

Junk to Jewels

By Larry Chkoreff

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Preface and Testimony

History shows that no one living on this earth is free from some sort of sufferings, difficulties, and challenges in life. Even those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ are not exempt. Why?

Genesis 3:17-18 says why. “Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field’” (Genesis 3:17-18).

Adam’s sin of rebellion against God was manifested in the fact that he and Eve no longer trusted only the Word of God but turned to their own “flesh,” or in other words, their own intellect disconnected from God. This brought on the curse.

Thorns represent the curse. We are all born under Adam’s curse, and most of us have other curses that are passed down through our generations. When Moses asked God to reveal His real personage to him, part of God’s response is found in the following verses. He spoke about the curse.

“Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.’ So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped” (Exodus 34:5-8).

Jesus warned all of us in the Parable of the Sower that even His Word would have no power if we did not cooperate with Him to overcome the curse. He spoke of thorns again, the curse. “Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful” (Mark 4:18-19).

The Apostle Paul perhaps explained this better than others. In 2 Corinthians chapter 12 he spoke of the thorn in his flesh, the messenger of Satan. I submit that Paul was experiencing the curse from his family line. Paul was a Pharisee of Pharisees. He was a legalist, a persecutor and even a murdered of Christians. He was touching the “Apple of God’s eye,” he was coming against Jesus Himself, thus he had some serious reaping of some bad seeds he had sown. Many were coming against him, including the Jewish legalists, and others who had beat him to a pulp many times.

However, Paul had learned a precious secret, that being that his curse, or his thorn in the flesh, was actually his best weapon for his ministry and for displacing Satan’s rule and bringing in God’s Kingdom. Paul said that after learning this secret that his infirmities were something that he actually embraced as profitable. Paul learned this grace lesson, that when he was weak the grace of God took over. To put it another way, when he was helpless that is when Christ in him was free to do the work of overcoming the curse and displacing Satan.

Job learned this. His suffering not only brought him face to face with God, but also brought defeat to Satan in Job’s realm of influence. God turned Job’s junk, or his thorns, into jewels.

Notice in the Exodus Scripture quoted above, that God said, “...forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.” This sounds like a paradox, but Jesus cleared it up. The Lord does visit the curse upon the generations, but Jesus forgives it, or takes it away by becoming a curse for us. “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:13-14).

How did Jesus overcome the curse? He went to the Cross. I believe that we overcome in much the same manner. We go through the “storms of life” that are brought on by the curse. When we live the overcoming lifestyle and go through the

storms, we find that they actually had no power over us, but instead we used them to turn our Junk, our thorns, into Jewels for the Kingdom of God.

The Book of Revelation is our script for overcoming as you will read later in this book. Revelation 21:19 says, “The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald.”

“And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him” (Revelation 22:3).

Testimony of Julie Hatcher – Freedom Fellowship Church, Austell Georgia

I was five when it happened. My first anxiety attack! I have vivid memories of crying as my father dropped me off from school. I would dread going to the bathroom by myself, or walking down the hall to take a note to the next classroom because I knew the fear would come. Although I lived in a supportive, loving Christian home the enemy was relentless in pouring out fear in to my life on a daily basis. Growing up with fear and anxiety felt normal to me. From my perspective, everyone experienced anxiety attacks and times of intense panic. After being in an abusive relationship during my teenage years and many destructive choices I had an encounter with the Lord that changed my life. I accepted Christ into my heart and it was then that I came to understand that fear was not something I was created to live with, but something that I was created to overcome!

As time went on and I began to grow in Christ I was still experiencing anxiety and intense fear. I knew the promises of God and yet I was not experiencing them. I continued to grow in my relationship with the Lord as well as my personal life so I convinced myself that I was okay. In the natural I meet a young man who God had placed in my life that would later become my husband. I journeyed through a tragic event with my family that took the life of my cousin. At the time, I knew I was

experiencing life changes that triggered anxiety, but it was what I did not know that the enemy would use to try to destroy me.

As time passed, I got married, and I was still not experiencing the promise of Peace and Abundant life that God was offering me. The fear continued to grow and the anxiety attacks were increasing. It was soon after I got married that I believed a lie that the enemy spoke to me. I remember one day while I was at work. I was having trouble with allergies so I took some allergy medication that had been prescribed to me. Immediately upon taking the allergy medication an instant fear came over me and I heard the lie of the enemy who said; “If you take medicine you will die.” After that experience I was not able to take medications and the fear began to spill over in to other areas of my life. The enemy then began to whisper the same lie when I would eat. I then began to pick through food not eating much of what was on my plate. After awhile the food I did eat I would try to purge when the anxiety would come. This fear continued for almost two years. People began to notice the weight loss. I would passively ignore the questions of how I was losing weight; all the while I was too ashamed and scared to share with anyone what was going on in my life.

Finally some good news! My husband and I found out we were expecting. Our first child, what a beautiful promise! Of course, the enemy was steady at work speaking fear and deceit during my pregnancy. Through grace I was able to eat a little more but still was not able to swallow prenatal vitamins because of the lie that I had believed. God kept my beautiful baby girl and me safe through the pregnancy. It wasn't until my last trimester that I received a wake up call! I remember going to one of my weekly appointments not expecting to hear the news that I would receive. The mid-wife had finished her exam and began to express her concerns about the lack of sufficient weight gain. She then began to inform me that my baby was not taking on weight because I was not eating enough. The final warning was my wake call. She told me that if I did not begin to gain two pounds a week that they were going to take my baby early! At this point I knew that I was going to have to address the stronghold in my life. I knew it was time!

Through God's grace and His mercy I was able to put on the appropriate weight through out the last trimester and we were blessed with a healthy baby girl. After the excitement of our new baby girl had leveled off I began to ask God the question "Why". Why was I not experiencing the power He promised in my life to overcome fear? Why was I not living in the peace that He spoke of in His word? I knew God promised me in I John 4:18 that perfect love cast out fear and He instructed me through out the Bible to "Fear not" and yet I still feared. I tried to manage the fear and anxiety attacks in my own strength, utilized techniques that I had learned through out my life, but nothing seemed to stop them from coming. I begin to pursue God for the answers, never expecting the answer that I would find.

Camp meeting! Through the plan of God, my husband and I heard about a missionary couple who was ministering at my previous home church so we decided to go. I had not seen the Rickles family in quite some time so I was excited to see them and hear what the Lord was saying. That was when I heard the term "From Junk to Jewels"! I was puzzled and intrigued all at the same time. The word of the Lord was so powerful that week. Pastor Scott preached about the very trash in my life was the raw material that God needed to create beautiful jewels with. Pastor Rocio, his wife, preached about the very dirt in our lives being the very clay that God was going to mold in to a beautiful masterpiece. It was then that I knew this was the answer that I had been searching for.

After the camp meetings Pastor Scott and Pastor Rocio handed out copies of the "Junk to Jewels" book that they had been preaching on. The following week I began to think about specific circumstances that happened in my life from my past. I tried to dismiss them but they just seem to keep coming back. I knew it wasn't the enemy because there wasn't a feeling of condemnation attached to them. I knew that I did not want to have to relive the pain that those circumstances had caused in my life. I just wasn't ready to face them again. It was then that I tried to start reading the Junk to Jewels book and I put it down. I did not have the strength or courage to face the strongholds in

my life. I tried before and failed because the fear and anxiety were still present. Perplexed about what to do I continued to ask the Lord for answers.

It was that week when the Lord woke me up one night and told me to pick up the Junk to Jewels book. So, I did. I remember reading through chapter five about overcoming and about the redeeming power of the cross. It was then the Lord spoke to me and said “I have disempowered the enemy; his power is null and void. No longer will the memories from your past give you pain. I am with you so they will not have the same effect on you as they did before, but we have to revisit them so that I can turn your pain in to power.” In other words, the Lord wanted to turn my junk in to jewels!

I began to praise God for His revelation; His truth had set me free! I understood what the Lord wanted to do. He wanted to take the junk that was sitting around in my life and turn it in to precious jewels for His kingdom. The memories were not for me to experience the pain and anxiety again, but opportunities for me to overcome the works of the enemy in my life. I began to understand that God had abolished the enemy’s power and that through Christ I had the peace that I had been longing for. I then began to walk without fear and anxiety because I began to believe the truth instead of the lie!

I can now say with confidence that the enemy has been defeated and I have been resurrected through Christ. I have a Heavenly seat with Christ Jesus! Hallelujah, Praise you Lord! **NO more shame, NO more guilt!** I do not have to hide the mistakes that I have made in my life. Now my testimony is one of Freedom, Joy and Peace because I know the master craftsman who transforms any mistakes, any junk that I create into something so beautiful that it shines with precision! I now know that my junk has been turned in to precious jewels!

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Prologue

Why are we sitting here until we die?

Have you ever been denied a miracle?

As a believer perhaps there have been desperate times in your life when you felt it would be appropriate for God to give you a miracle. You read about His miracle working power in the Bible, you read that He loves you, now you want to see it in your circumstances. Putting these two assumptions together, you ask God for a miracle, and you expect Him to give it to you. Sometimes He does, but sometimes, perhaps even more often, He does not.

What are you to believe? Where is God in your affliction?

Perhaps we can learn from the events recorded in John chapter 6. Jesus had just supernaturally fed more than 5,000 poor and needy people in the setting of a third world country. He took five loaves of bread and two fish and did a miracle of increase that would astonish anybody. They thought for sure that this was the prophet that Moses had spoken of, the one who would again provide manna from Heaven. “Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone” (John 6:15).

The disciples entered their boat and crossed the sea. Jesus walked on the water, and they arrived together. But the crowd who had been fed looked for Jesus the next morning hoping for another miracle. They finally found Him.

Jesus refused their request.

“Jesus answered them and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him’” (John 6:26-27).

Jesus admonished them to turn their efforts to what God requires. He knew that feeding them again would simply be another short-term fix, but it would not solve their true problem,

which resided in their hearts and souls. Jesus wants us to prosper, Jesus wants to meet our needs, but from the inside out, not from the outside in! “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent’” (John 6:29).

Then Jesus started a conversation that really caught them off guard. He has a way of doing that. We may be thinking about a material or earthly need, and He turns our attention to the real issue.

“Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst’” (John 6:31-35).

Their response was interesting.

“The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, ‘I am the bread which came down from heaven’” (John 6:41).

Then He took them even deeper down His road of surprises when He said, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world” (John 6:51). “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him” (John 6:56).

Jesus was offering them a blood covenant with the Maker of the Universe.

This is what He offers you and me. Can you just imagine? The infinite almighty God, sinless and holy, offers to exchange places with you and me, mere created and sinful people! He knew that having a blood covenant would make these people one with Him. They would abide in Him and He would abide in them. He knew that if they accepted the covenant that all their needs would be cared for. Which would you rather have, a miracle to take care of today’s problem, or a covenant of blood with Deity?

“Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this*, said, ‘This is a hard saying; who can understand it?’” (John 6:60).

Jesus persisted and even made things sound more difficult. He asked them how much more they would be offended if He left and they could not even catch Him to eat His flesh and drink His blood. He was speaking of His crucifixion and resurrection (John 6:62). It is human nature to desire a god or an idol that the natural eye can see.

Here is the major point.

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life” (John 6:63). In other words He was saying, “You don’t have to actually become a cannibal and drink My blood, but if you want a blood covenant with Me you will eat My Word, because My Word and I are one. My Words are supernatural. The more of the Word you obtain, the more of My blood you receive!” Covenants are made with words. In this case the Word replaces blood. Yes, Jesus shed His blood, and that blood is transferred to you through His Word. You have an invitation to cut the blood covenant with the Maker, God Himself. All He has is yours, provided of course that all you have is His!

Sorry, Jesus, without a miracle I am out of here!

“From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more” (John 6:66).

Some stayed.

Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God’” (John 6:67-69).

Jesus, through the blood covenant and exchange that took place, gave us His resurrection power so that we could apply it here on earth on His behalf, in His name!

Quick fixes and miracles will not build your character; they will make you dependent slaves. “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word” (Psalm 119:67). God created us to be fed from the inside, not from the outside.

Remember He said in Matthew 6:28 that lilies are clothed better than Solomon because they have life inside of them. Our provisions and all of our needs – emotional, spiritual, and physical – are to come from the life of God on the inside of us.

The blood covenant.

Here is a brief description of how we appropriate the blood covenant with God. There are three main elements:

1. His Cross, representing His blood. We appropriate His Cross when we, through the Word, obtain revelation on the finished work of His Cross and the wonderful grace afforded by it. We must be prepared to believe this radical message of unfathomable love and God’s gifts bestowed upon us.

2. Your cross. “Then He said to *them* all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me’” (Luke 9:23). We take up our cross when we live a life of love, and say *no* to our old nature which is manifested by our old un-regenerated will, intellect, and emotions. We must be radical in our walk of love. Without it the resurrection power of Jesus simply will not operate. We must allow Him to live His life through us. Any part of our old flesh nature must be forsaken in order for the blood covenant to operate.

3. Words against the antagonist. We are to take the Word of God on our lips and speak it against our demonic enemies. We must be radical to speak God’s Word no matter how bad things look. Satan has historically and biblically always been the antagonist against God’s blood covenants.

This is called overcoming. The overcoming lifestyle is summarized in Revelation 12:11 which says, “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

The results are rewarding beyond imagination

Not only will you see your “Junk” turn into “Jewels” for the Kingdom of God, but also you will enjoy being more than a conqueror. What is that? The more is more of the close presence and personal fellowship with Jesus.

Living this way brings peace.

When you live the overcoming lifestyle, you have done all that God requires and you can relax and leave the results to Him. You can enter into the rest of God based upon faith in Him and His Word. You are not responsible for your life, God is. However, you are responsible to press into the overcoming lifestyle.

“Why are we sitting here until we die?”

That is what the four lepers said in 2 Kings chapter 7 when they felt that their lives were hopeless. They resided in Samaria, which was besieged by the Syrians. The people were suffering starvation. Also they were boiling their own children for food.

“Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, ‘Why are we sitting here until we die? If we say, ‘We will enter the city,’ the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die” (2 Kings 7:3-4).

The four walked out to the Syrian army’s camp and found that the Lord had caused the Syrians to run for their lives based upon a “noise” that they had heard. The lepers had all they wanted to eat, and eventually called the people of Samaria out to share in the abundance of food left behind by the Syrian army.

You may be in oppressed circumstances. But you do not need to sit there until you die. You need to know that there is something you can do. First, you need to know that the spiritual army that has besieged you is already defeated. Jesus defeated Satan at the Cross. Next, you need to know that if you enter into the overcoming lifestyle that you will enter into the abundant life as Jesus described it. As you walk and live this lifestyle, you will bring others into it just as the four lepers did.

Your afflictions, circumstances, economic environment, medical environment, and nation in which you live do not limit overcoming. Overcoming is not based upon living in the First World or the Third World. The Word of God will operate in a

Prologue

human heart wherever you may live. The requirement is the condition of the soil of your heart, not the natural soil in which you live. God is able to work in any environment. His power is not limited by the culture in which you live, it is only limited by the honesty and passion of your own heart.

My family and I have overcome some very difficult and naturally impossible circumstances. We have “done” something and have been overcomers, rather than just sit there and die.

What I write here is not just what I have learned, but as John said (paraphrased) in his first epistle, “We have seen it with our eyes, our life has touched it, testified to it, and we now proclaim it to you, the eternal life which was with the Father and has appeared to us.” We have seen Jesus in our overcoming, and now testify to you, that He is real, alive, and on task for you!

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:1-3, NIV). John went on and said, “And we are now writing these things to you so that our joy [in seeing you included] may be full [and your joy may be complete]” (1 John 1:4, Amplified Bible).

If you want to do something, read on!

Chapter 1 Cleansing

Are you discouraged?

Have you ever looked at your life and felt that God must not think very much of you? All you are experiencing is trouble, grief, sickness, lack, and you blame yourself or others. You sense your life is barren, that you have no purpose. You begin to justify your situation by thinking this is your ordained suffering, that God is punishing you for being the low down creature you are. You know you lack faith, but you hate hearing those people tell you that all you need is more faith. Sure you should be happy for that person who is being blessed, but it can make you feel like something is wrong with you.

You know you are going to Heaven when you die, but you are living in Hell before you get there. You try to study the Bible, but it seems distant and cold. All you can do is look up those Scriptures that justify your pitiful situation.

Perhaps you have attempted to believe God for blessings but it has not worked. Or perhaps you are a new believer and really don't know where to start.

You are made to feel ashamed, guilty, and you can even feel that you deserve what you are going through. Perhaps you have experienced broken dreams, financial and marital failures, sickness, disease, fear of the future, loss of family members, and the list goes on. You might say, "If I had just done things differently, I would not be in this mess right now." You can get into a grieving and even a self-pity process that puts you into deeper despair and depression. You try all kinds of remedies, but they all are short-lived. You pray but it seems like God does not hear. Or worse, perhaps you feel He does hear but refuses to fix your life right away because of some fault of our own.

Maybe you are a Christian but you have not been living for the Lord. Perhaps you have just drifted away and gone the way of the world.

God has a message for you!

He has a message that will encourage you where you are, He has compassion for your present situation without condemnation, and at the same time, He will pick you up and put you on the path to blessings, purpose, and fruitfulness. The message consists of mercy for the present and for the future, vision, faith, hope, and love. It begins with God's initiatives to bring you into His presence from which all healing and victory will spring forth. It includes the promise of purpose for your life.

1. *Hope and vision.* Someone once said, "The woe and waste and tears of life belong to the interlude and not to the finale."

2. *Hope and mercy.* Your problems carry in them the very raw materials God needs for your success. If you had your life together, you would not have the materials God needs to bless you, use you, and make you fruitful for His Kingdom. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

3. *Faith.* "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live" (John 5:25). "So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

The Lord will perform those things that you are unable to perform. He is your performer. He is your advocate. He is interested in you. Abraham needed to make no new beginnings of his own. God took the initiative with him. Abraham never thought of Canaan as his goal, he just followed and responded to the call of God to go somewhere, not knowing where. Abraham was not worthy, he simply heard God, when he was as good as dead, and responded in obedience (Genesis 12).

4. *Purpose.* There is purpose in your afflictions. We will see how your overcoming afflictions will defeat demons and will set other people free. Just by overcoming your afflictions you will be able to sweep other people into God's Kingdom.

You also will see your generational curses eradicated and your junk turned into jewels for the Kingdom of God.

5. Love. God's love is what draws you, and His awesome presence is what keeps you. "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4).

God's love was manifested through Hosea.

In the book of Hosea God compares His people to adulterers because they had turned from Him, their husband. Then He shows us the cause and effect of their restoration. First, God freely forgives them (Israel), and the result is that they turn to Him.

Read God's heart in this passage. "How can I give you up, Ephraim? *How* can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? *How* can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred. I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I *am* God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror" (Hosea 11:8-9).

God must cleanse your conscience in order to give you His abiding presence.

Jesus always meets us where we are located. He never asks us to "measure up to Him," but rather He finds ways of "coming down to us." If we are in some sort of pit, or are in some way experiencing a "shadow of death," He wants to come to our pit. If you are really hurting, then Jesus wants to start out with you at "square one." He wants you to know that you are pardoned and forgiven. You may feel like you have failed the Lord, perhaps time and time again. This feeling probably makes you feel guilty and condemned. Perhaps you feel like a burned out failure in ministry.

Hebrews 10:22 states that we cannot draw near to God with a guilty conscience. Satan knows that. He knows that drawing near to God will heal you. God knows that your only chance to make it is to draw near to Him with a clean conscience. "Let us

draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22).

However, if you have failed and failed again, how can you draw near to God? You may be thinking, “God must really be tired of me by now. I just cannot measure up to Him. I keep failing Him.”

You are in a vicious cycle! The more you sin and fail, the worse your conscience becomes, and the further away from God you become. The solution is to draw near to God, but you think that you just cannot. The more you feel condemned the more you sin and continue to do things that are not pleasing to God.

Perhaps you have been the victim of sin.

Perhaps you have been abused, physically, emotionally, or even sexually. You may think that no one knows how you feel. Well, be sure that at least one person knows how it feels to be abused, and that person is Jesus. He was horribly abused, even sexually abused when He hung naked on the Cross. You may find it impossible to forgive the person(s) who abused you. Think of this. God is very angry at what happened to you. His wrath is kindled. He is not passive about your abuse. However, all of God’s wrath was put on Jesus instead of you. Also, all of God’s wrath was put on Jesus instead of the person who hurt you. That is forgiveness; to put all of God’s wrath on Jesus instead of your abuser. Do it, and you will be set free!

Forgive yourself.

If you do not forgive yourself for things done in your past, you will be trapped in guilt and shame, and will not be able to experience the presence of God to the fullest. If you do not respect and love yourself, you cannot respect and love others. The Bible says that Jesus took all your sins. By not forgiving yourself you are saying that you are smarter than God, and that is pride!

Jesus’ love and your experience of that love is the answer.

Jesus is waiting for you, not to condemn you, but happy to have you come to the Cross to give Him your sin and the sin of those who hurt you. So many Christians run from God in

shame and guilt when they discover sin. God's grace is amazing!

God's remedy for sin is to come to the Cross, and then come to the Holy of Holies into His presence and let His character flood your character. His holiness will replace your sin and your unforgiveness. This is the only remedy. You cannot do it yourself. It is the displacement method. You cannot just empty out your sin, rather God floods you with His holiness and love and the sin must leave.

Do not be discouraged if you have to do this time and time again. God is not the one who condemns, Satan is. God will take you back as many times as you come. When you stop coming is when He is grieved. Walk out into the light of reality. Drop your self-deceit and face this sin for what it really is. Take sides with God against it. Purpose in your heart *never* to go back into that sin again.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Forgive means to remove. God will remove your sin like a surgeon removes a cancer, and He will put it on Jesus at the Cross.

"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:8-12).

The woman taken in adultery was given the power to change.

"When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, 'Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more'" (John 8:10-11).

Notice that Jesus did not tell this woman that she had broken the Law; she knew that. She was unable to break out of her cycle of adultery. Once she was forgiven, she could draw near to God in the flesh, the love of God in the person of Jesus, and she obtained the power to “go and sin no more.” But without the pardon, she would have remained in the endless cycle.

Make no mistake about it, however, Jesus does not just forgive us so that we may go our own way. Forgiveness is not something He put in the cafeteria line so that we could just pick and chose as we desire. Forgiveness cost Jesus His life. He died with your sin. He cannot just pardon your sin. He must take your sin on Himself and suffer the consequences of it. When He suffers your sin, attached to that package is that fact that He purchased you with His blood. You no longer belong to yourself, but to Him.

After we are cleansed we can follow Him.

We need to heed what Jesus said during this incident with the woman caught in adultery. He said in John 8:12, “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’”

You have been purchased with the highest price that could be paid, the very life and blood of Jesus. “For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20). If you wish to participate in the wonderful blessings of God, especially in the power of His resurrection that turns your junk into jewels, you must settle the ownership issue now. You are not expected to be perfect, but you should be perfectly submitted.

Now is the time to be honest with God and give Him those areas of your life that are not under His Lordship. He will love you freely and you will once again sense His love.

What is your responsibility?

“Faith without works is dead” (James 2:26). You must begin to understand that God expects you to develop your relationship

skills with Him, and that these skills are blood covenant based. He wants to “know” you and for you to “know” Him intimately. Are we saved by grace? Yes and no. We are saved by grace, which activates works; works in keeping the blood covenant relationship.

What if you got married, and your husband never spoke to you, and you never poured your heart out to him, or vice versa? What if he said, “I told you I loved you at the wedding, that should be enough”? What kind of relationship would that produce? In the same way we need to pour out our hearts to God and allow Him to pour His Word into us!

Also, what if the next-door neighbor woman constantly knocked on your door asking your husband to come over and talk to her? Your job as a wife would be to “resist” her. How often? As often as she knocked!

Satan and his assistants are knocking on your door 24/7. You need to continually resist with the spoken Word of God.

Psalm 23:6 says, “Surely goodness [prosperity, moral goodness] and mercy [cheched, meaning His unconditional covenant love, akin to agape] shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

Some people would ask, “Why would God’s prosperity, His goodness, and His unconditional covenant love follow me, rather than go before me?”

It is because our past needs help and healing. God is covering our past with His love, forgiveness, and mercy. When we know that our past (our wounds, our sin, our mistakes, our former enemies) is taken care of, then our present and our future can be abundant. We can then dwell in His house forever, or in other words, have intimacy with Him.

Our suggestion is to develop your relationship skills with God as outlined in the appendix A.

Chapter 2

Junk to Jewels

“O you afflicted one, Tossed with tempest, *and* not comforted, Behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, Your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones” (Isaiah 54:11-12).

Notice, in chapter 21 of the Book of Revelation, the Kingdom of God is made up of jewels. Also notice that in the beginning of Revelation the apostle John is greatly afflicted. How did the afflictions become jewels? Jesus was showing John, and you and me, how to turn our afflictions into something significant, eternal material for God’s Kingdom. We will investigate this path in this book.

Many of the ways we humans attempt to compensate for an imperfect life full of unmet expectations, broken marriages, failed business, unexpected tragedies and terminal diseases seem to work for a season. However, they are really just different degrees of bandages that cover a deep wound.

My wife and I have both faced horrible circumstances in life. In them we sought Jesus, the God of the Bible, through the Holy Spirit with intensity, total commitment, and passion.

We noticed several things over the years.

1. The “junk” in our lives has always turned into “jewels.” God showed us that the eternal value in our overcoming process was far more valuable than our own personal victory.
2. With each trial we found ourselves becoming more intimate with the Living God.
3. God has given us eyes to look back and notice a path that became a familiar one. He has shown this path to us in the Scriptures as something that He calls “overcoming.”
4. God considers our afflictions, sicknesses, poverty, etc. as a gateway to abundance, not as our final judgment, or our designated lot in life. Colossians 1:20 says, “and by Him to

reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.” Reconcile means to make a friend from an enemy. All things, everything that comes into your life that looks like an enemy will be made a friend by the blood of Jesus. That is a law, but you have to cooperate and believe. How does that happen? It sounds too good to be true, you may say. The worse thing that ever happened was Jesus’ crucifixion. Look how God made that to be a friend! Your situation cannot be worse than the Son of God being crucified. The Cross and resurrection made all things potentially a friend.

5. God has used the Book of Revelation to help us see things from His point of view. God told the apostle John in Revelation chapter 4 to “Come up here.” When we allow God to lift us above circumstances and see things from His viewpoint, our circumstances can be used as seeds.

6. This path is based upon the principle of death and resurrection. Jesus, the perfect lamb sacrifice for your sins, suffered perfectly and completely for every evil in your life. Jesus took the ultimate evil that confronts you; therefore, by law, that evil *must* turn out to be a blessing (if you are on the overcoming path).

7. God did not violate man’s free will to rebel and not serve his creator, but He did provide a way to turn the disastrous results into a blessing! Jesus, as a perfect sinless man, suffered every kind of death and shade of death deserved by you and me, the most imperfect and rebellious men and women. If we accept this free gift, the divine exchange, then our “deaths” turn into resurrections of super-abundant proportions. Even our final death, the deaths of our bodies, propels us into the presence of God in Heaven, if we accept the exchange. “O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:55, KJV).

8. Jesus took the very essence of your pain and suffering. He absorbed the cause *and* the result of it. Therefore, if you believe and cooperate with Him, He will transfer the benefits of His resurrection power to your present circumstances. He will

deem your curse a seed. He will walk you through planting that seed, nurturing it, and with faith and patience hold your hand until that seed of death resurrects from the dead into a blessing that you cannot contain.

Resurrection always requires a death!

When the Bible talks about “death,” it does not always refer to just the death of our body, as we commonly define the word. There are degrees of death; there are the sub-works of death. There is a death of the spirit and the soul. There are deaths of dreams, expectations, hopes, and deaths of our good health. There are deaths of relationships. We will call these “shades of death.” It really does not matter whether or not you are responsible for your suffering. Sometimes we just are victims of living in an imperfect world.

Quite often people are born into a generational curse that comes down the family line from many generations, which makes them victims from the womb. You may not even know that you are a victim. You may feel that your afflictions are just the result of your own actions. It could be that your afflictions are the result of a spiritual curse passed down from your family. Maybe you are the victim of parents who did not show you love and perhaps have even rejected you. Perhaps you have tried hard at making life work, but everything just seems like you are “wrestling against a shadow.”

Perhaps you are in a different category. Perhaps your overcoming has to do with your character, something from the old nature that still attempts to “hang on.” Perhaps it is something like Paul experienced and described in Romans chapter 7, “For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I” (Romans 7:15, KJV).

You may have been born into some kind of shade of death. Perhaps you are living in a Third World country where just existing is a difficult daily task. You may be facing starvation, unemployment, civil wars, filthy water, and homelessness. These are all shades of death, and they all are the result of thousands of years of Satan’s work and works of man who is

disconnected from his Creator. You did not choose where you would be born. You had no choice to be born the son of a queen or the son of a slave. But you do have a choice to do something positive with your circumstance, rather than to just sit and feel like a victim. I am not talking about positive thinking or some kind of self-improvement scheme. I am inviting you to tap into the power of the God who created the universe!

There is yet another way you may be experiencing afflictions. If you truly decide to live by faith in the Word of Jesus Christ, with no compromise, you will suffer persecutions and afflictions.

I challenge you with this question.

Why should you be afraid to die, or experience some shade of death, if it is the first step to resurrection? “Resurrection,” you might say, “I thought that was for Jesus and perhaps for me in the afterlife, after my body dies?” It is, but Jesus always taught that the Kingdom of God could be experienced here on Earth, in this life. So many people miss God’s best because they refuse to embrace their afflictions as seeds. They insist on hanging on to their lower life. “Then He said to *them* all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and is himself destroyed or lost?’” (Luke 9:23-25).

Afflictions are seeds!

God set up several laws when He created the material universe, as we know it. A law is something that always works. He set up gravity, and it always works unless another law interferes. He set up the principle of seed, time, and harvest as stated in Genesis 8:22, “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease.” In the seed principle, He established that a seed must die in the ground before it produces much fruit. The fruit contains more seed, which, when planted, also must die. So the

process is, death first, life, or resurrection next. Jesus, referring to His crucifixion and resurrection said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain” (John 12:24). If we look at our shades of death as seeds, then we can rejoice as the farmer who just planted a crop of corn and is anticipating life, or fruit, from the death of his seeds.

Each result of our separation from God is some form of death, some shade of death. It can be called a curse instead of a blessing. However, God did not stop there. Thousands of years after Adam, Jesus was born of a woman with God’s Word acting as the male sperm. God was actually crucified in the material world. But He did not stay dead! Three days later He rose from the dead. God resurrected Jesus His son, thus defeating death, and every shade of death, including yours. What looked like the greatest tragedy turned out to be the greatest blessing! If Satan had known the end result, he would not have convinced the people to crucify Jesus.

If you feel or think that your affliction is not a candidate for this process, if you feel that somehow your situation is beyond God’s ability or even His desire to work out for you, think about the resurrection of Jesus and the miracle of it. Jesus was beaten to a point of being unrecognizable, His body was torn apart on the Cross, He died, He was wrapped in hundreds of pounds of cloth and ointment, He actually suffered in Hell. He was dead and in Hell. It looked hopeless. However, when God spoke to Him: “... You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” And again: “I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son” (Hebrews 1:5b), He was miraculously resurrected. Resurrected does not mean just brought back to life, as was the case with Lazarus in John chapter 11. When Jesus was raised from the dead, He was born all over again; a new species of being, the Bible calls it a new creation.

Jesus died a man of our race, the race of Adam, and He was resurrected a new race, which you and I now partake of. So it is with our afflictions. We bury them as something corruptible, but they are resurrected into blessings and jewels for the New

Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God. I think one of the reasons we have a difficult time believing this is that we usually see our infirmities and weaknesses as stronger than the resurrection life that Jesus gave us. Also, I believe that for thousands of years, the Church has not emphasized the truth of the power of the resurrection life that Jesus left in us through the Holy Spirit's indwelling.

When we were born again, when we received the Word planted in our hearts, our old nature died and an entirely new life was implanted into our spirit. The Blood Covenant with Jesus has transplanted our spiritual blood. We received His spotless blood and He received our sinful blood.

As it states in Romans chapter 6, this life is no longer subject to sin and death, nor is it subject to sickness, disease, and curses. Romans 6:14 (Amplified Bible) says, "For sin shall not [any longer] exert dominion over you, since now you are not under Law [as slaves], but under grace [as subjects of God's favor and mercy]."

The difficulty with most people is that they do not see that this new life has been granted as a seed that needs to be nourished and developed into maturity. As this new life is nurtured through our fellowshiping with the Lord and taking in His Word, through giving Him our sin on a regular basis, that part of us that is not acting in love, and by continually speaking the Word against Satanic beings, our new life begins to mature and become stronger than the infirmity or curse that was acting against it.

The seeds of afflictions will bear fruit.

The fruit will be luscious, and it will contain more seed for forming a new crop with which to bless others. "Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have *sown* and increase the fruits of your righteousness" (2 Corinthians 9:10).

This process I just described is called overcoming, it is also called "turning junk into jewels." That is the subject of this book. We will go into more detail to help you step on to and stay on the overcoming path and lifestyle.

So why are you cursing your seed of pain, your disadvantage, your lack of opportunity, your sickness, loss of relationship, etc? Rejoice! Sure it came from Satan, but Satan has just provided your seed for a blessing. 1 Corinthians 2:8 says, “which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” Praising God for the victory and rejoicing while we are still in pain will give God more to work with.

Overcoming is more than just making it.

I believe that overcoming is more than just making it through something difficult, although it includes that. I believe that overcoming is a vital process about which God wants His people to be educated. I believe a great deal of Scripture is about overcoming. I believe that only a Scripturally guided overcoming process can accomplish the work that is closest to God’s heart. I believe that God wants His people to be intelligent about this process and not just achieve its benefits by accident.

I believe that God’s main purpose for this book is to educate and encourage His people so that His purposes may be accomplished in Heaven and Earth. Secondly, I believe that God wishes to relieve much pain and suffering for the future generations, our children, and their children. I believe that God has rewards for overcomers both now and in eternity. I also believe that God may have drawn you to this book as a means of getting to know Him, perhaps for the very first time!

Overcoming accomplishes evangelism.

It is a historic fact that the First Century church knew that for each martyr approximately 300 people were saved for Jesus. It is much the same today. When a person overcomes affliction he is a successful martyr for the Kingdom of God. A person does not need to be a martyr unto death, just a living sacrifice as Paul talked about in Romans chapter 12.

The issue is not so much about you and your circumstances, but it is more about God and what He wants to accomplish to save this world through your life.

Luke 11:21-22 states that when we overcome, we not only experience victory for our own life, but at the same time, we take the spoils of war of the demons that were against us. That means that others are set free, maybe in your family, maybe in another nation. I have experienced this more than once.

“When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils” (Luke 11:21-22).

Your jewels are custom made just for you!

Revelation chapter 21 shows that twelve jewels create the foundation of the Kingdom of God. This, I believe, indicates that there are various types of jewels for various types of people and situations. Our overcoming will not be just like someone else's. We are not always, and very rarely, sure what our overcoming will actually look like. We should not attempt to dictate to God exactly what we expect as the end result of our overcoming process. In doing so we may be blocking His power. However, if He gives you a dream and a vision, go for it and don't let anybody talk you out of it. It is better to dream big and be wrong, than not to dream at all. God will tenderly take care of you as He has taken care of me in these types of circumstances!

Ephesians 3:20 (Amplified Bible) says, “Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams].”

A devotion quoted from Streams in the Desert says it well. ¹

"I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the

¹ Cowman, Mrs. Charles E. *Streams in the Desert* 2, December 3. Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan Publishing House, 1966, pp. 339-340

LORD, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel" (Isaiah 45:3).

Years ago, before the city of London had modern paved streets, the story is told of an incident in Ruskin's life. He was known during his lifetime for never having missed an opportunity to relate the goodness of his God. While walking down one of the streets of London with a friend, the friend turned and disgustingly commented to Ruskin, "What dirty, dreadful loathsome stuff!" He was referring to the peculiarly unpleasant compound, the mud of London streets. 'Hold my friend,' said Ruskin. "Not so dreadful after all. What are the elements of this revolting substance? First there is sand, but when its particles are crystallized according to the law of its nature, what is nicer than clean white sand? And when that which enters into it is arranged according to a still higher law, we have the matchless opal. What else have we in this mire? Clay. And the materials of clay, when the particles are arranged according to their higher laws, make the brilliant sapphire. What other ingredients enter into the London muck? Soot. And soot in its crystallized perfection forms the diamond. There is but one other, water. And water when distilled according to the higher law of its nature, forms the dewdrop resting in the exquisite perfection in the heart of the rose." So in the muddy, lost soul of man is hidden the image of his Creator, and God will do His best to find His opals, His sapphires, His diamonds and dewdrops. – T.L Cuyler.

Help Wanted Construction Workers

Limited number of positions open for the construction of New Jerusalem, a City designed by Jehovah God and being built by Jesus of Nazareth. Exceptional pay. The Master has a habit of paying for a full day in compensation for one hour of work. Fringe benefits include health insurance, retirement with full pay, protection in all forms of evil, need, and want; free emotional and psychological counseling.

Job consists of using The Master's own tools and property to add several finishing sections to The City, called New Jerusalem.

Qualifications: Applicants must be willing to submit to being changed (during a probation period) from a foolish to a wise virgin in the context of Matthew chapter 25.

Warning-Disclosure: Many former applicants have been disappointed and quit during the probation period when they discovered that the Master's tools were their problems, perplexities, infirmities and handicaps which have been strained through The Master's Cross, washed and coated in His Blood disarmed and defused of all evil and their ability to harm, and converted to a highly valuable construction material known as jewels through an amazing but time proven process known as "overcoming." Many preferred to stay as foolish virgins and see these "tools" as enemies. When their Master returned at the end of the probation period, they did not even recognize Him.

After the conversion process from foolish to wise the few that made it discovered that they had been carrying around the most valuable raw material in the universe. When they plunged these problems into the Cross the very nature of these former problems had actually been changed from bitter to sweet, from enemy to friend, and their reward was beyond explanation. Some actually reported that they saw wolfs fellowshipping with lambs.

Interested parties should contact the Holy Spirit.

Larry Chkoreff June 13, 1991

Chapter 3 Paul's Junk

The gateway to his true inheritance

We can experience portions of the resurrected power and Jesus' Kingdom now on earth! Jesus told a parable in Matthew chapter 20 about the weakest of the people receiving the kingdom before the stronger ones. He said that the last would be first and the first would be last. The man in the story who was first only worked one hour while the others worked most of the day. Recently in a Spanish-speaking country the congregation worshipped at the hearing of this story and carried banners stating: "El hombre una sola hora." The one-hour man! They were proud to be one-hour people.

The Apostle Paul grasped this truth. Paul expressed this time and time again. I would just like to use two Scripture passages to demonstrate how he felt. When the messenger of Satan afflicted him, it probably had to do with his list in 2 Corinthians chapter 11. That list included, being flogged with thirty-nine lashings five times, shipwrecked and spending the night in the sea, being robbed, facing perils by the heathen, perils in the city, in the wildernesses, in the sea and among false brethren, being hungry, cold and naked, and then having the cares of the new churches that had many problems and attacks. In addition, history records that these false brethren were legalistic Jews who always attacked Paul's message of grace.

His response to all this was, "Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:8-10). Notice he said, "I take pleasure." He did not say he just endured them, but rather they were profitable for him. Why did he think this way? Let us take a peek into his mind and

some of the things he had learned as shown in Philippians chapter 3.

First, Paul listed his strengths, the things that he had accomplished in life and even the things and privileges he was born into.

Philippians 3:4-6 says,

4 "though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;

6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

Then, he stated that these assets and strengths were of really no value when compared to something else. Notice he did not state that they were of no value at all, but that they had no value when compared to a greater thing.

Philippians 3:7-11 [brackets indicate Amplified version] says,

7 "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss [dung] for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection [the power out flowing from His resurrection which it exerts over believers], and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead [that lifts me out from among the dead even while in the body].”

Paul was a performance-based person.

He achieved his significance from how he performed. But later, after he changed, he wrote in Ephesians 6:6 that being a man-pleaser and working for eye-service were attributes of slaves. He finally understood that his significance was in his identification with Jesus only. Prior to that revelation his significance was according to the formula:

How I perform + How you view my performance = My Identity.

I will paraphrase what Paul said in Philippians.

“Look, I know I have been born into privilege, even religious privilege, that I have been educated with and by the best. I have performed perfectly in my vocations, I was a real performer, and few people could keep up with me. However, I have noticed something interesting. The fruit that I see in my life and in my ministry is fruit that came from my afflictions. That fruit far surpassed anything that all my natural strengths could and did accomplish. I was amazed! His resurrection of my afflictions has produced more fruit than all of my performance! Therefore I long for His resurrection power to work in my life, and I count all other things as “dung.” I would rather have Him turn my junk into Jewels any day!”

He also stated in Colossians 1:24, “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.”

Why was Paul's junk his gateway to his true inheritance?

We all were born under the curse of our old genealogy. Some have greater curses, some have greater blessings coming from our natural genealogy depending upon our forefathers. However, we all come from the same forefather Adam, who put himself and all of us under a curse.

But now, as we have received the new birth, we have a choice. We do not obtain the blessings of our new spiritual genealogy by default. Certainly it is by grace, but it is also by our own choice. How do we make that choice? Too many Christians miss the whole point on this and spend their lives inheriting curses.

Abraham in Genesis chapter 15 experienced the benefits of exchanging his old cursed genealogy for God's spiritual DNA through a blood covenant. However, Abraham never shed his own blood. Two theophanies (or early physical manifestations) of Deity walked the bloody trench while Abraham was put to sleep. The blood benefit was actually transferred to him by the words of the covenant. I believe that today's Jews still enjoy this blessing.

Then in Deuteronomy chapter 28 God states that we will be blessed if we hear and obey His Words. He also says that we will be cursed if we do not hear and do not obey His Words. In Deuteronomy 30 He goes on to say that we should choose between life and death, blessing and curse, and that choice is made by words. Paul quoted Deuteronomy 30:14 in Romans chapter 10. "But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil" (Deuteronomy 30:14-15). It goes on to explain that our choices are in our hearts and in our words, as well, and in whose word we hear and obey. You cannot obey someone's word on a consistent basis if you don't hear the Word consistently.

Jesus was telling the poor people in John chapter 6 that in order to have life they needed to eat His flesh and drink His blood. That disgusted many, and many of His disciples departed from that time forth. Then, in John 6:63, Jesus uncovered the real truth about spiritual DNA and the blood covenant as He said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." In other words, the life of the soul may be in the blood, as stated in Leviticus 11, however, the spiritual life, or the spiritual DNA, is in words. Jesus also stated in that chapter

that He, the Word, is the heavenly manna. How often are we to eat manna? Did the Israelites eat it only once a month because they remembered what it tasted like? Some say, "Why do I need the Word every day? I can remember what I studied last year."

Jesus bore all of your curses, and indeed your entire genealogy on the Cross. He offers to you all of his genealogy, all of the blessings through the blood covenant. However, it is your choice to feast on the Word in order to inherit His genealogy, and therefore the blessings.

To the degree you hear and obey God's Word, you will receive more of His genealogy and blessings. To the degree you hear and obey any other words, you will receive your own natural family genealogy and the resulting curses. The more you hear only the words of those at work, worldly philosophy, your family and their traditions, and from the TV set, the more you will be like your grandfather, or perhaps someone else in your family line that lived his/her life under the curse of sickness, addictions, sexual perversity, rebellion, poverty, or some other curse. If you do nothing, then by default you will be under the curse of the old genealogy.

Ancestral worship is not limited to primitive Africa. It is the "default" religion of most nations and people groups. Why? It is Satan's strategy for keeping us in the bondage of our generational curse. It is even prevalent in the so-called "civilized" Western nations, however, under a sneaky disguise.

The more Word you hear and obey, the more Word you meditate upon, the more Word you speak, the more of the life of Jesus, your true inheritance, will come into your life. I believe that even more of this blessing comes upon us when we pray in our spiritual language for extended periods of time. They are words of the Spirit!

Jesus said in John 17:17 that His Word actually sanctifies us or changes us into His image. That is our true inheritance, our true genealogy.

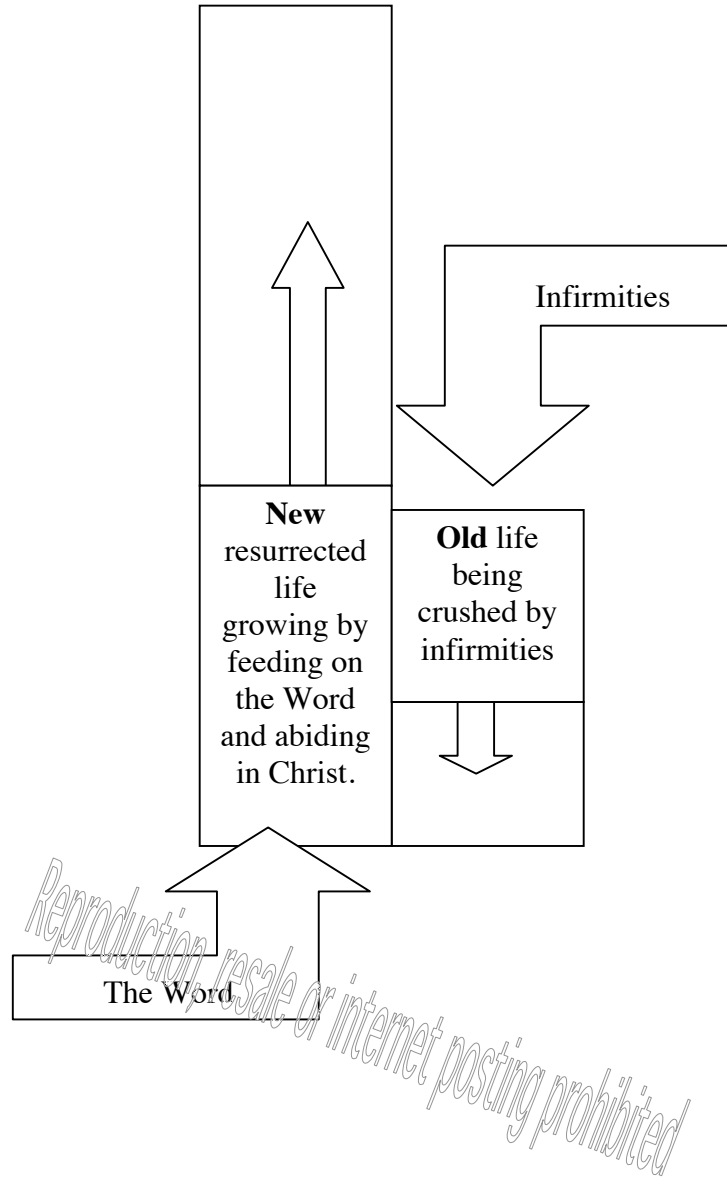
The answer to the above question of how Paul's junk brought his true inheritance is simple.

His sufferings weakened his old flesh nature to the point that he knew that all of his credentials were worth as dung compared to the resurrected genealogy of Jesus. His sufferings actually diminished and extinguished his old genealogy to the point that Paul began to covet more suffering. He stated in Philippians 3:10 that his passion was to KNOW Jesus. That is a term describing intimate fellowship that can only be achieved through the exchange of words, His and yours.

Can you say that? We don't want to suffer in the wrong way, to suppose that God is teaching us some lesson with a big stick, however, if our suffering is killing the old flesh nature that only can bring curses, then you can praise God!

God does not want polished junk; He is looking for jewels! God actually takes the suffering and infirmities caused by your old genealogy, and with your permission, buries them and then raises them in a supernatural resurrection.

I used to be tempted to compare myself to others. I could always find someone who was more gifted than I in whatever I was confronted with. Let me tell you right now, it is pure insanity to compare yourself to anyone else! It will cripple you! Instead, embrace your limitations, your infirmities as raw material for the resurrection, for some kind of jewel. Grab hold of Paul's mindset. He would rather have had one jewel for the Kingdom of God, then ten thousand pieces of things from his natural life. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). Polished junk won't stand before God. It may taste good, look good, but it is still junk. It must go through death and resurrection before it counts for anything eternal!



Chapter 4 Blessed Are The Poor

With God, poverty in any form is simply the gateway to abundance. We need to renew our mind to think like God on this subject.

The world has a way of making us feel totally defeated and without hope when we are going through bad times. If we are experiencing afflictions, we can feel like God wants to keep us poor forever, or that He had designed us for mediocrity. However, God has a totally different view! He says that being “poor” is the door through which we enter His Kingdom, His blessings, and His remedies. His goal for us is abundant life.

What does poor mean?

Poor in spirit means not having resources adequate to meet the demands made upon you. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).

The definition of “poor” according to Strong’s Concordance² is: “1) reduced to beggary, begging, asking alms; 2) destitute of wealth, influence, position, honour; 2a) lowly, afflicted, destitute of the Christian virtues and eternal riches; 2b) helpless, powerless to accomplish an end; 2c) poor, needy; 3) lacking in anything; 3a) as respects their spirit; 3a1) destitute of wealth of learning and intellectual culture, which the schools afford (men of this class most readily give themselves up to Christ’s teaching and proved themselves fitted to lay hold of the heavenly treasure).” Poor in spirit is not having resources adequate to meet the demands made upon you for life.

God loves to fill empty vessels.

In 2 Kings chapter 4, the prophet Elisha told the poor widow to go borrow as many empty vessels as she could. All the empty vessels were supernaturally filled with oil, and when she

² The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1995.

told her son to go find another vessel he told her that there were none left. God did not run out of oil, she simply ran out of emptiness. Bring God your emptiness, admit it, be honest with Him, show Him your hunger and thirst, and watch Him be God!

The following devotion by author Watchman Nee says it well. ³

"If that is the case, 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).

How does the Church reach her goal? Only by traveling the pathway from pressure to enlargement, from poverty to enrichment. You ask: What do we mean by enlargement through pressure? When three are shut into a furnace and the three become four that is enlargement through pressure. Some find a furnace rather close quarters for three, so they seek a way of escape; others accept the limitation, and in accepting it, make room for a Fourth. Not to let difficulties shut us out from God, but to let them shut us in to him, that is enlargement through pressure. Some, through pressure, reach God's end; others come to an end in the pressure. Some die in straitness; others, through straitness, find fullness of life. Some murmur when trials befall, finding in them only restraint, limitation and death; others praise God for the trials, and in doing so discover the pathway to enlargement, liberation, and abundance of life.

What if we don't think we are poor?

I believe many Christians remain shallow and mistake their own strengths for God's blessings. Some people are very

³ Nee, Watchman. *A Table in the Wilderness, Daily Meditations*, Wheaton, Ill; Tyndale House Publishers. Fort Washington, Pennsylvania; - Christian Literature Crusade. p.p. January 25

strong in will and intellect and have powerful emotions. They are often capable to defend against the trials in life that are meant to break down these very qualities of the old nature and the flesh. Their self-love and powerful souls are often capable to prevent the working of the Cross in their lives.

This idea is easily misunderstood. They would say that God is blessing them and that God does not bring trials and ordained sufferings. I would partially agree. God wants to bless us and He does not send things to hurt us. However, I do believe in ordained trials and sufferings, which are all meant to make us “poor in spirit” so that we may be candidates for God’s true blessings.

Many Christians in First World countries feel that God is blessing them, when actually they have just hooked on to the prosperity of the world’s system. That is not God’s best. There are two kinds of prosperity. The first is based upon the world’s system, which is graduation upwards. It utilizes the strength of the soul, the mind, will and emotions to survive and prosper. The second is based upon the Kingdom of God, which is based upon blessings coming from resurrection. However, death is required prior to resurrection. When we receive a blessing from Kingdom principles it is eternal and cannot be compared with blessings from the world.

The following is quoted from Watchman Nee from his book The Release of the Spirit.⁴

No life manifests more beauty than the one who is broken! Stubbornness and self will have given way to beauty in the one who has been broken by God. For example, consider Jacob in the Old Testament. We see how even in his mother’s womb he struggled with his brother. He was subtle, tricky, and manipulative. But his life was full of sorrows and grief. As a youth, he fled from home. For twenty years, Laban cheated him. The

⁴ Nee, Watchman. *The Release of the Spirit*. Riverside, CA. Sure Foundation Publishers, 1965, p.p. 20,21.

wife of his heart's love - Rachel - died prematurely. The son of his love - Joseph - was sold into slavery. Years later, another one of his dearly loved sons, Benjamin, was detained in Egypt. Repeatedly, he was dealt with by God, meeting misfortune after misfortune. He was stricken by God once, twice and thrice. Indeed, his whole history is said to be a history of being stricken by God. Finally, after many recurring dealings, the man Jacob was transformed. In his last few years, he was quite transparent. How dignified was his answer to Pharaoh! How beautiful was his end when he worshipped God leaning on his staff. How clear were his blessings to his descendants! After reading the last page of his history, we want to bow our heads and worship God. Here is one who is matured, who knows God so experientially. Several decades of dealings have resulted in the breaking of Jacob's outward man. In his old age, his life of brokenness is a picture of beauty.

Each one of us has much of the same 'Jacob-nature' in us. Our only hope is that the Lord may blaze a way out of us, breaking our outward man - breaking it to such a degree that the inward man may come out and be seen. This is precious! This is the way for those who serve the Lord. Only by this process can we serve the Lord, and only by this procedure can we lead men to the Lord. All else is limited in its value. Doctrinal and theological knowledge does not have that much usefulness. What is the use of mere mental knowledge of the Bible if the outward man remains unbroken? Only the person through whom God can come forth is useful.

Jacob's name was changed to Israel (God prevails) when his thigh was broken in an all-night wrestling match with the angel. The thigh is the strongest part of the body, the flesh. Jacob walked with a limp the rest of his life, but he was a warrior for God! Let us value our broken thighs and our limps!

God will overcome not only our difficult circumstances, but even more importantly, He wants to and will overcome our difficult personality traits, those parts of our old nature that are not like Jesus.

The Kingdom of God operates on different principles than the Kingdom of the world.

The world operates on increase and upward promotion for the strong. The Kingdom of God works on death first and resurrection next, our weakness making room for God's power. Without death there can be no resurrection! James 2:5 says, "Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?"

Jesus gives great value to bruised people.

One of the prophecies about Jesus as written in Isaiah 42:3 was, "A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth." In those days a bruised reed referred to an object that had no value and should just be discarded. People would take reeds that grew near the water's edge, cut a piece of it, cut some holes in it, and thus they would have made a flute or a recorder on which they would play music. These instruments were very fragile and would bruise easily. Once they were damaged the owner would break it and discard it. It would be much easier to make a new one than to attempt to repair the bruised one.

The smoking flax was a wick from a lamp that was so worn out that it would no longer burn, it would simply smoke. Therefore the owner would discard it and purchase or make a new one.

The prophecy says that Jesus would not do that. He would see a bruised person and see their value. He would see the prostitute, the tax collector, and see their potential. He would see the victims of divorce and failure, the financial failures, the moral failures, and instead of discarding them, He would heal them and fix them. He would see people who were burned out with trying to make their lives work and consider them the

finest potential for His Kingdom. As a matter of fact, He felt that they had more potential for His Kingdom than the strong, proud, and successful.

Reader, take hold of this concept!

This is our God! He loves you as you are. If you have failed, if you have not been able to make life work, you have just the potential God wants. When you allow this to soak in, you will realize the love He has for you, and how valuable you are to Him. Knowing that God loves you just the way you are is the most powerful step in healing. A person will never really be spiritually and emotionally healed until the love of God towards them becomes their identity. If you are continually attempting to establish your identity by your work, your appearance, your ministry, your friends, or even by your spouse, you will be miserable. You need to know that Jesus the creator loves you in your poverty and sees great potential in you.

When we see the apostle John in Heaven, we might expect him to identify himself in many different ways. He might say that he knew Jesus personally on earth, or that he wrote the Book of John, and the epistles of John, or that it was he who wrote the Book of Revelation. But I think he will simply tell us what he said many times in his writings, that he was simply one of His disciples whom Jesus loved. “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23).

The rich young ruler

It is a blessing to start off poor. Jesus never said that we would stay that way. If Jesus came to bring good news to the poor, then good news must be that they do not have to stay poor forever. However, we need to start there in order to be blessed. Blessings are a derivative of suffering, or being poor.” The Rich Young Ruler is a good example. “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God’” (Matthew 19:23-24). I

can personally testify that each time I become “poor” in some area of life, that is when I experience the Kingdom of God for that area.

Jesus spoke this to his disciples after his encounter with the Rich Young Ruler. This man “had it made.” He was rich, young, in strong authority like a governor or magistrate. He was also a very religious Jew who prided himself on keeping the laws. He was not suffering, however, he did have a longing in his heart for more. The issue I want to bring to your attention is the contrast that Jesus made between the rich and the poor.

The disciples were confused by the encounter with the Rich Young Ruler as recorded in Matthew chapter 19. They thought he was the example to be followed. Jesus went on to explain the principle of the Kingdom of God to His disciples by telling them a parable story as recorded in Matthew chapter 20.

Let us take a peek into what Jesus was telling these disciples in this parable. He was comparing “rich” and “poor” people and their privileges.

Matthew 20:1-7 says,

1 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

2 Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

4 and said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’

7 They said to him, ‘Because no one hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.’”

Obviously the landowner hired the strong, young, and qualified workers first. Wouldn't you? Notice however, that the weak did not give up. They stayed in the marketplace waiting for someone to hire them. There must have been another group of people who were on the streets begging, or even laying in bed sleeping.

Perhaps these weak people had some sort of physical handicap. Perhaps they were just poor in circumstances. Maybe they were too old. Perhaps they had a negative attitude towards themselves and life. But one thing for sure, they were the "poor in spirit."

Matthew 20:8-10 says,

8 "So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.'

9 And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius."

The weak people who worked for only one hour received the same compensation as the strong ones who worked all day. They also received their compensation *first*. Remember that this parable is about the Kingdom of God. Therefore I submit that the wages, or the reward paid, is the functioning of the Kingdom of God in the practical daily lives of those who qualify. We don't have to wait to die to live in the Kingdom of God. We are only pilgrims on this earth. We are actually citizens of the Kingdom of God. Why not enjoy the benefits now?

We are candidates for God's power operating through His Kingdom when we reach the end of our own resources. Kingdom living is Word living; it is living in real-time contact with Jesus through the Holy Spirit. My family and I are living testimonies of this truth! "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

Here is the point. Those who qualify as being weak or poor in the world's standards will live in the foretaste of the Kingdom of God now, on this earth, before they die! Hebrews 6:5 says, "and [they] have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come." Some people, like the Rich Young Ruler, may experience the Kingdom of God, but only after they die (I hope he did.). The last will be first and the first last. By the way, this parable in no way endorses being lazy or asking for handouts. I believe these poor people had the discipline of staying in there, and hoping beyond hope!

Continuing in Matthew 20:11-16 which says,

11 "And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner,

12 saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.'

13 But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?

14 Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you.

15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'

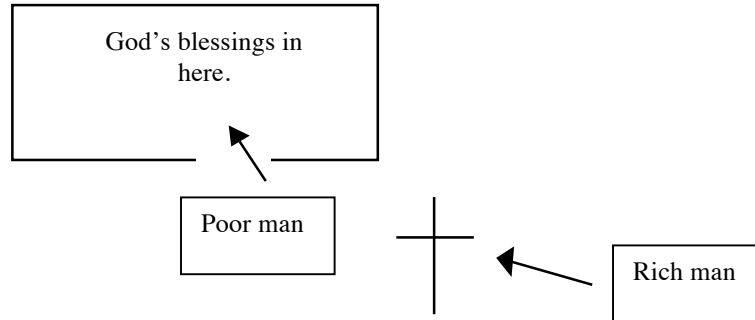
16 So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."

Jesus was talking about God's grace. God just wants to show us that He is good. He favors those who are down in circumstances. His solution was not to make them dependent upon something on this earth; His solution was to give them entrance into the Kingdom of God. The weak people in the parable in Matthew 20 were the desperate ones who needed to be rescued. The master came and he had them participate according to their own ability, which apparently was not very much. However, he did not pay them according to their ability, he paid them according to his goodness and grace.

Look at this picture. The rich man in the picture became

rich by his own power. Which position would you rather be in?
The response of many people would surprise you!

Which position would you rather be in?



This picture describes the faithful overcomers. They must stand for a long time, they have little power, but they have an open door.

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens: ‘I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.’”
“Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown” (Revelation 3:7-8, 11).

It is not a blessing to stay poor.

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly” (John 10:10). God wants His blessings to overtake you. Being poor is only a blessing to the extent that it is a starting point, but it is not the end. In Matthew chapter 6:25-34 Jesus was exhorting people not to strive and worry about temporal blessings such as what to eat and what to wear because that was not His design for His children. That is what the Gentiles do. A Gentile is a person who has no blood covenant with God. Jesus said, “But seek first the kingdom of

God and His righteousness, and all these things (that Gentiles labor for) shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). As we pursue the overcoming lifestyle, we should expect God’s blessings to overtake us from our backsides, that is to say, as a surprise. Blessings are not something that we pursue, they are something that pursue us as we seek Him.

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Chapter 5

Overcoming Is Our Assignment From The Lord

All things have been reconciled.

We know that the blood of Jesus reconciled us to Him. But Colossians 1:20 says that *all things* have also been reconciled. "...and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Colossians 1:20). Therefore we need to know that whatever evil comes it is reconciled by His blood. All evil has the potential of becoming our friend through the Cross and blood of Jesus.

Reconcile is a powerful word.

Strong's Concordance calls it "to bring back a former state of harmony." It is defined as "to repair, to put back into working order, making peace between two opposing views or groups." Vine's Bible Dictionary⁵ defines it as "to change from enmity to friendship." The Cross of Jesus Christ takes all of our "enemies," whether they be people, demons, circumstances, sickness, poverty, everything, and changes them into a friend. This is Wisdom!

2 Corinthians 5:18 says, "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." This is our ministry here on earth, to take all the enemies of our lives, dip them into the blood and Cross of Jesus Christ, and turn them into friends. I can tell you by the Word of God and by my own experience, that this is true. It works, if you are passionate and radical!

How can it be? Jesus absorbed all the evil into Himself. Nothing was left out! Satan's best blow was leveled against the Adamic race. Satan finally killed the best that Adam had, the Messiah. However, since Jesus was an innocent man, Satan killed him illegally. Therefore, death could not hold Jesus.

⁵ Vine, W.E. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*. Atlanta, GA: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996

Death was actually destroyed, death died! Evil was absorbed into good. Evil vanished into Hell and was left there. Satan is the embodiment of all evil. He hates Jesus and wants to take all people into Hell itself just because they are made in God's image. However, all of Satan's evil pierced Jesus, nothing was left out! Therefore we have no evil due us, unless we do not believe. If Satan is destroyed, evil is destroyed. "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him" (Romans 6:8-9).

When Jesus was raised from the dead, He was the first born of a new race. He was the last Adam. Death and evil have no more dominion over Him, or anyone else who is of this new race called the New Creation. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

This is an amazing concept about God. Many times in Scripture we are shown that God actually utilizes the evil, that Satan and people perpetrate, for His purposes. For instance, in Habakkuk, God informs the prophet that the enemy thinks that he is attacking Israel, but God is actually causing them to come so that they, the enemy, may be destroyed. The same idea is in Ezekiel chapter 38. Psalm 92:7 says, "When the wicked spring up like grass, and when all the workers of iniquity flourish, *it is* that they may be destroyed forever."

Psalm 68:22-23 (KJV) says, "The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring *my people* again from the depths of the sea: That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of *thine* enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same."

God "destroyed" the devil at the Cross.

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

These verses say that Satan was “destroyed.” What does that actually mean? He seems to be running around doing a job of destroying others. It does not mean to annihilate. Satan is still operating, he has not been annihilated.

The word destroy is defined in Strong’s Concordance as:

1) to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative;

1a) to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency;

1b) to deprive of force, influence, power.

Historically Adam had dominion over Satan, but when he sinned, he fell to the position of a slave to Satan. One of Adam’s descendents, Jesus, was also “victimized” by Satan and was killed by him. However, death and Hell could not hold Jesus because He had never sinned. Adam’s sinful nature was not in Jesus because of His virgin birth.

When Jesus, you, and I were raised from the dead, we were born again as new race that is no longer subject to Satan. He has no more dominion over us. We have dominion over him. Satan used his ultimate power on Jesus at the Cross, and Jesus was resurrected after that. Satan has no more power to exert. He is out of tools and weapons.

He can still destroy an unbeliever, and he can deceive a believer, but if we know the truth, he cannot harm us any longer. As far as we are concerned, he is destroyed. If we stand on the truth, all Satan can do is lie to us. Satan has no power over the new creation that includes you and me! “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Colossians 1:13).

Here is a very absurd example that may help us remember and picture what “destroyed” actually means.

Let’s pretend that you are a cat. A big dog, representing Satan, is harassing you, keeping you on the run, and making you hide. He is stealing your food and even tearing at your hide. Finally, this dog kills you.

Then, all of the sudden, by some supernatural miracle, you, the cat, are raised from the dead. This time you are no longer a cat, but a lion! Now this same dog comes and looks at you and he runs because he knows you can kill him! The dog has been destroyed (to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency, to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative, to deprive of force, influence, power)!

Just imagine now that this dog comes up with a plan. He comes to you and convinces you that you are still a cat and not really a lion. What if the dog could get you to actually act like a cat? That is what the dog Satan does to many Christians.

Just imagine that Jesus was this “cat” that died. Just before He died, however, He became “pregnant” with you and me in the Garden of Gethsemane. When He died and was resurrected, He became the firstborn from the dead and was raised as the Lion as the Tribe of Judah. When we are born again, we are also lions. “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18).

If you thought that you had destroyed your worst enemy, and all he did was get up out of the grave and pursue you, you would be destroyed!

There is a process that God has in transferring His reconciliation to earth. It is not automatic.

Knowing this is called wisdom. It is the process of overcoming. It takes time to convert our problems into blessings, and it takes our patience to hang on after all hope seems to be gone.

In Luke 19:11-27 the disciples thought that the Kingdom of God was coming to earth then and that all their problems would be solved the next day. Jesus taught His disciples a lesson for you and me.

“And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his

ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, *Occupy* till I come” (Luke 19:11-13, KJV).

He told a parable about a nobleman going into a distant country to obtain a kingdom and to return soon. The nobleman called his servants and gave them each an amount of currency equal to about 4 months of salary (a “mina”). He told them to *occupy* until he came back. Many of them detested his authority.

There were four classes of people present at his return.

1. The group that detested his authority and did not want anyone to reign over them were banished from his presence and killed.

2-3. Others occupied or did business and traded with the currency. According to their success, they earned more currency and rewarded with kingdom authority over many cities.

4. Others did not occupy because they thought that the nobleman was a mean person whose motive was to punish them. Not only did they not get any rewards but also their currency was taken away. Fear was their motivating force. Fear always neutralizes faith. Use it or lose it! These did not despise the authority, but they were terribly misinformed! Notice, the nobleman said that they would be judged by their own words! They had misunderstood the character of the nobleman and the value of the gift!

What is this word occupy?

The word *occupy* means to do business, to trade for profit. Business by definition is to take a raw material or service, add value to it and make it more profitable so it can be useful or sold. It means to exchange or to even change something to make it more profitable. It is used in the Bible to describe people who had businesses, cattle farms, and other businesses both good and bad. In our context it is the same thing as overcoming.

Proverbs 3:13-15 (NASB) says, “How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. For her profit (merchandise, or *occupation*) is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious

than jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her.” What “currency” did God leave with you?

What is His property?

I believe that it is useful to apply this principle to the talents and assets that God gives to us, but I do not believe that it is limited only to that, nor is it the essence of this parable. Notice that the nobleman left his servants his property, not their property with which to do business. In a similar parable told in Matthew 25:14, the Amplified version actually says “his property.”

What was the property that belonged to Jesus when He ascended back to Heaven after His resurrection? Matthew 28:18 says that all power in heaven and on earth was what He possessed. Jesus acquired all authority over every earthly kingdom when He was raised from the dead. Remember, back in Luke 4:5, Satan tempted Jesus with all the kingdoms of the habitable world. Jesus was tempted because this was one of His purposes, to acquire these kingdoms that were taken from Adam and Eve.

His property that you find yourself with is His authority to turn every earthly affliction into a Kingdom jewel.

While Jesus did indeed acquire dominion over all earthly things legally, He had not yet acquired them experientially. Hebrews 1:13 says, “But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool?’” (Hebrews 1:13). Hebrews 12:26-29 says that God is shaking all things on earth now so that only what is of His Kingdom will remain. I submit therefore that we are the agents who are responsible to change what is in our realm of responsibility from earthly to heavenly.

Did Jesus take all of your infirmities? Do you still experience them? Then you are to change those to something of eternal value. Did Jesus take your poverty? Do you still experience a form of poverty? Then you are to change that circumstance to something of eternal value. Have you been left with some “junk” in your life? Then “occupy” with that junk, or do business with it, and turn it into “jewels” for His

Kingdom; something of eternal value. This does not mean that we are to avoid resisting the devil. We should do that with all of our strength. At the same time, while we are resisting, we also can do business with our infirmities and turn them into blessings.

Another aspect of His property is represented by the minas, or the currency He left us to live this life.

He does not expect us to make our own way in life. He wants to add all those things that we need as we seek first His Kingdom according to Matthew 6.

I believe that the minas were hidden inside horrible looking containers. They did not see the hidden mina embedded within the “package.”

I have often wondered how this parable can reconcile the idea that God did not leave us with sufferings and curses, but He is the God that blesses us. He does not leave us with cancer, He does not leave us with rebellious children, broken families, poverty, etc. Yet we find ourselves with curses that overwhelm us, some of which are passed down to us and some of which we perhaps brought on ourselves, or maybe even a combination of both.

I believe that those things that we find ourselves with to overcome, are simply containers or packages and wrappings for the “minas” that Jesus has for us. Minas are good. Jesus gave us minas, good rewards, but they are embedded inside of our challenges, sufferings, and generational curses.

Not everybody recognizes the package that they receive. They are not familiar with the resurrection power of Jesus; therefore they feel that their challenges in life are something to be avoided. They are discouraged because they do not see God removing their trials. Or worse, they believe that God has given them bad things to teach them a lesson or to punish them. However, if they are wise, they will discern the “mina” inside of the horrible looking package and they can be change agents for the Kingdom of God and for their own lives and those in their realm of influence.

I believe those people in the parable who thought that the master was a mean person, simply could not see beyond the

wrapping of the package. They could not see that Jesus was actually giving them a mina.

Those people who did not want the master to rule over them are those who have not placed themselves under the authority of Jesus and in particular, the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

Junk does not just dissolve.

As we overcome, or occupy, or in other words, “do business” with these packages, the outer “junk” does not simply disappear, but it is transformed by the supernatural power of God. The death and resurrection of Jesus has defeated every evil. The Cross and resurrection when applied to our “outer evil packages” will transform those outer packages, and not only reveal the minas embedded within, but the transformed substance of what was previously evil actually adds to the beauty of the finished product. This is the principle of how jewels are produced. Junk, under lots of pressure and heat for a long period of time, is the process of diamonds and other jewels.

The Cross and resurrection has made every bad and evil thing a potential “friend.” Notice I did not say friend, but potential friend. It all depends upon you.

Colossians 1:20 says that all things are made “friends” by the blood of His cross: “and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

Purpose for our lives.

Most people, even Christians, never really understand their God-given purpose for life. As we go through the overcoming process, I believe that our purpose for and in life is manifested.

In this parable Jesus said that He would give authority to these overcomers. This process of turning junk into Jewels is parallel with the process in the Book of Revelation.

Going through this overcoming process, or this process of occupying, turning junk into jewels produces our ultimate purpose in life.

I submit that our purpose is as follows:

1. Revelation 20: Satan is dislodged from his strongholds.

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while” (Revelation 20:1-3).

2. Revelation 21: We inherit all things. “He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son” (Revelation 21:7). We are conformed to the image of Jesus and have a stronger relationship with our Father. The word “son” used here means one that is like Jesus in full relationship with the Father.

3. God’s Kingdom is established in your realm of influence. Notice also in Revelation 21:12 and following that John sees the foundation of the Kingdom of God made from jewels. This is the result of converting junk to jewels.

Junk: Something that looks and seems worthless. Even something you would not rather have.

Jewels: A priceless treasure that can only be produced by junk that is subjected to heat and pressure for a long period of time.

4. Revelation 22: You have an anointing for ministry.

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations [literally the Gentiles, or those who have no covenant with God]” (Revelation 22:1-2).

This list outlines our purpose for life. You enter into it as you cooperate with God in the overcoming process.

One more thing.

The mina, or purpose for your life, and what it looks like during and after the overcoming process is God's business and not yours. Often we make mistakes attempting to interpret what God has in mind for us.

Our responsibility is to live the overcoming lifestyle as outlined in Revelation 12:11 which says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death." We will focus on these three lifestyle attributes throughout this book.

Revelation 11:15 says, "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'" I believe that this represents a time in your overcoming life when the junk you have been overcoming is actually converted to jewels. The stuff of the world that was left with you, whether it is some sort of curse or whatever, has become jewels. Notice this is the seventh of seven trumpets. Revelation 11:18 says that this is a time of reward for the saints and judgment for our enemies.

Don't give up at the fifth or sixth trumpet. Wait patiently for the seventh trumpet to sound!

This mindset will raise your view from simply asking God to solve your earthly problems, to knowing that those earthly problems are the raw material for something eternal. Sure, I want my earthly problems to be solved, but if that is all I am living for, I am living on too low of a level!

We are to change our problems into profit.

We are to take the raw materials of problems and do business with them by producing blessings. Another word is reconcile, which means to turn something from an enemy to a friend. How? By the overcoming process, by standing on the Word of God.

I have never enjoyed the severe tests and trials in my life, but I can honestly say that without them the most valuable and eternal things in my life would have not been accomplished.

Joseph would have not been the Prime Minister of Egypt if he had not been made a slave and a prisoner. Moses would have not been the deliverer of Israel if he had not been given a 40 year assignment as a shepherd in the desert. The Gospel would not have been preached around the world if Daniel had not suffered in the lion's den.

Wisdom is knowing and relying on the fact that the Cross of Jesus absorbed all the evil and everything must turn out to be a blessing. The law of gravity says that whatever goes up *must* come down. The law of reconciliation says that all evil has been disarmed, and now must be a blessing, *if* you believe.

Job chapter 28:12-22 indicates that true wisdom is really found in suffering. Job 28:12 (KJV) says, "But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?" He goes on to state that it is not in the land of the living, not in the deep of the ocean, it cannot be purchased for gold, silver, precious stones, crystal, jewelry, coral, quartz, rubies, topaz or even pure gold. It is hidden from the eyes of all living, and concealed from the birds. Death and destruction, however, do have a testimony about wisdom. Job 28:22 says, "Destruction and Death say, 'We have heard a report about it with our ears.'"

Death said in affect, "Yes, Wisdom was here, but He did not stay long." The answer, I believe, indicates that when our flesh dies, when we are going through dark places of "death," then we can hear true wisdom. Proverbs 11:2 (KJV) also supports this when it says, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom."

This is the script of life. We need to recognize where we are in it. It will make suffering more compatible. Yes, Jesus is returning to earth someday, but He will also return for you now, to turn your problem into a blessing. We also need to know that the path we are on is a path through the Valley of Shadow of Death. It is the path of taking up our cross. It always seems like we are loosing the battle, but wisdom knows that we are winning it because we are on His path!

Our enemies always get closest to us just before their defeat! "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” (Deuteronomy 28:7).

If we really believe this, then all of our enemies will actually be revealed as friends.

One of the by-products will be the absence of fear. If all things have been reconciled, then what have we to fear? Fear is cast out by perfect love! Fear has torment and that torment is caused by things and circumstances that look like they will destroy you or your loved ones. If you continue in fear, it will finally have the power to overcome you. Dogs have an intuitive sense when you fear them, so do many other animals. When they sense your fear they are more likely to attack. I have heard that this is the same with some insects. Perhaps this applies to demons as well. If Satan knows that whatever he throws at you will be turned into “jewels” for God’s Kingdom, perhaps he will think twice before he gives you more raw material with which to do business.

I want to make a quick disclaimer here.

I am not saying that our life will be loaded with comfort. Enemies do not bring comfort! Also, only God can define what that enemy will look like when we turn it into a friend. We dare not be presumptuous and play God with our lives. The rewards, however, will be eternal. That is one reason that we often do not understand what God is doing in our lives. His goal is eternal jewels. Our goal is to know God, obey Him, and leave the driving to Him. Most likely the next enemy will be a greater challenge than the one you now have. If it is, you will be a greater warrior!

What is our responsibility during the waiting period?

The overcoming lifestyle is our responsibility. Focusing on what the blood of Jesus did for us, continually taking up our cross and not loving our life, and speaking the Word of God as our testimony against the devil.

Chapter 6 How Do We Overcome?

Overcoming is not merely an event; it needs to become a lifestyle.

It is like military training. When a crisis hits, the soldier immediately defaults into his disciplined behavior without thought. Training and boot camp has renewed his mind of what to do in a crisis. A human being cannot think properly and soberly in a crisis, therefore you must have an automatic response built in. Spiritually that response must be the stance of overcoming. You must immediately find out what the blood of Jesus did for you, click into the disciplines of loving not your life (as described herein), and exercise the spiritual warfare which includes testifying and speaking the Word of God.

I believe this is why so many of God's people do not choose to overcome. It is a radical lifestyle, and it requires one to turn his/her back on the world's culture and system.

Overcoming has three major components, three major lifestyle disciplines. *Knowledge* (the blood of the Lamb), *discipline* (love not their lives to the death), and *standing* on the Word of God (the word of their testimony). This is the overcoming process, and it takes time.

Here is a summary of what we will continually refer to as the "path" when we speak of overcoming. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death" (Revelation 12:11). Here is the summary of the "overcoming path."

I am going to help you to remember this path by calling it "The Big Three."

The Blood of the Lamb.

This is the knowledge of the blood covenant. This is the Cross from God's side. Grace, God's amazing finished work. This reveals our position in Christ based upon His work. Study to know the finished work of the Cross on a continual basis, not

just one time. Meditate on who you are in Christ because of His Cross. You cannot read your Bible ten minutes a day and expect to develop faith in the finished work of the Cross. You must soak yourself in the Word, day and night. You might say, "I don't have time." My answer is, then you have not made overcoming a priority! Many Christians fall into that category. Read Proverbs 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8. They will tell you that you should seek for Wisdom, the Word, as you seek for fine gold. "For wisdom *is* better than rubies, and all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her" (Proverbs 8:11).

Love not your lives to the death.

This requires discipline to take up your cross daily. The blood covenant from your side includes your obedience and fellowship with Him. This will include walking through the Tabernacle (in a later chapter) into the very presence of God. As you are progressing, your old nature is decreasing and God's nature in you is increasing.

When you take up your cross daily, you shed all the things in your life that do not line up with the life that Jesus wants to live through you. Walking in love is the big issue.

The word of your testimony.

That is standing on the Word of God. You must put the Word of God in your heart until it flows from your mouth, which will be the testimony against your spiritual enemies. Speaking the Word out loud will also give peace to your mind, body, and emotions. It will put you at rest in the midst of a fiery trial.

Ephesians lists the same "The Big Three."

SIT. The first two chapters of Ephesians deal with our identity, who Jesus made us by His work at the Cross and the resurrection. It tells us that we are seated with Him. "and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).

WALK. After we understand our new identity and God's love towards us, then we are free to choose to live properly. "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (Ephesians 4:1).

Attempting to live properly simply by legalism or conduct alone will cause us to lose our living relationship with the Lord. But knowing His promises, His facts, His grace and His work will empower Him to live His life in us.

STAND. Satan always will attempt to thwart God's plans for you. The Word of God spoken to him will defeat him. "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11).

Here is the confession for you, an overcomer.

"I am an overcomer because the original and chief overcomer Jesus Christ lives in me. I recognize that His Cross has made me a new creation in Him and has given me victory over all my spiritual enemies. I daily take up my cross, forsake my old life, and allow Him to live His life in me and through me by His grace. I put the Word of God on my lips and say, 'And I overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of my testimony, and I do not love my life to the death' (taken from Revelation 12:11)."

When knowledge and discipline, His Cross and our cross combine, we have real time connection with God and His blood covenant goes to work on our behalf. When we add the word of our testimony, that is, testifying with the Word of God and what it says about His Cross and His blood, we become overcomers.

"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My *disciples* indeed. And you shall *know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*'" (John 8:31-32). This verse says we are set free by knowledge and discipline just as the example in Revelation 12:11.

Believe and faith are both words that indicate knowing and doing. We need to know what God has done, we need to know what He expects us to do, and we need to testify to what the Word says about what He has done. When these are put together, the blood covenant will radically affect our lives.

I wish to emphasize something here.

While we do need all three ingredients to overcome, the blood of the Lamb is the supreme and main issue. What Jesus

did for you and for me at the Cross through the blood covenant ranks first and foremost. We cannot take up our cross, nor will the words of our testimony be of any value, if we do not truly see the value of Jesus, His love, His grace and what He did for us at the Cross!

Jesus, the creator of the universe, now invites you to join Him in creating New Jerusalem. “And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who *overcomes* shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son’” (Revelation 21:6-7).

“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (Revelation 21:10). “The construction of its wall was *of* jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city *were* adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation *was* jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates *were* twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city *was* pure gold, like transparent glass” (Revelation 21:18-21).

Where do all these precious jewels come from?

Jewels come from ordinary, natural matter, which undergoes intense heat, pressure, and is buried in the earth over long periods of time. Jewels are a derivative of junk, your junk, and my junk!

Notice I said “intense heat, pressure, and buried in the earth over long periods of time.” Overcoming is painful! Overcoming is not an instant fix! If you are signing up for overcoming with God, be prepared to hurt. Be prepared to doubt. Be prepared to have to press in to God with all of your might. Be prepared to stop manipulating others to obtain your needs. Be prepared to fast from the dictates of your flesh. Be

prepared to fast from your strengths and your crafty ways. Be prepared to drop your agenda. Be prepared to simply worship God even if nothing changes! Expect to see your character changed, expect to live out God's purposes for your life here on earth, and expect to be a co-creator for something eternal in God's Kingdom. You will not be ashamed!

Revelation reveals more than you think!

I am going to look at Revelation from different point of view than many are accustomed to. I am going to use it in the same way that God has used it in my life. God has used it for me as a present day devotion, something practical to show me what is going on in the spiritual world as I am overcoming. This is not so much my theology as it is my personal testimony and experience. Dr. Mark Rutland, president of Global Servants and Southeastern University, says that Revelation is more like a Hebrew opera, a drama with music and poetry, than a theological text book. I am not saying that Revelation does not have to do with future world history, but I am saying that it is more than that. It applies to your current history as well.

Remember back in chapter two we pointed out that the Book of Revelation ended with jewels and began with affliction. What happened in the process?

John was suffering on the isle of Patmos (definition: my killing – a rugged and bare island in the Aegean Sea). He had ministered with Jesus; he was His closest friend at one time. Jesus entrusted His mother to John at the Cross. John saw Jesus for many days after His resurrection. John had a powerful ministry during the early church days, starting with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. He, as an elder, wrote His precious epistles in an effort to get people back to basics, a relationship with Jesus.

Imagine how John must have felt now that he was a prisoner on barren island of Patmos. He was carrying rocks from a quarry up and down the hills as his daily work task. Perhaps he was wondering: "Jesus, what is going on? Peter is crucified, James is beheaded, the church is persecuted and in shambles,

and things do not look good. What is this all about?" Have you ever felt like John?

Then suddenly, on one Lord's day, "Bang." He sees Jesus in all of His glory, but not like he had known Him before. Jesus was so on fire and powerful looking that John fell at His feet as dead (Revelation 1:9-18). Read it.

Not only did Jesus want to make some sense out of John's affliction and the affliction of the church in those days, but also He had John write the Book of Revelation so that you and I could make some godly sense out of our afflictions. He wants us to know that He has not deserted us, but that He is on task wanting to turn our junk into jewels.

Jesus started out by revealing Himself to John as the One in control, and as the Judge. Jesus also revealed to John who he was, and who you and I are, that is kings and priests. We are destined to rule and reign and to be the bridge between lost mankind and God.

Then, in chapters 2 and 3, the church is told that they need to get their lives cleaned up because they are about to go to war and overcome. A soldier with a rusty rifle and a broken helmet cannot be victorious. We go into greater detail on this subject in chapter 9.

Then, in Revelation chapter 4, John sees a door opened in Heaven and he hears the voice saying, "Come up here." We need to obtain God's view of our circumstances so we can see them as He sees them. John noticed that he was in a courtroom; he saw God the Judge, he saw the Throne, and he saw a rainbow as a covenant promise.

The word "throne" used here in Revelation chapter 4 means a tribunal bench used for judges. God is now on the throne as a judge! There are multitudes of other examples showing God to be the judge. Some might say, "Oh, the Book of Revelation, and the judgment therein is for some future time in history." Well, it might be, but it is also in the now! We have the right to bring the Kingdom of God to earth now! I personally have experienced these kinds of judgments!

In chapter 5 John saw the Scroll in God's right hand. The Scroll is the curse of the entire human race and for you and for me personally (Zechariah 5:3). Jesus unrolls the Scroll, one seal at a time, confirming the price He paid for our bondage to sin and curses. He is the only one worthy to do this. John wept because he thought that nobody would be worthy.

Then John heard the song, "And they sang a new song, saying: '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).

As each seal of the Scroll is broken open, judgment is executed. Judgment is two-sided with God. For those who are consecrated and obedient and are overcoming, judgment is very good news. It means that Satan has been judged guilty and we have been judged innocent and set free! It is for our deliverance and the enemy's destruction.

While I cannot explain all of the disasters and suffering to the very detail in Revelation chapters 6-18, I can say that they represent God's judgments that are setting us free. The trouble is, so many of us feel these judgments and we feel like God has forgotten about us. We can feel like we are just victims, when in fact we are being delivered by all of this trouble. We just need to see it from God's viewpoint.

Remember as these disasters take place, you are only feeling their potential, but Jesus is holding your Scroll, and He is being pierced with your curse. He bore your curse and the penalties thereof.

Remember our blood covenant mandate. The three main things to observe.

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death" (Revelation 12:11). Here are "The Big Three": His Cross, your cross, and words against the covenant breaker, Satan.

Finally, in Revelation chapter 18 and 19, we begin to see the world system's fall, not only the one time in history when it will fall, but also the system that has kept you and me in bondage for so long. As we stand in the overcoming process, we see our enemies defeated.

In Revelation chapter 19 we see Jesus coming to rescue us on His white horse, and we see other saints, maybe you and me riding with Him rescuing others. We see the marriage supper of the Lamb, which speaks of a greater bride-like intimacy with Jesus, after we have endured so much.

Then, in chapter 20, we see the devil, who has been deceiving the unbelievers, chained and disabled. I see that as a picture of the spiritual authority we have gained during the overcoming. Then we see in chapters 21 and 22 the glory of the Kingdom of God, which is more real to us now since we have overcome. Revelation 22:2 speaks of ministry when it says, "In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations (nations, meaning gentiles, or unbelievers)." Notice the ministry we partake in after overcoming.

Finally, Jesus said, "Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near" (Revelation 1:3).

In Watchman Nee's devotion titled A Table in the Wilderness,⁶ he says:

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16).

The book of the Revelation is the unveiling, the apokalupis, of Jesus Christ. It draws aside the curtain

⁶ Nee, Watchman. *A Table in the Wilderness, Daily Meditations*, Wheaton, Ill; Tyndale House Publishers. Fort Washington, Pennsylvania; - Christian Literature Crusade. p.p. May 19

to reveal him. Its object is not primarily to enlighten us regarding coming events - the antichrist, the supposed revival of the Roman empire, the rapture of the saints, the millennial kingdom or the final downfall of Satan. John's remedy of our ills is not a matter of so many seals and trumpets and vials. It is not in fact designed to satisfy our intellectual curiosity at all, but to meet our spiritual need by revealing Christ Jesus himself in fullness, that we may know him. For Christ is the answer to all our questions. Get clear first about him, and we shall know all we need to know about 'things to come.' He is the risen and victorious King of kings. All the events that follow are the outcome of his being that.

Be prepared! If you are interested in joining God's team of overcomers, read on.

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Chapter 7 The Blood Of The Lamb

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Revelation 12:11). This chapter emphasizes the finished work of Christ on the Cross and at the Resurrection. The first step in overcoming is “the blood of the Lamb.” We must continually build our faith in what Jesus did for us, what He accomplished for us, and what His promises and purposes are for us. We live in a negative world, and it is difficult to keep our minds positive and upbeat. Focusing on what Jesus did and not so much on what we can do is a necessary point of beginning.

When I need to overcome, I spend whatever time and energy needed in order to hear what God has to say about my situation. Everything else must take second place! If I can hear Him speak, I am on the way to victory! Usually the word that God will speak will have something to do with what He accomplished for us. It is often centered around the finished work of His Cross, His grace, and His mercy. Once you receive this promise from God, then continually meditate on it. This procedure will fulfill what we are calling, “the blood of the Lamb.”

The Word says that anything that is not of faith is sin. “...for whatever is not from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23b). That does not necessarily mean that you are “sinning,” as in some moral act or in unforgiveness or the like, but it does mean that you are living in the natural and missing God’s mark.

The Word says that faith pleases God. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

The Word says that if we wake up and see who we really are, then we will not be so prone to live on a lower level, or missing the mark in sin. “Awake to righteousness, and sin not;

for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Corinthians 15:34, KJV).

How do we receive this faith? “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17, KJV). The word “Word” in this Scripture is *rhema*, which means a personal word spoken out of the mouth of God and customized for you personally. How do you hear in this manner? I suggest that you practice the “Relationship Skills” that we have outlined in the attached appendix.

Having said that, now ask God to make these Scriptures and truths real to you from His mouth so that you may hear the Word and that faith would rise in your heart, and that your life would turn from one that is lived on the lower level of the common (sin) to the abundant life which comes by faith.

Here are some Scriptures and Scriptural facts that can let you know who you are; they can help to give you your real identity. Meditate upon them, study them for yourself.

A blood covenant has been applied to your life.

You are clean by the blood of Jesus! It is up to you to accept it or reject it, or perhaps ignore it out of ignorance. A great exchange has taken place between you and Jesus Christ. On the Cross, He took every bad and negative thing in your life. At the resurrection, He gave you every positive thing in the nature of God Almighty! He begot you as sons and daughters and seated you with Him in a realm *far* above all your enemies. Satan, your enemy, will do all in his power to steal this from you with lies. However, if you know the truth and stand on it, you will be a winner! You went through the crucifixion with Him, His death with Him, and have already been resurrected with Him.

These facts are good seed, which will bear good fruit in your life.

They require a faith in God’s Word that surpasses your natural senses. What is more reliable to you, the Word of God or your senses? They are generic facts that apply to all believers. Besides these, God may give you a specific promise

that applies to your situation. The Holy Spirit through the Word can make who you are in Christ a reality. You need to take the Word at face value and believe it as a legal document.

You were hopelessly lost.

That means that someone else had to search for you. Ephesians 2:12 (a & b) says, “that at that time you were without Christ, ...having no hope and without God in the world.”

You were dead in your sins.

There is no way out for a dead man, except to receive life. Ephesians 2:1 says, “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

The blood Jesus shed on the Cross removed your sins.

He took your place. Ephesians 1:7 says, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” The word “forgiveness” actually means *to separate or cut away*. Our sins have been taken away from us and put onto Jesus, our sacrificial Lamb.

You were already “In Christ” when the following events took place.

You were crucified with Christ.

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

You died with Christ.

“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection” (Romans 6:5).

You were buried with Christ

“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death” (Romans 6:4a). “...buried with Him in baptism” (Colossians 2:12).

You were made alive with Christ.

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Colossians 2:13). “...even when we were dead in trespasses, [God] made us alive

together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” (Ephesians 2:5).

You were raised with Christ. You are seated with Christ.
“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:4-6).

That is our legal standing with God today and the foundation of our legal rights. As far as the spiritual world is concerned, your position is with Christ in the heavenlies. You are in a seat of authority. Satan and your mind will tell you that you are not seated with Christ in the heavenlies, but that is a lie! You need to know that God seated you with Him while you were yet a sinner!

You are a new creation.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

You might ask, how can this be?

Good question. God put us in Christ. “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). Being in Christ is like you were in your father and mother as a sperm and an egg. You inherited their history in your genealogy. Just imagine that you are a marker inside of a book. When the book is moved, the marker goes with it. When the book is put on the shelf, the marker goes on the shelf. If the book is burned, the marker is burned. If, by some miracle, the book is restored and put back on the shelf, so is the marker.

You were redeemed.

Redemption is a Bible word that confuses many people. Let’s see if we can dig out the hidden treasures in its real meaning.

According to Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary, redeem means “to buy” or “buy out,” especially of purchasing a slave with a view to his freedom. It means “to release by

paying a price of ransom from bondage.” It was a word commonly used in the market place. Think of it as going to a pawnshop to redeem something that was sold into the hands of a stranger, the wrongful but yet legal owner.

The price of redemption was the blood of Jesus. We are not explicitly told to whom the price was paid. I submit that the price was due to God Himself. And it was God Himself who paid the price.

Colossians 1:14 says, “in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

1 Peter 1:18-19 says, “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

The worth of an object is ultimately established by the price one is willing to pay for it. God thought that you were so valuable to Him that He paid that price of His own son for you. Your worth is not established by what other people think of you, how much money you have, how much education you have, or how successful your life has been. Your worth and your identity are based upon the fact that the Creator of the Universe paid the highest price He could pay, His own Son, to purchase you!

The parables in Matthew chapter 13 tell the story. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field” (Matthew 13:44).

The man who found the treasure is Jesus. The field is the world. This is stated in Matthew 13:38 in another parable. When the man discovered that there was a treasure, he hid it. This is like Jesus putting a cover on us so that Satan cannot steal us. He did not really want the field, but he was realistic enough to know that in order to get the treasure, he had to pay the price for the field. The price of the field was very high. It cost him all he had.

You were reconciled.

“Reconcile” is a powerful word. Strong’s Concordance defines it as “to bring back a former state of harmony.” It is defined as “to repair, to put back into working order, making peace between two opposing views or groups.” “Reconcile” infers that changes have taken place, even exchanges. Why do you suppose it was God’s plan to reconcile us to Him? I submit that the end goal for this, and all of the other aspects of the Cross we have been writing about, is friendship and intimacy with God. He desires to be close to you. He said in John 15 that we were His friends, not only His servants. That is a very foreign concept to many people, and is easy for even Christians to forget and to fail to nurture. Our “normal” position with God is intimacy.

All evil was reconciled.

2 Corinthians 5:18 says, “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.” This is our ministry here on earth, to take all the enemies of our lives, dip them into the blood and Cross of Jesus Christ, and turn them into friends. We covered this subject at length in chapter 5.

Propitiation.

Propitiation, according to The American Heritage Dictionary,⁷ means to “conciliate (an offended power); to appease wrath.” The Bible clearly states that God is love, yet God has wrath that must be appeased. How do these two apparent opposites become reconciled?

Without wrath, a law cannot accomplish its intended good.

God is a God of mercy and judgment. Actually, these two attributes are not contrary to one another; in fact one cannot exist without the other. They are interdependent.

God set up the universe and man to operate under laws. The law of gravity is one example. If someone abused the law of gravity, they would feel the wrath of that law. But if they, for some reason, would not feel the wrath of gravity, neither would

⁷ American Heritage Dictionary, Standard Edition, computer version.

gravity be capable of its intended good, keeping us planted on Earth without floating around. Hebrews 1:3 states that God upholds all things by His Word. If His Word fails, then the entire creation would fail and most likely implode. Therefore God must maintain His laws with justice and judgment. If we have laws prohibiting murder, our government must prosecute those who break that law and bring them to justice. In the same way, the breaking of God's laws must be prosecuted, otherwise we could not exist. Therefore God cannot wink at sin, or at the man who sins. He cannot simply excuse sin or unrighteousness. If He did, His Word and His laws would fail.

In the Garden of Eden, as recorded in Genesis chapter 3, God did two things that I would like to mention in reaction to the sin of Adam and Eve. First, He informed them that they had come under a curse (as He also did to Satan) and had lost the blessing of being connected to Him, and second, He made coats of skin and clothed them. These acts of wrath and kindness taken together can tend to confuse man's view of God's nature.

All of God's wrath was put on Jesus at the Cross. The Passover Lamb is your example. The Israelites who were in Egypt did not deserve to be delivered from the horrible plagues that were coming on the land and its people. However, they were instructed by God through Moses to take a perfect lamb, kill it, and spread its blood over the doorposts of their homes. That act of faith kept them perfectly safe. The lamb took their place. Jesus took your place. Jesus was your propitiation. God took the wrath due to you, and to those you need to forgive, and put it on Jesus.

You were made righteous.

Righteous means to have a right standing with God. A son (or daughter) is righteous with his father by birth. He is in the family and he has a right standing that the neighbor does not have. We are righteous by our new birth, not by anything we have done. "For He [God] made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). We are righteous because God put His life in us, not because of the way we act or live.

You were justified.

This subject will be covered in chapter 9.

Satan's dominion over you is broken.

Satan had dominion over your old nature, but your new nature is Christ's own Spirit that has already defeated Satan. Romans 6:8-10 says, "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God." If the spirit of this world has had you living in fear, God will set you free right now!

All of these wonderful things we just described were a free gift from God. You did not deserve them, and you could not earn them. Keeping the Law could not obtain them. God just loved you so much that He gave them to you for free. Now it is up to you to treasure these rich, eternal gifts. Amazing grace!

The solution is to move from hope to faith.

When you focus on what the blood of Jesus and the finished work of the Cross has accomplished, you will move from just hoping that God will do something to knowing that He has already done it. You are righteous, you are reconciled. You have been crucified with Christ, you have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness and into His Kingdom. The difference between hope and faith is a time issue. Hope sees it in the future, faith has it now, even though it cannot be seen with the physical eyes. Only God can do that. You cannot work up faith. Faith comes by hearing God speak to you personally, and that comes by pressing into a one-on-one relationship with Him. It comes by taking up your cross, obeying His Word, and seeking Him until you find Him. When your personal revelation of Jesus burns in your heart, you will know that you have the victory. Then you can put the Word that He has given you on your lips and proclaim the victory. Doubt may come, but you do not have to give into it. Soak in the Word of God and prayer until He becomes real to you!

Chapter 8 Blessings and Curses

I believe that a major theme of the Bible is turning curses into blessings. The curse was pronounced in Genesis, and the end of the curse is in Revelation. I also believe that often the process of removing curses is “overcoming.”

Deuteronomy chapter 28 is a good place to study curses and blessings.

A curse is the opposite of a blessing. A blessing is some type of prosperity that is the result of good and positive words or deeds. A curse is some type of failure caused or propagated by wicked or negative words or deeds. In Deuteronomy 28 Moses lists the blessings if one obeys the commandments of God and the curses if one does not obey the commandments of God.

Exodus 34:5-8 says that curses are passed down to future generations. “Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation” (Exodus 34:7).

God’s original purpose was for us to have blessings passed down to future generations, which would have resulted from man’s free will in right relationship to Him. However, justice demands that if blessings can be passed down so must curses be passed down.

Curses and blessings are subject to the law of sowing and reaping. If your grandfather sowed the sin of anger and rage, you and/or your children may be in line for far more anger and rage than your grandfather ever committed. He sowed the seed, however, the fruit is always more abundant than the seed. If you do a little drinking of alcohol, don’t be surprised if your children or grandchildren are plagued with substance addictions including substances more dangerous than alcohol. We have overcome physical infirmities that have been experienced by our ancestors. While we have no idea how these originated, we

do know that they were passed down. However, with our overcoming we know that our children and their children will never have to suffer with these issues. That “generation has passed away” (Matthew 24:34).

When Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place” (Matthew 24:34), I believe He was not only talking about the end of the world, but He also was referring to the generational curse in your individual life. In Matthew 24 He was talking about all kinds of tragedies taking place as a prelude to the curse being overcome. That process is overcoming.

In his book titled Blessing or Curse⁸ Derek Prince defines some of the effects of a curse. “...You, too, may have tasted success. You do indeed know the sweetness of it – but it never lasts! Suddenly, for no reason you can explain, you are dissatisfied. Depression settles over you like a cloud. All your achievements seem so insubstantial. You look at others who appear content in similar circumstances, and you ask yourself, ‘What’s wrong with me? Why don’t I ever experience real fulfillment?’” “Wrestling against shadows” is one of the phrases he uses.

In my experience, when I experienced the effects of a curse, whether it was a product of my own doing or something that was passed down through the generations, my self-esteem level was at zero. I was made to feel like there was something terribly wrong with me, and I experienced great despair and hopelessness. I want to add that this was during a time when I had a very intense relationship with the Lord.

People can react to this in different ways. Some just sink down under the weight of despair and give up, others become performance-oriented and seek to establish their own self-esteem based upon their works. I never gave up but rather gained relief on a daily basis by fellowshipping with the Lord in His Word. I can remember the Lord teaching me during that

⁸ Prince, Derek. *Blessing or Curse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1990

time about curses and blessings, and about myself. Eventually God gave me my self-esteem based upon having my identity in Him. Looking back, I think that the inner healing came before the actual curse was overcome and before circumstances started to look brighter. I entreat you now, be honest with God. Let Him know if there are areas in your life like this. It will be the beginning of your freedom. The truth will always make you free!

Jesus encountered several people who were bound with infirmities and/or demons that apparently were generational in nature.

In Mark chapter 9:17-29, Jesus cast a demon out of a young man who had been demon-possessed from his childhood. The disciples could not cast out this demon, and after Jesus did the job they asked Him about it. “So He said to them, ‘This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting’” (Mark 9:29). Apparently there were some issues that had to be dealt with besides the fact that a demon was present.

We need to see Jesus’ heart in dealing with generational spiritual bondages. First, He wants us free. Next, He is sovereign and often takes the initiative. Also, He heals us without condemnation. I am not saying that we will not be uncomfortable, or that God will not confront us with some tough issues and tough disciplines, but He does not condemn. The Holy Spirit does convict, and we need to be mature and honest enough to allow Him to do so.

In John chapter 9, Jesus was walking with His disciples and He noticed a man blind from his birth. How did He know the man was blind from birth? Who knows? Perhaps it was a word of knowledge, maybe God had spoken to Him in prayer the night before. This man was not seeking healing, Jesus sought him out of a crowd.

John 9:2 says, “And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’” They thought that infirmities were due to sin, perhaps the sin of the parents, perhaps a deeper generational curse as Moses had discovered. Jesus answered the question in a way

that I believe the Amplified version states the best. “Jesus answered, It was not that this man or his parents sinned, but he was born blind in order that the workings of God should be manifested (displayed and illustrated) in him” (John 9:3, Amplified Bible).

Obviously all have sinned, including this man and his parents. The point was, that Jesus saw a higher purpose in the infirmity and knew that focusing on whose sin caused it would not be merciful, nor would it produce a cure. I believe Jesus was teaching that our “junk,” viewed from God’s perspective, was nothing more than raw material for “jewels.”

So it is with our generational curses. I believe that Jesus has fasted and prayed, and that He comes to us with His power and converts our curses to blessings. What I want to impart here is first, the knowledge of the subject, and second, how we can cooperate with God’s effort to free us.

Your purpose in life may never be realized if curses are not dealt with.

Many years ago I was taking an extended walk with the Lord. In a moment of feeling that I wanted to totally consecrate myself to Him, I said, “Lord, write Your purpose on the tablet of my heart by the pen of the Word dipped into the ink of Holy Spirit.” I just wanted whatever God wanted for my life, no more, no less.

I could see some sort of canvas inside of me with the Lord writing His plan on it for my life. “Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart” (Proverbs 7:2-3).

The Lord responded, “I don’t have to write; the plan for your life was written on your heart before the foundation of the world. The counterfeiter has stolen your canvas and has painted his plan on it, covering up My plan. What needs to be done now is to scrape away the counterfeit paint.”

The Lord knew that I had met an artist one time that would steal beautiful paintings from galleries, not for their art beauty,

but just for the value of the canvas. He would then paint his work over the original. This is the picture I saw.

I believe that God has a beautiful purpose for you, here on earth, one that will satisfy you beyond your greatest dreams, dreams that you may have never dreamed, but that are locked up inside of you (Ephesians 3:20).

I also believe that much of the counterfeit paint consists of old sin and especially generational curses, including things that happened to you when you were young, and things that happened to your forefathers before you were born. I can tell you two things from my experience. First, God has been taking me into my purpose, and is still working it out. Second, it has not been easy; it has taken “overcoming” at every step of the way. But nothing in life is easy, so why not go for the “gold.”

Abandonment is the requirement.

Abandonment is believing and trusting. It is faith, and it really gets God’s attention. If you do not live in total abandonment to God, most likely you will have many regrets when you see Jesus face to face. When you abandon yourself in faith to Jesus, you set Him free to accomplish His purpose for your life. You have to make room for Him or He will not operate. I believe that when God sees your abandonment, He will begin your journey to turn your curses into blessings.

Here are some facts about generational curses extracted (in part) from the book Blessing or Curse⁹ by Derek Prince.

1. The penalty for sin is the curse. The curse of eternal separation is the ultimate curse. If that has been settled, what about those of a lesser penalty? If He annulled death, He also annulled your curse.

2. A curse or a blessing is a supernatural power for good or for bad. Deuteronomy 28:21 says they cling, verse 29 says none can save.

3. Curses and blessings can be generational, passed down. They can be on families, nations, races, and regions.

⁹ Prince, Derek. *Blessing or Curse*. Grand Rapids, MI:: Chosen Books, 1990

4. Curses are usually propagated by words spoken, written or inward or by objects.

5. Curses are like a long arm from the past. Wrestling against shadows.

6. The primary cause of a curse is not hearing and obeying God, Deuteronomy 28.

Some indications of a curse.

I do not believe that *all* of the following conditions *always* have to do with a curse, but they certainly make up a checklist to look into. Please do not take all of these as absolute indications that there is a curse operating in your life. I have seen exceptions. These outlines are taken (in part) from the book Blessing or Curse by Derek Prince, referred to above.

1. Mental or emotional breakdown.
2. *Repeated* or chronic sicknesses, especially if hereditary.
3. Barrenness, and/or a tendency to miscarry, or related female problems.
4. Breakdown of marriage and family alienation.
5. *Continuing* financial insufficiency.
6. Being accident prone.
7. A history of suicides and unnatural deaths.
8. Rebellion.
9. Demon activity.
10. *Continuing* failure, and the inability to succeed.
11. Inordinate sexual orientation.
12. Substance abuse such as alcohol and drugs.
13. Inordinate eating habits.
14. Other addictions.

If you feel that some of these may apply to you, don't feel condemned, just convicted enough to be honest. I have been delivered from many curses. The problem is that many people do not wish to agree with God about their condition, therefore they cannot be delivered. Allow Jesus to take your curse and your sin. He already did, now just appropriate it. Be honest with Him! It may be less painful to avoid the truth, but you will stay in bondage.

Some sources of curses.

Deuteronomy 27:17 says the person that moves the boundaries is cursed. God gave us boundaries, and when we transgress them, we are cursed.

1. False gods, Exodus 20:3-5.
2. Idolatry (occult), Deuteronomy 27:15.
3. Disrespect for parents, Proverbs 30:17.
4. Treachery...neighbor, Proverbs 17:13.
5. Injustice to the weak and poor, Proverbs 28:27.
6. Unnatural sex/incest, Leviticus 20:10-16.
7. Anti-Semitism, Genesis 12:3; 27:29.
8. Depending on the flesh, Jeremiah 17:5-7.
9. Stealing/perjury, Zechariah 5:1-4.
10. Stinginess, Malachi 3:8-10.
11. Perverting the true Gospel, Galatians 1:8-9.
12. Living by legalism, by the Law, and not by grace, Galatians 3:10.
13. Self-imposed (speaking negative words, and/or personal sin), Genesis 27:11-13; Matthew 27:24-25.
14. Servants of Satan, others cursing you like Balaam and Goliath, Numbers 22:6, 23:11-13; 1 Samuel 17:43.
15. Deuteronomy 28:15 says that if we do not obey His commands, all these curses will come upon us. Most of the time we recognize our sin, and when we confess it, we are cleansed. However, God commands us to “fear not.” Fear, which is born out of an ignorance of God’s great love for us, can bring curses. Fear can be the spirit connector to the curse.

Meeting the Conditions for breaking the curse.

A curse cannot attach itself without a cause. “Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight” (Proverbs 26:2).

The way to make every curse have no cause is to cooperate in its transfer to Jesus, who bore it for us, and to hear and obey the Word of God. When we miss it, we confess our sin and we come back into right standing and obedience (1 John 1:9).

Removal of the curse was a promise to Israel.

We, the church, are reaping the benefits of the New Covenant ahead of time. Natural Israel will also enter into the New Covenant as told by Jeremiah. Jeremiah describes the promise in Jeremiah 31:29-34. However, verses 29-30 give a great picture that I urge you to keep in your mind and spirit. “In those days they shall say no more: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’ But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge” (Jeremiah 31:29-30).

Jesus was the fulfillment of this promise. “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree’)” (Galatians 3:13).

Jesus took Barabbas’ curse and yours as well.

Matthew 27:16 says that Barabbas was a notorious prisoner. There were three crosses on Golgotha. The two on either side were made for criminals. Was the middle cross made for Jesus? No, it was made for Barabbas. Jesus took his place. Isaiah 53 says that Jesus took our place.

Isaiah 53:4-6 says, “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was on Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

The steps for becoming free from a curse are:

1. Confess your faith in the finished work of the Cross, that Jesus took every curse that could come on you. Lift up Jesus, as the Israelites lifted up the snake on the brass pole (Numbers 21). Place the reaping of the consequences of sin, perhaps that of your forefathers or even your own, on the Cross.
2. Confess your faith that Jesus is the Son of God, the only way to God, and that He died on the Cross and rose again.

3. Repentance is a powerful way to deal with curses. Repent from all rebellion and sin, and submit to Jesus as Lord. This may include your personal repentance as well as corporate repentance for your family or whoever is affected by this curse. In the case of our children, we should repent for them and for our forefathers, who may have passed this curse down, as well as for ourselves. Look back at your forefathers' sins and forgive them. Then put the fruit of those sins on the Cross of Jesus who bore their fruit. Look at yourself and ask God to forgive you. Then look forward and ask God to forgive your children and pray to put the fruit of generational curses on Jesus instead of on them. Repentance in this manner is powerful. My wife and I can testify to that. We have seen supernatural blessings occur in this area.

4. Claim forgiveness for all of your sins, especially for the sins that exposed you to a curse. Ask for release from consequences of your ancestor's sins.

5. Forgive others who have wronged you or disappointed you. Forgive yourself.

6. Renounce all contact with anything occult or satanic, including objects that represent them.

7. Replace the void created with the Word of God. Ask God to give you the Word that will counteract the curse you have renounced. Then meditate upon it, memorize it, and continually confess it.

Overcoming a curse may come immediately or it may take some time.

Often it takes a period of time to become totally loosed from the effects of a curse. With some people it is immediate, with me it has more often required a lengthy process. I am not trying to bottle up God in a formula. He can work any way He wills. I am just giving you what my experience has been and how it has lined up with Scripture. We have seen victory and overcoming when we have lived out the overcoming lifestyle as I have explained. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death" (Revelation 12:11). We have also seen immediate manifestations of the path of healing and deliverance

when we identified the problem and confessed our sin with repentance. Our job is to be honest and repent, God has the plan and the path customized for your life.

Pull the chain around the tree.

I heard someone from Derek Prince Ministries tell a wonderful way to stand once we meet the conditions. He used the analogy of a giant Redwood tree. Sometimes the workmen do not simply saw them down. Instead they will wrap a chain around the huge trunk and tighten it with a winch. Every so often they come and tighten up a few more notches. The tree is dead once this happens, yet it still has great foliage on it. Every so often the workmen come back and tighten the chain, more and more, until the manifestation of the death is obvious. When we meet the conditions as stated above, our curse is also dead, but it may still have fruit and foliage. Just continue to tighten up your chain by living the overcoming lifestyle!

That is what we are doing as we position ourselves to be free from curses in our lives. We have strapped down the chain. Now simply tighten it by living the overcoming lifestyle. Remember to “keep your garden clean,” or in other words, walk a life worthy of the Lord as in Ephesians 4:1. Stay out of strife and live your life in love and forgiveness.

Suggested prayers.

Scriptural basis: “Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that on the cross You took every curse that could come on me.”

Faith in Christ: “You are the Son of God, the only way to God; You died on the cross and rose again.”

Repentance: “I give up all rebellion and sin, and I submit to You as Lord and Master.”

Claim forgiveness: “I confess all my sins and ask Your forgiveness, especially for sins that exposed me to a curse. Release me also from consequences of my ancestors’ sins.”

Forgive: “By a decision of my will, I forgive all who have wronged or disappointed me – just as I want God to forgive me.”

Renounce: “I renounce all contact with anything occult or satanic. If I have “contact objects” I commit myself to destroy

them. I cancel all Satan's claims against me." (See pp. 68-71 of Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose for list of occult practices. See pp. 121-124 of They Shall Expel Demons¹⁰ for five signs of a cult.)

Release: "I ask You now to release me from every curse over my life. In Your name, Jesus, I release myself.

Now receive the exchange.

| Blessings | Curses |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Exaltation | Humiliation |
| Reproductiveness | Barrenness |
| Health | Sickness of all kinds |
| Prosperity | Poverty or failure |
| Victory | Defeat |
| Authority (head) | Helplessness (tail) |
| Above (strength) | Beneath (weakness) |

Here is the point to remember. God's solution for us is to see and believe.

There is a spiritual reality behind everything in the natural realm. The spiritual and invisible world is all around us but we cannot see it with our natural eyes. It is upholding everything that we can see with our eyes. Paul prayed in Ephesians chapter 1 that the people would have eyes to *see* the spiritual world. Ephesians 1:17-18 says, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." When we see the truth of the spiritual world, we will know the truth and we will be free, as Jesus said in John chapter 8.

Paul's prayer is that you and I may *see* the riches of the glory that is our inheritance. What is this glory? Colossians

¹⁰ Prince, Derek. *They Shall Expel Demons*. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1998

1:27 says, “To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” The glory, the blessing, is Christ in you! You, the old person that is subject to curses, have been crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20), however, the new man, Christ in you, is now living. And guess what, Christ in you cannot be subject to curses!

We must see the good and the bad.

First, you see the positive that you were born again with the resurrected Christ who is now living in you, and who is not subject to being under a curse. Christ is not merely your example for living, He is not just somebody out there in Heaven helping you, but He has become your substitute, living His life in you instead of you living your old life.

God, in His mercy, will help you to see yourself. As you stay close to God and spend time with Him in prayer and the Word, the Holy Spirit will convict you of strongholds, habits, and attitudes that are not Christlike. Use this reason: if Christ is living in me, then what is this in me that is not Christlike? This conviction is a gift of repentance from God. As you feel and sense bitterness, anger, jealousy, lust, etc., immediately bring it to Him as sin. Ask God to show you from where this originated. Open all of the doors of your heart and allow God to come into the closed areas of your life. Only He can heal them. Daniel was not harmed in the lion’s den because, as the Scripture says, he was innocent with God. The Hebrew word for innocent is transparent – Daniel 6:22.

In years past, before I knew much at all about curses and blessings, God was releasing me from curses through my simple honesty and transparency with Him. I would continually look into the Word as a mirror and allow it to read me. Then I would confess all things in me that did not look like Jesus. This is really what you need to be free!

The fact that curses are attempting to overtake you is based upon a lie!

If Christ lives in you, then the issue of curses hurting you is legally settled. However, now you must possess that truth for yourself by seeing and believing. You must continue to see

what is going on in the spiritual realm and affirming the truth of what you see. That is the only way to make it, because some curses don't just release the next day. Some demonic strongholds don't just go away like a scared dog. It may take patience and a lot of time affirming and testifying to the truth of the Cross. At the same time you must live a holy life, in other words, an honest life, so that your testimony is effective with God and with Satan. It may take some time for your mind to become renewed or for the genetic factors to change, but as you continue to see and believe, you are overcoming.

Seeing is your God-given heritage as a child of God. "But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

Remember our previous statements regarding curses.

While they are not desirable in our lives, they can be the raw material for "jewels" for the Kingdom of God. Remember the theme of the Book of Revelation. We saw Jesus at God's throne holding our Scroll with our curses recorded therein. After the process in Revelation, we see in its final chapters jewels making up God's Kingdom.

On the Cross Jesus was cursed. In Hell He was cursed. But God spoke resurrection life into Him and He is now King! That same resurrection life spoken into you will also transform you and your life.

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Chapter 9

The Word Of Your Testimony

The Cosmic Courtroom

Since I believe that the Scriptures indicate a legal process in overcoming our challenges and our spiritual enemies, then let us see what we can find out about the courtroom when all of this legal battle takes place.

Life is a courtroom.

I have been emphasizing the Scriptures and my personal experiences that indicate that there is a legal process in overcoming. In fact, the word *overcome*¹¹ infers a legal process. That being the case, I believe, like any good lawyer or participant in a legal matter, that we should discover what this Heavenly Courtroom is really like in order to give us an advantage to win.

I submit that if we could pull back the curtain of this material world, we would see behind this “veil” not only the spiritual world, but also the “Heavenly courtroom.” I believe that one would see frantic activity; perhaps even more intense than one would see in a U.S. District court.

The judicial system in America is one of the best in the world, but it is not based upon justice; it is based upon who can win the case, even if the guilty one is set free, or the not guilty one is jailed. Both sides are not vying for justice; they are competing to win at any cost. This is the way Satan works. As a matter of fact, our judicial systems are systems of the world,

¹¹ overcome, when one is arraigned or goes to law, to win the case, conquer, prevail, get the victory, to carry off the victory, come off victorious, of Christ, victorious over all His foes, of Christians, that hold fast their faith even unto death, against the power of their foes, and temptations and, persecutions.

and Satan is the Prince of the World. However, God judges righteously.

I am convinced that the Scriptures show us that overcoming difficulties in life is a series of courtroom experiences for all of us. I believe that understanding these courtrooms is essential when it comes to overcoming, especially overcoming curses in our lives. Actually, there is so much in the Bible about this subject that there is not enough room in this chapter to cover it all. I have provided a multitude of Scriptures having to do with overcoming in Appendix A of this book.

Jesus spoke parables in Luke chapter 18 in response to the questions from the Pharisees (Luke 17:20) asking when the Kingdom of God would come.

In our previous chapter, when Jesus entered Jerusalem, He sensed that His disciples thought that the Kingdom of God would come immediately (Luke chapter 19). He answered them with a message of hope and grace through the Parable of the Minas. Now in Luke 18 Jesus answered a question from the Pharisees about when the Kingdom of God would come. He spoke to the Pharisees in a very different way than He did His disciples. He was saying to both groups, "I am going to leave you a gift for you to utilize for turning evil into blessings, and when I return I will see what you did with it."

First He explained to the Pharisees that there would be a courtroom experience but that they may not prevail in the courtroom due to the fact that their self-righteousness does not carry weight in the Heavenly Courtroom.

Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees, not His followers in the following Scriptures,

Luke 17:20 says,

"20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation;"

Luke 18:1-8 says,

"1 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

2 saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.

3 "Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.'

4 "And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man,

5 'yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'"

6 Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said.

7 "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?

8 "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Jesus is using the unjust judge here as a contrast. If the unjust judge will avenge the widow, then how much more will God, the just Judge, speedily avenge His children? Also notice that the example here is the widow, which represents our helpless position. The last statement has to do with Jesus wanting to find us justified by faith and not by works as the Pharisees did. Notice, it says "Faith on the earth."

In the next parable Jesus addresses the Pharisees about the issue of our justification in this end times courtroom.

Jesus was not condemning the Pharisees when He spoke these two parables to them; He just emphasized that they would need to be justified by faith, which was not something that they understood. Notice in Luke 18:8 Jesus said, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" He was saying that to prevail in this courtroom you must be as helpless as a widow and must be justified by faith.

Luke 18:9-14 says,

“Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am 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.’

“And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.””

Jesus always stressed that behavior modification is worthless unless it comes from the heart. In order to have a heart change, we must “see” Jesus, and that takes the pouring out of our heart to Him. Two examples in these parables are the widow and the tax collector. When we do this, our “have to” is changed to a “want to.” We are no longer legalistic; we are instead obedient because we love Him.

If life is a courtroom and God’s judgment is pending, then justification is the greatest gift we can receive.

I believe that so many believers have failed to overcome afflictions because they do not understand this Biblical principle.

I submit that Job was in this courtroom, and that he was finally justified (in a very different way than he anticipated) and became a classic overcomer. While he was spending time justifying himself, God was just waiting. Going through this “trial” was Job’s door into the very presence of God in a way he could have not experienced without his suffering.

First we must be judged so that we may prevail in this courtroom.

Our judgment is based on the finished work of Jesus, and our obedience to His Word. When we find ourselves not obeying, missing the mark in some way, we can quickly come back to being perfect before God because of His finished work.

Justification is a major aspect of the Cross.

Romans 4:25; 5:1 says,

“4:25[He] who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”

Justify is a word that is used in courts of law. It means “the establishment of a person as just by acquittal from guilt.” If you knew you were guilty of a crime, and then, for some strange reason, the judge acquitted you, you would be very happy. Being acquitted is better than a pardon. A pardon means you are set free even though you are guilty, but to be acquitted means that you are not guilty. It is just like you never sinned, because Jesus bore it all.

One of Satan’s greatest weapons is to falsely accuse us.

Nobody likes to be falsely accused. It is one of life’s most painful experiences. During your time in the Heavenly courtroom, you will be falsely accused. However, Jesus bore this for you as well. He was falsely accused during His trials, and His response was remarkable.

Mark 14:60-61a says,

“And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, ‘Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?’ But He kept silent and answered nothing...”

If you respond by defending yourself, you cannot accept being justified by faith!

It is painful but powerful to remain silent when you are falsely accused. This is an exercise in taking up your cross, and

it will crucify your flesh. Our redemption was based upon Jesus being falsely accused; perhaps someone else's redemption is fruit of us following Jesus into this crucible. You might save someone's life!

What is the purpose of this courtroom?

From God's point of view, which should be ours, our goal is to apply the victory of the Cross to specific issues and satanic beings in our lives.

Satan is attempting to perpetuate curses in our lives and in the lives of those in our realm of influence. He is attempting to perpetuate our junk to remain junk and suffering, while God wants to transform our junk into jewels. It is illegal for satanic forces to continue to perpetuate curses in our lives because Jesus bore all of our curses. However, if we cooperate with the satanic forces, they are quite willing and legally able to continue to perpetuate our curses. If we cooperate with God, then they will be judged guilty in the Heavenly courtroom, and will be "destroyed" or rendered inoperative and unemployed.

So many people do not pay attention to the idea of God's judgment.

Others misunderstand it thinking it is only an event that will take place after they die. Yes, this world and the people in it are constantly experiencing judgment. Judgment from God is a two-sided coin as described in Psalm 1. For the believer who has been following the Lord to the best of his/her ability, judgment brings reward. However, for others it brings condemnation and penalties. The same judgment can work both reward and condemnation at the same time.

We must face the truth while we are in our court trials. We are most likely guilty of something. We have not been perfect with our children, our businesses, our spouses, or in just living life.

This is where justification by faith comes in. Because Jesus took our guilt, sin, and judgment, we are set free, not by what

we have done or by how we have performed, but by faith in what He gave us as a free gift.

Here is the cast of characters in this courtroom:

Satan is the accuser.

We, or those we are standing for, are the accused.

Our Heavenly Father is the judge, The Ancient of Days.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit are our advocates or lawyers.

We play another role in this courtroom; we are also witnesses.

What is a witness?

Acts 1:8 says,

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”

Too many believers just look at their “trials” in life as a difficult time that they are going through. They ARE going through a difficult time. Court trials are not fun. Most often the circumstances will look impossible. Worry will attempt to set in. Sleep will be difficult to come by. It is painful! We must always remember that we are “witnesses” to the power of and truth of Jesus and what He did, and that something much bigger than us is happening.

Jesus quoted what is written in Acts 1:8 to His disciples when they asked Him about coming back to set up His Kingdom. He made it clear – the job of His disciples was and is to be witnesses, and in being witnesses, His Kingdom would come. He also emphasized that we need the power of the Holy Spirit to do this job.

I believe that Jesus was referring to the type of witness we are talking about.

The word *witness* in Greek is defined as *Martur*, meaning “one who bears witness by his death, in a legal sense, one who is a spectator of anything, e.g. of a contest.” I do not think that this is limited to our traditional definition of martyr. Jesus said that we must, in a spiritual sense, take up our cross. We die daily when we live for Jesus. We are killed continually when

we testify to the truth. We need to be prepared to give up our physical life if needed, but often it is more difficult to stay alive than it is to die. This is called a *living sacrifice*. We are tempted to crawl off of the altar.

What are we to witness to?

We should only witness to the truth of God's Word. Actually, we are not the real witnesses. We are only mouthpieces or vessels for the real and true witness, the Holy Spirit. He is the only one who was an eye witness to the resurrection of Jesus. He is the only One who can prove that Jesus was raised from the dead and that we are justified. The Holy Spirit empowers us to speak the truth of the Word of God, and we become the witnesses. The Holy Spirit is the only One who can help you obtain a not guilty verdict. When going through a trial, it is vitally important to press into God's presence until such time as you hear Him speak a Word directly to you. It is called a *rhema*, or revelation knowledge, described as a personal voice from the lips of Jesus to you.

Then it is up to you to prove that you really believe. You are called upon to believe. How?

1. By speaking the Word that God has given to you about your situation as a witness. This is usually difficult and takes discipline.

2. Our walk with the Lord also has to be obedient and repentant.

While it is true that our justification is from God, we must cooperate and continue to be obedient and to confess our sins as our flesh attempts to prevail with ungodly behavior.

Usually the trial you are experiencing will be difficult on your emotions. Circumstances may not line up with God's promise. You will be tempted to say the wrong thing. You will be tempted to give up and feel that God does not care. Here is where you can prove what you really believe. Stand on the Word!

The word of our testimony as used in Revelation 12:11, I believe, represents testifying what the Word says that the blood

of Jesus did for us. It is testifying to Satan's defeat and the finished work of the Cross. It is speaking God's promises and reading your Bible aloud!

A very powerful way to pray as a witness is to pray in tongues for long periods of time. If you do not pray this way, ask God to give you this gift and to baptize you into the Holy Spirit. I can testify that many strong deliverances have come into my life by praying in tongues.

Order out of chaos.

In Genesis chapter 1 the Holy Spirit is seen brooding and hovering over the earth, which was "without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep." Then God spoke and the Holy Spirit coupled with the Word brought order out of chaos. That same Spirit is in us now, and that same power can be breathed through our breath and lips to bring order out of chaos.

Only humans are authorized to be witnesses.

God cannot employ witnesses who are not human. We are the only people authorized to speak words of testimony on this earth. Satan attempts to get us to speak as his witness. We are tempted to say, "My children are rebellious. I am poor. I wish I could just die. This old car of mine will never make it another mile." Or others may become witnesses for us like Job's friends did. They may tell us how bad we look. They may tell us that so and so was trusting God but their house was foreclosed. They may tell us, "You never know what God will do, sometimes He helps and sometimes He does not."

While it is true that we do not know how God will orchestrate our trial, and while we do not deny the facts of difficult circumstances, no matter what we must exalt His Word as the witness, establishing the truth, standing on the truth until such time as God judges the case in His timing and in His wisdom. God is a fair Judge inasmuch as He allows both sides to make their case. Often that takes time.

Matthew 12:36-37 says,

"Jesus said, "But I say to you that for every idle word 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."

You must speak the word of your testimony, the Word of God, out of your mouth consistently. You must speak the Word against Satan and his demons until you overcome. Meditate on and repeatedly speak the Word that God has given you to stand on. Angels hearken to the Word; demons flee at the Word. The Word applies the blood of Jesus over your "doorpost."

The Holy Spirit is the power for overcoming.

The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strength, Standby (John 14:26, Amplified Bible). The word *comforter* in Greek is translated *paraklesis*. It means, "advocate (in a courtroom sense), combining encouragement with alleviation of grief. It suggests the capacity of giving aid. It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, a counselor, and advocate, one who pleads the case of another." When looking up the definition of advocate, one is referred back to comforter. An advocate is a courtroom lawyer. Jesus is our Advocate, however, He did say that the Comforter would come and take His place. So our witness is the combination of the Word and the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 2:23-24, New Living Translation says,

"...He (Christ) left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed"

God revealed to Daniel very specific visions about the Heavenly Courtroom in end times.

Beginning at Daniel 7 Daniel saw, in the form of various beasts, the historic and spiritual kingdoms which had and which would rule the earth. First, he saw the Babylonian Empire as the lion,

which was toppled by the Medo-Persian Empire represented as the bear. Then, he saw the Grecian Empire, Alexander the Great, represented by a leopard. These were all actual historic empires, however, they also had invisible spiritual foundations.

The fourth beast was very powerful and was *quite different*. It had iron teeth and devoured ruthlessly. In my opinion, this represented two kingdoms, the actual Roman Empire and the spiritual empire of Satan in the last days since the resurrection of Jesus.

Look at Daniel chapter 7 below and notice how the fourth beast is overcome in a courtroom situation. I suggest that you pause and notice that the Ancient of Days, God the Judge, not only judged for Jesus to receive the Kingdom, but then for the Saints. There seemed to be verdicts first in the heavenlies then also on earth.

Daniel 7:1-28 says,

1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.

2 Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.

3 "And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

4 "The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

5 "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

6 "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a

bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

7 "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

There is a more complete explanation of this fourth kingdom in Daniel chapter 2:42-45 which says;

42 "And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

43 "As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

45 "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

The clay feet of this final empire shows its vulnerability to the Rock that destroys it.

Continue with Daniel chapter 7.

8 "I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were

eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

9 "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire;

10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.

11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.

12 "As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

13 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

I believe that this first courtroom described above in verses 9-14 is the one that judged Satan at the Cross as guilty and Jesus as innocent. I believe that the Scripture shows that when He ascended back to the Father, that He received the Kingdom.

15 *“I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.*

16 *“I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things:*

17 *‘Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth.*

18 *‘But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’*

19 *“Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet;*

20 *“and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.*

21 *“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them,*

22 *“until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.*

I believe that verses 21-22 describe the warfare and finally the second courtroom, the one that we go through.

23 *“Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces.*

24 The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings.

25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

26 'But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever.

27 Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

I believe that verses 25-27 again describes the second courtroom and our warfare, and the Kingdom of God being ushered to earth by our overcoming.

28) "This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart." "

Keep this mind on a personal level, when our circumstances look like the iron toes, something we cannot handle, an enemy that is too strong for us, just remember the spiritual foundation of that kingdom is made from clay. The Cross of Jesus and His resurrection took care of this. If we stand, we will prevail and the enemy with clay feet will fall! Notice above in Daniel 2:45, that the Stone or Rock is what broke this final fourth kingdom

in pieces. The Rock is Jesus; the Rock is the Word! Speak the Word!

Things always look bad at first.

The prosecutor, Satan, accuses you. The evidence comes in. It does not look good. He begins to wear you out. You check out his record and discover that he has worn out many others before he focused on you. You feel fear!

You hear the verdict in the lower court, “guilty.” Perhaps you did not handle things just right and you do have some guilt. When we are under intense pressure in suffering, often we do not respond to temptations in godliness. The flesh can cause us to act in fear, where we try to control circumstances and outcomes. These temporary failures can make you discouraged and hopeless. But God is quick to forgive when we repent, He is quick to justify us, to have mercy on us, if our heart is set on pleasing Him. Your motives during this time are what God is really examining.

Maybe you were without guilt but the prosecutor is simply very skilled. Maybe the doctor’s report acts like a conviction against you. Job has been in this courtroom and we have a first hand report on how it worked out for him. He appealed to the Supreme Court. You decide to try one more appeal, hoping maybe, just maybe you can overcome the impending sentences and doom.

You walk into the Supreme Court and you glance over and see Satan at the prosecutor’s bench. He is staring at you with evil so thick that you can feel it in your bones. You see his intelligence and his stacks of papers of evidence. He is smiling at you. You try not to look at him, but you catch him smirking at you with one eyebrow raised in wicked self-confidence.

Daniel’s prophetic dreams tell us that overcoming is painful and sometimes takes a long time to prevail against the workers of darkness. They tell us that overcoming takes place in a Heavenly Courtroom. The final chapters of Daniel confirm this. The Book of Revelation is a parallel prophetic vision.

Then the participants in the courtroom all gasp at what they see.

This is the courtroom I described in the previous chapter. You and I are the accused. A *being* enters the Courtroom! Just before you are ready to cave in, just before you feel that you cannot stand any longer, just when you have given up all hope in your fleshly resources for making a defense, you decide to enter into praise. You are praising the Lord for His character, His reputation, His reliability, and His faithfulness (this is called “The New Song”). Just then the Father, the Supreme Court Judge, steps into the courtroom!

Suddenly a voice sweeps the room and says, “All rise for the Judge.”

Imagine with me standing in that courtroom. The Holy Spirit comes over to you, puts His arm around your shoulders, and says, “My friend, leave this one to Me. I have been here before, and I know the Judge personally.”

The Holy Spirit presents Himself before the Ancient of Days. He asks Him to look out the window. The Ancient of Days commands the curtain and the window to be thrown open. He has a bittersweet look as His head turns to gaze outside the City. He sees Golgotha. Behold, He sees a Lamb slain on a Cross. He turns to you and to me and He says, “You are not guilty, you are acquitted and justified!” He says to the demon, “You are destroyed, rendered unemployed and inoperative!”

Unlike worldly court process, in the Heavenly Courtroom the Supreme court decided the case even before the lower court had a chance to try it. The Cross of Jesus Christ decided the outcome in advance.

What is the end result?

Next time you find yourself in a *trial*, a suffering, understand that *it is* a trial, but the Judge is God the Father, your Advocate is Jesus and your accuser is Satan himself. Look behind the circumstances. They always lie. Look instead to the Word.

The curse is broken and vengeance is taken. Jesus’ mission statement in Isaiah 61, forecasts that the many things that Jesus

wishes to do for us come after the “Day of vengeance.” I believe you will see a multitude of results after overcoming. Read all of Isaiah chapter 61 and meditate upon it.

As bad as the trial has been, you will experience gladness for having participated and persevered (in a bittersweet way). Next, you have broken the curse(s) from your life and your family line. Also, because the curse is broken, the demon(s) who had attached themselves to the curse are heading for an early retirement, and as I wrote in the previous chapter, are destroyed or unemployed.

In addition, you have entered new realms of operating in the Kingdom of God here on earth. Your life has been purified and you have a much more intimate fellowship experience with the Lord. Finally, you are now the minister of comfort, an advocate for others who are going through similar circumstances. You are one of the saints riding with Jesus on white horses in Revelation chapter 19 coming to the aid of others.

How long do you need to stand on the Word and speak the word of your testimony? Until you win!

2 Corinthians 4:13 says,

“And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, ‘I believed and therefore I spoke,’ we also believe and therefore speak.”

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Chapter 10
Not Loving Your Life To The Death
Taking up your cross

Two deaths, Jesus' and yours, activate the blood covenant!

You cannot expect God's richest presence and blessings without your part of the blood covenant, without sacrifice. Jeremiah 34:18-20 states that we are in the hands of our enemies if we transgress the covenant.

You may have been focusing on the blood of Jesus and what the Cross accomplished for you, and you may have been using the word of your testimony to speak the Word of God into your affliction, but without taking up your cross, everything else will be of no avail. We will see how taking up your cross is simply cooperating with the Word of God to allow the character of Jesus to replace your old character. It means totally abandoning the things that you have relied upon for your needs of love, security, and significance. God does not want us to change, He wants us to "die" and allow Jesus to live His life through us.

We cannot have true fellowship with God without a good conscience, which cannot exist without holiness, and true holiness is nothing more and nothing less than Jesus living His life in our vessels (1 Timothy 1:5; Hebrews 12:14).

Can we really take up our cross without help? We can only take up our cross to a point, but not all the way. We don't have enough hands to crucify all of ourselves; the last nail must be inserted by the world. We must experience some sort of pain and breaking to really get the job done. God does not do this, the world does. We can offer to God those things that we control, those things that we are aware of. However, God sees with vision we do not have. He knows those things in your soul that are keeping you from complete healing and connection with Him. The more of you that can die, the more of Him can live in you. His plan is not to clean up your old life, but to have you experience the crucifixion with Him.

We will be focusing on two major consequences or rewards that are a result of living a life of taking up your cross.

1. As you continually take up your cross you will be conformed to the image of Jesus. You will be conformed to love like He loves, give like He gives, and forgive like He forgives, and be holy as He is holy. As you live this life of love, all of your spiritual enemies will be rendered harmless, and you will overcome. Remember, faith works by love! (Galatians 5:6).

2. As you continually take up your cross, the second major reward and consequence will be that you will experience the presence of God.

You need the presence of God to free and cleanse you in order to overcome. You cannot overcome difficulties in life with plans and formulas, with the pastor's sermon or the Sunday school class. You must be in touch with the Living God! In Revelation chapter 2, the church at Ephesus was into great works, but God said to them, "Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love" (Revelation 2:4).

I stay hungry for His presence!

Staying in God's presence magnifies Him and makes Him larger than your afflictions. "Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together" (Psalm 34:3).

"Blessed is the man You choose, and cause to approach You, that he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, of Your holy temple" (Psalm 65:4). Our greatest blessing in life is to be honored by God's presence. There is nothing like being in real time touch with Him. However, we need a pure conscience, otherwise we will be deceived.

Often we hear the expression, "Feeling the presence of God." While we do not trust in our feelings, and certainly we need faith in the presence of God without feelings, often we can and do sense and feel the presence of God. The Tabernacle pattern makes this "feeling" dependable. God wants our emotions involved. As you will learn in this process, our

emotions are not relied upon until after we consecrate our mind and will. If we use this pattern, our emotions are safer. There are a lot of “spirits” out there that can and do affect man’s emotions, but God has made a safe way to know that it is Him.

When we are in affliction, the only remedy is to push into the presence of God for relief. When we find His presence, it seems like everything will be all right. We discover a different perspective on our life and on our afflictions, which only His presence can uncover. We begin to look at things from the heavenly viewpoint.

We need to know that there are enemies that want to stop God from being real to us. Our enemies come at us three main ways: our flesh, the world, and Satan.

God has already provided for all victory over our enemies! The way into His presence was provided at the Cross when the veil of the Temple was torn from top to bottom. Mark 15:38 says, “Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” Now it is our job to cooperate. We must take up our cross – which will give us the victory!

However, we need to understand that we may be cooperating with some of these enemies which will prevent us from entering into God’s presence and even from overcoming. In this chapter we will deal with those issues by using the example of the Tabernacle. Some hindrances which may be blocking the presence of God in your life may be:

- a. Not accepting God’s forgiveness, and not offering forgiveness.
- b. Not making the Word of God the first priority in your life.
- c. Keeping an unthankful attitude towards God.
- d. Hanging on to your independence and your strong will and not allowing God to work out His will in your life.
- e. Not allowing God to renew your mind and remove strongholds in your life.
- f. Not maintaining an attitude of praise, which leads to worship.

g. Not loving and giving as Jesus does. In other words, being selfish and self-centered.

h. Trying to live by legalism and the law, rather than by grace.

i. Trying to live an unholy life by being presumptuous on God's grace.

The Tabernacle is a picture of the three parts of our soul.

They are the will, intellect (mind), and emotions. The Tabernacle will serve as a foundation for our part of the blood covenant, our sacrifice.

The following is a quote from God's Plan and the Overcomers¹² by Watchman Nee.

"The Old Testament tells us how the chosen people of God lived on earth. At first, the tabernacle served as the center of the 12 tribes; later it was the temple which became their center. The center of the temple was the ark. The tabernacle, the temple and the ark are all types of Christ. As long as the children of Israel maintained their proper relationship with the tabernacle or the temple they were victorious, and no nation could overcome them. Even though their enemies learned how to fight while they themselves were not familiar with fighting, the children of Israel overcame all their enemies nonetheless. But the moment they had problems with the tabernacle or the temple, they were taken into captivity. Nothing else, whether they had powerful kings or great wisdom in themselves mattered at all; the only concern which mattered was whether or not they had offended the ark of the tabernacle or temple. If the Lord had the preeminence, then theirs was the victory. So too with us today. In minding the victory of Christ, we also have the victory."

¹² Nee, Watchman. *God's Plan and the Overcomers*. NY: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 1977.

One part of overcoming is "...and they did not love their lives to the death" (Revelation 12:11c). The word "lives" is *psuche* in Greek, which means the soul. It does not mean our physical life, it means our will, intellect, and emotions. It means that unregenerated part of our being that needs to become like Jesus. "Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

God is actually accomplishing many things during our overcoming of affliction.

1. We are overcoming the actual curse or affliction we are dealing with.
2. We are closer to God, in intimate fellowship, than we have ever been before.
3. Our soul is going through a healing and is being renewed.
4. We are being conformed into His image.
5. We receive the *rhema*, God's personal Word, to us.

Paul wonderfully expresses the process of taking up your cross in the Book of Romans. Paul takes the first eight to eleven chapters of Romans to explain the desperate need of mankind and the wonderful provision God has made for that need. Then he says in effect that in view of these wonderful mercies, take up your cross. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be 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" (Romans 12:1-2). Then, in the next few chapters, he gives some very good practical advice on how to take up your cross and present your members as a living sacrifice. I urge everyone reading this to read Romans chapters 12-15 prayerfully, asking God to convict you in your ways of selfishness.

Our mind needs to be transformed and renewed, to change into another form, to transform, to transfigure. Christ's

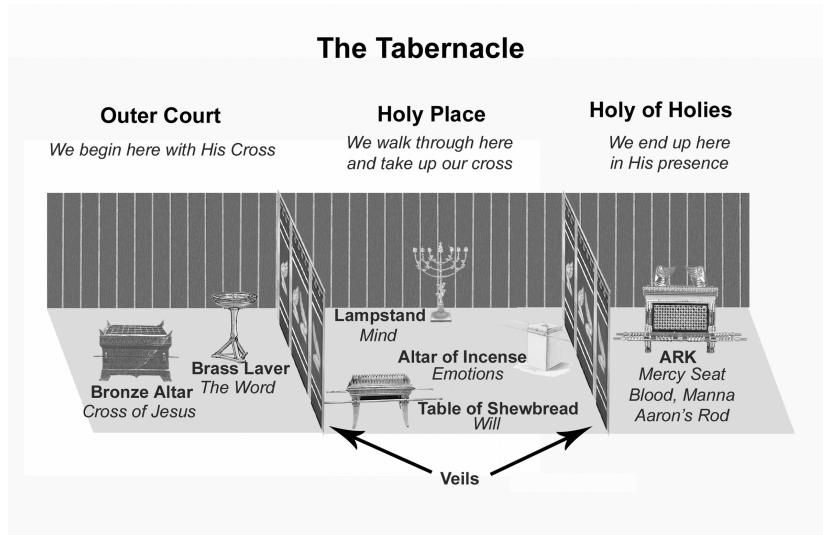
appearance was changed and was resplendent with divine brightness on the Mount of Transfiguration. God does a supernatural work of changing us as we submit our old will, intellect, and emotions.

Transformation is kind of like the displacement method. When clean water is poured into a glass of dirty water, the displacement theory transforms the water. The dirty water did not become clean, but was displaced by the clean water. As we go through this process the character of Jesus displaces our old will, mind, and emotions. That is called grace!

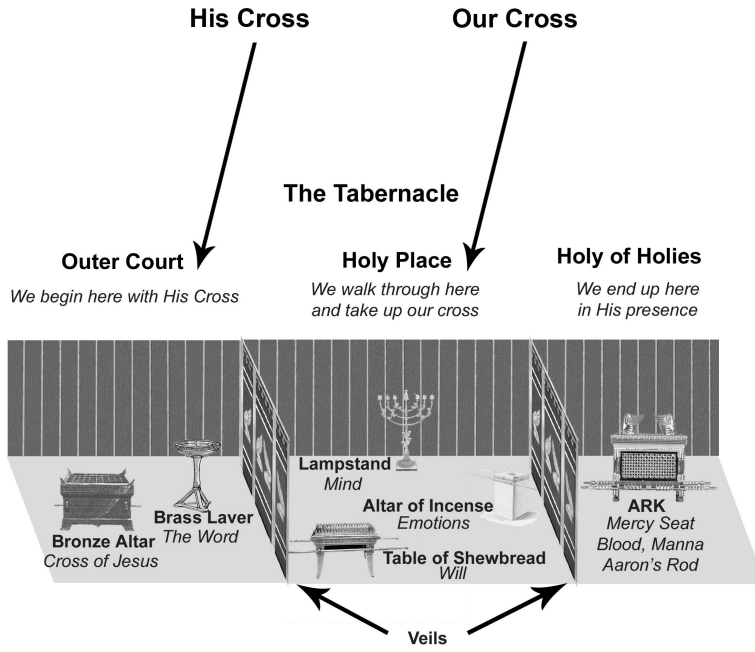
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As you journey into fellowship with God, picture taking a walk through the Tabernacle as the priests of the Old Testament did.

**“In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me”
(Psalm 27:5b).**



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Walking through the Tabernacle

When Jesus said that we must deny ourselves, lose our life for His sake, etc., He was using a word that refers to our soul. So we must deny, or say *no* to, our soul.

Our soul consists of three parts: the will, mind (intellect), and emotions. The Holy Place represents that part of our being, the soul. It has three pieces of furniture that represent our will, mind, and emotions (see above picture). Allowing God to replace our old will, mind, and emotions with His, is the taking up of our cross.

Now we will take a journey to each of these items in our prayer time and journey right past our enemies into the very presence of God!

A Journey into the Presence of God

First stop, His Cross: Receiving forgiveness and forgiving others.

The first stop within the Tabernacle pattern towards the presence of God is the Bronze Altar. Bronze stands for judgment. Our sins have been judged as transferred to Jesus on the Cross. I believe that this altar is a pivot point, a kind of watershed, not only for coming into God's presence and overcoming, but also for our entire relationship with God. I make this statement based upon the fact that in the Book of Revelation, as God is looking for overcomers, He continually makes the statement, "He who overcomes..." Then He makes to overcomers some promise, a different one for each of the seven churches. He is referring, in each case, to overcoming their faults, sins, and fleshly attitudes.

The Brazen or Brass Altar represents the Cross of Jesus and His sacrifice there for our sins and our sin nature. However, we must appropriate this sacrifice by being honest with Him.

Many people have never been comfortable enough with another person to be totally transparent and honest. If you have never encountered the person of Jesus, in the Holy Spirit or in

another human, it may be difficult for you to bare your heart before God.

Look at it this way. Imagine that you are preparing to go into a courtroom where you were the defendant. Imagine further that you were sitting in a restaurant in the building just downstairs from the courtroom, thinking about your trial, and suddenly, the judge walks in. He sits next to you and begins to tell you how you can win the trial for sure. He gives you advance information on what he will be looking for. He gives you inside information. This is how I see Revelation chapters 2-3. They are not put there to make us feel condemned, but rather to prepare us for victory. There may be many hidden and deceitful attitudes in our lives that the enemy can use against us. You can trust the judge who does this. He is looking out for your best interest.

We need to be and can safely be very straight up with ourselves and with God about our attitudes and sinful actions. I am not promoting some kind of striving after sinless perfection that could drive us to despair, but rather am encouraging you to be totally gut-level honest with the One who loves you more than you love yourself. He will not condemn you nor make you feel dirty. The devil does that. The devil never gives you a way out. However, when we allow God to convict us, He always does it in love and always gives us a way out. It is called repentance, which means to turn from our attitudes and actions with the power given to us in and through the Holy Spirit living within.

I have seen a lot of people study the Bible and become very grounded in who they are in Christ and what the Cross did for them, and they even continually confess those Scriptures, but they experience defeat. Why? I submit that it is because they do not want to be honest with their real condition, and they do not want to be real with themselves and with God.

Repentance is a gift from God. Being able to repent brings revival; it brings the presence of the Lord. Acts 3:19 says, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the

presence of the Lord.”

We can be honest with Jesus, we can trust Him. 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

A big part of taking up your cross is being *gut-level honest* with God. You need to be totally transparent and tell Him everything. Take time to pour out your heart to Him as you would to your best friend! Often we do not even know our sin. The safest thing to do is what I have learned from my wife, just tell Him everything! Pour out your heart to Him telling Him how you feel about everything. You can be sure that as you do that, some of what comes out of your mouth will be the confession of sin, and Jesus loves it!

1 John 1:7 says, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” Jesus said in John 3:19-21 that sin had no power as long as people came out into the light with the truth, and did not attempt to hide in darkness. Jesus did not die for our excuses; He died for our sin!

Here are some of the areas in which the Holy Spirit will work in your life.

a. Sin against men.

The greatest issue is that you need to walk in love, and when you fail, run to God to be cleansed. If we stay turned toward God and stay honest with Him, He will see us through, even in our mistakes and stumbling. Read 1 Corinthians 13, the “love chapter.”

b. Sin against God

The greatest issue with God is that many Christians still go to “other gods” for their needs rather than to the Word. The Old Testament is overflowing with this issue and Jesus spent a lot of time teaching about “You cannot serve God and Mammon.” *Mammon* is not simply money; it is increase (outside of God’s Word) of any kind, including love, security, and significance. Your safety lies in repenting from all other idols in your life. Then Jesus can supply your needs.

c. Let us look at Revelation again.

Jesus wanted to prepare the Churches of that day, as well as you and me, for the trial. His way of doing that is expressed in Revelation chapters 2-3.

God is looking for overcomers in Revelation. Overcoming is the bottom line message to each of these seven churches. Jesus was showing each one of the churches back then, and each one of us right now, that there are certain things in our lives that we need to line up with God's plan, so that we may become overcomers. We need to clean up our ways because before we overcome, we will be in intense war. As soldiers, we need "clean rifles, shinny boots," and obedient spirits. The message continues and shows us that things will get bad, then they will get worse, and then they will seem intolerable. It will look like evil is winning. We don't know if we can hang on any longer, then suddenly, Jesus comes on the scene and delivers us. We overcome! The rewards of overcoming include a closer relationship with God, more of His character in our lives, more of His provisions for temporal needs, and spiritual authority to go rescue others who need to overcome.

The word *overcome* is used eleven times in Revelation. The first seven times it is for the churches, and you and me. The next two times, chapter 11:7 and 13:7, the bad guys overcome the good guys. The next time, chapter 17:14, Jesus, The Lamb, overcomes the bad guys. The last time is in chapter 21:7 when Jesus tells us, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son" (Revelation 21:7).

I admit that I do not understand all of the beautiful pictures and language portraits in Revelation. In an effort to summarize some practical points gleaned from Jesus' message to each of the seven churches in Revelation, I offer the following practical, yet probably incomplete summary. I believe that included here are areas that each one of us may apply to our own lives. Remember Jesus was not condemning these believers and churches, He wanted them to overcome. He knew that Satan would prevent their overcoming unless they repented.

The Church of Ephesus (Revelation 2:1). They were working hard for the Gospel, undergoing trouble and were patient. They would not endure wicked people. Their heart was in the right place for God and His work. But they left their first love. Jesus said, “You deserted ME! Get back into real time, vital, living contact with Me, or you will not survive and overcome what is about to happen to you.” We need to be in “real time” contact with God through the Holy Spirit and the Word. The analogy is, we can write letters to one another, we can send email to one another, we can even “chat” with one another on the Internet, but unless we get face to face, our relationship will be limited. We need face to face contact with God.

The Church of Smyrna (Revelation 2:8). This was, and represents the persecuted church. Jesus knew of their great distress, affliction, and poverty, but He told them to hang on and be faithful, even to death. Jesus had nothing against this church. I submit that this includes people who are destined to be physical martyrs. Their reward is the Crown of Life. Crown stands for authority, and life represents the spiritual life given by God. Historically, the death of martyrs has brought about a great harvest of souls. In the year 2000, there was a tragic incident in an American High School in Colorado, where two demonized boys killed thirteen people. Some of the ones who died did so as true martyrs. Since that time there have been thousands of souls come into the Kingdom of God through this event. I believe that the “Smyrna believer” can also be those who are in terrible suffering which may not be unto death. Notice in verse 2:9 the Lord calls those who are afflicted and in poverty rich. “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich)...” (Revelation 2:9). The next verse says that these people “will have tribulation ten days.”

The Church of Pergamos (Revelation 2:12). These people lived among an evil people who had the spirit of anti-Christ, yet they did not deny Jesus. But Jesus saw that some of them had a

money problem, serving two gods at the same time and they welcomed some false teaching about needing a mediator between themselves and God (Nicolaitans). Some believers and some entire denominations feel that there needs to be a human priest to mediate between God and man. “For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the Man Christ Jesus*” (1 Timothy 2:5).

They also were prone to sexual vice.

Perhaps they had a love of the “world” and its “gods.” Revelation 2:14 states that these people held to the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak, the King of Moab to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel. Balaam was hired by Balak to curse the Israelites prior to waging war with them. Balaam, a prophet, tried to curse Israel, but he could only bless. Later, as recorded in Numbers 31, in a war with the Midianites, the Israelites, at the prompting of Balaam, mingled with the Midianite women. This sin caused Israel to fail, and a plague came upon the entire congregation of the Lord.

“And Moses said to them, ‘Have you kept all the women alive? Look, these *women* caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD’” (Numbers 31:15-16).

Satan knows that sin and disobedience is the quickest way to overcome God’s people. The curse could not be effective because God had blessed them, but their own choice to sin defeated them. Obedience is a very big issue with God, and many Christians are deceived, even self-deceived, by their own works; and even deceived by their own sacrifices. Obedience is better than sacrifice.

Jesus said that if they did not turn from these sins, that He would fight against them. He also promised them a major blessing of close fellowship with Him if they overcame these problems.

The Church of Thyatira (Revelation 2:18). Jesus recognized their love and service, but He saw the spirit of

Jezebel (which is being out of line when it comes to authority). This often leads to sexual immorality and being led astray in many other ways. Jesus promised authority to those who overcame. There are many manifestations of the spirit of Jezebel, some within the church and some outside the church. It is not primarily a sexual demon, although it uses sex as one of its tools to control. It counterfeits the Holy Spirit and often acts as a false prophet. Often when found in the church, Jezebel's goals are to destroy the congregation. Often she is successful. Pastors must remain vigilant to people who disguise themselves as super-spiritual. Pastors, and all men, must remain in proper relationship with their God-given spouse; otherwise they are prime targets. A woman very often traps young men, who do not submit to the authority of Jesus, with a Jezebel spirit. Young women who find themselves without an authority figure are often trapped by a male with a Jezebel or an Ahab (Jezebel's husband) spirit. This is why the church is commissioned to minister to widows and orphans. They make up a large groups of those who are not under a male authority (divorced women as well).

The Church of Sardis (Revelation 3:1). Jesus called them dead! He said that they thought that they were alive. That is a very dangerous position to be in; dead but convinced they are alive! This could describe many main line denominations that go through the motions without real life. He stated that their garments were dirty but that there were a few who had on white, representing His righteousness. The remedy prescribed for them, and for those who are tending to be like them, is to back up and remember the lessons they have heard in the past and to be a doer of the Word this time. In other words, be obedient to the Word of God. He said that if they repented and turned that He would not blot their names out of the Book of Life. It is a fearful thought that some people may have been scheduled for salvation but had their name blotted out!

The Church of Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7). These people are overcomers! This was the church that was doing its best to live and minister properly, but they were constantly under attack from the enemy. Jesus found nothing against them, but warned them to hang on to the end, or they would lose. I believe that these are the people who are positioned to turn their troubles and curses into triumph and blessings! I believe that these are the people who will win if they hang on long enough. Revelation 3:10 indicates that God will keep them safe during the “trial.” These are the people who will have spiritual authority and will be able to help others overcome.

The Church of Laodicea (Revelation 3:14). This was the lukewarm church; they were neither hot nor cold. They said they were rich, but Jesus called them poor. I believe there is an indication that they were very religious and self-righteous. They were blinded to their condition. Jesus warned them to be overcomers, not losers. The reason I feel that “lukewarm” indicates self-righteousness, is because He told them, “Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17). That is spiritual pride. In verse 18 He tells them that they cannot even see their condition. I believe that all of us can take a warning from this admonition.

Let us not forget how grace reached down and saved us. Let us not judge others too quickly. The only effective way of dealing with a brother or sister who is not acting right is to bring them into the presence of God. It will not remedy their situation if we hit them over the head with the Bible! I am not saying that there won't be times of firm dealings with some people, but, for the most part, love and grace are the needed ingredients. Criticism and gossip will not help people. Criticism and gossip is what comes out of the mouth of the self-righteous, and those are the people who Jesus will “spue out of His mouth” (Revelation 3:16b).

The wonderful promise for repentance from a self-righteous attitude is that the person may be intimate with Jesus. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20). There is no intimacy with God for the self-righteous, critical, and legalist.

I have known “cold” believers who have been precious. Remember cold tastes good to Jesus. I have known many believers who do not know very much about the Bible, but they have a great love for Jesus and for people in general. They walk and live in love, but may not be very evangelistic.

The lost world does not need religion; they need love. Our brothers and sisters in the Lord need to be loved and encouraged.

Simple honesty with God is powerful.

When you confess your sin without excuse and determine to turn around and go in a different direction, you are positioning yourself to enjoy God’s presence.

Now that you have been offered such free and undeserved forgiveness, you must also forgive those who have offended and hurt you.

You must forgive whether you feel like it or not and whether or not the other party has apologized.

Second stop in the Tabernacle – The Laver: The Word of God.

The word *laver* means *bowl* or *to wash*. Here it is a symbol for the Word of God. The first object was the brass altar that stood for the Cross and the blood of Jesus. Now that our conscience is clear, we can make contact with God through the Word. Sometimes the Word will not be powerful to us if our conscience is tainted.

The Word says that the priest would die if he tried to get into the Holy Place without stopping at the laver. We cannot proceed into God’s presence without being cleansed by the Word of God (Ephesians 5:26-27).

The laver will cleanse us from the filth of the world. It will also be a mirror to judge us; it will bring things to our mind that we need to get right with God. The Word will renew our mind so that we can think spiritually and stand against the words that demons speak into our minds.

The Word is a mirror. The Word is cleansing water. The Word judges. The Word is a seed. The Word is a sword. The Word is Jesus and Jesus is the Word. You need to soak yourself in the Word of God on a daily basis. It will change you and change your circumstances. The Word of God is a vital stepping stone into the presence of God! The Word will not return void. It will produce what it is intended for.

The third stop is Thanksgiving.

We must enter in the Holy Place with thanksgiving. Now it is time to go through the first of two veils from the outer court into the tent itself, and that portion called the Holy Place. However, before we study the Holy Place, we must see what gets us into the Holy Place and how we get through the first door or veil.

The Word of God commands us to give thanks at all times and under all circumstances whether we feel like it or not.

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, *and* into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, *and* bless His name” (Psalm 100:4).

1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, “...in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Colossians 3:17 (KJV) says, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

A sacrifice of thanksgiving is the key! The will is the key. The time to thank the Lord is when we do not feel like it, when our emotions tell us not to be thankful. That is the time that our will must take over. Like David said in Psalm 104:1, “Bless the Lord, O my soul!” He spoke to his soul and commanded it to praise God, especially when he felt bad. Thanksgiving is a function of the will. “And when you offer a sacrifice of

thanksgiving to the LORD, offer *it* of your own free will” (Leviticus 22:29).

When we enter into thanksgiving and praise to God during the bad times, something in us “dies.” When we “die,” we see God. In Psalm 50, God is saying that He does not really give much value to all of the Hebrew sacrifices compared to the sacrifice of thanksgiving. He told them that He was not hungry for food. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He said that He was hungry for three things: thanksgiving, paying one’s vows, and calling upon Him in the day of trouble. That is what satisfies God’s hunger.

a. We need to give thanks for what we see.

Do we have a “Gimmee, Gimmee” attitude, or one of thankfulness? The boy was complaining about having no shoes until he met the man who had no legs. Sometimes we don’t know how well off we really have it. God is not into giving us more things and solving our problems when we are not thankful for what He has already done; no matter what bad thing we are facing. I know I am that way with my children. I can’t help it, I just am, and so is God!

b. We need to give thanks for unseen.

How can we give thanksgiving and praise without being phony? The answer is the Cross! What God has already done? The Cross is an accomplished fact, we just need to see the truth behind it and we will not see the truth unless we “die,” or take up our cross. The Cross has the power to change the seen via the unseen through the Word, praise, and thanksgiving. The Cross is invisible to us today, but it is still a fact in history and believing in it and acting on it through the Word of God will change your condition. Thank God for the things that do not look good because God has entrusted them to you to utilize as raw materials for blessings. Overcoming is about turning junk into jewels for the Kingdom of God. No junk, no jewels!

Now you enter the Holy Place.

We are using the Holy Place to represent our mind, will, and emotions.

Inside the Holy Place there are three pieces of furniture: the Table of Shewbread, the Golden Lampstand, and the Altar of Incense. One symbolic meaning for these (there are many) is that the Table of Shewbread stands for our will, the Lampstand – for our intellect, and the Altar of Incense – for our emotions.

The fourth stop is the Table of Shewbread. This represents the will.

When Jesus said that we must deny ourselves, lose our life for His sake, etc., He was using a word that refers to our soul. So we must deny, or say *no* to, our soul. Our will, mind, and emotions are where we actually take up our cross and make the connection to His Cross, and the blood covenant.

Showbread (the King James Bible calls it Shewbread) literally means the Presence of His Face, or that God is staring at it. In our Tabernacle journey, this piece of furniture represents our will, or giving up our own will for God's will.

Something that I want to impress upon your thinking, even before you study this section, is that God will allow you to have your own will. He will not violate your free choice. You must give your will to Him. If you do not, He is ready to allow you to suffer the consequences, even to the point of pain and destruction, and yes, even to the point of spending eternity in Hell. He will move Heaven and earth to give you the options, but you must choose life or death, blessing or curse, His will or your will. Often God will lovingly guide a strong-willed person by allowing them to feel the pain of their self-will.

Romans 12:1-2 says that we should offer our lives as “a living sacrifice” to God so that we may “*prove*” the perfect will of God for our lives. In other words, we need to give God our will. When we do that, we are promised that we will prove, or walk out through trials, the perfect will of God for our lives.

Your will is your decision maker. Man is the only animal that has the freedom to choose. This choice is what gives us the potential for real love; it is also what gives us the potential for evil. This is when the word “will” is used as a participle, kind of like a verb; “I will give...”

Why would God want you to give Him your will?

So He can give you His! In a covenant relationship there is always a swap. Yours for mine and mine for yours! Now who do you think gets the better deal, you or Jesus? All we do is give up “junk” in order to receive “jewels.” In spite of this, so many people think it is such a sacrifice to give up their wills and accept God’s will. The only person who ever received anything bad by giving up their own will to God’s will was Jesus, and He did it with joy, the joy of seeing you and me saved.

Many people agonize over God’s will for their lives, feeling that if they give into His will that He will call them to some sort of torture, suffering, or ask them to move to another country. The truth is, if God ever did ask a person for such a task, that person would have a burning desire to accomplish it. God’s will for every life is “abundant life.” “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly” (John 10:10).

What is God’s will for you? God’s Word is His will for you and me. We need to see God’s Word as a friend who died and left His riches to us. In addition, God has a customized plan or will for your own individual life. However, you may be hindering Him from working that into your life by hanging on to your old fleshly will. Ephesians 2:10 indicates that God has a predestined path for each of us, and He calls it the good life, the abundant life.

How do you give God your will? One way is when you submit to the Word, you are giving your will to God. When you read in the Word to be kind, not to criticize, to give and not be selfish, then you are giving your will to God so that He can give you His.

Other ways are to put your thoughts, plans, and desires “on the altar” and allow God to either burn them away or perfect them. This can be difficult for some people who are strong-willed and very talented. They are capable of feeling that their desires are always God’s desires because they perform them out of their own power and abilities. However, if we give our plans

and desires to God and then back off and see if He performs them, that is the faith life, and it is truly trusting God's will for your life.

Breaking is needed!

The bread on this table is laid out in the shape of a cross. We can only take up our cross to a point, but not all the way. We don't have enough hands to crucify all of ourselves; the last nail must be inserted by the world. We must experience some sort of pain and breaking to really get the job done. God does not do this, the world does.

God will give you His will through His Word.

God wants to paint His will on the tablet of your heart. God is a visionary, and He created us as visionaries. Yes, He wants us to be practical in the everyday affairs of life, but He wants to transfer His will to us by painting pictures on our heart by the media of His Word. Look at Genesis chapters 30 and 31 to see how God transferred His will for Jacob into reality by speaking a word to Jacob and allowing him to see a dream about spotted and speckled cattle. We need to trust God more and open up to Him. We can tend to get too cautious and be too "Western-minded" and too much into linear thinking. We should take some lessons from the Eastern, African, and Asian mindsets that understand that the supernatural works through pictures on the heart. Pictures on the heart is the language of the Holy Spirit. We just need to make sure that it is God who is painting the pictures and not some other god, and not ourselves.

Not my will, but yours!

Oftentimes Christians, even well meaning Christians, can get into the trap of using their own will without God involved. "There are many plans in a man's heart, nevertheless the LORD's counsel – that will stand" (Proverbs 19:21).

The Bible story that best illustrates this is centered on Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac. God came to Abram in Genesis 12 to call him out from his own family, his business and financial security, his idols and his method of worship, in order to create a family that will be called the "family of God." This would be the Israelites, the Jews, and eventually the Christians,

the Body of Christ, who were grafted into God's spiritual family.

In Genesis 15, God appeared to Abram again and they discussed having a child. "But Abram said, 'Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' Then Abram said, 'Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!' And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.' Then He brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:2-6).

Abram could not figure out how God was going to give him a child since he was so old and his wife Sarah was barren and could not have children. He knew God's will, and he figured that it was time to just do it. So he made his own plans for having a child. The story continues and Sarai, Abram's wife, suggests that her maidservant Hagar become the mother of Abram's child. The child was named Ishmael. Although God loved Ishmael, he was not God's choice for creating His family of Israel from whom the Messiah was to come.

As it turned out, all of the Arab nations came from Ishmael, who was a result of Abram's plan. Israel, Jesus, and Christianity all came from the supernatural birth of Isaac, which were all part of God's plan and His own doing. God is interested in saving the Arabs now through Jesus Christ. God wants to graft them in just like He grafted in you and me.

God was not finished with Abram, who was now called Abraham. God had other plans, His plans! He came again to Abraham some years later and told him about His plans. Genesis 17 records how the Lord appeared to Abraham again, at a time in life when both he and his wife were beyond child bearing, and promised them the supernatural birth of Isaac.

"And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived

and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him – whom Sarah bore to him – Isaac” (Genesis 21:1-3).

The lesson we are to learn from this is that we need to allow God to perform those things for us that He wants. Sure we are supposed to work, study, and try hard. But as far as our will is concerned, we are to offer that up to Him. Abraham should have had this attitude. He should have said, “Oh God, I know Your promise to me, I understand You want me to have a child, and I don’t see how that can possibly happen. Perhaps I misunderstood You; perhaps You have something else for me. I lay this desire of mine, and promise from You, on the altar and ask You to perform it for me if You want this for my life. I dare not touch this to help You. If this is from You, then I will wait until You perform it.” We need to refuse to manipulate people and circumstances to get our way. God never does that, and we should be *afraid* to do it. This will ensure that we do not create an “Ishmael” in our life that we will be sorry for, perhaps forever.

One of the rules I have adapted for sifting out God’s will from my will is a method I learned when I used to sail in the Virgin Islands and other parts of the Caribbean. We would begin to enter a harbour and would be warned that there were coral reefs all over the harbour entrance. However, we had a map, or a chart, that would give landmarks on the land from which we could line up our entry course. For instance, there would be a church, a water tower, and the city hall. If we would line up those three objects so that we could only see them in a straight line, then the chart would tell us we could enter the harbour on that course and would be safe. In the spiritual world I like to line up three or four items to find out if a certain course is God’s will. I want to hear from Him in the Word, I want to hear from the Holy Spirit, I want to see circumstances begin to line up, and I want to see the Body of Christ affirming my decision.

The fifth stop is the Golden Lampstand. This represents the mind.

At this stop in our walk through the Tabernacle towards the presence of God, we have the need to exchange our old thoughts for the mind of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:4-6 tells us that the spiritual warfare is our mind. It tells us that strongholds, reasonings, and imaginations hold our thoughts captive, and that these things keep us from the true knowledge of God. These thoughts lie to us about the goodness and grace of God and His saving love and power. Demons constantly accuse us and bombard our minds with half-truths. They perpetrate guilt, unworthiness, and fear. They preach that we must perform to please a harsh God. Isaiah 11 tells us that God replaces our natural intellect with that of the Holy Spirit: i.e., Spirit of the Lord, knowledge, counsel, wisdom, understanding, might and fear of the Lord. There is much to be said here because our thoughts are the very core of our being.

Our thinking governs our emotions, and our emotions drive our activities and words. It is all in the thinking! 2 Corinthians 10: 4-6 tells us to take our thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. How do we do that? Like a security scanner at the airport. When it detects a dangerous object in the luggage, it denies access to the airplane. When you detect a thought that does not line up with the Word of God, you say to it, "Access denied! I lead you captive to the death of the Cross, to the obedience to Christ, the Word of God."

We must set our thoughts free! How? When we were slaves to sin, we used the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which is our independent reasoning. Now we should be using the Tree of Life, which is the Word of God. I no longer think and decide, but I use my mind for it's God-given purpose, and that is to listen and obey! When we truly see the glory of God as Paul did on the road to Damascus, we no longer reason, we simply say, "Lord, what do You desire for me to do?" You may ask, "Am I supposed to forfeit my creativity and become a robot for God?" No! God wants you be creative just like He is, however, He wants to author your creative thoughts.

Why is the mind represented by the Golden Lampstand?

The Lampstand traditionally represents testimony. We should utilize our intellectual powers to speak God's Word as a testimony to the enemy. The Lampstand is also symbolic of the Holy Spirit, with its symbols of oil and fire. When God made Adam and Eve, He told them that they could *touch* any tree in the Garden, but could not *eat* from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. I believe that the Tree of Life is the Word of God and that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is our own mind that is not taking instructions from the Spirit of God. Adam did not need to have knowledge to decide what was good and evil. If he had lived in oneness with God he would have intuitively known. But Adam wanted to be independent of God, so he began to make his own decisions of what he should do and not do. He did not want to be bad, just independent.

What was the original function intended for the mind?

We are supposed to use our mind, but God's guidance transcends human reasoning. When God saves you He does not remove your mind, He renews it. The mind is the organ of thought. It is the hidden force of human destiny because your thoughts turn into actions, which turn into habits, which turn into character.

God made us in such a way that we are supposed to use our mind to pick up information for navigating life on earth from our five senses, but to obtain information on spiritual reality from our spirit.

The Helmet of Salvation. Our brain needs salvation from cleverness, from allowing our mind and intellect to take God's place in our lives. Without this, we will never walk in God's perfect will for our lives (Romans 12:1-2). More often than not, this is not something that we can or will voluntarily give up. Usually it takes a "breaking," a set of circumstances that take us beyond what our brain can negotiate and/or solve. Only then can we quietly wait on God for Him to speak and be silent while He works out our lives.

We need to work on holy concentration.

Our imagination can lead to blindness if we do not totally consecrate it to God and His Word. The imagination is a powerful God-given function designed to be submitted to Him so that He may write His pictures on it. If we allow Satan or the world to write on our imagination, we become blind as the following Scriptures testify.

“In whom the god of this world hath *blinded* the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV).

“Casting down *imagination*s, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5, KJV).

If we habitually concentrate on the negative past we will stay bound to it, and eventually “go back to it.” Hebrews 11:15-16a (Amplified Bible) says, “If they had been thinking with [homesick] remembrance of that country from which they were emigrants, they would have found constant opportunity to return to it. But the truth is that they were yearning for and aspiring to a better and more desirable country, that is, a heavenly [one].” We need to focus on the better things God has for us, not our past failures.

If we do not concentrate on the positive, our mind will default to the negative. If your mind is passive, the imagination is passive. It is waiting for an outside stimulus.

Positive concentration, especially on the Word of God, is important for the overcoming process. “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in 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” (Joshua 1:8). According to Strong’s Concordance, the word *meditate* in this Scripture means to speak, utter, imagine, and study. I have heard it said that meditate is like a cow chewing a cud. She regurgitates it, then chews it again, then the process continues over and over.

We should do the same with the Word of God. Soon we will be thinking God's thoughts and we will be so close to Him it will surprise us!

Strongholds of the mind.

A stronghold is a fortress of false knowledge that is believed on as truth.

Satan is capable of building strongholds in our minds, which are designed to protect his property that he may have gained in our lives. That property may simply be a carnal worldly mindset, or the stronghold could progress to influence by a demon. I believe that what starts out as a fleshly thought in our mind and is allowed to become a habit may ultimately be latched onto by a demon. Jesus is our protector, and He will protect us, provided we cooperate (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

One primary evidence of a stronghold is a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness. It causes the person to act ungodly without being able to even choose the godly behavior. Strongholds can nullify one's will.

Strongholds can include, but are not limited to:

Fear, guilt, shame, dishonesty, poverty, temper, cheap grace, legalism, judgment, and others.

How strongholds can get a foothold in your life:

- a. Your sin.
- b. Generational sin
- c. Sin in the world
- d. Weights, or oppression
- e. Through an idol in your life
- f. A "soul tie" type of relationship can bring powerful strongholds!
- g. Rebellion against authority.
- h. We can be responsible for becoming slaves to various things and people (excepting of course those issues that have to do with our childhood).

We become slaves to whomever or to whatever we yield (Romans 6:16).

What is the solution?

Here is what Jesus said about getting free. “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” (John 8:31-32, KJV).

First, you must continue in His Word. The word “continue” is a strong word. It means to settle down, abide, and make our home in His Word. It does not mean to look at His Word once a week or even five minutes a day, it means to sustain your very life by His Word. “But He answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4). The word used in this Scripture for “word” is “rhema.” *Rhema* means a personal Word spoken from Jesus to you. You must invest time with God to receive His rhema.

Next, you must be committed to being Jesus’ disciple. That means to be so united with Him that He is your teacher in everything. It means that you drop your pride and allow God, who knows you better than you know yourself, to have His way with you. When you are going through discipline with the Lord, remember He is doing it because He loves you.

The result will be that you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’” (John 14:6). Knowing Jesus is knowing the Truth. Having a personal, close intimate relationship with Him is the only thing that will really make you free.

God may use many methods of delivering this freedom to you. He may cause demons to be cast out of you, or out of the influence of your life. Or He may take you through a long process of getting free through pouring the Word into your life.

My own personal experience has been one of displacement. I continually pour the Word into my vessel, and everything that is not of God comes out, including demons. Matthew 8:16 is an example of Jesus casting out demons with His Word. It says, “When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and

healed all who were sick.” The basic idea is to starve the mind of the flesh and replace it with the mind of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer for deliverance.

1. Personally affirm your faith in Christ. “Lord Jesus Christ, I confess that You are my Lord. Lord, I believe that You are the Son of God and the only way to God; that you died on the Cross for my sins and rose again so that I might be forgiven and receive eternal life.”

2. Humble yourself. “I renounce all pride and religious self-righteousness and any dignity that does not come from You. I have no claim on Your mercy except that You died in my place.”

3. Confess any known sin. “I confess all my sins before You and hold nothing back.” Now list and confess them.

4. Repent of all sins. “I repent of all my sins. I turn away from them and I turn to You, Lord, for mercy and forgiveness.”

5. Forgive all other people. “By a decision of my will, I freely forgive all who have ever harmed or wronged me. I lay down all bitterness, all resentment, and all hatred.” Now list and confess them.

6. Break with the occult and all false religion. “I sever all contact I have ever had with the occult or with all false religion. I renounce all the works of the devil, Satan, and other evil spirits in my life. I confess and renounce all my occult practices and sins as abominations before You, a Holy and righteous God. I renounce any occult influence from my forefathers.” Now list and confess them.

7. Prepare to be released from every curse over your life. “Lord Jesus, I thank You that on the Cross You were made a curse, that I might be redeemed from every curse and inherit God’s blessing. I renounce every curse from my forefathers. On that basis I ask You to release me and set me free to receive the deliverance I need.”

8. Take your stand with God. “I take my stand with You, Lord, against all Satan’s demons. I submit to You, Lord, and I resist the devil. Amen!”

9. Expel. “Now I speak to any demons that have control over me.” Speak directly to them. “I command you to go from me now. In the name of Jesus, I expel you! I pray that any evil power or ability I may possess, or which have oppressed or possessed me, be completely destroyed or removed from me. I commit myself, my body, my mind, my personality, my emotions, my whole being to the Lord Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Savior. I pray this in the mighty name of Jesus, believing I am delivered.”

The sixth stop is the Altar of Incense: Emotions.

The Golden Altar in the Holy Place is the last piece of furniture that one comes to prior to going through the final veil into the Holy of Holies and into the very presence of God. It is symbolic for several things. We are going to look at it primarily from the standpoint that it symbolizes our emotions as we make our way into the Holy of Holies and God’s manifest presence. It also symbolizes our prayer, praise, and worship.

In front of this altar is the thick veil that hides the Holy of Holies and the presence of God. God wants you to come through the veil more than you desire to. He will pull you through. No natural man could go here without dying.

This veil was torn from top to bottom when Jesus died on the Cross, giving us entry into God’s presence by His blood and indicating that His death removed the obstacle that sin created for coming into the very presence of God.

The Holy of Holies is the place where there is no light except for God. The High Priest could only go here once a year, and only under certain conditions. The incense censor from this altar actually went into the Holy of Holies with the High Priest once a year. This symbolizes that your praise and worship do not stop here but that they are the very entry into His presence. They actually accompany us into His presence.

The table of Shewbread symbolized the will, and the Lampstand – the mind and the Holy Spirit. The final attribute in man’s soul is his emotions. God wants us to be “whole people” with emotions that are in their proper place. He does

not want us to be robots unable to express ourselves. We are created in God's image, and God has intense emotions that He expresses. Mankind has either perverted his emotions to go wild or to be held in and not expressed; both are wrong and are out of order. This altar gives us an opportunity for exchanging your old emotions, induced by your flesh and the world, for God's emotions which have their roots in the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, kindness, etc. (Galatians 5:22-23a). Altars are where things die.

The emotions feel like the real you, but they can be unreliable. Experiences in life and your generational makeup often damage emotions. Some of your emotions are in prison, other emotions keep you in prisons. Perhaps emotions are primarily the windows which express or sometimes fail to express the inner prisons like rejection, loneliness, depression, guilt, low self-esteem, confusion, broken hearts, etc.

Jesus has emotions. He cried, grieved, mourned, groaned. Not only did He feel and experience emotions, but He also expressed them.

Our emotions can cause us to act contrary to God's desires if we allow them to rule us. In God's order, our emotions cannot really be trusted until He has dealt with our minds and our wills, then our emotions can be freely expressed; and indeed should be. Unregenerated man has put his emotions on the throne, and allowed them to control his mind, will, and body. This is our working of God's divine created order. Emotions should be the *result* of a will and mind laid down and consecrated to God. Only then could man's God-given emotions be whole and well.

God is a heart God.

He enjoys your presence. Your presence is not real if you bury your emotions. You need to allow them free reign with Jesus while you are with Him. You need to give Him the good, the bad, and the ugly. You cannot really *be* with someone whose emotions are not allowed to come out. You feel like you have been with a machine. Your spouse's will and mind may be consecrated to you and that is important. But how would

you feel if your spouse told you, “My will is to love you, my mind is to love you.” Then that person just shuts their mouth, has a glassy stare in their eyes, and they totally bury their emotions? You have not really been *with* that person, or *in* that person’s presence.

God, where are You?

Every human being has the latent need to experience God in His fullness including His emotions. However, I believe in most cases God cannot trust you with His emotions until you are totally consecrated to Him. It is like a marriage engagement, or like dating. A girl should not become emotionally intimate with a boy until that boy has made a commitment. God wants you to go through the act (continuously) of consecrating your will and mind, represented by the Table of Shewbread and the Golden Lampstand, then He can trust His emotions to you.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit allows you to experience God with His emotions.

I believe that this altar in the Tabernacle can also represent the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the outer court represents the Holy Spirit being *with* us. We may think of the Holy Place as a symbol of the Holy Spirit being *in* us. Jesus told His disciples in John 14:16-17 that there would be these two relationships, *with* and *in*. In John 20:22 Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit *in* them. However, there was one more relationship spoken of by Jesus about the Holy Spirit. He said in Acts 1:8 that the Holy Spirit would come *upon* them. Finally, in Acts 2:4 when the Holy Spirit did come upon them, they were *filled*.

There is an experience or a filling of the Holy Spirit that will cause God to be more real to you than ever before. God desires that His emotions and your emotions meet. I believe that as God pulls you through the next veil for the first time, that you will experience this *upon and filled* experience. I also know that as you go through this veil into the Holy of Holies on a regular basis, that you will touch God and God will touch you in a way that is powerful and meaningful. These experiences are not “simply emotional highs,” but are truly an encounter

with the God who created the Universe. They are a connection that pleases both you and God. When you go through this veil into the Holy of Holies, your afflictions, and even your worldly pleasures, will become pale and meaningless in the light of His glory and grace. The hotter His presence becomes, the colder your suffering becomes.

It is like a bridegroom and a bride who have only met through letters and long-distance telephone calls. They have perhaps experienced each other's will and mind, but without an actual face to face experience, they cannot really experience each other's emotions. When they finally do meet face to face, they actually discover each other's emotions and truly experience the fullness of the other person. I believe that is the way God feels about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He reveals Himself to you as the glorified Christ, you are deeply moved and filled with His presence, and you allow your emotions to go out to Him.

The love of God is the only thing that can heal your damaged emotions.

You can truly trust God with your real emotions. There are very few people whom you can truly trust to peer into your inner heart via your emotions. That is why so many people pay a lot of money to go to psychiatrists, lay on their couches and pour out their hearts. God wants your real emotions for several reasons. First, He wants to heal them, and second, He enjoys being in your presence.

This altar is the place of a sacrifice of praise.

Altars are for death. You cannot go into the Holy of Holies without something dying at this altar, and that something is your emotions. If you do not feel like praising Him, do it as a sacrifice. A sacrifice infers death, just as altars are for death.

Praise heals emotions.

I interviewed an anointed psalmist and worship leader about this subject. He confirmed that when one praises God, it has a healing effect on one's emotions. Entering into praise heals fractured and wounded emotions. He said that even secular people know that singing can dispel depression. Psalm 100:4

says, “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.” As we live a life of praise, he told me, the up and down emotions become smoothed out.

You can praise God even in bad times if your praise is based upon the Word of God, not upon your emotions. For instance, in 2 Chronicles chapter 20, a strong enemy was attacking the Israelites. A prophet came and spoke the Word of God to Israel, stating that the battle was the Lord’s, and they were not to worry. Based upon the Word of God, Israel’s strategy was to send forth the choir and praise God.

“And when he had consulted with the people, 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).

Demons flee when you praise God!

“Let the high praises of God *be* in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment – this honor have all His saints. Praise the LORD!” (Psalm 149:6-9).

If you cannot articulate praise because of your damaged emotions, or because you are hurting too bad, then read Psalms 145-150 out loud as a sacrifice of praise. Use some of the other great Psalms, like 23 and 91. Praying them out loud has always been powerful in our lives.

Worship.

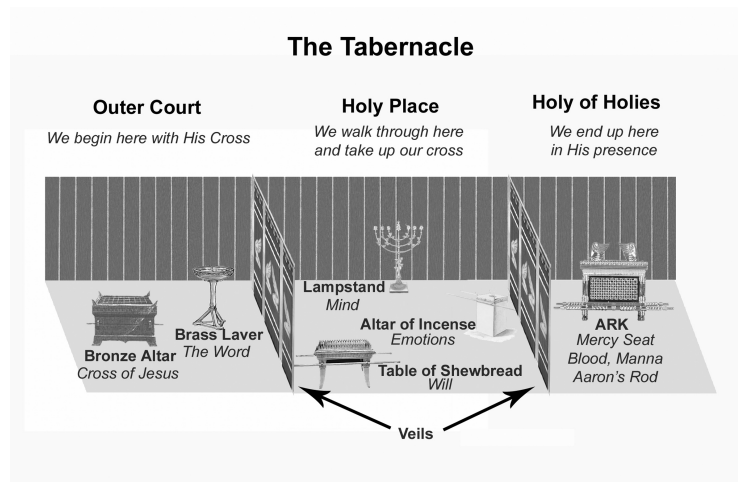
The Altar of Incense starts out as a place of praise but ends up as a place of worship. Praise brings on God’s presence, which causes us to worship Him. God inhabits praise. Therefore His presence will manifest as we praise Him. His presence will give us a true picture of who He is, and that will

result in true worship. First, we give thanks for what He has done for us. Then, we praise Him for what the Word says even if we cannot see the evidence yet, and the result is worship.

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Chapter 11

Inside The Holy of Holies



If you have walked through the Tabernacle, you will find yourself in the Holy of Holies, in the very presence of the Almighty God!

Coming into God's presence in the manner we have described is the result of the working of His Cross and of you taking up your cross. You can go to church and revival meetings and certainly experience the presence of God. That is good. However, it is not God's permanent goal for your relationship with Him. You cannot live on someone else's relationship. If your minister or the revival evangelist came into God's presence prior to the meeting, he is most likely transferring that glory to you. That is wonderful, however, it is *his/her* experience with God that you are experiencing. Your neighbor may tell you about his/her relationship with his/her spouse. Although that may encourage you, it is not a replacement for your relationship with *your* spouse. Going to church and meetings to experience the glory of God is good, but

if you are not experiencing Him on your own, you are missing what God wants you to have. You are trying to have a relationship with God by using someone else's experience.

The veil to the Holy of Holies is one veil that we do not "kick down." Of course, as we stated in the previous chapter, this veil was indeed torn from top to bottom when Jesus died on the Cross, indicating that God made the way for sinful mankind to come into His presence. "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh" (Hebrews 10:19-20).

The Tabernacle is a symbol of Christ and of the invisible world.

The Holy of Holies represents His presence, and the fresh air of Heaven, a different world from the one you can see with your eyes. "But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation" (Hebrews 9:11). "For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another" (Hebrews 9:24-25).

Richard Wurmbrand, the founder of the ministry "Voice of the Martyrs" who spent much time in prison and solitary confinement for his faith, wrote some similar statements in his book, If Prison Walls Could Speak.¹³

Wurmbrand writes:

Christ said to His first disciples: "Come and see" (John 1:39). We have passed from hearing to seeing. To Martha, the Lord said, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40). The Book of Revelation too, is a book

¹³ If Prison Walls Could Speak - Richard Wurmbrand - Living Sacrifice Book Company, Bartlesville, OK - 1972- quotes from pages 28-33.

about things that John actually saw. In the conditions of solitary confinement, which are similar to those of a hermit in the desert deprived of material things, the seeing becomes so real that you have difficulty convincing yourself that what you see is an event in the spirit and not in the material world.”

Then Wurmbrand speaks about a Chinese legend.

“It is said that a great painter once painted on a wall a beautiful landscape with a cave. When he had finished, he walked into the cave and disappeared, and was never heard of again.” He went on, “Whatever you create or evoke in the spirit can become a reality into which you can enter, and live, and disappear.”

Wurmbrand concludes,

“Therefore we have been given the power to ascend in the spirit. Poverty, sickness, inner and outer tragedies, prisons, or chains cannot hinder this ascent. On the contrary, they assist it. Oh my brothers and sisters, why remain in ugly places? Evoke heaven and enter forever into what you have evoked. What will death matter then?”

One of the first steps in God’s plan for our afflictions is for us to “Come up here,” as Jesus told John in Revelation chapter 4. He wants us to experience spiritual reality, His presence, to such a degree that the things of this world grow strangely dim.

If you do not feel like the things in this chapter relate to you, if you feel like you are out of fellowship with God and are not close to Him, then I suggest that you peek inside the Holy of Holies with me in this chapter. Then return to the previous chapter on the Tabernacle and walk through it again. Align your life with the disciplines you have been reading about and you will find yourself in His presence. Faith will become more real than your feelings.

Through the veil is intimacy.

One can experience certain levels of God's presence at various times. For instance, His presence can be experienced during corporate worship. But making contact with God in this setting of the Holy of Holies is pure intimacy.

There is something about the voice of God in these conditions that can only be experienced. I am not in any way suggesting that this position of intimacy is only for *special* people. I think that it is more about our positioning ourselves and making ourselves available for Him, and then making room for Him to have His way with us. He may show up in different ways to each individual and different ways at different times. You may sense His presence hours after you have walked through the Tabernacle, perhaps even after many hours or days of disappointment that you did not make contact. Just keep coming by faith. "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). The goal is to live your life continually entering into the Holy of Holies as you naturally walk through the disciplines of the Tabernacle.

The Lampstand stands for our testimony, and the Ark stands for God's testimony. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10). When you hear God speaking while you are in His presence, it is different and unique, and is usually something prophetic. I do not mean that His voice is telling you of coming events in history (which He may do), but it is prophetic in that it tells of things that you do not yet see, but nevertheless are facts. For instance, if He tells you, "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19), and you are still experiencing lack in your life, that is prophetic.

How did you enter?

The Old Testament gives many examples of how dangerous it would be for a mere man to encounter the presence of God. The man would be destroyed. That is why God hid Himself in the Tabernacle, so that the people He loved would not die from

His presence. Sin cannot stand in the presence of God. That is why it took Jesus removing your sin in order to rip the veil and make the connection between God and man possible. That is an historic fact. It is all by grace, not by any of your works. However, there is a protocol that you walked through. If you walked through the Tabernacle pattern, that pleases God and puts you into closer friendship with Him. If I have one child that is obedient and one that is rebellious, I still love the rebellious one, but I enjoy being with the obedient one.

I am not saying that you must walk the Tabernacle path that I have laid out here. There are many believers that dwell in His presence, in the Holy of Holies, that may have never heard of the Tabernacle. However, I suspect that they practice many of the disciplines we discussed in the Tabernacle path. We often sense His presence in corporate worship. God can also break through to you when He pleases. But the Tabernacle walk is our positioning ourselves for His presence; preparing ourselves as a bride adorns herself for her husband.

You prepared yourself for His presence by taking up your cross as we have described.

A lesson from Esther.

Esther was prepared herself for an entire year before she entered the “new queen competition.” In Esther chapter two, it tells of many young women who were chosen to prepare themselves for an entire year. Queen Vashti had angered King Ahasuerus so he set up a competition to replace her. For one year the women who were in the competition for queen used oil of myrrh, perfumes, and other preparations used for beautifying women. Esther 2:14 states that Esther would not go in to the king again unless the king delighted in her and called her by name. This should be our attitude when we approach King Jesus! When it was Esther’s turn to see the king, she did something interesting. She took the advice of one of the king’s main servants, Hegai, a eunuch and the custodian of the women. She took nothing in with her that Hegai did not advise. She figured that Hegai knew the king and what would please him.

“Now when the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail

the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, to go in to the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her. So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which *is* the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. The king loved Esther more than all the *other* women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti” (Esther 2:15-17).

In the same way, we should take the advice of the Holy Spirit, and take only what He advises when we approach the Father.

One more thing about your entry.

All of the steps through the Tabernacle were part of taking up your cross. In doing that, you made yourself invulnerable to Satan. When you take up your cross, the only thing left is Jesus, and He defeated Satan. This is expressed in Psalm 91 and all of the benefits of being in the “Secret Place of the Most High.”

What is in the Holy of Holies?

I have heard the teaching that the first gate into the outer court is called “The way,” the veil into the Holy Place is called “The truth,” and the veil into the Holy of Holies is “The life.” “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). If this is true, then it is appropriate. The entire Tabernacle symbolizes a picture of Jesus, and the Holy of Holies is where God's presence abides.

The Ark is the centerpiece of the Holy of Holies.

The Ark symbolizes the very presence of God, and as the Scriptures tell us, it is the very place where the presence of God dwelt on Earth. Sometimes, as believers, we take for granted the presence of God in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, but in the Old Testament days, the Holy Spirit dared not expose Himself to mere man. Only the blood of Jesus made this

possible. Nevertheless, God wanted to be near His people, and the Ark was the way He expressed that.

The Ark is covered by the Mercy Seat, which is sprinkled with blood. We needed mercy at the Bronze Altar, the Cross, in the very beginning. However, now in His presence there is a new dimension of realizing His mercy and the blood of Jesus in a way that only the Holy Spirit can show you. His mercy endures forever. It is almost impossible to write about, it must be experienced.

On both sides and hovering over the Ark are huge angels protecting everything. There is no light in the Holy of Holies, except for the Light of God. It is called the Glory of God, *kabowd* (Hebrew); sometimes called Shekinah. The glory of God gave the only light. This is the light under which men would normally die. In this light there can be no hidden sin. Can you imagine that some people are still afraid of this light? Yes, if they do not know about or accept the wonderful work of Jesus on the Cross, and how He became sin for us. Today, people still hide from the light of God because they love their own sin (John 3:16-21). The light of God will destroy sin and will destroy your flesh, your old nature, as you dwell in it.

Also present inside the Holy of Holies was the Golden Censor carried by the High Priest from the Golden Altar, representing worship, praise, and prayer.

In the wilderness, the Tabernacle was small and the floor was of desert sand. The Temple Solomon built was very large. It was fixed and not portable, and was made of very luxurious materials. The only thing that was the same in both temples was the Ark of the Covenant, sometimes called the Ark of Testimony. The Ark cannot be improved nor enlarged, it is the same. It is the testimony of God's Son. He is the same forever.

These are the items found inside the Holy of Holies:

The Ark

The Mercy Seat

The Blood on the Mercy Seat

Cherubim angels

The Golden Censer from the Altar of Incense with your worship and the prayers of the saints

The Glory of God.

The three items in the Ark.

Inside of the Ark are the Tablets of Law, the Manna, and Aaron's rod. Rather than look at these from the Old Testament point of view, I would like to make a transition here.

The Ark of God now resides in your heart!

It is important to see this picture and to understand the significance of it. God promised Israel, through the prophet Jeremiah, that He would make a new covenant with them. The main feature of this new covenant was that the Law of God would be put inside of the hearts of the people.

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

We know from Hebrews 10:16 and related verses, that God was speaking of the days when the blood of Jesus would cleanse our sins so that the Holy Spirit could dwell in mere man again. It is no longer an external thing. We are God's Temple. Meditate on that. “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). There will also be a day when natural Israel will experience this New Covenant.

The Law is in the Ark – Fruit for character.

If the law is in your heart, then that does away with any

form of performance and legalism. When you are attempting to live according to the fruit of the Spirit and are finding it difficult, remember, God's law is written in your heart. When you allow your true nature to express itself, it will express God's character, which is the Law.

Manna is in the Ark – Fruit for the provisions for your natural life.

Manna literally means, "What is it?" Recall the idea of manna in the Book of Exodus chapter 16, and in Numbers chapter 11. The Israelites had just left more than 400 years of slavery in Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea, and now they were in the hot desert without food and water. God fed them supernaturally by allowing manna to fall out of Heaven six days a week. On the seventh day they were to use what was stored up on day six. However, if they attempted to store the manna in any other way, it would become rotten and unusable.

The manna was called "The Bread of Heaven." Somehow it supplied all of their nourishment in the desert for forty years. Jesus is called the Bread of Heaven in John chapter 6. He now lives in you through the Holy Spirit, and one of those benefits is that you have the principle of manna living inside of you. What is that principle? It is the precept that all of your needs are supplied through the indwelling Christ! You have something that people in the world without Jesus do not have. You have supernatural provisions. Not only that, you have the very principle of supernatural provisions dwelling in your heart. That manna will work for you provided you keep your relationship to the Tabernacle, to Jesus, proper.

The manna represents the Word of God, it is Jesus Himself.

The Kingdom of God operates by the Word of God planted in a human heart as a seed (Mark 4:11). In John chapter 6, Jesus said that He is the real manna from Heaven, and that if a person ate of that manna, he would never be hungry. More than that, He also stated that if anyone would eat of Him, as manna, as the Bread of Life, that person would live forever and never die (John 6:48-58)! John chapter 1 tells us that Jesus *is* the

Word. Jesus is the Word, Jesus is the Bread of Life, Jesus is our manna, and Jesus is our provider through the Word in our heart.

One of the biggest fears that God has delivered me from is the fear of not having natural provisions for my family. I can tell you from the Scriptures and from experience (since 1979) that the Word of God planted in my heart has *always* provided for me supernaturally! Normally, great trials and persecution accompanied that provision. The very source of your provisions dwells inside of you, in your personal Holy of Holies. It is not an outside source, nor is it subject to the whim of Satan or people in the world. It is only subject to you keeping a right relationship with that source. That source cannot fail. Jesus eagerly wants to be your provider. One of the definitions of Lord is “bread provider.” Step out on His Word and allow Him to be your Lord.

Aaron’s rod is in the Ark – Fruit for ministry in your life.

Numbers 17 tells of a time when the Israelites were in the desert after leaving Egypt. Many in the congregation had complained against the authority and ministry and the anointing of Moses and Aaron. The Lord first sent a plague that was stopped when Aaron took a censor of fire from the Tabernacle Altar and ran through the congregation with an atonement-making act. The plague stopped; however, God wanted to make a point to the Israelites and show who truly represented Him and on whom His anointing rested.

The Lord then commanded that one almond rod, broken and independent from any roots, should be taken by each of the twelve tribes. The name of the tribe would be written on the respective rods and then placed into the Holy of Holies. Whichever rod budded, and that had to be supernaturally, would indicate on which tribe God’s anointing would rest for ministry.

“Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds. Then Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD to all the children of Israel;

and they looked, and each man took his rod. And the LORD said to Moses, 'Bring Aaron's rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die.' Thus did Moses; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did. So the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, 'Surely we die, we perish, we all perish!'" (Numbers 17:8-12).

While we have just described the "new rod of Aaron," there was also an "old rod." In Exodus chapters 7 and 8, God commanded Moses to tell Aaron to stretch out his rod to cause the plagues that came upon Egypt, Pharaoh, and Egypt's gods. I believe that this judgment was more on Egypt's gods, or in other words, the gods of this world, than it was on the people. People just receive judgments because they will not separate from the gods of this world. I believe we have both anointings the new and the old. If, as it says in 2 Corinthians 4:4 that the gods of this world has blinded the eyes of the unbelievers, than we have the "rod" to use on those gods so that those people can have their eyes opened, see God, and be saved. The rod here is our prayer: praying the Word of God and taking authority over these gods who blind!

We are all ministers.

In the Old Testament only the Levites answered the call for service in the Tabernacle. Not so with us. We are all priests unto the Lord, and to all people. A priest is a bridge between God and man and vice versa. The problem is, too many people today misunderstand this idea. Too many ordinary people, business people, and housewives do not consider themselves priests and ministers, and too many professional paid workers in church feel that they are in some special and exclusive service for the Lord. Your pastor should be preparing you for the ministry, rather than just trying to do everything himself and becoming burned out and ineffective.

"But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

When you come into the Holy of Holies, you are equipped to be a real intercessor. You are sharing in the High Priestly ministry of Jesus and praying for others effectively. Jesus said in John 15:7, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”

Towards the end of the Book of Revelation, after all the overcoming takes place, chapter 20 shows your spiritual authority when you have overcome.

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while” (Revelation 20:1-3).

Perhaps you know some people who have been deceived by Satan but who could be released with your overcoming!

Sweat or fruit?

Too many believers, both full-time pastors and others, feel that they need to perform and grab hold of some ministry. They feel that they need to work hard to fulfill God’s call and to even compete with others, make a name for themselves, and use church politics for promotion. While hard work is admirable, and sometimes ordained, you need to understand that the only ministry that really counts is that which comes as fruit. Aaron could not do anything to cause his rod to bear buds and almonds. That fruit came out of the darkness of the Holy of Holies and out of resurrection life. It speaks of resurrection. It speaks of God’s sovereign selection and His work, not our sweat and blood. The idea of the almond tree budding is seen in Jeremiah chapter 1 as a sign of God being ready to perform His Word, even when circumstances seem impossible.

Only God has our ministry for us, and we only realize what it is when we are in right relationship to the Tabernacle, or in other words, to Jesus. It does not matter how lowly you feel, how insignificant you feel, if you continue to maintain your

relationship to Jesus, He will put you into a fruit-bearing ministry that can be accomplished best only by you. It will fulfill you and your desires more than you can imagine. While it may include hard work, or even sacrifice, perhaps even personal danger, it will totally satisfy you. Your need for significance is God-given, and He is the only one who can satisfy it.

Ministry just takes place supernaturally. Things take place that you could have not planned nor even thought of. It is a God thing! You have spiritual authority in your appointed realm of influence. Fruit is appearing.

The two churches in Revelation that successfully overcame both received authority symbolized by a crown. “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write... (Revelation 3:7a).

“Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown” (Revelation 3:11).

“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write...” “...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:8a & 10b). Remember that Smyrna represents the martyrs or those who continue in their sufferings. Their fruit is powerful but the hands of others will experience it.

Spiritual Capital.

If you have capital in this world, in the natural, that capital will earn interest or dividends for you without a lot of work. You must tend to your capital, but it does not require a lot of “sweat.” Real estate will produce rent or agricultural crops, cash will produce interest from the bank, and stocks will produce dividends.

There is also spiritual capital. The fruit of character, fruit for provisions, and fruit for ministry work are like spiritual capital. Our capital account or fruit account may be increased in several ways. Overcoming is the most powerful way. Spiritual fruit, or spiritual capital, is one of the primary objectives of overcoming. This is one of the primary ways that God gives us the anointing, the authority, and the power to accomplish His will on earth. I believe that God uses the gifts

of the Spirit to accomplish His purposes, but I also believe that ministry as the result of overcoming is powerful and has a permanent effect that the gifts of the Spirit may not, in some cases, have.

As we overcome afflictions and enter into worship, we find ourselves in His presence more and more. Worship brings us into His glory so that He is blessed and so that He may bless us with His presence. We have always had the capital in our hearts, but we only realize it when His light shines on it in these conditions.

Is God a capitalist?

Before Adam rebelled, he had the capitalist principle in his heart. You might say that Adam contained “spiritual capital.” He was in charge of a garden that worked for him in much the same way that stocks and money in the bank work for you as capital. However, after he rebelled, God told Adam that he lost that capital. “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19). I am not proposing that Adam was lazy, nor that God wants us to cease to work and expect others to feed us. No to that! However, you do contain manna in your heart, and that manna, when prepared properly, will supply your needs. God warned them to not store up the manna. Why? I believe it was because God counted it as “spiritual capital” and it was not to be abused as natural capital, kind of like a saving account. Also, God wanted them, and us, to trust Him daily for our provisions. If you are from a culture that does not understand the term capital, then follow the explanation that Jesus gave in Matthew chapter 6.

Jesus spoke of two opposites to explain spiritual capital.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal” (Matthew 6:19).

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). “Added” is like a dividend being paid on a stock that you own.

Dividends come from capital. The manna in your heart, if properly cared for, will be your capital. Jesus is your Manna!

Seeking the Kingdom of God is seeking to live on the Word. It is taking care of the poor, and sending or taking the Gospel where God leads you. It is overcoming curses in your life by the blood of the Lamb, the word of your testimony, and not loving your life (soul) to the death.

Our contentment. His presence will be enough for anything!

Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians from a Roman jail. I want to briefly use his example of how God can give us contentment while we are in the process of overcoming. In Philippians 2:8, Paul spoke of Jesus' blood and His Cross. In Philippians 3:8, Paul speaks of his cross, or not loving his life to the death. In Philippians 4:12, he spoke the word of his testimony and said, "I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

During the overcoming process, God may take you through times of being in need (abased) and times of having plenty (abound). But He will teach you to be content with each set of circumstances, as long as you are in right relationship to the Tabernacle, to Jesus.

Finally.

Determine that you will practice the presence of God on a daily basis. It is the main ingredient for victory in this life and the next. Now go ahead and walk through all of the points we have covered in the Tabernacle, starting in the outer court, going into the Holy Place, and finally, into the Holy of Holies. Most likely you are in His presence. You may or may not actually *feel* the manifest presence of God. You must rely on faith in His Word; feelings will follow.

Chapter 12

Conquerors and Hupernikao

As you have been living a lifestyle of seeking the Scriptures for His blood, His Cross, and as you have been taking up your cross and using the words of your testimony, you have overcome during this season, and you are a conqueror. You are living in God's purposes for your life, your needs are being supplied, you have put away some demons resulting in the salvation of souls, and your character has been more conformed to the image of Jesus. You have turned your junk into jewels.

What does it mean to be a conqueror?

The word "overcome" in Greek is *nikao*, which means "to subdue, to conquer, to prevail and get the victory. *The* means of success. To subdue the world system and all the adversaries of God's Kingdom."¹⁴ This indicates a war with spiritual beings. There is a time factor involved, and usually the pain of warfare. Overcoming will look different for each person and for each circumstance.

I know a pastor whose son was killed in an auto accident by a drunk driver. This pastor and his family overcame. How? He and his family lived a life of praise, thanksgiving, and victory in spite of their loss. They did not turn on God, but drew closer to God. The impact of their ministry has reached the world. Many people have been healed spiritually, emotionally, and physically as a result. The Kingdom of God has been expanded. Other times, overcoming will manifest a prodigal child returning to the Lord, a financial situation improved, a relationship healed, or a physical healing.

Overcoming does something very powerful in the spiritual realm as well.

In Luke chapter 4:18-19, Jesus proclaimed His mission statement. However, He did not proclaim His entire mission as

¹⁴ The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1995.

was prophesied in Isaiah 61. In Luke, Jesus stopped with “The acceptable year of the Lord,” which is the Year of Jubilee. However, in Isaiah, right after “The acceptable year of the Lord,” it says, “And the day of vengeance of our God.” The Bible constantly refers to the day of vengeance of our God. “To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, *And* the day of vengeance of our God...” (Isaiah 61:2a). Jesus left out the day of vengeance in Luke 4 because He had not yet been to the Cross. Now is the day for vengeance!

Many feel that that day of vengeance will only come when Jesus returns to earth for the final time. I believe that we participate in that vengeance right now as we overcome. I believe that we disengage demons that have been assigned to our family or nation when we overcome. I believe that we send them into an early retirement. In addition, read Isaiah 61, verses 3-11, and you will discover the benefits of overcoming and vengeance. This is explained in greater detail in the unabridged version of this book.

What does it mean to be more than a conqueror?

The word *hupernikao* means more than a conqueror, or “hyper-conqueror.” It infers that it is excessively over and beyond being a conqueror. Another way to say it would be “hyper-overcomer.” The only place I can find *hupernikao* used in the Bible is in Romans chapter 8. “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

A conqueror was described in Colossians 2:15, which says, “Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” The word *disarmed* is translated from *apekduomai*, which means to strip of rank, to despoil and disarm. It is likened to a Roman general being stripped of his medals by the enemy who conquered him. It is like our USA General McArthur, when he met the Japanese general on the ship where the Japanese surrender took place. The general was stripped of his rank and medals. Jesus stripped

Satan of his authority, now it is our privilege to carry out that surrender.

What more can there be besides conquering?

I continued to ask the Lord this question when I knew that He was directing me to name this last chapter Hupernikao, more than a conqueror.

In looking at Romans chapter 8 one can make the following observations of what Paul meant when he used the term “more than a conqueror.”

1. In Romans chapter 6. Paul laid out the facts, the finished work of what the death and resurrection of Jesus did for us. This is a tremendous revelation!

2. In Romans chapter 7. Paul admitted to his weaknesses in actual living out this victorious life.

3. In Romans chapter 8. Paul reconciled the differences between the facts and his experience.

Paul said that we should walk, or live, according to the Spirit and to keep our minds focused on the Spirit and the true facts outlined in Romans chapter 6, rather than to walk, or live, in the flesh and be carnally minded.

He also stated in Romans chapter 8 that as we walk according to the Spirit, we would go from “suffering to glory.” “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

One of the definitions of the word *glory* is “the glorious condition of blessedness into which is appointed and promised that true Christians shall enter after their Savior's return from heaven.”¹⁵ This is the very opposite of what we have been overcoming, that is curses.

In Romans chapter 8 Paul continues to describe this pathway to glory for us. In 8:26-28 he talks of our infirmities, but that all these things will work together for good. In 8:30 he talks about our pathway to being glorified, “Moreover whom

¹⁵ The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1995.

He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Romans 8:30). Then in 8:35-36 he talks about the kind of situations that potentially could harm us, but because of Christ they cannot. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter’” (Romans 8:35-36).

Then, in Romans 8:37 he says, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” All what things? All of the sufferings and afflictions we have been through during the overcoming process. The suffering and affliction, together with your overcoming lifestyle in the face of them, has made you more than a conqueror!

To put it all together I could paraphrase it this way. All of the sufferings and afflictions you have been through during your overcoming process have given you glory, which is a condition of blessedness that you did not enjoy previously.

What is my “more”?

Yes, my enemy has been overcome, but *more* than that, I have become closer to my King in a new level of intimacy, the status of a bride. That is my *more*! I have more of Jesus and He has more of me!

The following are three things that I believe this new and deeper condition of blessedness includes:

1. A greater manifestation of Christ in you.
2. A greater manifestation of Christ upon you.
3. A defeat of many enemies and taking their “spoil” as in Luke 11:22.

1. A greater manifestation of Christ in you. As we discussed in a previous chapter, the Ark of the Covenant is in your heart. Now that you are more than a conqueror, the benefits of the contents of the Ark will be enhanced. That includes the Law of God is working out in your character, the

manna of God is providing for your needs, and Aaron's Rod is bringing ministry fruit into your life.

You are now what Paul calls a "fragrance." "For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing" (2 Corinthians 2:15). This closer union with Jesus together with your broken life that allows for the pouring forth of His life has caused you to spread His fragrance wherever you go.

As you have been overcoming, you have been wounded, broken, and hurt. Often it has been all you could do to hang on. You perhaps have been misjudged and misunderstood. The result has been less of you and more of Christ. Less of your old nature and more of *His* nature now prevails. A clay vessel needs to be broken in order to allow the sweet oil to flow out. You have been broken, and now His sweet anointing oil flows out to others. You have wasted yourself on Jesus and He has honored you as He honored the woman when she broke her alabaster flask.

"And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured *it* on His head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, 'Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.' And they criticized her sharply. But Jesus said, 'Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her'" (Mark 14:3-9).

There is a special anointing that comes along with being more than a conqueror. Not only have you overcome the demons in your own realm of influence, but your conquering extends to spiritual beings with whom you previously had no

connection. You may or may not experience this special anointing, perhaps others will reap the harvest, but in my life I have experienced this on a regular basis.

This is difficult to explain, however, I believe that Old Testament Joseph's experience is that type of experience. Joseph was not only persecuted by his brothers, but also in Egypt he was treated so unfairly. It seems like trouble upon trouble kept following him. If anyone in the Bible had a "right" to complain, it would have been Joseph. But the Bible says in all that he went through, that "God was with him." When Joseph overcame his own person suffering, not only did he receive a great reward in his life, overcomer, but he was a hyper-overcomer, more than a conqueror. How? It is because of Joseph's overcoming, that Israel survived as a people and eventually, through Moses, went back to the Promise Land.

2. A greater manifestation of Christ upon you.

You will experience a more real and lasting abiding in deep communion with God in His presence. Now that you are a conqueror, becoming more intimate and closer to Jesus is the "more."

In Revelation chapter 19, when Jesus returns on His white horse to deliver us, we are also told of a very special love relationship that is consummated. "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, 'Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'' And he said to me, 'These are the true sayings of God'" (Revelation 19:7-9).

The "more than a conqueror" is being more intimate with Jesus.

The marriage supper speaks of a very deep level of intimacy and oneness. I believe, at this point in your life, your relationship with Jesus is deepened to new levels. I believe that there are new levels of trust on both sides. I believe that your access to God is different than it was previously. A bride has

the right to make demands on her husband that no other person can make. A bride, who has consummated her marriage, has the right to depend upon security of many types, including financial security and emotional security. She has access to her Husband that no one else has. Esther is an example.

3. A defeat of many enemies and taking their “spoil.”

When we overcome, we bring down many more enemies than we can imagine, and other people are set free. When we overcome a spiritual enemy, a sin, a stronghold, a curse from our family or national lineage, we not only overcome that issue in our life, but we overcome for others. We take the spoils of war. Conquering is simply defeating the enemy with whom you are engaged in your realm of influence. More than conquering is taking down that enemy in the realm of other people, people groups, and even nations.

“When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace, But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils” (Luke 11:21-22).

This mirrors Jesus’ victory. He overcame death, His personal death, but you and I were set free. It’s the same with us.

Paul knew that afflictions caused his ministry to be anointed. He said, “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church” (Colossians 1:24).

See in this verse that Paul’s sufferings actually set others free. This is how we get the anointing. Overcoming through afflictions is never fun. But we are not here for fun and comfort, although Jesus will give us rest and comfort in His timing.

My wife and I have experienced all three of these Hupernikao experiences many times!

Visit this scene with me into Revelation chapter 19.

First, visualize what Paul quoted from Psalm 68 when he was writing Ephesians 4:8 and said, “Therefore He says: ‘When He

ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” Leading captivity captive was an old tradition exercised by conquering kings. They would chain their defeated enemies and line them up behind the king and his soldiers to display the bounty. The defeated foes would be on foot, chained to one another. This is a picture of a past tense event. We are to be one of the townspeople standing at the side of the road shouting and praising the king for his victory, perhaps victory over generational curses, failures, anger, addictions, poverty, etc.

Now, if the rest of this picture stretches Scripture a little, please just take it as my imagination. All of a sudden, the King stops. It is King Jesus riding on His white horse as in Revelation chapter 19. He looks at you with an intense gaze of love, and He says, “Come, you have participated in this victory, you should not be down there with those people, here is your white horse, ride with Me.” As you ride with Him into the royal courtyard, He looks at you once more and says, “Come, now you are more than a conqueror, you are my bride. I have a feast prepared for you.”

Jesus’ final testimony to the churches in Revelation is about intimacy when He talks about the Tree of Life and says, “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last. Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:12-14).

The wise and foolish virgins.

An example for the positive and negative side of this blessedness is the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25. All of the virgins were waiting upon the consummation of the wedding, which is another way of saying that all of them were in the overcoming process. However, the five foolish were not prepared to stay for the long haul. The foolish ones were half-hearted. The wise virgins were determined to stay until the bridegroom arrived, no matter how

long it took and no matter how bad things looked. They may have said, “I know the character of my Bridegroom, He will not stand me up, He can be trusted; therefore, I will sell everything I need to sell to purchase whatever I need to purchase to stay here until He comes for me.”

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘*No*, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming” (Matthew 25:1-13).

Is it real?

We have noticed that when this “more” takes place, it is manifested as an effortless blessing. We also have experienced what Psalm 126 speaks about. That is, we have been in a warfare-overcoming mode for so long, it is hard to imagine that we are actually experiencing a blessing now.

“When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, We were like those who dream [it seemed so unreal]. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, And our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, ‘The LORD has done great things for them.’ The LORD has done great things for us, *And* we are glad. Bring back our captivity, O LORD, As the streams

in the South [are restored by the torrents]. Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves *with him*” (Psalm 126:1-6, bracketed comments from Amplified Bible).

Does this mean that we can now relax, that our overcoming days are over, and can just sit around and enjoy blessings? I do not think so! I submit that it means that now we are qualified to do greater works for the Kingdom of God and that we can be trusted with new overcoming assignments. But the “more” it produces will be well worth the effort!

One final thought. Hang on brothers and sisters, He is coming!

I believe that as we overcome, as we turn our “junk” into “jewels,” that we touch the very heart of God by adorning His Son Jesus with jewels.

The last few chapters of Revelation describe the Kingdom of God and it is interesting to note that the foundations of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones. “The foundations of the wall of the city *were* adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation *was* jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald” (Revelation 21:19).

The City described is made of gold, representing the good ordained works of man. However, the Foundation, who is Jesus, is adorned with jewels, representing the fruit of suffering. Also the entire City has a luster resembling a rare and most precious jewel, like jasper, shining clear as crystal. In addition, the very wall of the City was made of jasper.

Jesus is the foundation Who is adorned with our jewels. “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

“Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If

anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him* My new name" (Revelation 3:12). Pillars stand on the underground and unseen foundation. They are the manifested portion of the invisible foundation of any building.

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen" (Revelation 22:20-21).

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Appendix A

Relationship Skills

1. Make a firm decision to pursue the relationship.

Offer yourself completely to God. Romans 12:1-2.

This is our blood covenant response to a mighty blood covenant offered to us by God.

2. Take time to listen:

You must take in His Word. Words are blood covenant containers. The Word of God is Jesus Himself; it is not a book of promises to pick and choose from. The Word of God should be pursued as a regular and daily relationship skill and should be looked at as listening to your Lord, Jesus Himself. Ask Him to speak. The Word is supernatural and it produces faith in the same way natural food produces energy. Jesus said that He is the true manna that gives eternal life. Write down what you feel He is speaking.

3. Take time to talk:

Your words: journaling and being gut-level honest. Write down exactly how you feel. Honesty with your blood covenant partner, Jesus, will cause your sin to go on Him. You cannot and will not overcome any issue in life without this gut-level honesty. We suggest two-way journaling. This is a great way to allow the “flow” of the Holy Spirit to speak to you personal and intimate things. First, you write down what you want to tell Jesus. Then, through your fingers, be prepared for Him to write His message to you. At first, there may be some mistakes, but through faith and practice, He will be real to you.

4. Take time to talk:

His Words. The antagonist, Satan and his assigned demons constantly are on task to come against your effort to relate to Jesus and to overcome. They can only be resisted by you; Jesus gave you the authority and responsibility to speak His Word against them.

One idea for doing this is:

Read Psalms and Proverbs by the day. You should read ALOUD five Psalms every morning. Use the system of the calendar, i.e., on the 3rd of the month read Psalms 3, 33, 63, 93, and 123. Also read Proverbs 3. In this system the student will read all Psalms and Proverbs every month. Using this system renews the mind, speaks the Word to Satan, and allows the suffering student to relate his/her emotions to the Psalmist's. Provisions can be made for months with 31 days, and for Psalm 119.

5. Obey God.

Ask God to give you something simple, something small every day that you may obey. It may be just encouraging another, it may be not driving down the same street that fed your addiction, it may be confessing your sin to Him.

This is a big thing! John 14:21-23 says that when we obey His Word that He will reveal more and more of Himself to us. Once you have “seen” Jesus, relationship with Him will no longer be a discipline, but it will be a passionate pursuit.

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