gave him the promise of having a son. Abraham and Sarah were advanced in age and past child bearing age.

Undoubtedly she had already gone through menopause. It was impossible for them to have a child in the natural. Sarah heard the promise from her tent door and laughed. And the Lord said, "Is anything too difficult for the LORD" (Genesis 18:14)?

Is there something you feel God has promised you that seems impossible? It may be so outlandish that if you told someone they would laugh. God's question for you today is the same He asked Abraham, "Is anything too difficult for the LORD" (Genesis 18:14)?

2. In Relation to God's Purposes Being Fulfilled

At the end of his trouble, trials and testings, Job said, "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You" (Job 42:2).

What are you presently going through? What trial or time of testing are you facing? Do you believe God can do anything, and that nothing can thwart His purposes from being fulfilled? It's one thing to believe in God's ability when all is well, but quite another when, like Job, you've lost everything and your world is falling apart.

3. When Comparing His Ability to His Creative Power

In contemplating the creation of the universe, Jeremiah wrote, “Ah Lord God! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee” (Jeremiah 32:17).

If God was able to create the heavens and the earth with His spoken Word, could there possibly be anything that is too hard for Him?

“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11:3).

4. In View of God’s Impending Judgment

“Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for Me” (Jeremiah 32:27)?

We see God’s omnipotence displayed even in the light of His judgment. When looking upon God’s end time judgment there are three Alleluias listed in praise to our God for His mighty power manifest in His judgments:

1. “Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are His judgments.” – Revelation 19:1-2
2. “Again they said, Alleluia And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.” – Revelation 19:3-4
3. “And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent

reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him.” – Revelation 19:5-7

All flesh subject to Him. This also has to do with all flesh being in subjection to the Lord and under the power and control of God. “I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for Me” (Jeremiah 32:27)? He created us – all flesh or mankind and we are therefore subject to Him. Decree those for whom you’re praying, their lives and circumstances to be made subject to God and His will.

5. When Dealing with Mary’s Astonishment that She, as a virgin, would Give Birth to the Son of God

Mary was engaged to be married, and unlike most today, she had never slept with her fiancé. An angel appeared to her, telling her she was going to give birth to a son. In her astonishment she said, “How can this be, since I am a virgin” (Luke 1:34)?

The Angel’s response was, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also the holy child which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:35 and 37).

I love Mary’s response. It was one of faith. “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; BE IT UNTO ME ACCORDING TO THY WORD.” (Luke 1:38). Let’s respond to His promises in faith like this young women did.

David had a similar response to God’s promise to him, his household and descendants. “Therefore now, Lord, let the thing that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant and concerning his house be established for ever, and DO AS THOU HAST SAID. Let it even be established, that Thy name may be magnified for ever” (1 Chronicles 17:23-24a).

6. When Dealing with the Impossibility of Man to be Saved

Jesus had just finished ministering to the rich young ruler, who said he had kept all the commandments from his youth. Jesus told him he lacked one thing, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (Matthew 19:21-22).

Jesus went on to tell his disciples it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. The disciples responded, "Who then can be saved? But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:25-26).

God is omnipotent and is able to do anything. No matter what you are going through or facing, our God is able! It may seem impossible in the natural, but let me assure you on the authority of God's Word, He is able.

I'm personally going through something right now that seems impossible. There have been times that the situation seemed to be dealt with, but the same thing continues to raise it's ugly head over and over again.

I'm reminded of something I read in Dake's Annotated study Bible. "All men (Christians) believe God can do anything, but few believe that He will." Will we dare to believe God is not only able to work in our situation but that He will?

6 Things God is Able to do:

1. God is Able to Save

"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). The word uttermost in the King James Version can also be translated, completely and forever. God is able to save us completely and forever. No matter how messed up

you are, or how far you've fallen into sin, God is able to save you completely and forever if you will surrender to Him with all your heart.

God is not only able to save completely and forever, He is also able to save the most unlikely candidate among us. Think of the one who seems so far from God, the likelihood of them ever giving their life to Christ is simply beyond comprehension. Let me encourage you, those are the very ones God specializes in. He specializes in hard cases.

Peter, after preaching the gospel on the day of Pentecost, told those who had responded, "For the promise is to you and to your children, and **to all who are afar off**, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39). If there's someone you're praying for, but they seem almost beyond saving, be encouraged, our God has an affinity for those "who are afar off."

"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:25-26).

2. God is Able to Deliver Us

The three Hebrew children expressed confidence in God's ability and said, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king" (Daniel 3:17). They not only expressed faith in God's ability, but that He would deliver them – "He will deliver us".

God is able to deliver us from sin and peril. "He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Romans 11:26-27 KJV).

Jesus said, "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).

“The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them” (Psalms 34:7).

God is still in the delivering business!

3. God is Able to Heal

“The blind men came to Him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord” (Matthew 9:28). Jesus is still in the healing business. He is able to heal us from whatever ails us. Whether we are suffering physically, emotionally, from depression, mentally, mental illness or from some sin that has us in it's grip. God is able to heal us.

The key is, will we let Him? Jesus said to a lame man, “Do you wish to get well” (John 5:6)? Do we really want to be made whole? That was Jesus' condition of healing and deliverance. Frequently, people appear to hate their illness or sin, but do they really want to be well? Do they truly want to be healed and set free from their illness or sin?

For those whose lives have thrown them into intense bondage, there is something that is necessary on your part. You must give your life to Jesus without reservation. It's usually the case of those who have sold out to sin that they must fully surrender to Christ with all their heart. It's then that salvation, deliverance and complete wholeness comes into their life. On the authority of God's Word, God is still in the business of saving, delivering and healing.

4. God is Able to Keep Us from Falling

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24). Once He has delivered us, God is more than able to keep us from falling into the same sins and traps that have previously held us in their grip. If we will cling to and hold onto Him, He will sustain us and keep us from stumbling.

5. God is Able to Keep Us from Temptation

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

When we are facing temptation on every front, God is able to deliver us and will provide a way of escape. We must, however, walk through the escape route He provides.

6. God is Able to Provide

“God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8). The context of this verse is referring to financial provision. The key is, God is able to bless us financially so we can abound to every good work – and not just lavish it upon ourselves.

There are some who are reading these words that God has blessed abundantly. If you want to continue in His blessing, you must find an outlet for the blessings you have received. Find a reputable ministry and sow into it. God has blessed you for that very purpose, in order that you might be a blessing (Genesis 12:2).

If you don't use some of your abundance to abound to every good work, God may take away that which you have. “For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath” (Matthew 25:29).

“Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Ephesians 3:20).

“The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him – completely His” (2 Chronicles 16:9).

35 Scriptures on Victory

It is God's design is for His children to experience victory in every aspect of life. He desires victory for His church and every child of God within His church. Let's stand upon God's Word, His promises (2 Corinthians 1:20) and decree His Word through to victory (Job 22:28).

God's Word will not return to Him void but it will accomplish exactly what He pleases and the purpose for which He has sent it forth (Isaiah 55:10-11). He promises that He will hasten His Word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12). It's incumbent upon us to speak it out, unleash it and send it forth (Matthew 4:1-11).

Victory was God's original intention for all mankind, but victory was forfeited through the fall. "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Hebrews 2:8).

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The following scriptures are listed in an alliteration style outline which helps us remember and organize verses in our mind and spirit. It will also assist the preachers among us in sermon preparation.

Victory Prescribed

In terms of human emotion, victory is accompanied with strong feelings of elation. Victory dances and victory cries similarly parallel war dances and war cries performed before the outbreak of physical violence.

Merriam-Webster: The overcoming of an enemy or antagonist; Achievement of mastery or success in a struggle or endeavor against odds or difficulties.

Wikipedia: Originally applied to warfare, given to success achieved in personal combat, after military operations in general or, by extension, in any competition.

Victory Praise

In accordance with our definition of victory, it is often preempted by shouts of victory or praise. Shouts of victory and praise must be set forth in faith prior to actually receiving and experiencing victory.

- “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were heard to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed” (Acts 16:25-26).
- “Clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph” (Psalm 47:1).
- “Break forth into joy, sing together, You waste places of Jerusalem! For the Lord has comforted His people, He has redeemed (delivered) Jerusalem” (Isaiah 52:9).
- “He appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever.

Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated” (2 Chronicles 20:21-22).

Victory Purposed

God has purposed victory for us in His Word. Let’s appropriate all He has purposed for us.

- “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).
- “Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God” (1 John 5:4-5).

- “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon that I have given you. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you” (Joshua 1:3 and 5).

Compare with the New Testament counterpart Ephesians 1:3

- “Who are protected by the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5).
- “The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing” (Psalm 34:7-10).

It’s significant to note “The angel of the Lord” is singular. This, no doubt, refers to the Lord Jesus Himself. He is the “captain of the host of the Lord” (Joshua 5:13-15). He is head and commander over all the angelic host of heaven. He, Jesus, is the one who is encamped around us, accompanied by His host of angelic beings.

Victory Proclaimed

God has proclaimed victory over us. We must do the same over our lives, situations and those for whom we desire victory, in agreement with Him and His Word (Matthew 18:19).

- “Fear not. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians (your enemies) whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace” (Exodus 14:13-14).
- “Let God arise, Let His enemies be scattered; Let those also who hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away, So drive them away; As wax melts before the fire, So let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the

righteous be glad; Let them rejoice before God; Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly” (Psalm 68:1-3).

- “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you” (Isaiah 43:2).
- “No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their righteousness (vindication) is from Me, Says the Lord” (Isaiah 54:17).
- “When the enemy comes in, like a flood The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).

Most translations place the comma after “flood” in this verse, signifying the enemy comes after us like a flood. Though our enemy does pursue us like a flood at times, the comma should be after “When the enemy comes.” In this way the verse signifies that when our enemy come after us, “like a flood The Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him.”

- “Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries, And all your enemies shall be cut off” (Micah 5:9).
- “Fear not, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them” (2 Kings 6:16).
- “The Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for he is strong that executes His Word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it” (Joel 2:11).
- “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Hebrews 1:14)?
- “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us” (Romans 8:31)?
- “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Romans 8:37).

Victory Purchased

Jesus purchased our victory for us on Calvary. Our victory was paid for spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally and situationally – In the natural realm. When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden (Genesis 3), they handed the “title deed to the earth” over to Satan.

This is why he is called the “god of the world” (2 Corinthians 4:4), the “prince of this world” (John 14:30) and the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). Jesus purchased the “title deed to the earth” back at Calvary. He paid for both our redemption and the earth’s when He shed His blood (Romans 8:19-23). We are both awaiting our full redemption.

- “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:9-10).

The scroll here was very likely representative of the title deed to the earth.

- “When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display/spectacle of them, having triumphed over them through the cross” (Colossians 2:15).
- “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men. Now that He ascended, what is it that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things” (Ephesians 4:8-10).

Victory Perpetuated

We see from the preceding verse that during the three days between Jesus’ death and His resurrection Jesus “descended into the lower parts of the earth” – hell itself. At which time, He took back the very keys to hell and death that the devil has used to hold us in bondage. Jesus took them and gave them over to us, thus, perpetuating the victory He wrought over hell and the grave, handing those very keys over to the church.

- “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of Hell and of Death” (Revelation 1:18).
- “Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:18-19).
- “What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places,

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 1:19-23).

- “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6-7).
- “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17).

Victory Promised and Praised

We have been promised by God Almighty victory. We can depend on Him to keep all that He has promised. “For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

- “Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).

- “Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and makes manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place” (2 Corinthians 2:14).
- “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To preach deliverance to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed (bruised); To preach the acceptable (favorable) year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19).

This anointing is passed on to us as we preach the gospel – His Word!

- “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you” (Luke 10:18-19).
- “And it shall come to pass in that day (in this day), that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing” (Isaiah 10:27).
- “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).
- “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:20).

You’re “shortly” has come and is now – Praise Him for it!

Victory is God’s intention for His people. Let’s stop allowing the devil, this world and the situations and circumstances of life to rob us of God’s design and plan for us.

Experiencing an Abundant Life

Most people never experience life to the extent they were meant to. Having a good job and making money doesn't mean you will experience fullness of life. Many who have been successful and had more than they could have ever dreamed still end up disappointed with life.

Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life and life more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Abundant living doesn't just fall in our lap. Abundant living, living life to the full is synonymous with victorious living. If we're living victoriously, the abundant life Jesus promised and came for us to experience will be part of that life. So what can we do to move toward this abundant life Jesus promised?

14 Keys to Experiencing an Abundant - Victorious Life:

1. Choose Life

Experiencing fullness of life is first and foremost a choice. We must choose life! We can choose to either be in a funk or choose to enjoy the life we have. The Bible says,

"See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, both you and your descendants" (Deuteronomy 30:15 and 19).

2. Be Faithful in the Small Things of Life

Life is not a long jump. We don't go from step one to step ten all at once. We must move from step 1, 2, 3, and so on, one step at time. We must be trustworthy in the little things of life first if we ever expect to experience the big opportunities in life. That's why tithing is so important. (Read Matthew 25:14-29)

Luke 16:10-12 - "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon (money), who will commit to your trust the true riches?

And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

Matthew 25:29 - "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

If we are faithful with the little things life gives us, God will be entrust us with more. If we are faithful with the little things of life, we will be in danger of having what has been entrusted to us taken away. Let's be faithful – trustworthy with the small things of life.

3. Have an Attitude of Gratitude

Be thankful instead of complaining. It is so easy to complain. I have struggled with this somewhat my entire life. We can easily develop the outlook that if we don't complain we don't care. We will find ourselves getting to the other side of difficulties much sooner if we would adapt an attitude of gratitude.

Philippians 2:14 - "Do all things without complaining and disputing – arguing."

Ephesians 5:20 - "Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thessalonians 5:18 - "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

4. Don't Focus on nor Neglect Yourself

We live in a world in which we are taught to look out for number one. If your entire focus is on yourself you will always end up empty. On the other hand, you can't neglect yourself either. The key is to find the proper balance between completely focusing on yourself and looking outside yourself to the needs of others.

Philippians 2:3-5 - "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5. Maintain a Sober Estimation of Yourself

Many either think too much or too little of themselves. It's either one extreme or another. Some think they are all that – the world revolves around and can't get along without them. Yet, there are times we must assert ourselves.

Still others have too low of an estimation of themselves. They tend to think they are of no value, worthless, and can't do anything. Balance is the key. The truth is without an element of ego no one would ever accomplish a thing.

Romans 12:3 - "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

6. Pursue Excellence

Philippians 1:10 - "That you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ."

Many just want to get by and experience the bare minimum. They are addicted to mediocrity. They live this way in all areas of their life. If we are going to get the most out of life we will have to give everything in life our best.

7. Be a Visionary

You will only accomplish what you first envision (John 5:19). My good friend, Dr. Dave Rahn once said, "Future direction is much more significant than past successes or failures." Keep your eyes off the past and on what's ahead of you.

Keep your eyes on the course (your goals, dreams, or vision) God has set before you. Blinders on horses are used to keep them from looking away at other things, getting distracted and their eyes off the course. We need spiritual blinders to keep us on course.

Proverbs 29:18 - "Where there is no vision, the people perish – run aimlessly."

Hebrews 12:2 - "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."

Philippians 3:12-14 - "Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that [b]for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Habakkuk 2:2-3 - "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie - It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry."

8. Have a Good Support System – Hebrews 10:24-5; Acts 13:1-3

Every one of us will need help at one time or another. We all go through times of difficulty. You can't conquer life solo. We need the support of others. Get with a group of people who are positive, uplifting, and encouraging. Meet with them on a regular basis. Peter and John, when threatened, "went to their own company" (Acts 4:23).

We all need our own company to go to in times of trouble. Those who won't condemn us but who will be there to support, pray for and encourage us. When Peter was arrested "prayer was being made fervently for him by the church" (Acts 12:5). Now that's support.

9. Be Positive

We live in a negative world. We're surrounded by negative things and people. When you pick up a newspaper or watch the news most of the emphasis is on the negative.

If we are to get the most out of life we are going to have to be different. Have you ever seen negative, critical people who had peace and joy (Romans 14:19a)? Let's make a disciplined effort to retrain our thinking and outlook from the negative to the positive.

Philippians 4:8 - "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Proverbs 23:7a - "For as he – a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

10. Express Faith

Everyone has an element of faith. For instance, when you enter a room and sit in a chair you demonstrate faith in the chair. You did so when you sat in it. You were confident the chair would hold you up if you sat in it.

Romans 12:3 - "According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

- **Faith outside of yourself.** Everyone needs something outside yourself that you can look to and trust in. Otherwise, we are doing nothing but trusting in ourselves.

You will inevitably let yourself down at some time or another. Most of us will do so quite frequently. You need something or someone you look to greater than yourself.

- **Faith in yourself (Philippians 4:13; Proverbs 23:7a).** Believe in what you can do and are good at. Most aren't good at everything but you can find a few things that you are really good at. Be confident in yourself and what you can do.
- **Act in faith (Hebrews 4:2; James 2:17).** If your going to accomplish anything you will have to step out and do something. You must exercise faith and step out and do whatever it is that you are believing and hoping for. There are things in life that if you don't jump in and do it, it will never get done. It will at times be scary, but ever so rewarding.
- **Speak in Faith (Proverbs 18:20-21).** I am not nor have I ever been part of the Word of Faith movement. Nevertheless, there is always an element of truth in everything. We mustn't throw the proverbial baby out with the bath water.

We must declare what we are believing God for. What we speak forth comes from our heart. Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). The wise man said, "As he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

If negative things are spewing out of our mouth perpetually, that is probably what we believe. We must change our heart and as a result change what we say. We will ultimately become what we believe and speak forth.

Let's renew our minds and hearts (Romans 12:2) and begin to speak forth what we believe God for in our life – His goodness (Romans 11:22, Hebrews 9:11, James 1:17).

11. Be Audacious

Boldness is the absence of fear. But you may say, what if I fail? What if you don't? What if you succeed? There will be times you do fail, but you won't always. If you never try you will never succeed.

Those who shrink back in fear and never step out in faith and try things will never accomplish a thing. Those throughout history who have accomplished great things frequently failed. They often failed an innumerable amount of times before actually succeeding. Be bold and try things.

Proverbs 28:1 - "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion."

Let's awaken the lion within!

12. Work Hard

The harder you work the luckier you'll become. There is simply no short cut to good old fashion hard work. The lazy never experience abundance in life.

Proverbs 10:4 - "He becomes poor that deals with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent makes rich."

Hebrews 6:12 - "That ye be not slothful – sluggish, lazy, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

13. Make Steppingstones Out of Life's Experiences Not Stumbling Blocks – Philippians 3:14; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; 11:23-33

Life will throw difficult things your way from time to time. It's what you do with those things that will make all the difference in the world. Difficulties can easily cause us to stumble and defeat us in life.

They can also be used as steppingstones taking us to higher ground. It's all up to you and what you do with them. Will the things of life keep you down or will you use them as steppingstones on the upward course? Let's choose to keep moving upward.

14. Never Give Up

Quitters never experience fullness of life. If we are going to have abundance in life we have to be determined to never give up. Continue moving forward and upward. Never stop! If you will refuse to quit you will overcome and get the most out of life. It's the devil's job to get you to give up. Never, never, never quit!

Endurance is paramount!

2 Timothy 2:3 - "Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

Hebrews 12:1 - "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up" ~ Thomas Edison.

Galatians 6:9 - "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Spiritual Warfare: Binding the Strong Man

If we want to accomplish anything in either the natural or spiritual realms, we must engage in a spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:12). In Mark 3:27 Jesus said, “No one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.” Spiritual warfare is imperative to experiencing victorious living.

When Adam and Eve sinned they turned over the title deed of the earth to Satan. Satan is called “god of the world” in 2 Corinthians 4:4, “prince of this world” in John 14:30 and “prince of the power of the air” in Ephesians 2:2. In 1 John 5:19, the Apostle John said, “We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the grip of the evil one.” We must “first bind the strong man” (Mark 3:27) if we are going to plunder his house – this world over which he rules.

This is particularly true in seeing people “rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Colossians 1:13). This is what was taking place in Mark 3:14-15 – “He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons,” which Jesus Himself had been doing.

This is particularly true in overcoming strongholds that may be keeping us from experiencing victory in life. The enemy of our souls goes out of his way to set up strongholds and fortresses to keep us from victorious living.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 - “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

Keys to Defeating the Strong Man:

Adversary

First of all, we must realize that we have an adversary. Peter said, “Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Paul agreed saying, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

We have an enemy – adversary that is opposing the things of God, the church and every born again believer. We are engaged in a spiritual battle – spiritual warfare! We have an enemy that is fighting hard against us, the souls of mankind, everyone who is seeking to do the will of God, and especially men and women of God who are doing what they can to make an impact for the kingdom of God.

“The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force”
(Matthew 11:12)!

Abode

This enemy of ours has a place in which or over which he abides. Our enemy has a place (abode) over which he seeks to control, manipulate, master, and keep away from the kingdom of God and God’s control. There’s a battle taking place against the powers of darkness and the kingdom of God.

Satan’s abode is fourfold:

1. **The world.** Satan is “the ruler of the world” (John 14:30) or “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4) until Jesus’ final victory culminates at His return and the “ruler of this world will be cast out” (John 12:31). People have often imagined the devil in Hell shoveling coal, but this is a fallacy.

In the book of Job we see Satan presenting himself before the Lord along with the angels. “And the Lord said to Satan, From where do you come? So

Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it” (Job 1:7).

Satan’s abode has been the earth from the time he was kicked out of heaven to this present day (Isaiah 14:12-17, Ezekiel 28:12-19).

2. **The unregenerate.** In a sense, all unregenerate (lost mankind) are the abode, under the control of or habitation of the devil. The Apostle John said, “We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world (unregenerate man) is under the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19).

Paul, speaking of our life before Christ, said, we “formerly walked according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). This is why the strong man must first be bound before people can be set free to come to Christ (Mark 3:27, Colossians 1:13).

3. **Strongholds.** “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

The enemy of God and His kingdom attempts to set up strongholds against God’s people, His church, and anything advancing the knowledge of God in this world. These strongholds must be brought down with spiritual weapons of the Word, prayer and the authority of the believer.

4. **Our minds.** One of the main arenas the enemy seeks to set up strongholds is the mind. The context of the previous verse brings light to this.

In 2 Corinthians 2:11 Paul said, “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

Devices or schemes is *nóēma* (a neuter noun, derived from *noiéō*, “to exert mental effort”) – the mind, especially its final output (systematic understanding). Note the “-ma” suffix which underlines the result of the thinking. For example, the personal verdict that comes out of using the mind.

Our enemy seeks to set up strongholds (his abode) in or against our minds.

Arrest

“No man can enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house” (Mark 3:27). Jesus said He gave us “authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19). “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 18:18).

Jesus told Peter, “On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:18-19).

We must begin to exercise our authority in Christ and arrest the demonic hosts of hell that are set forth against us, our loved ones and the Lord’s church.

Attack

We are to take the aggression, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it – His Church” (Matthew 16:18). Gates are there to keep things out. The gates of hell are set up to keep us out. Instead of getting attacked and the church merely reacting – fighting back, we are the ones who are to be taking the initiative and aggression against the gates of hell.

“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force” (Matthew 11:12). Instead of merely reacting to the attacks of the enemy, let’s begin to aggressively attack and wage war against the gates of Hell and the forces of darkness and take the kingdom by force!

Advancement

“The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it – the church” (Matthew 18:18) suggests the church is to be moving forward making advancement against domain of darkness” (Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 3:10). It’s time the church cease retreating and begin making advancement against “The gates of Hell.” Church let’s begin advancing against the gates of Hell. The “violent men take it by force” (Matthew 11:12). We are to be pressing forward and advancing and not withdrawing and shrinking back.

Four places we are told to press on – advance forward:

- **Press on to know the Lord.** “Let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; And He will come to us like the rain” (Hosea 6:3). Let’s make advancement in our knowledge and intimacy with the Lord (Jeremiah 29:13; Philippians 3:10).
 - **Press on in our calling and purpose in Christ.** “I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:12). We are to press on and make constant advancement in laying hold of our purpose and calling in Christ. This suggests that our calling and purpose may be progressive and unfolding as we move forward and make advancement in Him.
 - **Press on toward the goal and prize set before us.** “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14). Against any and all odds, we must keep making advancement, moving forward and pressing on toward the goal and vision God has set before us (Proverbs 29:18 and Habakkuk 2:2-3). As we do we will lay hold of the prize that is set before us (Hebrews 12:2).
 - **Press on toward maturity in Christ.** “Let us press on unto maturity” (Hebrews 6:1). We are to be constantly growing and maturing in our relationship with Jesus. Peter said, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2). The whole purpose of The Five-Fold Ministry is to bring us to maturity in Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13). It doesn’t matter how long we have been serving the Lord, we are to be continually pressing forward toward maturity in Him.
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Let's press on to know the Lord, in our calling, in the vision He has set before us and maturity in Christ, in so doing we will be making advancement against the gates of hell.

Ambush

A thief doesn't forewarn the owner of the home prior breaking into his house. He does it using the element of surprise, when he least expects it. A good example of this is Elisha.

The enemy had come against him and he prayed, "Strike this people with blindness, I pray. So He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. Then Elisha said to them, This is not the way, nor is this the city; follow me and I will bring you to the man whom you seek. And he brought them to Samaria. When they had come into Samaria, Elisha said, O Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. So the Lord opened their eyes and they saw; and behold, they were in the midst of Samaria" (2 Kings 6:18-20).

God blinded the eyes of the enemy until they were captured. We must take the enemy by surprise if we expect to win the battle. There's a time and place for sharing our vision with our people and leaders, however, we often do so prematurely and we frequently share our plans with too many and with too broad of a group. If the devil knows all our plans before hand, he will not be taken by surprise. Let's use discretion in what we share and who we share it with. Some may not be ready for what God has shown us.

Anointing

We can't fight spiritual battles on our own. "The yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing" (Isaiah 10:27). Jesus said, "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). If we are to break the yoke of the strong man in people's lives we will need God's anointing and power to do so. It's the power of God that pulls down spiritual strongholds in people's lives and this world in which we live (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

This type of anointing does not come by accident. It takes time seated at the feet of Jesus (Luke 10:38-42). When Peter was threatened by the religious leaders we read, "Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them... (and) when they saw the

boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:8 and 13).

There are times when the foothold of the enemy in a person’s life or a certain situation may be so strong that it will take seeking the Lord in a time of fasting and prayer to see it broken.

Avalanche

Mountainous strongholds come tumbling down when God’s people bind the strong man (Mark 3:27) and come against the gates of hell under the anointing of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 16:18-19). Praise the Lord!

“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

I decree strongholds are coming down now in the name of Jesus (job 22:28) – Praise the Lord! If we will lay hold of the horns of the altar (Isaiah 64:7), like in the days of old, we will once again see the works of the enemy destroyed. Victory is on the horizon! Let’s seek the face of the Lord and expect great things to be done for His glory!

Alleluia

When God’s people are set free and strongholds begin tumbling down, alleluias will begin to roll. Three times in Luke 15 Jesus said there was rejoicing over the yoke of the enemy being broken. There was the lost sheep (Luke 15:6), the lost coin (Luke 15:9-10), and the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-31). Prodigals are coming home and revival is on its way – Glory be to God!

“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 melts 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 rejoice exceedingly.” ~ Psalms 68:1-3

“Through God we shall do valiantly: for He it is that shall tread down our enemies.”
~ Psalm 60:12

“Thine hand shall be lifted up upon - against thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.” ~ Micah 5:9

The Authority of the Believer

God has given the church authority and victory in both the natural and spiritual realms where He is head over all things. The devil has been attacking many of us for too long. Romans 16:20 says, “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”

Notice, it says the God of peace. Sometimes the only way to make peace is by fighting. This is a prophetic word for many who are reading this. God is fighting on your behalf and is about to place Satan and all the demons coming against you under your feet!

“What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Ephesians 1:19-23).

“And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6-7).

“Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17).

Areas Over Which We Must Exercise Our Authority Over:

1. **Life and prosperity (John 10:10, Deuteronomy 30:15 and 19, 3 John 2, Jeremiah 29:11)**. Jesus came that we might experience life and life more abundantly (John 10:10). This has to do with much more than just finances. It has to do with every area of our life – spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically and materially.

2. **Health and wholeness (Isaiah 53:3-5, Psalms 103:1-5, Romans 8:11).** “By His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). The context deals with more than physical healing but emotional and mental as well. Someone who is reading this is battling emotional scars that God is completely healing right now.

Someone else has been told you have a mental illness and God is healing you as you read this. Receive it now by faith. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is bringing life and healing to someone’s physical body this very moment (Romans 8:11).

3. **Finances (2 Corinthians 9:6-8, Malachi 3:8-10, Philippians 4:18-19, Deuteronomy 8:11-20).** “It is He who gives you the power to make wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:18). Listen for Him to speak to you. If something pops into your head, it may be God giving you just what you need in order to prosper financially. Seek counsel, pray and if everything seems to be a go, run with it.

He is able to make all financial grace abound toward you (2 Corinthians 9:8) and open the windows of heaven blessing you until there is no longer room to receive it (Malachi 3:10). He promises to supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:18-19). The context of each of these verses deals with giving. We cannot expect God to bless and meet our needs if we are not willing to be faithful in our giving.

4. **Salvation of family and loved ones (Acts 2:38-39, Acts 16:31, Isaiah 59:21).** The devil has robbed us of our loved ones long enough. Let’s start standing on the Word of God for our loved ones to be brought to Jesus.

He able to reach even those who seem farthest from Him. “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39).

5. **Growth of the church body (Isaiah 43:5-7, Acts 2:39, Ephesians 4:16, Acts 2:47).** Pastors, leaders and congregants, it is God’s desire and will that your church grow both spiritually and numerically. If you will be faithful, pray, witness, follow up on the wayward, work hard and believe God, He will make your church body to grow exponentially.

He has “ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit – multiply and that your fruit should remain” (John 15:16). Notice, you have to go in order to multiply. It will not happen with you sitting on the sidelines and doing nothing.

6. **Peace and joy (John 14:27, John 16:33, Ephesians 2:14, Isaiah 26:3, Philippians 4:6-7, John 16:23-4, Isaiah 35:10, Isaiah 52:9, Isaiah 60:5, 1 John 1:4).** Read, study and memorize these scriptures. God wants to give you peace and joy even when these things aren't a reality in your life.

There will be times when you will have to "break forth into joy" (Isaiah 52:9) when there is nothing to be joyful about. It's something you must choose to do. You must "choose life so you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

7. **Restoration of all the enemy has stolen (Joel 2:17-27).** The Bible says, "Do not despise a thief If he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving. Yet when he is found, he must restore seven-fold" (Proverbs 6:30-31).

The devil is the thief who has come to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10a). Whether what we have lost in life is from the original sin, through direct attacks of the devil and his emissaries, or through our own sin, faults and poor choices, Satan is still the thief and source of our losses.

Let's demand all that has been taken from us be restored seven-fold.

Joel 2:20, 23 and 25 – "I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate.

Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He has given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, My great army which I sent among you."

Implementing Our Authority:

Now that we've discussed the authority given to us through Christ, I want to share how we can implement that authority. Read Ephesians 1:19-23, Ephesians 2:6, Joshua 1:3, Ephesians 4:27, Matthew 4:8-10, and Colossians 2:15. In the first half

of Ephesians, Paul is trying to help us realize who we are in Christ, before telling us what we are to do for God.

Hebrews 2:8 says, “Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all things in subjection under him, He left nothings that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.”

It’s clear in this verse that God has placed all things in subjection to us, under our feet. “But now we see not yet all things put under him,” also reveals it hasn’t completely materialized yet. Therefore, there must be something we can do to bring this into the realm of reality.

1. **Tenacity and discipline (2 Timothy 4:6-8, Galatians 6:9, Luke 18:1).** This is not easy. It is something I have struggled with, especially in recent years. The real struggle is maintaining your authority. It takes discipline and stubbornness.

It’s hard, when we face battles and things don’t go right, to continue standing firm and exercise and implement our authority in the situations of life. It is easy to become discouraged, fainthearted and give up instead of continuing to fight the good fight. Tenacity is a must!

This is particularly difficult when we have faced continuous hardships and reversals in our life and ministry. It is easy to get tired and beat down. Even when we have been very tenacious in the past, we have a hard time stirring it back up again and maintaining it. You must reach deep within yourself, as David did, and encourage yourself in the Lord (1 Samuel 30:6 KJV).

This was a major turning point for David. If he had not done this he would have missed God and the greatness God had prepared him for. It was shortly thereafter, at the very beginning of 2 Samuel that David is crowned King. This materialized not only because of God’s calling and destiny, but also because of David’s tenacity. We will never know what would have happened if he had given up.

2. **Choose life (Deuteronomy 30:19).** Life and victory are ultimately a choice. Things will not always go our way. We will be attacked and at times viciously. We may, at times, feel beat down and defeated. We may even get

discouraged and depressed. We may feel there is no way out and no hope (Proverbs 13:12).

It is in these times we must choose life. "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19). This is the only way to pull out of the pit we are in and begin to head toward and experience victory.

Shout it out, at the top of your lungs, "I choose life!" We must choose life and keep choosing life until we have taken authority over our situation and victory has come.

3. **Visualize victory (John 5:17 and 19, Judges 6:11-12, Proverbs 29:18).** As with effective praying, we must see the victory in the spiritual realm before it can become an outward reality. Jesus saw the Father working and therefore He worked (John 5:17 and 19). Gideon was hiding in the wine press for fear of the Midianites. When the angel called him he said, "The Lord is with thee thou mighty man of valor" (Judges 6:11-12).

I remember, when my oldest son was going through a rebellious stage, when he would leave the house, I would say, "See you later you mighty man of valor." I'm sure he thought I was crazy, but I was trying to see him as the man God had called him to be even if everything in his life was contrary to it.

4. **Exercise faith (2 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 11:1, Hebrews 6:13-15, Romans 4:18-21).** If we are to implement the authority given us in Christ, we must be men and women of faith. It was said of Abraham, "Who against hope believed in hope" (Romans 4:18). "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). Faith is expressed in four ways:
 5. **Having vision (Proverbs 29:18, Hebrews 12:2).** We not only must see God doing something in the spiritual realm, but we must have a vision for what we want to see God do, accomplish or what He has promised us. We perish and experience defeat without vision. Jesus kept His eyes on the joy that was set before Him of what God had promised. Paul likewise kept his eye on the prize set before him (Philippians 3:14).

6. **Claim His promises.** “Every place the sole of your foot shall tread, that have I given unto you” (Joshua 1:3). This speaks of putting your foot on and claiming the promises of God. In whatever area you are needing to assert your authority over, find out what God has said about it and claim His Word and promise for you. Stand on it and claim it saying, “This is mine,” on the authority of God’s Word and the promise of God, who cannot lie (Hebrew 6:18).
 7. **Resist the enemy.** “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7-8). “Whom resist steadfast in the faith” (1 Peter 5:8). We must resist the enemy, negativism, our situation, and everything that opposes God’s Word and promises.
 8. **Taking action (Mark 2:5, James 2:17-19).** We have to move in faith to adequately place things under our feet. “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:17). Jesus saw the faith of those carrying the paralytic man and was moved to intervene in their situation (Mark 2:5). The Word must be mixed with active faith if it is to profit us (Hebrews 4:2).
 9. **Be aggressive (Joshua 1:3).** “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force” (Matthew 11:12). It is incumbent upon us to take aggressive action if we are going to implement the authority Christ has given us over the things of this life.
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Aggression is “A forceful action as an unprovoked attack when intending to dominate or master” (Winston Dictionary). The problem is the devil is the one who has initiated the aggression against us and done the provoking. We need to begin to initiate the attack against the gates of hell and stop waiting on the devil to attack us before doing spiritual warfare (Matthew 16:18).

We must begin to take the offensive, instead of merely reacting defensively. Gates don’t attack but are there to keep something out. “Place” in Joshua 1:3 translates from “topos” in the Septuagint and is where we get the word topography. It is “used of a region, locality, room, of a place which a person or place occupies” (Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words). We must begin to take aggressive action and take back all that the enemy has stolen.

10. **Move forward (Philippians 3:12-14, Hebrews 6:1, Hosea 6:3, Isaiah 43:18-19).** Standing still and looking back cannot be an option. This only leads to more reversals and going backward. Even if we just stand still, sooner or later we will begin sliding backwards. We must, therefore, continue pressing on and aggressively moving forward in all areas of life.
11. **Watch what you say (Matthew 12:36-37, Proverbs 18:20-21, Mark 11:22-4, Deuteronomy 30: 11-16, Romans 10:8-10, James 3:5-6, Ephesians 4:29, Luke 6:45, Judges 6:11-12).** What we say does matter. If we get discouraged and begin speaking negatively, criticizing and complaining, we will retard the implementation and exercise of our authority, our occupation of the land and the promises of God. Our words can build up the kingdom, God's church and one another, or tear down and destroy (Ephesians 4:29). "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof" (Proverbs 18:21).

Supporting Scripture:

1. **Hebrews 2:8** – "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him."
2. **Luke 10:18-19** – "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt (injure) you."
3. **Ephesians 4:27** – "Neither give place to the devil."
4. **Joshua 1:3** – "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you."
5. **2 Corinthians 10:4** – "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."
6. **Revelation 12:11** – "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."
7. **1 John 4:4** – "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

8. **1 John 5:4** – “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”
9. **Romans 8:37** – “In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”
10. **Deuteronomy 28:7-8, 12-13** – “The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. The Lord will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath.”

11. **2 Kings 6:16** – “Fear not, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”
12. **Isaiah 43:2** – “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you.”
13. **Isaiah 54:17** – “No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their righteousness (vindication – NIV) is from Me, Says the Lord.”
14. **Isaiah 59:9** – “When the enemy shall come in, like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against him.”

God has given us authority in Christ. Scripture clearly bears this out. It's high time we begin exercising our God given authority.

Taking the Land: Psalm 37

Taking the land not only refers to Israel entering the promise land, but also believers entering into the fullness of all God has for them. In Psalm 37 there are at least six references to taking, dwelling in, or inheriting the land.

This has to do with every promise in the Bible whether spiritual, physical, financial, or emotional. “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39). Are you ready to lay hold of all God has for you?

Scriptures:

- “Dwell in the land” (Psalm 37:3).
- “They shall inherit the earth” (Psalm 37:9).
- “The meek shall inherit the earth” (Psalm 37:11).
- “Those blessed by Him shall inherit the earth” (Psalm 37:22).
- “The righteous shall inherit the land” (Psalm 37:29).
- “He shall exalt you to inherit the land” (Psalm 37:34).

In the first five verses of Psalm 37 we have several key words that teach us how to take the land God has for us. There are two things we should not do, and five things we should if we are going to enter into all the fullness God has for us.

Fret Not

Psalm 37:1 says, “Do not fret.” Webster defines fret as “to cause emotional strain, be vexed or worried, an action of wearing away, agitation of mind.” When we are anxious or worry, we cause ourselves emotional strain and start to wear away spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. In such a state, we greatly hinder our ability to take (inherit) the land God has for us.

In Numbers 13-14, Israel spent too much time fretting over the giants instead of God’s power and ability to enable them to enter the land and experience victory

over its inhabitants. How often do we do the same? We look at what's coming against us instead of God's power to overcome it. We think, "Am I going to make it? What am I going to do?" Pastors do this too. Someone doesn't show up at church and we fret. Did I offend them? Did I make them mad? Consider the following encouraging verses:

- "Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).
- "So we may boldly say: The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me" (Hebrews 13:6)?
- "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (Timothy 1:7).
- "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).
- In Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus admonishes us at least five times not to worry or be anxious.

Be Not Envious

Psalm 37:1 also says, "Be not envious." Envy and jealousy will destroy us. Proverbs 27:4 says, "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?" Envy has destroyed both individuals and churches. "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:16).

Envy begins in the heart and from there flows out of the tongue. James 3:6 says, "The tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell." Envy plus the tongue equals division in a body of believers. It defiles the entire body.

It usually starts simple then escalates. Someone may have been promoted in the church or is blessed in a certain way and jealousy ensues. "Who do they think they are? I should have received that. Why them and not me?" It can also go something like, "What do you think about the decision the leaders made, I'm not sure I agree with what the pastor said, what do you think?"

Let's crucify envy before it destroys us and the body of Christ (Romans 6:11). If someone is blessed, promoted or they get something we wanted, be happy for them. We are to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15). If someone is blessed, rejoice with them. Who knows, the next person to be blessed might be you.

Trust God

Psalm 37:3 says, "Trust in the LORD and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness." In Mark 1:16-20 the disciples left their lifestyle, family, friends, and career to follow Jesus. James and John "left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants to follow Him" (Mark 1:20). Their father had servants so they probably stood to inherit a very lucrative business.

Likewise, in Genesis 22 Abraham was willing to offer his only son trusting that God was "able to raise people even from the dead" (Hebrews 11:19). How much do we really trust God? Isaac was the promised child from which Abraham was to become a great nation. God often asks us to surrender the very thing He promised us to see if we will trust Him completely.

When Peter recognized Jesus walking on the water he was willing to get out of the boat, step into the water and walk to Jesus. Peter is frequently criticized for getting his eyes off of Jesus and sinking, but to his credit he was the only one who got out of the boat. I'd rather step out into the stormy waters of life and go where Jesus is than sit in the safe boat with the rest of the disciples. What about you?

God is looking for those who will trust Him and be willing to risk everything. They are the ones who will inherit the fullness of all God has for them. We must take the risk and at least try. That's faith. God may be speaking to you about something that frightens you. Fear is the opposite of faith. I'm not saying we should act foolishly, but we never know what we might miss out on if we refuse to step out in faith and try.

You may say, “What if it doesn’t work and I fail?” or “What if I step out in faith and sink?” What if it does work and you succeed? No matter what happens, there is one who will reach down and lift you up. Peter took his eyes off Jesus and started to sink, but when he called out to Him, Jesus lifted him up and Peter walked on the water with Jesus back to the boat.

Doing Good

“Trust in the Lord and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness” (Psalm 37:3). Doing good has nothing do with our salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 4:4-5), it’s the fruit of our salvation. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). Doing good is a significant key to being able to take the land God has for us. The Word is clear concerning good works in the life of believers:

- “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14).
- “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).
- “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Hebrews 6:10).
- “Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not – do not lose heart” (Galatians 6:9).

According to Galatians 6:9 we will reap, inherit the land, and lay hold of all God has for us if we don’t faint, give up or quit. The condition is that we do not give up or become fainthearted in doing good. There are a number of things we see in Galatians 6 that we should do if we expect to inherit the land.

- **Restoration.** “If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one” (Galatians 6:1). Restoration is the mandate of the church. It is

the truly spiritual person who seeks to restore his fallen brother or sister and not condemn them. It's our job to put our arm around the fallen, help them up, and encourage them not to give up.

- **Bear one another's burdens.** We must support people who are burdened down with problems and cares. We are told, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

Those of us who have gone through particular difficulties can support those who may be going through similar things (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). We can also assist our leaders who carry the load of the ministry, as well as those bearing financial burdens, etc.

- **Share.** "Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches" (Galatians 6:6). We must share with those who are over us in the Lord, let them know what their work means to us, and how much it benefits us.

"If the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things" (Romans 15:27).

"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine" (1 Timothy 5:17).

The context here deals with finances (1 Timothy 5:18) and "double honor" refers to double the finances or salary. If our pastor is doing a good job, they should be making at least as much as the average salary of the congregation (1 Corinthians 9:1-14).

Also, we should give our leaders gifts on special occasions such as birthdays, vacations, Christmas, and at times give them a special gift just to let them know how much we appreciate them.

- **Sow to the spirit.** If you want to take the land you must sow to the spirit. "He who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:8). Spend time in prayer, study the Word, witness, and fellowship with other Christians, etc.

- **Outreach.** “While we have opportunity, let us do good to all men” (Galatians 6:10). We must continue to reach out beyond ourselves. If we ever stop doing good to “all men” we will stop moving forward. Church leaders need to remember this.

The church must be constantly reaching out beyond itself to the world around it. The moment we focus merely inward we become stagnant. Let’s use our imagination and think of new ways to touch the world.

- **Support the church.** While reaching out to “all men” we can’t forget “those who are of the household of the faith” (Galatians 6:10). Get involved! For example, teach a class, usher, clean the church, or be on the worship team. Do something to support your congregation.
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Cultivate Faithfulness

“Trust in the Lord and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness” (Psalm 37:3). We must cultivate faithfulness within ourselves. The psalmist cried out, “Help, Lord, for the godly man ceases to be, For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men” (Psalm 12:1).

Proverbs 20:6 says, “Who can find a faithful man?” And again, “A faithful man will abound with blessings” (Proverbs 28:20). Faithfulness is a key ingredient to laying hold of all God has for us (1 Corinthians 4:2, Luke 16:10-12, Ephesians 1:1, Ephesians 1:3, Matthew 25:29).

This can also refer to our feeding on God’s faithfulness. The New King James Version translates this “feed on His faithfulness.” Had the twelve spies in Numbers 13-14 spent their time feeding on God’s faithfulness instead of fretting over the challenge that was before them, Israel would have entered the promise land forty years earlier.

Spend time meditating on scripture pertaining to God’s faithfulness (2 Timothy 2:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:24, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, Lamentations 3:22-23). Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your remembrance all the times God has been faithful in your life and begin to dwell on them. You will soon find your faith being renewed and even surging to new heights.

Delight in the Lord

Psalm 37:4 says, "Delight yourself in the Lord; And He will give you the desires of your heart." Delight not dread. Run to the Lord, not from Him. Develop a hunger and thirst for Him. "As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Psalm 42:1-2).

Enjoy Him and His presence. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him" (Psalms 34:8)! We shouldn't dread spending time with Him, in His Word and prayer but cherish it as Mary did (Luke 10:38-42). Many of us are like Martha and too busy "serving the Lord" to take time enjoying Jesus' presence. (See also Psalm 119:103, Jeremiah 15:16).

Commitment

Psalm 37:5 says, "Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." A couple may meet and enjoy each other's presence, but the relationship will not continue without commitment. We may enjoy spending time with God in prayer, praise, His Word, and fellowship (church), but if we're going to continue doing so it will take discipline and commitment.

Alexander the Great was on his final conquest. His scouts told him about one city he had to conquer if his conquest was to be successful. It was a small city and very fortified. It was built with high walls and surrounded by three cliffs approximately one hundred feet high.

He left for the city with one hundred of his personal guards. Approaching the city, he demanded its immediate surrender. From the top of the wall, the king responded saying they were well fortified and had enough provision to withstand an attack for months if necessary.

Alexander said nothing but simply motioned to his guards. They immediately lined up single file toward one of the cliffs. He gave them a second signal and they started marching toward the cliff. One marched off the cliff to his death, then two, three, four, five, six and finally with one swoop of his hand, they stopped prior to the final one going off the cliff.

Without saying a word, Alexander looked up at the king. The king came off the wall, opened the gate and surrendered. When asked why he surrendered, he said he knew there was no way he could withstand an attack with such dedicated and committed soldiers.

What if the church had such dedicated and committed followers? Imagine what kind of fear it would strike in the powers of darkness. The impact it would make on our world would be phenomenal.

God help us build such an army in these last days. Let's recommit ourselves to take the land God has set before us. God's promise to us is still, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you" (Joshua 1:3).

Taking the Land: The Next Generation

In our previous teaching taking the land not only refers to Israel entering the promise land, but also believers entering into the fullness of all God has for them – spiritually, physically, financially, and emotionally.

Moses was told to take the children of Israel into the promise land, but because of his sin he was only allowed to see the land from a distance and eventually died in the wilderness. Joshua, his disciple, was the one who would lead the children of Israel into the promise land. Joshua did what Moses was unable to do.

God is raising up a new generation of spiritual warriors. They will far surpass all that their predecessors accomplished. God was able to use Joshua because he had been faithful to Moses, his mentor and teacher. If you will be faithful in another man's ministry (Luke 16:12), God will raise you up to do great things for His glory. You will go far beyond what your mentor has done. Joshua 1 contains several key ingredients that will help us take the land.

Moses is Dead

“After the death of Moses” (Joshua 1:1) and “It came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun saying, Moses my servant is dead” (Joshua 1:1-2). The fact that Moses was dead was said twice because, as in the dreams of Pharaoh, the thing was sure. Below are a few lessons we can learn from this.

We must put a death to the past (Isaiah 43:18-19, Philippians 3:13).

- **Disappointments of the past.** Can you imagine the disappointments Joshua must have experienced not being able to enter the promise land forty years earlier? We must put a death to all of our disappointments of the past. If we don't they will hinder us in what God is calling us to in the future.
- **Failures of the past.** Joshua experienced failure forty years prior. We will have failures in this life, but we can't dwell on them. We must put our failures in the past and set our eyes on what God has for us in the future.

- **Bitterness.** I don't know about you, but I'd be a tad bit irritated with the men who brought back a bad report that kept me wondering in the wilderness for forty years (Numbers 13-14). The Bible says, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:15). "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice" (Ephesians 4:31).
- **Achievements of the past.** We must also put a death to our past achievements. For example, the war stories we tell of what God did back in the day or the great things we have on our resume. The point is, what is God doing or desiring to do now? We must get our eyes off the past and on what God has for us in the future (Proverbs 29:18).

Our security gone. Joshua was Moses' assistant. He ministered and did all that Moses told him to do. He had it pretty easy because Moses had all of the responsibility on his shoulders. With Moses gone suddenly all of the responsibility was on Joshua. He'd have to carry the load of the people and ministry himself. His security blanket had been ripped out from under him. He had to learn to lean on the Lord alone (Matthew 11:28-30).

The time for mourning is over. Israel always set aside a time of mourning for the dead. They had mourned over Moses' death. It was time to stop mourning and move on. Some of you have been in a state of grief and mourning. It may be over the loss of a loved one, some loss or tragedy in your life, or even sin. There is a time for mourning (Psalm 34:18, Psalm 51:17), but there is a time to lay aside your grief and move on. Your time of mourning is over.

Entering a new level of responsibility. Joshua had been Moses' servant, but now Moses was gone. All the responsibility for Israel's future was now on him. Joshua would do what Moses was unable to – take Israel into the promise land. He now had to lean on the Lord Himself and let Him carry the burdens.

He had to take responsibility for the task that was before them. Some of you have been following faithfully, but now it is time for you to take some areas of responsibility upon yourself. Don't be afraid. It is time for you to lay hold of the task that is before you and let the Lord carry the load (Matthew 11:28-30).

God Spoke to Joshua

Joshua 1:1 – “It came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun saying...”

God is still speaking today. Hearing from God is a must if we are going to take the land that God has set before us. If we are going to hear from Him, we must tune into His voice.

- **Develop a listening ear.** “Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, today if you will hear His voice” (Hebrews 3:7). Are you listening for His voice? We spend a lot of time talking to God in prayer, but we must also spend time listening. In your prayer time, set apart a segment of it to be still before Him and listen (Psalm 46:10).

Keep a pen and notepad with you and write down anything you hear from Him. You say, “But what if I don’t hear from Him correctly?” Practice makes perfect. You will probably not get everything right at first, but as you practice listening to His voice it will become clearer.

- **Church.** The believers of Antioch were in church when they heard from God concerning Paul’s first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-2). They positioned themselves in the proper setting to hear from God. We must put first things first – be faithful in the little things (Luke 16:10). Start by being in church if you want to hear from God. If we can’t start there, God probably isn’t going to speak to us in our quiet time.
- **Worship.** When they heard from God, the Antioch believers were not only in church, but they were also actively involved in worshiping. It was as they “ministered to the Lord and fasted” that the Holy Spirit spoke (Acts 13:2). There is something about worship that makes it a major catalyst for the Holy Spirit to speak to His people.

In 2 Kings 3 Elisha was requested to speak to the kings of Israel and Judah. He first requested a minstrel (musician) before he could hear the Word of the Lord (2 Kings 3:15). Worship is a powerful instrument in our preparation to hear from God. Never take lightly the function of worship in the house of God or personal worship.

- **Servant-hood.** Joshua was first Moses' servant before God spoke to him (Joshua 1:1-2). Jesus said, "If you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who will give you that which is your own" (Luke 16:12). Elisha served and followed Elijah faithfully before entering into his own ministry (1 Kings 19:19-21, 2 Kings 2).
- **Giving.** Jesus said, "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon (money), who will commit to your trust true riches" (Luke 16:11). Malachi challenged God's people about tithing, and when they failed to obey, God was silent 400 years until the coming of John the Baptist (Malachi 3:6-12). We cannot purchase God's favor, but giving definitely opens us up to being able to hear from God.
- **Sacrifice.** Acts 13:2 – "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said..." The Antioch church was fasting, not of compulsion, but of free will. God was moved by their sacrifice and spoke to them. They sacrificed by fasting (seeking His will and heart), by sending out two of their primary leaders, and by supporting Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey. When God speaks to us, He often does so concerning sacrifice.
- **God's will.** Jesus said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17). If we are not willing to do what God tells us to do, why should He continue to speak to us?

Matthew 25:29 – "To everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away."

If we do what He says, He will give us more. If we don't heed His words, He will stop speaking until we are ready to follow through in obedience. If we obey step one, He will give us step two, step three and so on. If not, He will stop at step one. Let's do whatever He tells us, no matter how great the sacrifice.

Crossing Over

Joshua 1:2 – “Now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them.”

God was commanding Israel to cross the Jordan into the promise land. The Jordan was what stood between them and the land God was giving them. What's standing between you and the fullness of all God has for you? Let me encourage you. You are about to cross over. There have been things standing in your way and you're going over. Now is your time.

It's a command, “arise, cross this Jordan,” it's not an option. God is commanding you now to cross over. It takes action on your part. Maybe you've been in a slump, wondering in the wilderness, and discouraged. You must hear the voice of God, take action and obey. This is your time. Get up, move forward and cross over all that has been standing in your way.

It will take faith on your part. It will be risky. The Jordan was in flood stage. The priests had to first step into the Jordan before the waters dried up so they could cross over (Joshua 3). You must take some risks in order to cross over what is standing between you and all God has for you.

It may be frightening. What if you are overcome by the waters? You will have to step in, trusting God will dry up the waters. Step out in faith now, obey all that God is telling you and move forward into the land He has promised.

Joshua 3:13 – “As the soles of the feet of the priests shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap.”

It was the spiritual leaders who risked all so the people could cross the Jordan. Likewise, it's the pastor who risks all for the church so its people can cross over into God's fullness. You must be willing to follow your pastor as he hears from God.

Pastor, it's you who must lead in faith and step into the waters of your Jordan. Then you, the church, and your people will begin moving forward into the land God has

for you. In Joshua 1:3-5 God gives Joshua four promises. Claim these for yourself. They will encourage and strengthen you.

Taking the Land

Joshua 1:3 – “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you.”

Every promise you read in God’s Word is yours. Everything you set your foot upon God has given you.

Faith. This is yet future. “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). It takes faith and vision for the future to enter into all God has for you. “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18). Perish can also be translated as being unrestrained or to run aimlessly. Clear vision shows us the direction we must go. Faith also denotes action.

- “Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:17).
- “The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Hebrews 4:2).
- You must have a vision for the future and act accordingly. “And Jesus seeing their faith...” (Mark 2:5).
- Jesus is moved when He sees people’s faith in action.

Aggression. The definition of aggression is “a forceful action or procedure, as an unprovoked attack, especially when intended to dominate or master.” The devil has been taking the aggression against God’s people far too long. It’s time we take the aggression against him.

Matthew 11:12 – “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.”

Let's take what rightfully belongs to us. The word place in Joshua 1:3 in the Septuagint is topos. It's the same word used in Ephesians 4:27 and the same word from which we get our word topography which is "used of a region or locality, room, of a place which a person or thing occupies." People who've made the greatest impact for God were aggressive.

- Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:13-15).
- Moses confronted Pharaoh to release God's people (Exodus 4-12).
- David went after Goliath (1 Samuel 17).
- Jesus sent the disciples out (Luke 10:1-20).
- The church is to take the aggression against the gates of hell (Matthew 16:13-19).

Moving forward. When we stop moving forward we begin slipping backward. It's like driving up an icy incline in your vehicle. The moment you stop, you begin sliding backward. That's why we shouldn't focus on the past, but always have a forward vision (Isaiah 43:18-19, Philippians 3:13). There are four verses in the Bible that challenge us to press on.

- We are to press on to know the Lord (Hosea 6:3).
- We are to press on to lay hold of our purpose in Christ (Philippians 3:12)
- We are to press on to reaching for our goals, future reward, and the upward call of God (Philippians 3:13-14).
- We are to press on toward maturity in Christ (Hebrews 6:1).

Claim. "Every place the sole of your foot will tread upon..." denotes placing your foot upon something and staking your claim. We are to stake our claim, with faith and aggressive determination, on everything God has promised us.

Preach the gospel. If we want to aggressively move forward and take the land God has set before us, we must be actively involved in preaching the gospel. Paul said we are to have our “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15).

Again he said, “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also” (Romans 1:15).

Peter said, “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). Let’s set our feet in motion for “preparation of the gospel.”

Victory Promised

“No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life” (Joshua 1:5). Joshua was promised victory and we are as well.

- “In all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).
- “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).
- “Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).
- It was said of believers in the midst of the tribulation period that they “overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death” (Revelation 12:11). Let’s expect and claim the victory God has promised.

God's Presence

Joshua 1:5 – “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.”

God promised He would be with Joshua just like He was with Moses. God promises His presence will be with us no matter what we are going through. Jesus said, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20) and “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5).

God is there whether you feel His presence or not. We must stand on His Word that He is with us through our greatest battle, even when we feel farthest from Him. His Word is unalterable.

1 Peter 1:8 – “Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.”

You Won't be Abandoned

Joshua 1:5 – “I will not leave you nor forsake you.”

You may have been forsaken by family, friends, and even the church, but God will never forsake you. Most people have felt forsaken at one time or another, but God will never abandon you – Thus saith the LORD!

The Power of Praise

Praise is the act of expressing approval or admiration. Worship is reverent honor and homage paid to God. There is tremendous power in praise. If we are to experience a victorious Christian life, a life filled with praise, even in the midst of conflict, is imperative.

Praise is the Means and Response to the Infilling and Overflow of the Holy Spirit in Our Lives

Ephesians 5:18-19 – “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

Praise and worship triggers the overflow of God’s Spirit in our hearts. We not only enter God’s presence through praise (Psalms 100:4), but we are also filled with His presence through worship. Are you feeling spiritually dry? Worship Jesus with all your heart and the Spirit of the living God will fill your innermost being to overflowing.

James 4:8 – “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

John 7:37-39 – “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. This He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive.”

Praise is also the response to being filled with God’s Spirit, which cries out from within us in prayer and praise.

Romans 8:15 – “You have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

Galatians 4:6 – “And because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

Throughout scripture people were worshiping and magnifying God when filled with the Holy Spirit. Worship is one of the evidences of the Spirit filled life. As the Holy Spirit flows within our heart, the natural response of the human spirit is praise and worship.

Acts 10:45-46 – “On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.”

Praise Creates an Atmosphere for Hearing From God

If you want to hear from God, you must worship Him. Acts 13:2 says, “While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said.”

When I am in a service where the praise and worship is intense, I feel the greatest anointing in my preaching and teaching. It's in this type of atmosphere that God seems to speak the clearest. Whether in your personal time with God, or a public setting, praise is the key to hearing from Him.

We also find this when we are in a spiritual battle. It's when we are going through a time of difficulty and spiritual conflict that we desperately need to hear from God. In 2 Kings 3:15-16, Ahab and Jehoshaphat ran out of water while going to battle Moab. Jehoshaphat said, “Is there not a prophet of the Lord here that we may inquire by him?” One of the king's servants said, “Elisha the son of Shaphat is here.” Jehoshaphat said, “The Word of the Lord is with him” (2 Kings 3:11-12).

They went to Elisha and he told them, “Bring me a minstrel.” After the minstrel played Elisha proclaimed, “Thus says the Lord.” It was when the musician began to play that the Lord spoke to Elisha, giving him the needed Word to lead them to victory.

It was only after the musician began to play that the Lord spoke to Elisha, who gave them the Word of God they needed for victory. This is why a worship leader's job is so important.

People who minister on a worship team should never underestimate the importance of their calling. They are the ones who set an atmosphere for the church hearing God speak. Worship ushers in the anointing of God, not only in church services, but also in our personal devotions. We should always have a time of praise and worship prior to our study of the Word, whether it's in a corporate setting or in our personal devotions.

Praise Releases Stress and Anxiety

Philippians 4:6-7 – “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

The prescription for stress and anxiety in Philippians 4:6-8 is prayer, praise, and a positive mindset. We need to “cast all our care upon Him, for He cares for us” (1 Peter 5:7). Prayer alone is not enough.

Prayer focuses on the problem, whereas praise focuses on the solution. Prayer keeps our focus on the cause of our stress and anxiety, whereas praise moves our focus and concentration from the cause to the one who is the solution to our stress.

It's important to pray, but don't stop there. We must always move from prayer to praise, so we don't dwell on the problem but on the solution.

Matthew 11:28-29 - “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your soul.”

True rest is found in God!

Hebrews 4:9 - “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.”

Praise Releases the Generosity of God

Think about how you feel when your children tell you how great you are. Our immediate response is usually, “What do you want?” We laugh, but if they are constantly praising us, we usually give them anything they want.

This is especially true of grandchildren. God is the same. If we are continually praising and worshipping the Lord, telling Him how much we love Him and how great He is, He is likely to give us anything we desire (Psalm 37:4), sometimes even before we ask.

Isaiah 65:24 – “It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are still speaking, I will hear.”

How great is that? Praise brings this to fulfillment in our lives. If we will spend more time in praise and worship, we will have a lot less to pray about.

Praise Causes Our Enemies to Flee

In 2 Chronicles 20:12, the enemy was coming against the people of God and Jehoshaphat was afraid and said, “We have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”

Have you ever been in a place where you were afraid, felt completely overwhelmed, and had no idea what to do? That is exactly where they were. It was only when they praised the Lord with all of their heart that He struck down the enemy before them. They didn’t even have to lift a hand to fight.

Their praise was not timid and ritualistic, they “stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a very loud voice” (2 Chronicles 20:19). They praised Him with all their might, and as a result, God fought for them, struck down their enemy, and gave them victory.

In Exodus 17:10-13, when Amalek fought against Israel at Rephidim, Moses sent Joshua to fight for Israel while he stood on top of the hill with Aaron and Hur. When

Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed. When he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed.

When Moses grew weary, Aaron and Hur held up his hand allowing Joshua to overwhelm Amalek. Every man of God needs those who will hold his hands up when he becomes weary.

In Exodus 17:15, Moses built an altar and named it Jehovah-Nissi, "The Lord is My banner." As long as Moses kept his hand lifted high in praise, Israel prevailed against the enemy.

The same is true for us. If we constantly praise and worship Him, God will cause us to prevail and our enemies to flee before us. Let's lift up His banner high and unashamedly for all to see. Victory is ours!

The Source of Joy

1 John 1:4 says, “And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.” This verse reveals God’s desire to fill His people with joy. Why then is joy alluding us and how can we tap into the joy of the Lord? God’s plan for you is fullness of joy. If we’re to experience victory in life joy is a prerequisite. Joy and victory go hand in hand.

“The first requisite for happiness is the abolition of religion.” – **Karl Marx**

Of course, all religion does is convict and condemn a person unless they give their life to Christ. Unbelievers experience less joy and happiness around Christians because they are uncomfortable being in the presence of God. Believers could learn from this quote, applying it somewhat differently than he intended. We need to get rid of religiosity and get Jesus back in the church.

“There is a joy which isn’t given to the ungodly, that of those who love thee for thine own sake, whose joy thou thyself art; and this is the happy life to rejoice in thee, and of thee. This is it and there is none other.” – **Augustine**

“Joy is the gigantic secret of the Christian life.” – **G.K. Chesterton**

What a true statement. The problem is the church has lost its joy and therefore the secret of its life and victory. Let’s get some joy back into the church and our lives as believers.

Joy and Happiness

There is a vast difference between joy and happiness. Chuck Smith contrasts joy and happiness in this way, “Happiness is the level of the soul dependent on outward circumstances (nothing there to ruffle things), whereas joy is a spiritual quality independent of outward circumstances.”

Jesus’ joy didn’t come from this world’s goods. In fact, scripture seems to indicate He lived on somewhat of a sub-poverty level. When taxes were due, He borrowed

money from a fish to pay them (Matthew 17:27). “A certain scribe came and said to Him, Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go. And Jesus said to him, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Matthew 8:19-20).

I’m not always happy about my circumstances, are you? Paul was incarcerated when he said, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice” (Philippians 4:4)! We may not be happy about our circumstances, but in spite of what we may be going through God wants to fill us with “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8). This is God’s will for you and me. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

There are some reading this who have been going through a time of sorrow, discouragement and despair. Life has a way of taking everything out of us – stealing any joy and we might have. God wants to set you free today and fill you with joy as only He can.

Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, That you shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. And you now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you” (John 16:20 and 22).

This is a prophetic word for many of you. You have been overwhelmed with sorrow and grief to the point of intense weeping and lamentation. God is about to turn your sorrow into joy. You are about to catch a glimpse of Jesus and your sorrow is going to be turned into joy – and nothing will be able to steal your joy from you.

“Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Peter 1:8).

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost” (Romans 15:13).

“The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans 14:17).

“Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you righteous: and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart” (Psalm 32:11).

“Everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee” (Isaiah 35:10).

“Break forth into joy, sing together - shout for joy together... For the Lord has comforted His people” (Isaiah 52:9).

“Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy” (Isaiah 60:5).

“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3).

“Thou hast put gladness in my heart” (Psalm 4:7).

“The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).

Sources of Joy:

1. Righteousness

Paul said, “For the kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans 14:17). Righteousness always precedes joy. There is no joy without righteousness. Let me be clear, we have no righteousness of our own – “All our righteousness is as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). If we are going to experience joy it must be dependent upon Him and His righteousness and not ours. When we trust Christ as our Savior, His righteousness is put to our account.

The source of our joy is His imputed righteousness. “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). If we are depending on our own righteousness, we will never maintain any level of joy – we always fall short (Romans 3:10, 23).

Also Read: Matthew 6:33, Psalms 32:10-11, Hebrews 1:9, Romans 12:9, and Micah 6:8.

2. Answered Prayer

“Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have you asked nothing in My name: ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:23-24). How glorious and exciting it is to see our prayers answered.

- We experience the joy of His presence. “In Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalms 16:11).
- We experience God’s glory. “By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:2). Moses experienced God’s glory to the extent he had to put a veil over his face.
- God meets our needs through prayer. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

3. God’s Word

God’s Word is a glorious source of joy for the believer. “Thy Words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts” (Jeremiah 15:16).

If we are called by His name, His Word is a constant source of joy to us. It’s like getting a love letter from someone you have been longing to hear from. We’re thrilled, excited and filled with joy upon hearing from them.

Also Read: Psalms 119:103 and Luke 10:38-42.

4. A View to the End Product of Your Trial

“And not only so, but we glory (boast, rejoice, exalt) in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope” (Romans 5:3-4).

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

The key is knowing. If we are to stand up under trials and experience joy, we must have a vision toward the end product which is hope. “Hope deferred makes the heart sick” (Proverbs 13:12a).

Forward vision is essential - “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Proverbs 29:18). Lack of hope and vision destroys us, but looking forward in faith to something better is life. “Desire fulfilled is a tree of life” (Proverbs 13:12b).

Also Read: Matthew 5:10-12, Hebrews 12:2, Romans 5:13, Romans 8:18, and 1 Corinthians 2:9-10.

5. Soul Winning

Reaching souls for Christ should be one of our greatest sources of joy. “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy” (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).

Imagine the Apostle Paul in heaven. A great multitude walks by and the Lord says to him, “These are here because you cared, sacrificed and remained faithful to your call” (Acts 20:24). Wow, what joy!

Jesus told parables about a lost sheep, coin and prodigal son (Luke 15). At the end of the parables He proclaimed there was rejoicing in heaven over one soul that

comes to repentance. Soul winning is one of the greatest sources of joy a believer will ever experience both now and in the life to come. Let's reach the lost!

6. Leadership

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).

You can either bring joy to your pastors and leaders or grief. We can make their job enjoyable or an utterly miserable thing. I have seen and experienced both.

It's unprofitable for us to make their job difficult, but profitable when we make their ministry a joyful experience. They watch over your soul and will give an account to God. Let's make what they do enjoyable. We will be the better for it.

We can do so by getting behind them and being supportive to them and their vision. Jeremiah said, "I will fill (saturate) the soul of the priests with abundance, And My people will be satisfied with My goodness, declares the Lord" (Jeremiah 31:14). The more blessed our leaders are, the more blessed we will be.

7. God's Will

"That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God" (Romans 15:32). We are never filled with more joy than when we are in the center of God's will. I have experienced times when I was struggling over what to do in a situation and had no peace or joy whatever. Once I surrendered to the will of God joy flooded my heart.

While in Caesarea, Paul was prophesied over that if he went to Jerusalem he would be arrested and bound. Everyone immediately began trying to talk him out of going. He finally responded,

"What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, The will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:13-14).

Paul knew that only in the will of God would he find fulfillment, even if it meant the worst of circumstances. It's amusing that when he couldn't be persuaded, they finally surrendered to the will of God. Isn't that the way we are? When God can't be persuaded to do things our way or we can't change our situation, we finally give ourselves over to the will of God.

Let's surrender to and commit ourselves to pursuing God's will. In this alone is there true joy.

Also Read: John 13:13-17, Acts 20:24 and James 1:22-25.

8. Victory in Battle

“Let God arise, Let His enemies be scattered. Let those also who hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away, So drive them away. As wax melts before the fire, So let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad. Let them rejoice before God. Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly” (Psalm 68:1-3).

Victory over the enemy is one of the greatest joys we will ever experience. The righteous “rejoice exceedingly” whenever God rises up and scatters our enemies from before us. Victory is on its way with accompanying joy!

Psalm 60:12 – “Through God we shall do valiantly: for He it is that shall tread down our enemies.”

There are many of you who have been going through battle after battle with seemingly no victory. Discouragement has set in and your joy has been stolen. God is about to rise up on your behalf and bring unprecedented victory into your life and situation.

God's prophetic word for you today is, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:20).

Claim it – Your victory is imminent!

20 Scriptures Declaring Our Deliverance

During prayer one morning, I felt the Spirit of God speaking to me to write a word concerning deliverance. Many reading this have been facing what seems to be insurmountable opposition and attacks from the enemy. God is about to bring deliverance your way – deliverance into your life and situation. There are times and in certain situations that we will need divine intervention and deliverance before victory can be wrought.

God's Word for you:

RELAX – REST IN HIM and HIS WORK ON YOUR BEHALF!!! “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God - YOU. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works, as God did from His” (Hebrews 4:9-10).

I have listed below a number of scriptures concerning deliverance. Use and claim them for yourself! Memorize and meditate on them! Quote them and speak them aloud, declaring and decreeing your deliverance.

As you declare or decree the Word of God into the spiritual realm, you will begin to see it materialize into the realm of reality – THE NATURAL REALM! “You will also declare/decreed a thing, And it will be established unto you; And the light will shine upon your ways” (Job 22:28).

Scriptures on Deliverance

1. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has 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, To preach the favorable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19).
2. “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

3. "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder (cobra): the young lion and the dragon (serpent) shalt thou trample under foot" (Psalms 91:13).
4. "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means injure you" (Luke 10:18-19).
5. "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display/spectacle of them, having triumphed over them through the cross" (Colossians 2:15).
6. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Romans 16:20).

You're "shortly" has come and is now!

7. "Do not be afraid! Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" (Exodus 14:13-14).
8. "The Lord your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you – to give you victory" (Deuteronomy 20:4).
9. "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 melts 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 rejoice exceedingly" (Psalms 68:1-3).
10. "Thine hand shall be lifted up against thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off" (Micah 5:9).
11. "It shall come to pass in that day (this day – today), that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing" (Isaiah 10:27).
12. "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you" (Isaiah 43:2).

13. "No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; And every tongue that rises against you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their righteousness - vindication is from Me, declares the Lord" (Isaiah 54:17).
14. "When the enemy comes in, like a flood The Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19).

Most translations place the comma after "flood" in this verse, signifying the enemy comes after us like a flood. Though our enemy does pursue us like a flood at times, the comma should be after "When the enemy comes." In this way this verse signifies that when our enemy come after us, "like a flood The Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him."

15. "The Lord shall utter His voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For he is strong that executeth His Word" (Joel 2:11).
16. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty – A victorious warrior; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will quiet you in His love, He will joy over thee with singing – with shouts of joy" (Zephaniah 3:17).
17. "The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them" (Psalm 34:7).

It's significant to note "The angel of the Lord" is singular. This, no doubt, refers to the Lord Jesus Himself. He is the "captain of the host of the Lord" (Joshua 5:13-15).

He is head and commander over all the angelic host of heaven. He, Jesus, is the one who is encamped around us, accompanied by His host of angelic beings.

18. "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings 6:16).
19. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation" (Hebrews 1:14)?

20. “This charge I commit to you, according to the prophecies (this prophecy) made concerning you, that by it you may wage a good warfare” (1 Timothy 1:18).

When confronted by the devil, Jesus, did not pray any longer, but used the Word of God (Matthew 4:1-11). This is our main offensive and defensive weapon, to fight back against the devil’s attacks and to make advancements toward victorious life. We must do no less.

Paul charged Timothy to take the Word given him, through prophetic utterances, to fight and wage a good warfare against the powers of darkness and the situations of life.

THIS IS HOW VICTORY IS OBTAINED!

Take the above scriptures, put them to memory, and use them to wage warfare against the enemies and the attacks coming against you.

No matter what the battle or situation – **God will give you victory!**

“The Word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Hebrews 4:12).

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked...and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Ephesians 6:16-17).

Guidelines to Fasting and Prayer

Fasting is an example set for us by Jesus. As Christians, we can't go wrong following His example. The Bible says, "He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). "Be ye therefore followers (imitators) of God, as dear children, and walk as Christ" (Ephesians 5:1-2). "After He (Jesus) had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry." (Matthew 4:2).

Jesus obtained victory over a direct confrontation by the devil through fasting and prayer. Prayer actually was the foundation upon which His victory was laid. Prayer and fasting came first, then Jesus took out His sword - "The Sword of the Spirit." Each time the devil threw an accusation at Him, He used God's Word to combat his attack.

Fasting and prayer is often the foundation that must be laid in order to experience victory in battle. Some strongholds can't be broken unless preceded by a time of prayer and fasting. When facing certain battles, you will often need to preface it with a time of fasting and prayer before victory can be wrought.

Jesus began His public ministry victoriously after an extended time of fasting and prayer, followed by a battle in the wilderness. Prayer and fasting was the precipice upon which Jesus launched His public ministry.

"When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district" (Luke 4:13-14).

God has great things in store for you. He is about to launch many reading this into something that is beyond what you could have ever imagined. This was true in Jesus' life. The same that was true for Him is also true for you. Fasting and prayer must be the precipice upon which you are launched into the greatness God has for you. Like Jesus, you too will come out of your wilderness victoriously "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14).

Fasting Defined

“Fasting is primarily the act of willingly abstaining from all food, drink, or both, for a period of time. An absolute fast is normally defined as abstinence from all food and liquid for a defined period, usually 24 hours or several days. Other fasts may be only partially restrictive, limiting particular foods or substances. The fast may also be intermittent in nature. Fasting practices may preclude sexual intercourse (1 Corinthians 7:5) and other activities as well as food.”

Motive – Fast Before God, Not Man

Jesus said, “Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:16-18).

He was saying we shouldn't flaunt what we are doing when we fast. Flaunting our fast can be spiritually egotistical and prideful which would be seeking man's attention and approval instead of God's.

When we fast, we shouldn't tell everyone what we are doing, put on a sad face and appear as if we are making some great sacrifice. It should be something between us and God alone. That does not mean we can't let our spouse know what we are doing so they know why we are not eating. It also doesn't mean we can't let other people know why we are refusing to eat with them. The point is, it's not something we should flaunt, So you are “not noticed by men, but by your Father.”

Have a Specific Purpose in Mind

David Livingston said, “Fastings and vigils without a special object in view are time run to waste. They are made to minister to a sort of self-gratification instead of being turned to good account.”

Fasting is not to be a religious ritual we go through. When we fast, we should have a specific purpose in mind, something we want to accomplish as a result of our fast. It can be for something simple as well as for something complex. So, why fast?

Specific Purposes for Fasting:

1. Fasting Humbles Us Before God

Jesus told a parable about two men who went to the temple to pray, a Pharisee and a tax collector. The Pharisee prayed to himself, “God, I thank you that I’m not like other men—extortioners; unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.”

The tax collector, who was considered a notorious sinner, prayed, “Standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:9-13). Jesus’ response to these two was, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:14).

Fasting, if done the proper way as Jesus describes in Matthew 6:16-18, is a way of humbling ourselves before God saying, Lord, I need you, I am nothing without you, apart from you I can do nothing, I am in complete dependence upon you (John 15:5). Peter said, “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:6).

2. Fasting is a Means of Subduing our Flesh

Eating is something we must do for survival. If we can deny ourselves what is a necessity of life, then we will be able to master our flesh in other areas. Paul said, “I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:27). He said all those who are able to master the flesh would be granted an incorruptible crown as reward for their discipline. Fasting is a way of mastering our flesh. It is an exercise in self-denial.

Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). If we can deny ourself food and/or drink for a period of time we should be able to deny our flesh of sinful desires and in various disciplines of the Christian life.

When the disciples were asked by Jesus to stand with Him in prayer, they fell asleep and Jesus said, "Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:40-41). If we can take control over the flesh in the area of eating, we can control it in every other area of life.

3. Fasting is Used in Seeking Help in Troubled

The children of Israel were being defeated in battle and "All the people, went up and came to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening" (Judges 20:26). They desperately needed divine intervention and they sought the Lord in fasting and prayer. After they had fasted they inquired of the Lord saying, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease? And the Lord said, Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand" (Judges 20:28).

The Psalmist said, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me" (Psalms 50:15). Throughout scripture fasting was used to call on God in times of trouble. Are you facing a time of trouble and difficulty? My advice is to seek the Lord through a time of fasting and prayer for His deliverance.

4. Fasting can be Used to Seek God's Direction

God told Jeremiah, "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3). Daniel, while in captivity, saw that seventy years were appointed in the desolation of Jerusalem and he said, "I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes" (Daniel 9:3). As a result, God sent the angel Gabriel to explain to Daniel the seventy weeks which clarifies much prophecy for us today.

5. Fasting can be Used in Seeking God for a Much Needed Breakthrough

Daniel was once again seeking answers from God and had been fasting for twenty-one days. Gabriel appeared to him saying,

“Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days” (Daniel 10:12-13).

When a spiritual battle is waging, fasting and prayer can be used to break spiritual strongholds allowing revelation to be released and victory wrought. If the answer and breakthrough we are seeking seems to be withheld from us, an extended time of fasting may be required (Acts 13:1-3).

6. Fasting is an Expression of Mourning

Throughout scripture people often fasted as an expression of emotional sorrow over a tragedy. We see this in the case of David grieving over the approaching death of his child (2 Samuel 12:16, 2 Samuel 12:21). Jesus expressed this in answer to the question of John the Baptist's disciples,

“Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast? And Jesus said to them, Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast” (Matthew 9:14-15).

We see in Jonah 3:5-7 that fasting was often used in mourning over sin and repentance thereof. Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). This is a mourning over our spiritual bankruptcy. There are also times for us to mourn over particular sins that have befallen us.

There are times when fasting is required as mourning over defeat by the enemy to find out what is wrong and how to remedy it as seen in Israel's defeat before Ai

(Joshua 7:1-6). If facing a spiritual battle and defeat, fasting can be used in mourning over our defeat and in seeking out what is wrong so it can be dealt with and remedied. “Lord, why are we not victorious and prospering?”

7. Fasting can be Used to Draw Near to God

Jesus did this at the onset of His public ministry in Matthew 4:1-2. After this time of fasting and prayer Jesus “returned in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14). This is a time when we set aside food and often drink for the specific purpose of drawing near to God.

Moses set aside such a time on Mount Sinai. “Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water” (Exodus 34:28). Fasting is a time to lay hold of God with all that is humanly possible (Isaiah 64:7). “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you” (James 4:8).

8. Fasting – The Cure for Unbelief

A man brought his son to Jesus saying, “I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him” (Matthew 17:16). Jesus of course cured the child. “Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, Why could we not drive it out? And He said to them, Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, Move from here to there, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:19-21).

Notice Jesus said they could not cast the demon out because of the littleness of their faith and “this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” Clearly there are times when fasting stimulates greater faith that may be needed for more intense spiritual conflict.

9. Fasting Taps into Spiritual Power

This same instance of fasting being a cure for unbelief also indicates it enables us to tap into additional spiritual power (Matthew 17:14-21). The child in this passage was possessed by an evil spirit and the disciples were unable to cast it out. Jesus said, "This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21).

I remember hearing Lester Sumrall telling the story of a person in prison in Manila, Philippines who was tormented by evil spirits. Many people tried to help this person to no avail. He went to assess the situation, but before attempting to do anything he first left and spent time in fasting and prayer. When he returned, he cast the demons out and the person was completely set free.

Many men of God like R. A. Torrey, Charles Finney, D. L. Moody and many others testified to having been fitted with power after long seasons of fasting. Sadly, few today desire God's power enough to pay the price of fasting. Jesus Himself was endued with power after He had fasted for an extended period. "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14).

If we want to be victorious in life, there will be times in which we'll have to seek the face of God in prayer and fasting. Some things simply cannot be broken apart from fasting. Many battles are stubborn and will only be won and victory wrought through a time of fasting and prayer - "This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21).

God has destined you for victory in everything in life and in every situation. Are you willing to pay the price of victory? Victory awaits you – God's desire for you is a victorious life! Let's lay claim to and not be deterred by anything until victory is won and established once and for all!

Breaking the Curse

A curse (also called an imprecation, malediction, execration, malison, anathema, or commination) is any expressed wish that some form of adversity or misfortune will befall or attach to some other entity: one or more persons, a place, or an object.

Is it possible to have a curse on your life, a business, ministry or family? What about generational curses? Can a curse be upon our life and it pass on to succeeding and subsequent generations?

1. Pronounced Curses

A pronounced curse is defined as “a solemn utterance intended to invoke a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on someone or something. To invoke or use a curse against.”

Balak, King of Moab, “Sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, saying: Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed. So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the diviner’s fee” (Numbers 22:5-7).

Untimely, God would not allow Balaam to curse Israel, but from this passage, it is apparent that curses can be pronounced on people, things, situations and groups. This can be done by those seeking our harm, those who seek our destruction and those who simply hate us. It undoubtedly has been done by those in cultic or satanic groups against Christians, ministers and ministries seeking to hinder and withstand them and the furtherance of the gospel.

Nehemiah 13:2 ~ “They met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit OUR GOD TURNED THE CURSE INTO A BLESSING.”

It can also often be done by those unaware of what they are doing in a moment of anger or rage. This is why James said, “Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so” (James 3:10). This is frequently aroused by a spirit of bitterness or a bitter root within our life which needs to be eradicated from our soul and spirit. The Bible says, “Looking diligently lest any man fail – fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Hebrews 12:15).

We are exhorted in scripture, “Neither give place to the devil. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:27, 29-32).

2. Exposed to a Curse

A person can be exposed to a curse by exposing themselves to something that is inherently evil, or by dabbling in something that is demonic by nature and that God has strictly forbidden. This is why playing around with things that are spiritually opposed to God and His Word is extremely dangerous.

The Bible strictly forbids and warns us, particularly Christians, not to consult with any type of mediums, psychics, astrology, fortune telling, tarot cards, palm readings, seances, ouija boards and the like.

With their use we open ourselves up to what the Bible calls familiar spirits or demonic influence. Many people are tormented by demonic spirits after consulting with mediums and experimenting with these things. We actually open ourselves up to the demonic and give them permission to come into our life.

We can also have a curse come upon us by being exposed to a place where something bad has happened and begin to experience adverse things in our life. This is why when moving into a new building or home, it is wise to find out any history of the place that we can. Regardless, it’s always smart to pray over any new

place we move into pleading the blood of Jesus and speaking the Word of God over it room by room and around the structure.

If after doing our due diligence and researching the place's history, and we discover anything particularly bad has taken place there such as a murder, suicide, etc. we must take authority over the spirits behind such actions or activities.

3. The Curse of the Law

We all fall under the curse of the law, in that, we have all fallen short of what God's law has demanded. Paul wrote, "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Romans 10:5). Not a one of us have lived up to the law of God (His Word). We have all fallen short (Romans 3:23).

This reveals our need of a savior (Galatians 3:24). Not only is there the penalty of sin on us of death (Romans 6:23a), but there's a curse and long of adverse consequences of the law which follows those who fell to live up to it (Deuteronomy 28:14-68).

We all fall under this curse and separation from God as a result of sin, but there's GOOD NEWS! When we come to Christ He becomes our substitute – our propitiatory sacrifice. He took our place and died in our stead (1 John 2:2; 1 Peter 3:18). Those of us who are in Christ are no longer under the curse of the law and the penalty of sin. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13).

4. Generational Curses

Exodus 20:5 – "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me."

Exodus 34:7 – “He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”

Numbers 14:18 – “He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children [a]to the third and the fourth generations.”

Deuteronomy 5:9 – “I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me.”

Leviticus 26:39 – “Because of their iniquity, and also because of the iniquities of their fathers they shall rot away like them.”

Numbers 14:18 – “The Lord is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children [a]to the third and the fourth generations.”

From John 9:1-3 it is apparent the disciples were persuaded generational curses existed. We read, “His disciples asked Him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind’ (John 9:2)?

We have all seen particular sins that have passed on from generation to generation. He’s just like his father or she’s just like her mother. They’re a chip off the old block. They are often even passed on to those who hated what they saw of it in their parents or grandparents, etc. Even though they loathed what they saw in others, they have gone on to repeat the same offensive pattern.

We have seen those whose parents experienced divorce to go on to see it repeated in their life as well. The same is also true concerning alcohol and drug addictions, abusive relationships and a myriad of other sins. This may be true, in part, because of unforgiveness and/or a Bitter Root Expectancy.

Jesus said, “If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.” This has nothing to do with us

having authority to withhold forgiveness from people's lives. It has more to do with us.

When we harbor bitterness and unforgiveness within our heart, we retain that particular sin to ourselves. If we forgive someone who has sinned against us, we release ourselves from any hold that sin or situation might have on us.

When we hold things against someone, we often have the same things happen to us. If someone has sinned against or offended us and we don't forgive them from our heart, we may find ourselves in bondage to the very sin that we hated and that offended us.

The only way to free ourselves is to completely forgive. In Matthew 18:21-35 Jesus said we often must forgive up to 490 times or levels before getting something completely out of our system. This means we must choose to forgive an offense every time it raises its ugly head, until there's no bitterness or unforgiveness left in us.

We if we have confessed the sin, have forgiven the one(s) that have offended us and we still find ourself in bondage – It persists and is unable to be broken? How do we break such generation curses that have been passed down to us? Or for that matter, any of the other curses that have been discussed here?

Other curses that could be passed down from generation to generation may be such curses as a spirit of poverty, sicknesses and disease, unbelief, anger and rage, demonic oppression, lack of will power, depression and mental disorders, crushed spirit, lacking of productivity and defeatism and a myriad of other things.

Breaking the Curse Off Our Lives

1. **Forgiveness.** As was stated above, unforgiveness can easily retain certain sins to us so that we repeat the very things we hated in others. We must repeatedly forgive up to 490 different levels before it is completely eradicated out of our life once and for all. Forgiveness is a choice and therefore we must choose to forgive every time the offense arises, no matter how we feel.

2. **Exercise your authority.** We can take authority over every curse in the name and authority of Jesus. Jesus said,

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

“Verily I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:18).

It's interesting that both these passages were in the context of the church. God has given authority to the local church as well as the universal church. This is why it is so vitally important that we are anchored into a local body of believers. Seek the counsel, covering and authority of your local church and its leaders. Let them pray with you and take authority over the bondages in your life.

3. **Speak, confess and pray the Word of God.** Speak, confess and pray the Word of God over any curses and/or bondages that may have attached themselves to you or anyone you might be trying to help get set free. There's power in God's Word. When battling demonic strongholds, We are to take up “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Ephesians 6:17).
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It goes without saying, if we are speaking, confessing and praying God's Word, we must be spending personal time in His Word. “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:31-32, 36).

God's Word has inherit power within its pages to set His people completely free if we'll continue in it!

4. **Plead the blood of Jesus.** There's power in His blood to break every curse and/or bondage that may attach itself to us. “They overcame him by the
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blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 12:11a). There are seven places Jesus bled in order to save us and break every curse and bondage from off our lives. Claim His blood over every curse and bondage and watch them be broken.

For further reading on this subject, we suggest Free at Last: Breaking Generational Curses

Breaking Generational Curses: 7 Places Jesus Bled

We have all seen particular sins that have passed on from generation to generation. He's just like his father or she's just like her mother. They're a chip off the old block. They are often even passed on to those who hated what they saw of it in their parents or grandparents, etc. Even though they loathed what they saw in others, they have gone on to repeat the same offensive pattern.

We have seen those whose parents experienced divorce to go on to see it repeated in their life as well. The same is also true concerning alcohol and drug addictions, abusive relationships and a myriad of other sins. This may be true, in part, because of unforgiveness and/or a Bitter Root Expectancy.

In this scenario, it may not be something passed down from our bloodline. It very well may be projected on us by someone close to us, who saw this particular behavior in others close them. They're expecting the same behavior to be repeated by us because that's the way it has always happened. A person may actually behave or act out in a way that is completely contrary to their personality and nature. This is their Bitter Root Expectancy projected onto us.

Other curses that could be passed down from generation to generation may be such curses as a spirit of poverty, sicknesses and disease, unbelief, anger and rage, demonic oppression, fear, lack of will power, depression and mental disorders, crushed spirit, lacking of productivity and defeatism and a myriad of other things.

These are not mere genetics, as many professionals today would portray it as. This is most likely spiritual in nature and therefore has to be dealt with spiritually. It may even be demonic strongholds or oppression that may require a time of fasting and prayer to see them brought down and destroyed (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Counseling and therapy alone is not sufficient to deliver someone in these cases.

There are various types of curses one may encounter, but generational curses are the most prevalent. There is power in the blood of Christ and many benefits

inherent in His blood. Most merely think of His blood being shed on Calvary's cross, which is true. However, there are seven specific places that Jesus bled.

The Bible says, "My people are destroyed – perish for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). We often experience defeat and bondage because we fail to understand the significance in the places He bled. Each place He bled was for a specific purpose, to reverse the curse and bring blessing into our lives. Clear knowledge and understanding of this is the first step in overcoming the enemy's strongholds in our lives.

The next crucial step is applying His blood to our lives and the lives of those needing to be set free. "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:2). Faith in His blood must be appropriated. "They overcame him by the blood of the lamb" (Revelation 12:11). When properly applied, His blood has within it the power to bring deliverance to the captive.

Jesus said,

"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, To preach the acceptable – favorable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

7 Places Jesus Shed His Blood:

1. The Sweating of His Blood in the Garden of Gethsemane

Luke 22:40-44 ~ "When He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly – fervently: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

The significance of this is three-fold:

- **Jesus Won Back Our Willpower**

Eve sinned when she was deceived by the serpent (Genesis 3:1-6). She “gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Genesis 3:6). Eve was deceived but Adam chose to sin, rejected the will of God and thereby surrendering his willpower over to the desires of his flesh. Ever since that day, man has struggled with his willpower over the flesh. In ourselves, when it comes to a choice between the desires of the flesh and the will of God, our flesh will win nearly every time.

We are no longer subject to the will of our flesh and sinful desires. Jesus overcame the greatest temptation that was so intense, it caused Him to sweat blood. Thereby setting us free to choose the right thing rather than the wrong thing. Jesus Won Back Our Willpower to resist temptation.

- **We’re Set Free from Fear of the Will of God**

We can now choose the will of God over the of the flesh. But it goes far beyond this. Because of His battle over the fear of the cross, we no longer need fear the will of God. We are set free to pursue God’s will without fear. This is why the apostles and others throughout history have been able to face both spiritual and physical battles courageously, undaunted by what lay before them.

Proverbs 28:1 – “The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

2 Timothy 1:7 – “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear – timidity; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

Philippians 1:28 – “In nothing alarmed by your adversaries: which is a sign of destruction to them, but of salvation to you, and that of God.”

• **The Will of God is Released**

Because of Jesus' choice in the Garden, the will of God can be released in our life, the lives of our children, the church, and the world in which we live. We can confidently pray,

Matthew 6:10 – “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth (in earthen vessels and situations), as it is in heaven.”

Ephesians 1:10-11 – “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him:

In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.”

We can rejoice and rest in the will of God!

Romans 15:32 – “That I may come to you with joy by the will of God.”

Hebrews 4:9 – “There remains therefore a rest to the people of God.”

2. The Shedding of His Blood from the Crown of Thorns

John 19:2 – “And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head.”

Thorns and thistles were the result of the curse of original sin. After Adam and Eve had sinned they were told, “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.” – Genesis 3:17-18

Jesus bore the crown of thorns, blood gushing from His brow, bearing the curse of the thorns – poverty on our behalf. Jesus came to reverse the curse of poverty for us. Jesus bore the crown of thorns to reverse the curse of poverty and release prosperity into the lives of His people and the church. We no longer have to live in poverty and eke out a living just to get by.

The Curse has been Reversed!

Praise the Lord – Let Prosperity Flow!

2 Corinthians 9:8 – “God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”

Isaiah 60:5 – “Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come.”

Proverbs 10:22 – “The blessing of the Lord, it makes rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.”

Proverbs 13:22 – “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.”

Psalms 35:27 – “Let them shout for joy, and be glad, which favor My righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, Who hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.”

Deuteronomy 8:18 – “It is He that giveth thee power to get wealth.”

Deuteronomy 15:6 – “For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as He promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many, but they shall not reign over thee.”

Isaiah 48:17 – “Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.”

3. The Shedding of His Blood at the Whipping Post

John 19:1 – “Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him.”

Isaiah 53:5 – “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”

It should be noted that Isaiah 53:3-5 has to do with the healing of, not only physical healing, but also our souls – our mind, will and emotions and spirit.

When Pilate had Jesus scourged, they used what was called a “cat o’ nine tails.” The cat o’ nine tails was a type of multi-tailed whip, whose lashes were made of leather and were tipped with metal, bone and barbs. Jesus received thirty-nine lashes, the maximum lashes allowed under Jewish law was forty (Deuteronomy 25:1-3). However, it was feared that forty lashed would kill them so they normally stopped at thirty-nine.

They scourged Jesus, flaying His flesh until there was little life left in Him. The meat and tissue of His back was so flayed that you could actually see His bones. The Bible says, He was actually beaten beyond recognition (Isaiah 52:14).

Through the shedding of His blood at the whipping post, Jesus purchased our healing. His body was bruised, beaten and broken so ours could be made whole. Because of what He experienced here, we no longer need be bound by sickness and disease. When sickness comes knocking at our door we can experience a touch of His resurrection power, and go on to walk in divine health.

Exodus 15:26 – “I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians – the world: For I am the Lord (Jehovah Rapha) that healeth thee.”

Psalm 103:3b – “Who healeth all thy diseases.”

1 Peter 2:24 – “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by Whose stripes ye were healed.”

Divine health and healing are a touch of future resurrection power!

Romans 8:11 – “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

4. His Internal Bleeding

Isaiah 53:5 – “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.”

Bruising – Blood or bleeding under the skin due to trauma of any kind; typically black and blue at first, with color changes as healing progresses. A bruise rising in the skin revealing inward bleeding. Iniquities can apply to those things in life that beat us down.

Many have been beat down by the things of life, experiencing inward bruising and trauma. For some, it might be the situations and circumstances of life. For others, it may be things that have been spoken to and over us negatively beating us down and causing us to experience inward bruising of the soul and spirit. Still others, it could be things of our own making that have caused bruising emotionally, mentally and to our spirit.

Jesus was beaten and “bruised for our iniquities.” He bled and was bruised inwardly, taking it upon Himself, in order that we might be healed completely and forever. We must simply apply His bruising to ourself for our inward healing.

He came to set us free!

Jesus said,

“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 BROKEN HEARTED, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to SET at LIBERTY THEM that are BRUISED, To preach the acceptable – favorable year of the Lord.” – Luke 4:18-19

Psalm 51:17 – “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.”

Psalm 34:18 – “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

With this healing PEACE and JOY are released to us mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

John 14:27 – “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.”

John 16:33 – “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace.”

Ephesians 2:14 – “For He Himself is our peace!”

Romans 14:17 – “The kingdom of God is... righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

1 John 1:4 – “And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”

1 Peter 1:8 – “Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

Psalm 32:11 – “Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.”

Isaiah 35:10 – “The ransomed of the Lord will return, they will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.”

Isaiah 52:9 – “Break forth into joy, sing together – shout for joy together, ye waste places... for the Lord hath comforted His people.”

Isaiah 60:5a NIV – “Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy.”

CLAIM HIS BRUISING ON YOUR BEHALF and REJOICE!!!

5. The Blood that was Shed from Jesus' Pierced Hands

Mark 15:24 – “They had crucified Him – They nailed His hands and feet to the cross.” (TPT)

Psalm 22:16 – “They pierced My hands and My feet.”

The significance of Jesus bleeding from His hands is four-fold:

- **Restored Productivity**

Before the fall, all that man did flourished. After the fall, he would have to eke out a living by the sweat of his brow. Before sin, everything man did blossomed. After sin, man would have to labor and work extremely hard for everything he'd receive. Nothing came easy any longer. He'd have to exert a lot of effort in order to get just a little return.

When we apply His blood that was shed from His pierced hands, we no longer have to eke out a living. The believer in Christ, who understands this and applies His blood, can now produce thirty, sixty and a hundred-fold return from his labor. Those in the world, the unregenerate, may have to work and work for just a little return from their labor, where the believer may put in a fraction of the effort for the same return and much more.

Productivity is restored – Praise the Lord!

Deuteronomy 28:8 – “The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and He shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

Deuteronomy 28:12 – “The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand.”

Deuteronomy 30:9 – “The Lord thy God will make thee plenteous – prosper you abundantly in every work of thine hand for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good.”

• **Victory Over the Enemy**

Micah 5:9 – “Thine hand shall be lifted up upon – against thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.”

Every enemy that coming against you will be defeated as you apply the blood shed from Jesus' hands. As you lift up your hand against your enemies and adversaries, they'll be cut off. They will have no power over you. On the contrary, you'll have power, authority and victory over them.

Deuteronomy 28:7 – “The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.”

• **Power and Authority Restored**

Mark 16:18 – “They shall take up serpents... they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

Serpents in scripture represents the devil and his demonic entities. We no longer need be afraid of the demonic forces that are set against us. Because Jesus was pierced in His hands, shedding His blood, we have power and authority over them and need not be afraid of their attacks against us. Like the Apostle Paul, we need only to fling them off when they attack or attach themselves to us (Acts 28:3-6).

Healing power – authority is also given us to lay hands on the sick and to see them recover as a sign that He is with us and as an attestation of the gospel message. When doing so, we are also applying, by the laying on of hands, His blood that that was shed at the whipping post for our complete healing – emotional, mental, physical and spiritual healing (Isaiah 53:3-5).

• **The Power and Authority of Divine Impartation**

1 Timothy 4:14 – “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”

Impartation has to do with the giving and receiving of spiritual gifts, blessings, healing, baptism in the Holy Spirit, etc., for the work of the ministry. It is the transference of these “gifts” from one man or woman of God to another, through the laying on of hands.

6. The Blood that was Shed from Jesus’ Pierced Feet

Mark 15:24- “They had crucified Him – They nailed His hands and feet to the cross.” (TPT)

“They pierced My hands and My feet” — Psalm 22:16

This signifies Jesus restoring our dominion that was lost through the fall.

Genesis 1:26 – “Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Hebrews 2:8 – “Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.”

Dominion was given us and has been officially restored “But now we see not yet all things put under him.” It has been restored by the blood of Jesus. It’s up to us to appropriate the dominion that He has restored to us. It’s ours – now it’s up to us to stake our claim to it.

Setting your feet on something denotes placing your foot upon something and staking your claim. We’re to stake our claim, with faith and aggressive determination, on everything God has promised us.

Deuteronomy 11:24 – “Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours.”

Joshua 1:3 and 5 – “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”

The word “place” in Joshua 1:3 in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) is “topos.” It’s the same word used in Ephesians 4:27 – “Neither give place to the devil.” It’s the same word from which we get our word topography which is “used of a region or locality, room, of a place which a person or thing occupies.”

Let’s stake our claim and take the land our God has set before us!

Psalm 91:13 – “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder (cobra): the young lion and the dragon (serpent) shalt thou trample under feet.”

Luke 10:18-19 – “And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power – authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

Ephesians 1:19-23 – “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.”

1 John 4:17 – “As He is, so are we in this world.”

Romans 16:20 – “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet.”

7. The Blood that was Shed from the Spear Piercing Jesus' Side

John 19:34 – “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.”

Blood and water gushing from Jesus' side represents:

- **Jesus Dying from a Broken Heart**

The fact that blood and water flowed from His side symbolizes that Jesus died from a broken heart. The intensity and anguish of the weight and burden of all of our sins that He took on Himself and our continual betrayal against Him was too much to bear and ultimately caused His Heart to stop beating.

This signifies that Jesus won back our joy and healed us of our broken hearts as with “His Internal Bleeding” in point four, in that “He was bruised for our iniquities.” – Isaiah 53:5

• **The Fullness of the Holy Ghost**

Water in scripture is a type of the Holy Spirit. When water gushed from Jesus’ side, it released the potential for the fullness of His Spirit to be released in the church, His followers and the world in which live and that without measure. Jesus was the only one to receive the Spirit without measure.

As a result of His bleeding, we too can receive the Holy Ghost without measure. It’s available to all who will apply the blood and water that flowed from His side. Let’s stake our claim to the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

John 3:34 – “For He whom God hath sent speaketh the Words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him.”

Let’s beseech the Lord to release His Spirit without measure upon ourselves, the church, those for whom we are praying and the world in which we live.

Romans 15:19 – “Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.”

Joel 2:28-32 – “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit.

And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.”

Isaiah 12:3 – “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”

Isaiah 44:3 – “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring.”

Isaiah 55:1 – “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

Matthew 3:11-12 – “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but He that cometh after Me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Luke 24:49 – “Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

John 4:14 – “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

John 7:37-39 – “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believes on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.”

John 20:22 – “He breathed on them, and said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”

Acts 1:4-5 – “Being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

Acts 1:8 – “But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me.”

Acts 2:1-4 – “When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Acts 4:31 – “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness.”

Ephesians 5:18-21 – “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”

Notice the parallel verse in Colossians:

Colossians 3:16 – “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

In Ephesians says we are to “be filled with the Spirit” and in Colossians we are told to “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.” The context is nearly identical! A major key to being filled with the Holy Spirit is causing the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Isaiah 10:27 – “And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.”

Let Your anointing fall on us to remove every burden and break every yoke.

Now we ask You to release all the power and manifestations of the Holy Ghost!

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 – “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.”

Mark 16:15-20 – “And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following. Amen.”

Hebrews 2:4 – “God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?”

For further reading on the subject see [7 Places Jesus Shed His Blood](#)