

When
Heaven
INVADES
Earth

A Practical Guide to a Life of Miracles

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God. This book is all about that journey...the quest for the King and His Kingdom.

*The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.*¹

*Seek first the kingdom of God....*²

ENDNOTES

1. 1 Cor. 4:20 NIV.

2. Matt. 6:33.

2

Commission Restored

“Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst...”¹

Jesus could not heal the sick. Neither could He deliver the tormented from demons or raise the dead. To believe otherwise is to ignore what He said about Himself, and more importantly, to miss the purpose of His self-imposed restriction to live as a man.

Jesus Christ said of Himself, “The Son can do nothing.”² In the Greek language that word *nothing* has a unique meaning—it means NOTHING, just like it does in English! He had NO supernatural capabilities whatsoever! While He is 100 percent God, He chose to live with the same limitations that man would face once He was redeemed. He made that point over and over again. Jesus became the model for all who would embrace the invitation to invade the impossible in His name. He performed *miracles, wonders, and signs*, as a man in right relationship to God...not as God. If He performed miracles because He was God, then they would be unattainable for us. But if He did them as a man, I am responsible to pursue His lifestyle. Recapturing this simple truth changes everything...and makes possible a full restoration of the ministry of Jesus in His Church.

What were the distinctions of His humanity?

1. He had no sin to separate Him from the Father.
2. He was completely dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit working through Him.

What are the distinctions of our humanity?

1. We are sinners cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Through His sacrifice He has successfully dealt with the power and effect of sin for all who believe. Nothing now separates us from the Father. There remains only one unsettled issue—
2. How dependent on the Holy Spirit are we willing to live?

THE ORIGINAL COMMISSION

The backbone of Kingdom authority and power is found in the *commission*. Discovering God's original commission and purpose for mankind can help to fortify our resolve to a life of history changing significance. To find that truth we must go back to the beginning.

Man was created in the image of God and placed into the Father's ultimate expression of beauty and peace: the Garden of Eden. Outside of that garden it was a different story. It was without the order and blessing contained within and was in great need of the touch of God's delegated one—Adam.

Adam and Eve were placed in the garden with a mission. God said, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it."³ It was God's intention that as they bore more children, who also lived under God's rule, they would be extending the boundaries of His garden (His government) through the simplicity of their devotion to Him. The greater the number of people in right relationship to God, the greater the impact of their leadership. This process was to continue until the entire earth was covered with the glorious rule of God through man.

But in Genesis chapter 1 we discover it's not a perfect universe. Satan had rebelled and had been cast out of heaven, and with him a portion of the fallen angels took dominion of the earth. It's obvious why the rest of the planet needed to be subdued—it was under the influence of darkness.⁴ God could have destroyed the devil and his host with a word, but instead He chose to defeat darkness through His delegated authority—those made in His image who were lovers of God by choice.

A ROMANCE STORY

The Sovereign One placed us—Adam's children—in charge of planet earth. "The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD'S; but the earth He has given

to the children of men."⁵ This highest of honors was chosen because love always chooses the best. That is the beginning of the romance of our creation...created in His image, *for intimacy*, that dominion might be expressed through love. It is from this revelation that we are to learn to walk as His ambassadors, thus defeating the "Prince of this world." The stage was set for all of darkness to fall as man exercised His godly influence over creation. But instead, man fell.

Satan didn't come into the Garden of Eden violently and take possession of Adam and Eve. He couldn't! Why? He had no dominion there. Dominion empowers. And since man was given the keys of dominion over the planet, the devil would have to get his authority from them. The suggestion to eat the forbidden fruit was simply the devil's effort to get Adam and Eve to agree with him in opposition to God, thus empowering him. Through that agreement he is enabled to *kill, steal, and destroy*. It's important to realize that even today satan is empowered through man's agreement.

Mankind's authority to rule was forfeited when Adam ate the forbidden fruit. Paul said, "You are that one's slaves whom you obey."⁶ In that one act mankind became the slave and possession of the Evil One. All that Adam owned, including the title deed to the planet with its corresponding position of rule, became part of the devil's spoil. God's predetermined plan of redemption immediately kicked into play, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."⁷ Jesus would come to reclaim all that was lost.

THERE WERE NO SHORTCUTS TO HIS VICTORY

God's plan of rulership for man never ceased. Jesus came to bear man's penalty for sin and recapture what had been lost. Luke 19:10 says that Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost." Not only was mankind lost to sin, his dominion over planet earth was also lost. Jesus came to recapture both. Satan tried to ruin that plan at the end of Jesus' 40-day fast. The devil knew he wasn't worthy of Jesus' worship, but he also knew that Jesus had come to reclaim the authority that man had given away. Satan said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."⁸ Notice the phrase "for this has been delivered to me." Satan could

not steal it. It had been relinquished when Adam abandoned God's rule. It was as though satan was saying to Jesus, "I know what You came for. You know what I want. Worship me and I'll give You back the keys." In effect, satan offered Jesus a shortcut to His goal of recapturing the keys of authority that man lost through sin. Jesus said "no" to the shortcut and refused to give him any honor. (It was this same desire for worship that caused satan's fall from heaven in the first place.) Jesus held His course, for He had come to die.

The Father wanted satan defeated by man...one made in His image. Jesus, who would shed His blood to redeem mankind, emptied Himself of His rights as God and took upon Himself the limitations of man. Satan was defeated by a man—the Son of Man, who was rightly related to God. Now, as people receive the work of Christ on the cross for salvation, they become grafted into that victory. Jesus defeated the devil with His sinless life, defeated him in His death by paying for our sins with His blood, and again, in the resurrection, rising triumphant with the keys of death and hell.

WE ARE BORN TO RULE

In redeeming man, Jesus retrieved what man had given away. From the throne of triumph He declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore...." In other words: *I got it all back. Now go use it and reclaim mankind.* In this passage Jesus fulfills the promise He made to the disciples when He said, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven."¹¹ The original plan was never aborted; it was fully realized once and for all in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. We were then to be completely restored to His plan of ruling as a people made in His image. And as such we would learn how to enforce the victory obtained at Calvary: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."¹²

We were born to rule—rule over creation, over darkness—to plunder hell and establish the rule of Jesus wherever we go by preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. *Kingdom* means: *King's domain.* In the original purpose of God, mankind ruled over creation. Now that sin has entered the world, creation has been infected by darkness, namely: disease, sickness, afflicting spirits, poverty, natural disasters, demonic influence, etc. Our rule is still over creation, but now it is focused on exposing and undoing the works of the devil. We are to give what we have received to reach that end.¹³ If I truly receive power from an

encounter with the God of power, I am equipped to give it away. The invasion of God into impossible situations comes through a people who have received power from on high and learn to release it into the circumstances of life.

THE KEY OF DAVID

The gospel of salvation is to touch the whole man: spirit, soul, and body. John G. Lake called this a *Triune Salvation*. A study on the word *evil* confirms the intended reach of His redemption. That word is found in Matthew 6:13 (KJV), "Deliver us from evil." The word *evil* represents the entire curse of sin upon man. *Ponos*, the Greek word for evil, came from the word *ponos*, meaning pain. And that word came from the root word *penes*, meaning poor. Look at it: *evil-sin*, *pain-sickness*, and *poor-poverty*. Jesus destroyed the power of sin, sickness, and poverty through His redemptive work on the cross. In Adam and Eve's commission to subdue the earth, they were without sickness, poverty, and sin. Now that we are restored to His original purpose, should we expect anything less? After all, this is called the better covenant!

We were given the keys to the Kingdom¹⁴—which in part is the authority to *trample over all the powers of hell*.¹⁵ There is a unique application of this principle found in the phrase *key of David*,¹⁶ which is mentioned in both Revelation and Isaiah. Ungers' Bible Dictionary states, "The power of the keys consisted not only in the supervision of the royal chambers, but also in deciding who was and who was not to be received into the King's service."¹⁷ All that the Father has is ours through Christ. His entire treasure house of resources, His royal chambers, is at our disposal in order to fulfill His commission. But the more sobering part of this illustration is found in *controlling who gets in to see the King*. Isn't that what we do with this gospel? When we declare it, we give opportunity for people to come to the King to be saved. When we are silent, we have chosen to keep those who would hear away from eternal life. Sobering indeed! It was a costly key for Him to purchase, and it's a costly key for us to use. But, it's even more costly to *bury it and not obtain an increase for the coming King*. That price will be felt throughout eternity.

A REVOLUTION IN IDENTITY

It's time for a revolution in our vision. When prophets tell us, *your vision is too small*, many of us think the antidote is to increase whatever numbers we're

expecting. For example: if we're expecting 10 new converts, let's change it to 100. If we were praying for cities, let's pray instead for nations. With such responses, we're missing the sharp edge of the frequently repeated word. Increasing the numbers is not necessarily a sign of a larger vision from God's perspective. Vision starts with identity and purpose. Through a revolution in our identity, we can think with divine purpose. Such a change begins with a revelation of Him.

One of the tragedies of a weakened identity is how it affects our approach to Scripture. Many, if not most theologians, make the mistake of taking all the "good stuff" contained in the prophets and sweeping it under that mysterious rug called, *the Millennium*. It is not my desire to debate that subject right now. But I do want to deal with our propensity to put off those things that require courage, faith, and action to another period of time. The mistaken idea is this: if it is good, it can't be for now.

A cornerstone in this theology is that the condition of the Church will always be getting worse and worse; therefore, tragedy in the Church is just another sign of these being the last days. In a perverted sense, the weakness of the Church confirms to many that they are on the right course. The worsening condition of the world and the Church becomes a sign to them that all is well. I have many problems with that kind of thinking, but only one I'll mention now—it *requires no faith!*

We are so entrenched in unbelief that anything contrary to this worldview is thought to be of the devil. So it is with the idea of the Church having a dominating impact before Jesus returns. It's almost as though we want to defend the right to be small in number and make it by the *skin of our teeth*. Embracing a belief system that requires no faith is dangerous. It is contrary to the nature of God and all that the Scriptures declare. Since He plans to do *above all we could ask or think*, according to Ephesians 3:20, His promises by nature challenge our intellect and expectations. "[Jerusalem] did not consider her destiny; therefore her collapse was awesome."¹⁸ The result of forgetting His promises is not one we can afford.

We are often more convinced of our *unworthiness* than we are of His *worth*. Our *inability* takes on greater focus than does His *ability*. But the same One who called *fearful Gideon* a Valiant Warrior and *unstable Peter* a Rock has called us the Body of His beloved Son on earth. That has to count for something.

In the next chapter we'll see how to use a gift to manifest His Kingdom—causing heaven to touch earth.

ENDNOTES

1. Acts 2:22.
2. John 5:19.
3. Genesis 1:28.
4. Genesis 1:2.
5. Psalm 115:16.
6. Romans 6:16.
7. Genesis 3:15.
8. Luke 4:6-7.
9. Isaiah 14:12.
10. Matthew 28:18-19.
11. Matthew 16:19.
12. Romans 16:20 NIV.
13. See Matthew 10:8.
14. See Matthew 16:19.
15. See Luke 10:19.
16. Isaiah 22:22; Revelation 3:7.
17. Unger's Bible Dictionary, page 629 "Key" Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1957.
18. Lamentations 1:9.

Repent to See

*Most Christians repent enough to get forgiven,
but not enough to see the Kingdom.*

Israel expected their Messiah to come as the King who would rule over all other kings. And He did. But their misunderstanding of greatness in His Kingdom made it difficult for them to grasp how He could be born without earthly fanfare and become the servant of all.

They expected Him to rule with a rod of iron. In doing so they would finally have revenge on all those who had oppressed them throughout the ages. Little did they realize that His vengeance would not be aimed so much at the enemies of Israel as it would be toward the enemies of man: sin, the devil and his works, and the self-righteous attitudes fostered by religion.

Jesus the Messiah came...full of surprises. Only the contrite in heart could keep up with His constant *coloring outside the lines* and stay unoffended. His purpose was revealed in His primary message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."¹ Now there's something that caught them completely off guard; He brought His world with Him!

MORE THAN TEARS

Repentance means much more than weeping over sin, or even turning from those sins to follow God. In fact, turning from sin to God is more the *result* of true repentance than it is the actual act. Repentance means you *change your way of thinking*. And it's only in changing the way we think that we can discover the focus of Jesus' ministry—the Kingdom.

This is not just a heavenly mandate to have happy thoughts. Obeying this command is possible only for those who surrender to the grace of God. The renewed mind is the result of a surrendered heart.

AN ABOUT-FACE

Repentance is often defined as *doing an about-face*. It implies that I was pursuing one direction in life and I change to pursue another. Scripture illustrates it like this, "Repentance from dead works...faith toward God."² Faith then is both the crown and the enabler of repentance.

This command has been preached strongly in recent years. The message is greatly needed. Hidden sin is the *Achilles' heel* of the Church in this hour. It has kept us from the purity that breeds boldness and great faith. But as noble as that target is, the message has fallen short. God wants to do more than just *getting us out of the red*. He wants to *get us into the black!* Repentance is not complete until it envisions His Kingdom.

CO-LABORERS WITH CHRIST

The focus of repentance is to change our way of thinking until the presence of His Kingdom fills our consciousness. The enemy's attempt to anchor our affections to the things that are visible is easily resisted when our hearts are aware of the presence of His world. Such awareness aids us in the task of being *co-laborers*³ with Christ—*destroying the works of the devil*.⁴

If the Kingdom is *here and now*, then we must acknowledge it's in the invisible realm. Yet being *at hand* reminds us that it's also *within reach*. Paul said that the invisible realm is eternal, while that which is seen is only temporal.⁵ Jesus told Nicodemus that he'd have to be born again to *see* the Kingdom.⁶ That which is unseen can be realized only through *repentance*. It was as though He said, "If you don't change the way you perceive things, you'll live your whole life thinking that what you see in the natural is the superior reality. Without changing the way you think you'll never see the world that is right in front of you. It's My world, and it fulfills every dream you've ever had. And I brought it with Me." All that He did in life and ministry, He did by drawing from that superior reality.

LIVING FROM THE UNSEEN

"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter."⁷ Some things are only discovered by the *desperate*. That highly valued Kingdom attitude⁸ is what marks the heart of true *Kingdom royalty*.⁹ The God who put the gold in the rocks brought His Kingdom with Him, but left it unseen.

Paul dealt with this in his letter to the Colossians. There he informs us that God hid our abundant life *in Christ*.¹⁰ Where is He? *Seated at the right hand of the Father, in heavenly places*.¹¹ Our abundant life is hidden in the Kingdom realm. And only faith can make the withdrawals.

THE KING'S DOMAIN

Look at the word *Kingdom*—King-dom. It refers to the *King's Domain*, implying authority and lordship. Jesus came to offer the benefits of His world to all who surrender to His rule. The realm of God's dominion, that realm of all sufficiency, is the realm called the Kingdom. The benefits of His rule were illustrated through His works of forgiveness, deliverance, and healing.

The Christian life has been harnessed to this goal, verbalized in the Lord's Model Prayer: "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."¹² His dominion is realized when what happens here is *as it is in heaven*. (This will be dealt with more thoroughly in Chapter 4.)

THE GREATEST SERMON

In Matthew, chapter 4, Jesus first declared the repentance message. People came from all over, bringing the sick and diseased, the tormented and handicapped. Jesus healed them all.

After the miracles He gave the most famous sermon of all time: the Sermon on the Mount. It is important to remember that this group of people just saw Jesus heal all kinds of sicknesses and perform mighty deliverances. Is it possible that instead of giving commands on the new way of thinking, Jesus was actually identifying for them the transformation of heart they had just experienced?

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."¹³ How would you describe a people who left cities for days at a time, traveling great distances on foot, abandoning all that life involves, only to follow Jesus to some

desolate place. And there He would do what they had thought impossible. The hunger of their hearts pulled a reality from the heart of God that they didn't even know existed. Can their condition be found in the Beatitudes? I think so. I call them "poor in spirit." And Jesus gave them the promised manifestation of the Kingdom with healing and deliverance. He then followed the miracles with the Sermon, for it was common for Jesus to teach so He could explain what He had just done.

In this case, the actual Presence of the Spirit of God upon Jesus stirred up a hunger for God in the people. That hunger brought a change in their attitudes without their being told it should change. Their hunger for God, even before they could recognize it as such, had created a new perspective in them. That even they were unaccustomed to. Without an effort to change, they had changed. How? The Kingdom comes in the Presence of the Spirit of God. It was His Presence they detected, and it was His Presence they longed for. For them it didn't matter if He was doing miracles or just giving another sermon, they just had to be where He was. Hunger humbles. Hunger for God brings about the ultimate humility. And He exalted them at the proper time¹⁴ with a taste of His dominion.

The Sermon on the Mount is a treatise on the Kingdom. In it Jesus reveals the attitudes that help His followers to access His unseen world. As citizens of heaven, these attitudes are formed in us that we might fully apprehend all that His Kingdom has available. The Beatitudes are actually the "lenses" that the Kingdom is seen through. Repentance involves taking on the mind of Christ revealed in these verses. He could have put it this way: *This is how the repentant mind looks.*

Please take note the joyful condition of the citizens of His world who are not yet in heaven! *Blessed* means *happy*! The following is a personal paraphrase of *Matthew 5:3-12*.

3. You are happy if you are poor in spirit, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.
4. You are happy if you mourn, for you shall be comforted.
5. You are happy if you are meek, for you shall inherit the earth.
6. You are happy if you hunger and thirst for righteousness, for you shall be filled.
7. You are happy if you are merciful, for you shall obtain mercy.

8. You are happy if you are pure in heart, for you shall see God.
9. You are happy if you are peacemakers, for you shall be called sons of God.
10. You are happy if you are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.
11. You are happy if they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.
12. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Examine the promised result of each new attitude—*receiving the Kingdom, being comforted, obtaining mercy, seeing God, etc.* Why is this important to recognize? Because many approach the teachings of Jesus as *just another form of the Law*. To most He just brought a new set of rules. *Grace* is different from the *Law* in that the favor comes *before* the obedience. Under grace the commandments of the Lord come fully equipped with the ability to perform them... to those who hear from the heart.¹⁵ *Grace enables what it commands.*

DOMINION REALIZED

The unseen world has influence over the visible. If the people of God will not reach for the Kingdom at hand, the realm of darkness is ready to display its ability to influence. The good news is that "*His [the Lord's] kingdom rules over all!*"¹⁶

Jesus illustrated this reality in Matthew 12:28, saying, "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you." There are two things to notice that will be covered more thoroughly elsewhere in this book. First, Jesus worked only through the Spirit of God; and second, the kingdom of God came upon someone in his deliverance. Jesus caused the collision between two worlds: the world of darkness and the world of light. Darkness *always* gives way to light! And in the same way, when the dominion of God was released through Jesus to that man, he became free.

MOVING OUT OF CONVICTION

That same collision between light and darkness happens when the sick are healed. Walter had experienced two strokes in the previous year, which left him without feeling on the entire right side of his body. He showed me a horrible

burn on his arm that he had suffered, not knowing he was being burned. Conviction, one of the words used to detect faith,¹⁷ began to burn in my heart. While he was still talking I began to pray for him with my hand on his shoulder. I had to do so quickly. I had become aware of the Kingdom where no numbness existed. I didn't want to become more aware of how severe his problem was. My prayer went something like this: *Father, this was Your idea. You commanded us to pray for things to be here as they are in heaven, and I know there is no numbness there, so there shouldn't be any here. So I command in the name of Jesus for the nerve endings to come to life. I command full restoration of feeling in this body.*

Soon after I started to pray he told me that he felt my hand on his shoulder and could even feel the fabric of my shirt with his right hand. That world began to collide with the world of numbness. Numbness lost.

Faith is the key to discovering the superior nature of the invisible realm. It is the "gift of God" within to uncover. In the next chapter we'll learn how faith deals with the unseen and makes room for heaven's invasion.

ENDNOTES

1. Matt. 4:17.
2. Heb. 6:1.
3. See 1 Corinthians 3:9.
4. See 1 John 3:8.
5. See 2 Corinthians 4:18.
6. See John 3:3.
7. Proverbs 25:2.
8. See Matthew 5:6.
9. See Revelation 1:5.
10. See Colossians 3:3.
11. See Ephesians 1:20.
12. Matthew 6:10.
13. Matthew 5:3.
14. See 1 Peter 5:6.
15. See Jas. 1:21-25.
16. Ps. 103:19.
17. See Heb. 11:1 KJV.

4

Faith—Anchored in the Unseen

*"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things not seen."¹*

*Faith is the mirror of the heart that reflects the realities of
an unseen world—the actual substance of His Kingdom.
Through the prayer of faith we are able to pull the reality of
His world into this one. That is the function of faith.*

Faith has its anchor in the unseen realm. It lives from the invisible toward the visible. Faith actualizes what it realizes. The Scriptures contrast the life of faith with the limitations of natural sight.² Faith provides eyes for the heart.

Jesus expects people to see from the heart. He once called a group of religious leaders *hypocrites* because they could discern the weather but couldn't discern the times. It's obvious why Jesus would prefer people to recognize the times (spiritual climate and seasons) over natural weather conditions, but it's not quite so apparent why He would consider them hypocrites if they didn't.

Many of us have thought that the ability to see into the spiritual realm is more the result of a special gift than an unused potential of everyone. I remind you that Jesus addresses this charge to the Pharisees and Sadducees. The very fact that they, of all people, were required to see is evidence that everyone has been given this ability. They became blind to His dominion because of their own corrupted hearts and were judged for their unfulfilled potential.

We are born again by grace through faith.³ The born again experience enables us to see from the heart.⁴ A heart that doesn't see is a hard heart.⁵ Faith was never intended only to get us *into* the family. Rather, it is the nature of life

in this family. Faith sees. It brings His Kingdom into focus. All of the Father's resources, all of His benefits, are accessible through faith.

To encourage us in our capacity to see, Jesus gave specific instruction, "Seek first the kingdom of God...."⁶ Paul taught us, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."⁷ He also stated, "For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."⁸ The Bible instructs us to turn our attention toward the invisible. This theme is repeated enough in Scripture to make those of us bound by the logic of this Western culture quite nervous.

Herein lies the secret to the supernatural realm that we want restored to the Church. Jesus told us that He only did what He *saw* His Father do. Such an insight is vital for those who want more. The power of His actions, for instance, the mud in the eye of the blind, is rooted in His ability to see.

WORSHIP AND THE SCHOOL OF FAITH

God is very committed to teaching us how to see. To make this possible He gave us the Holy Spirit as a tutor. The curriculum that He uses is quite varied. But the one class we all qualify for is the greatest of all Christian privileges—worship. Learning *how to see* is not the purpose for our worship, but it is a wonderful by-product.

Those who worship in spirit and truth, as mentioned in John 4:23-24, learn to follow the Holy Spirit's lead. His realm is called the kingdom of God. The throne of God, which becomes established upon the *praises of His people*,⁹ is the center of that Kingdom. It's in the environment of worship that we learn things that go way beyond what our intellect can grasp¹⁰—and the greatest of these lessons is the value of His Presence. David was so affected by this that all his other exploits pale in comparison to his abandoned heart for God. We know that he learned to see into God's realm because of statements like, "I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved."¹¹ The Presence of God affected his seeing. He would constantly practice recognizing the Presence of God. He saw God daily, not with the natural eyes, but with the eyes of faith. That priceless revelation was given to a worshiper.

The privilege of worship is a good beginning place for those unaccustomed to addressing some of these kinds of themes found in Scripture. It's in

that wonderful ministry that we can learn to pay attention to this God-given gift: the ability to see with the heart. As we learn to worship with purity of heart, our eyes will continue to open. And we can expect to see what He wants us to see.

SEEING THE INVISIBLE

The invisible realm is superior to the natural. The reality of that invisible world dominates the natural world we live in...both positively and negatively. Because the invisible is superior to the natural, faith is anchored in the unseen.

Faith lives within the revealed will of God. When I have misconceptions of who He is and what He is like, my faith is restricted by those misconceptions. For example, if I believe that God allows sickness in order to build character, I'll not have confidence praying in most situations where healing is needed. But, if I believe that sickness is to the body what sin is to the soul, then no disease will intimidate me. Faith is much more free to develop when we truly see the heart of God as good.

The same misconceptions of God affect those who need to have faith for their own miracle. A woman who needed a miracle once told me that she felt God had allowed her sickness for a purpose. I told her that if I treated my children that way I'd be arrested for child abuse. She agreed and eventually allowed me to pray for her. After truth came into her heart, her healing came minutes later.

Unbelief is anchored in what is visible or reasonable apart from God. It honors the natural realm as superior to the invisible. The apostle Paul states that what you can see is temporal, and what you can't see is eternal.¹² Unbelief is faith in the inferior.

The natural realm is the anchor of unbelief. But that realm is not to be considered as evil. Rather the humble of heart recognize the hand of God through what is seen. God has created all things to speak of Him—whether it is rivers and trees, or angels and heaven. The natural realm carries the witness of His greatness...for those with eyes to see and ears to hear.¹³

REALIST/MATERIALIST

Most all of the people that I've known who are filled with unbelief have called themselves *realists*. This is an honest evaluation, but not one to be proud

of. Those kinds of realists believe more in what is visible than they do in what they can't see. Put another way, they believe the material world rules over the spiritual world.

Materialism has been thought simply to be the accumulation of goods. Although it includes that, it is much more. I can own nothing and still be materialistic. I can want nothing and be materialistic because materialism is faith in the natural as the superior reality.

We are a sensual society with a culture shaped by what is picked up through the senses. We're trained to believe only in what we see. Real faith is not living in denial of the natural realm. If the doctor says you have a tumor, it's silly to pretend that it's not there. That's not faith. However, faith is founded on a reality that is superior to that tumor. I can acknowledge the existence of a tumor and still have faith in the provision of His stripes for my healing... I was provisionally healed 2,000 years ago. It is the product of the kingdom of heaven—a superior reality. There are no tumors in heaven, and faith brings that reality into this one.

Would satan like to inflict heaven with cancer? Of course he would. But he has no dominion there. He only has dominion here when and where man has come into agreement.

LIVING IN DENIAL

Fear of appearing to live in denial is what keeps many from faith. Why is what anyone thinks so important to you that you'd not be willing to risk all to trust God? The fear of man is very strongly associated with unbelief. Conversely, the fear of God and faith are very closely related.

People of faith are also realists. They just have their foundation in a superior reality.

Unbelief is actually faith in something other than God. He is jealous over our hearts. The one whose primary trust is in another grieves the Holy Spirit.

IT'S NOT IN THE HEAD

Faith is born of the Spirit in the hearts of mankind. Faith is neither intellectual nor anti-intellectual. It is superior to the intellect. The Bible does not

say, *with the mind man believes!* Through faith, man is able to come into agreement with the mind of God.

When we submit the things of God to the mind of man, unbelief and religion¹⁴ are the results. When we submit the mind of man to the things of God, we end up with faith and a renewed mind. The mind makes a wonderful servant, but a terrible master.

Much of the opposition to revival comes from soul-driven Christians.¹⁵ The apostle Paul calls them *carнал*. They have not learned how to be led by the Spirit. Anything that doesn't make sense to their rational mind is automatically in conflict with Scripture. This way of thinking is accepted all throughout the Church in Western civilization, which should explain why our God so often looks just like us.

Most of the goals of the modern church can be accomplished without God. All we need is people, money, and a common objective. Determination can achieve great things. But success is not necessarily a sign that the goal was from God. Little exists in church life to ensure that we are being directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Returning to the ministry of Jesus is the only insurance we have of accomplishing such a goal.

FAITH FROM A RELATIONSHIP

The Holy Spirit lives in my spirit. That is the *place* of communion with God. As we learn to receive from our spirits we learn how to be Spirit led.

"By faith, we understand."¹⁶ Faith is the foundation for all true intellectualism. When we *learn to learn* that way, we open ourselves up to grow in true faith because faith does not require understanding to function.

I'm sure that most of you have had this experience—you've been reading the Bible, and a verse *jumps out at you*. There is great excitement over this verse that seems to give so much life and encouragement to you. Yet initially you couldn't teach or explain that verse if your life depended on it. What happened is this: Your spirit received the life-giving power of the word from the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ When we learn to receive from our spirit, our mind becomes the student and is therefore subject to the Holy Spirit. Through the process of revelation and experience our mind eventually obtains understanding. That is biblical learning—the spirit giving influence to the mind.

FAITH IS BOTH SUBSTANCE AND EVIDENCE

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”¹⁸

Faith is the mirror of the heart that reflects the realities of His world into ours. It is the substance of the unseen realm. This wonderful gift from God is the initial earthly manifestation of what exists in His Kingdom. It is a testimony of an invisible realm called the Kingdom of God. Through prayer we are able to pull that reality into this one—that is how faith functions.

If I go into the local pizza parlor and order a pizza, they will give me a number and a receipt. I am to place that number in a conspicuous place on the table. Someone may walk in off the street and come to my table and announce that they won't give me any pizza. I'll just point to the number and tell him, *When pizza number 52 is done, it's mine!* That number is the *substance* of the pizza hoped for. If that guy tells me that my number isn't any good, I'll point to my receipt. It verifies the value of the number. When my pizza is done, the waiter will walk around looking for my number. How does the product of heaven know where to land? He looks for the substance...the number. If a question comes up over the validity of my number, my receipt, which is contained in the Bible, verifies my right to both the number and the pizza.

Heaven is not moved simply by the needs of man. It's not that God doesn't care. It was out of His great compassion that He sent Jesus. When God is moved by human need He seldom fixes the problem outright; instead, He provides Kingdom principles that when embraced correct the problems. If God was moved solely by human need then countries like India and Haiti would become the wealthiest nations in the world. It doesn't work like that. Heaven is moved by faith. Faith is the currency of heaven.

A FAITH SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the affects of faith found in Hebrews 11:2-30:

- By faith**—the elders obtained a testimony,
 - we understand,
 - Enoch was taken away having pleased God,
 - Noah became an heir,
 - Abraham obeyed, and dwelled in a land of promise,

—Sarah received strength to conceive, and judged God as faithful who gave her the promise.

By faith—Abraham received promises,

—Isaac blessed his son,

—Joseph gave a prophecy of what would follow his death.

By faith—Moses' parents preserved him, seeing he was special,

—Moses refused to be aligned with the whole Egyptian system and chose instead to be rejected by people.

By faith—the walls of Jericho fell,

—Rahab did not perish.

By faith—they subdued kingdoms,

—worked righteousness,

—obtained promises,

—shut the mouths of lions,

—quenched the violence of fire,

—escaped the edge of the sword,

—were made strong,

—were made valiant in battle,

—turned to fight the enemies.

THE SOURCE OF FAITH

“Faith comes by hearing....”¹⁹ It does not say that it comes from *having heard*. It is the listening heart, in the present tense, that is ready for heaven's deposit of faith.

The apostle Paul was driven by the command, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel....”²¹ However, when he was ready to preach the gospel in Asia,²² God said no. What God *had said* appeared to be in conflict with what God *was saying*.²³ Paul then prepared to go to Bithynia. Again, God said no. Following this Paul had a dream of a man calling out to him from Macedonia. This was recognized as the will of God, and they went.

Even though we may know the will of God from Scripture, we still need the Holy Spirit to help us with the interpretation, application, and empowerment to perform His will.

FEARFULNESS

The biblical command repeated most often is: *Do not fear*. Why? Fear attacks the foundation of our relationship with God...our faith. Fear is faith in the devil; it is also called unbelief. Jesus would ask His fearful disciples, "*Why are you so faithless?*" because fearfulness is the same as faithlessness. Fear and faith cannot coexist—they work against each other.

The devil is called Beelzebub, which means, *lord of the flies*. He and his hosts are attracted to decay. We once had a freezer in a building detached from our house. One Sunday we came home from church only to be hit with a wall of smell that is unfortunately hard to forget. I realized in an instant what had happened. Our freezer had died. I thought the stench I had smelled for days was because my boys forgot to take *all* of the trash to the dump. Instead it was the ever-rotting meat and bear hide in the freezer.

From the front seat of my car I looked at the window of the shop about 40 feet away. It was black with flies...a number that is still hard to imagine these many years later. The freezer was filled with all sorts of meat. Flies found a happy breeding ground in spoiled flesh and were multiplying in unbelievable numbers. Both the meat and the freezer were taken to the dump.

Issues such as bitterness, jealousy, and hatred qualify as the decay of the heart that invites the devil to come and give influence²⁴—yes, even to Christians. Remember Paul's admonition to the church of Ephesus, "Neither give place to the devil."²⁵ Fear is also a decay of the heart. It attracts the demonic in the same way as bitterness and hatred. How did the flies know where my freezer was? Through the scent of decaying meat. Fear gives off a similar scent. Like faith, fear is *substance* in the spiritual realm. Satan has no power except through our agreement. Fear becomes our heart's response when we come into agreement with his intimidating suggestions.

REACT OR RESPOND

Many who have feared the excesses made by others in the name of faith have ironically embraced unbelief. Reaction to error usually produces error. Response to truth always wins out over those who react to error. Some people would have no belief system were it not for the error of others. Their thoughts and teachings are the antithesis of what others believe and practice. As a result those who strive for balance become anemic. The word *balance* has come to mean *middle of the road*—of no threat to people or the devil, with little risk, and above all...the best way to keep our nice image intact.

The Church warns its members about the great sin of presumption. God warns us of the sin of unbelief. Jesus didn't say, *When I return will I find people who are excessive and presumptuous?* He was concerned about finding people with faith, the kind He displayed. While we often huddle in groups of like-minded people, those with faith blaze a trail that threatens all of our comfort zones. Faith offends the stationary.

People of great faith are hard to live with. Their reasoning is *otherworldly*. My grandfather, a pastor, sat under the ministry of several great men and women of God of the early 1900s. He used to tell me how not everyone liked Smith Wigglesworth. His faith made other people feel uncomfortable. We either become like them or we avoid them. We find their lifestyle either contagious or offensive with little neutral ground. Smith is well loved today...but it's only because he's dead. Israel loved their dead prophets too.

There's something amazing about unbelief—it is able to fulfill its own expectations. Unbelief is safe because it takes no risk and almost always gets what it expects. Then, after a person gets the answer for their unbelief, they can say, *I told you so*.

A SUPERIOR REALITY

My faith is not just an abiding faith; it is active. It is aggressive by nature. It has focus and purpose. Faith grabs hold of the reality of the Kingdom and forcefully and violently brings it into a collision with this natural one. An inferior kingdom cannot stand.

One of the more common things people tell me when I'm about to pray for their healing is, *I know God can do it*. So does the devil. At best that is hope...not faith. Faith knows He will.

For one who has faith, there is nothing impossible. There are no impossibilities when there is faith...and there are no exceptions.

Sheri, for instance, came forward for prayer after a wonderful meeting just outside of Nashville, Tennessee. She had suffered with Lupus for 24 years, the last four of which had gone into Pulmonary Hypertension. It had gotten so bad that she had to have an aluminum shunt placed into her heart. To this a pump was attached, which supplied the needed medication to keep her alive. Her doctor told her that without this medication she could live for only three minutes.

When she walked up to me, I actually felt a presence of something I had never felt in that measure before. It was faith. I actually stood back and stared at her for a few moments realizing that I was seeing something completely new for me. As she received prayer, she fell to the ground under the power of God. When she got up I asked her how she was doing. She described a heat that was on her chest. (Heat often accompanies God's healing touch.) As she left I told her, *your faith got you this one!*

That was Saturday night. At 7 a.m. that following morning the Lord spoke to her saying she didn't need the medication any more.²⁶ So she removed it. She showed up 14 hours later giving testimony of God's wonderful healing power.

She has since had the aluminum shunt removed—she doesn't need it anymore!

EARS TO HEAR

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."²⁷ Notice it does not say, *faith comes from having heard*. The whole nature of faith implies a relationship with God that is current. The emphasis is on hearing...in the now! In Genesis God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. As Abraham raised the knife to slay his son God spoke again. This time He told him not to slay his son, as he had passed the test of being willing to do anything for God. It's a good thing that Abraham's only connection with God was not just over what *was said*, but was based upon what He *was saying!*

ANSWERS FOR LIFE'S IMPOSSIBILITIES

What this world needs is for the Church to return to a *show and tell* message on the kingdom of God. They need an anchor that is greater than everything they can see. The world system has no answers to the world's increasing problems—every solution is only temporary.

Dale came to my office to confess sin. He lived quite some distance from my city, but because he had deceived us out of some money, he felt the need to come and confess in person. After I expressed both God's and my forgiveness, I asked him about his back. He had walked into my office with difficulty and was obviously in great pain. He lifted his shirt to show me two scars that ran on each side of the spine the full length. He had broken his back some years earlier and had recently been in a car accident that further aggravated his injury. He then told me that God would probably like to heal him, but that he just got in His way. I told him he wasn't big enough. All I could picture was the greatness of God and the puny condition of man. He looked at me with a stunned look on his face. I went on to explain that God was really big and could pretty much do as He pleased. Although Dale didn't move into great faith, he did begin to doubt his doubt. That was all it took. I laid hands on his back and invited the Holy Spirit to come and give His gift of healing. I then commanded it to be healed. He bent over, placing his hands flat on the floor, saying, *I can't do that!* He proceeded to do it over and over again, each time declaring, *I can't do that!* He left pain-free with full movement and a heart full of praise. This was a man who could barely walk only moments before.

Faith is not the absence of doubt; it's the presence of belief. I may not always feel that I have great faith. But I can always obey, laying my hands on someone and praying. It's a mistake for me to ever examine my faith. I seldom find it. It's better for me to obey *quickly*. After it's over I can look back and see that my obedience came from faith.

THE CLUSTER BOMB EFFECT

When the corporate level of faith grows, it has what I call a *cluster bomb effect*, where innocent bystanders get touched by the miracle-working power of God.

Francis is a woman who had esophagus cancer. One Sunday morning during worship she leaned over to her husband and said, "I was just healed!" She felt the *fire* of God touch her hands and concluded that it represented God's

healing touch. When she went to the doctor she told him of her experience. His response was, "This kind does not go away." After examining her he stated, "Not only do you not have cancer, you have a new esophagus!" Corporate faith pulls on heaven in marvelous ways. His world becomes manifest all around us.

Sharon had suffered an accident many years ago in which she had destroyed a tendon that ran down her leg. It left her with restricted movement and partial numbness in her foot. I was giving an altar call for people to get right with God during one of our Saturday night meetings. She began to make all kinds of noise. I stopped the altar call and asked her what happened. She told us of the tingling feeling that ran down her leg and the subsequent restoration of all movement and feeling to her foot. A creative miracle happened without anyone praying.

The crowd at this particular meeting was quite small. But power is not in the number of people in attendance. It's the number of people in agreement. Exponential power²⁸ is the product of the *unity of faith*.

In some meetings it's easy to mistake enthusiasm for faith. In that setting I emphasize the use of testimonies to stir peoples' hearts to believe for the impossible so He might invade.

MORE THAN BEING LOUD

Just as fear is a tangible element in the spirit world, so faith is tangible there. In the natural a loud voice may intimidate another man. But devils know the difference between the one who is truly bold and aggressive *because of their faith*, and the one who is simply covering his fears with aggressive behavior. Christians often use this tactic when casting out devils. Many of us have yelled threats, called on angels for help, promised to make it harder on the demons on Judgment Day, and other foolish things only to try and cover immaturity and fear. Real faith is anchored in the invisible realm and is connected to the authority given in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The authority to cast out demons is found in rest. Rest is the climate that faith grows in.²⁹ It comes out of the peace of God. And it is the Prince of Peace who will soon crush satan underneath our feet!³⁰ What is restful for us is violent to the powers of hell. That is the violent nature of faith.

This is not to be a soulish attempt at self-confidence or self-determination. Instead it is a moving of the heart into a place of surrender...a place of rest. A surrendered heart is a heart of faith. And faith must be present to please God.

VIOLENCE AND FAITH

"Until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."³¹

Two blind men³² who sat by the road called out to Jesus. People told them to be quiet. That only hardened their determination. They became more desperate and cried out all the louder. He called them forth and healed them saying, "The kingdom has come near you." He attributed their miracle to their faith.

A woman³³ who had hemorrhaged for 12 years pressed through a crowd. When she was finally able to touch the garment of Jesus, she was healed. He attributed it to her faith.

The stories of this kind are many, all with similar endings—they were healed or delivered because of their faith. Faith may quietly press in, or it may cry out very loudly, but it is always violent in the spirit world. It grabs hold of an invisible reality and won't let go. Taking the Kingdom by faith is the violent act that is necessary to come into what God has made available.

FAITH EMPOWERS

An automobile may have several hundred horsepower. But the car will go nowhere until the clutch is released, connecting the power contained in the running motor and transferring that power to the wheels. So it is with faith. We have all the power of heaven behind us. But it is our faith that connects what is available to the circumstances at hand. Faith takes what is available and makes it actual.

It's not illegal to try to grow in faith. It's not wrong to seek for signs and the increase of miracles. Those are all within the rights of the believer. But learning how to pray is the task at hand. It is the only thing the disciples asked Jesus to teach them. And so we will examine His Model Prayer for insights on His view of prayer and the release of His dominion.

Praying Heaven Down

"If you want anything from God, you will have to pray into heaven. That is where it all is. If you live in the earth realm and expect to receive from God, you will never get anything."¹

"The Church has been negligent in one thing... she has not prayed the power of God out of heaven."²

The Fourth of July Celebration was the biggest event of the year for our wonderful community. The parade, rodeo, and demolition derby were just a few of the activities that took place during the festival that lasted nearly a week.

Carnivals would also make their way to us, with rides, games, and special foods that are common at those events. One year a fortune-teller tried to get in on the celebration. She pitched her tent with the others and laid out her tarot cards, crystal ball, and other psychic paraphernalia. The devil sent her to impart the gift of *demon possession* to the citizens of my city. The folks in our church began to pray.

As I walked around her tent I began to declare, *You don't exist in heaven, you are not to exist here. This is my town. You are here illegally. I forbid you to establish roots here! God has declared that wherever the soles of my feet tread, God has given it to me. I bind you to the word of God that declares that I have authority over you. Be gone!* I continued to walk around the tent like Israel walked around Jericho. Nothing fell in the natural.

I did not speak these things to the woman. I didn't even do it loud enough to draw her attention. She was not my enemy, nor was she my problem. The kingdom of darkness that empowered her was my target.

ENDNOTES

1. Heb. 11:1.
2. See 2 Cor. 5:7.
3. See Eph. 2:8.
4. See John 3:3.
5. See Mark 8:17-18.
6. Matt. 6:33.
7. Col. 3:2.
8. 2 Cor. 4:18.
9. See Psalm 22:3.
10. See Ephesians 3:20.
11. Ps. 16:8.
12. See 2 Corinthians 4:18.
13. See Romans 1:20-21.
14. I interpret religion as form without power.
15. The soul is the mind, will, and emotions.
16. Heb. 11:3.
17. "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6).
18. Heb. 11:1.
19. Rom. 10:17.
20. See Genesis 22.
21. Mark 16:15.
22. See Acts 16.
23. God never contradicts His word. But He is willing to contradict our understanding of His word. The principle of the Great Commission (in Mark 16:15) was not nullified by the Acts 16 situation. Their application of the principle was God's target.
24. See Jas. 3:15-16.
25. Eph. 4:27 KJV.
26. When I'm asked what to do regarding medication, I tell people to do what's in their heart. It wouldn't do them any good to do what I had faith for, or to keep them from doing what could be infected by my unbelief.
27. Rom. 10:17.
28. See Deut. 32:30.
29. See Heb. 3:11-4:11.
30. See Rom. 16:20.
31. Matt. 11:12.
32. See Matt. 9:27.
33. See Matt. 9:20-22.

While she was doing her *sortery* to a couple seated at her table, I stood on the other side of the tent wall, only a few feet away from the unsuspecting couple. I held my hands toward them, binding the power of hell that was intent on their destruction. I left when I felt I was done. (The hands that are surrendered to God can release the power of heaven into a situation. In the spirit world it is released like lightning.³)

Even though the fair went on for many more days, she left town the next morning. The power that influenced her had been broken. She couldn't leave fast enough. It was as though the *hornets of Exodus* drove her out of town.⁴

JESUS GAVE THE MODEL TO FOLLOW

The Lord's Model Prayer provides the clearest instruction on how we bring the reality of His world into this one. The generals of revival speak to us from ages past saying, *If you pray, He will come!*

Biblical prayer is always accompanied by radical obedience. God's response to prayer with obedience always releases the nature of heaven into our impaired circumstances.

Jesus' model reveals the only two real priorities of prayer: First, intimacy with God that is expressed in worship—*holy is Your name*. And second, to bring His Kingdom to earth, establishing His dominion over the needs of mankind—*Your Kingdom come*.

As we prepare to examine this prayer let me highlight one more thought that will help us to better understand the purpose behind prayer; as disciples we are both citizens and ambassadors of another world. This world is our assignment, but not our home. Our purpose is eternal. The resources needed to complete the assignment are unlimited. The only restrictions are those between our ears.

Let's examine the prayer from Matthew 6:9-13, starting with the first phrase:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name."

The title *Father* is a title of honor and a call to relationship. What He did to make it possible for us to call Him "our Father" is all one needs to see to begin to become a true worshiper. *Hallowed* means respected or revered. This too is an expression of praise. In the Book of Revelation, which is actually entitled *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*⁵ (not the antichrist!), it is obvious that praise and

worship are the primary activities of heaven. And so it is to be for the believer here on earth. The more we live as citizens of heaven, the more heaven's activities infect our lifestyles.

Worship is our number one priority in ministry. Everything else we do is to be affected by our devotion to this call. He inhabits our praise. One translation puts it this way, *But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel*. God responds with a literal invasion of heaven to earth through the worship of the believer.⁶

One of my sons is a worship leader. He took a friend along with his guitar to the mall to worship God. They stopped after three hours of singing and dancing before the Lord. An unsuspecting man walked through the same area where they had been worshipping God. He stopped, reached into his pocket, pulled out illegal drugs, and dropped them onto the ground. No one said anything to him about his sin. How did it happen? Heaven touched earth, and there are no illegal drugs in heaven.

We see this on a regular basis as our ministry teams go to the streets of San Francisco. We work in compassion ministries as well as overt efforts to bring the supernatural power of God into broken lives. Healing and deliverance is the norm. Sometimes this happens in the worship environment.

As His presence becomes manifest upon a worshipping people even unbelievers are brought into an encounter with God. My son and daughter have ministered to the Lord on troubled streets in San Francisco. As people walked by we saw many who manifested demons while others broke out in joyful laughter as they came into the presence of the Lord.

These things shouldn't surprise us. Look at how God responds to the praises of His people as mentioned in Isaiah 42:13: "The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies."

"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

This is the primary focus for all prayer—if it exists in heaven, it is to be loosed on earth. It's the praying Christian who *looses* heaven's expression here. When the believer prays according to the revealed will of God, faith is specific and focused. Faith grabs hold of *that reality*. Enduring faith doesn't let go. Such an invasion causes the circumstances here to line up with heaven. The

critics of this view sarcastically say, *So I guess we're supposed to pray for streets of gold.* No! But our streets should be known for the same purity and blessing as heaven—"Let our cattle bear without mishap and without loss, let there be no outcry in our streets!"⁷ Everything that happens here is supposed to be a shadow of heaven. In turn, every revelation that God gives us of heaven is to equip us with a prayer focus.

How much of heaven has God purposed to become manifest here on earth? No one knows for sure. But we do know through Church history that it's more than we have now. And we know through the Scripture that it's even more than has ever entered our minds.⁸

The will of God is seen in the ruling presence of God, for "*where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*"⁹ Wherever the Spirit of the Lord is demonstrating the Lordship of Jesus, liberty is the result. Yet another way to say it is that *when the King of kings manifests His dominion, the fruit of that dominion is LIBERTY.* That is the realm called *The Kingdom of God.* God, in response to our cries, brings His world into ours.

Conversely, if it is not free to exist in heaven, it must be bound here. Again, through prayer we are to exercise the authority given to us. "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth *shall have been* bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth *shall have been* loosed in heaven."¹⁰ Notice the phrase *shall have been.* The implication is that we can only bind or loose here what has already been bound or loosed there. Once again, heaven is our model.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

Is anyone starving in heaven? Of course not. This request is a practical application of how His dominion should be seen here on earth—abundant supply. The abuses of a few in the area of prosperity does not excuse the abandonment of the promises of God to provide abundantly for His children. It is His good pleasure to do so. Because there is complete and perfect provision in heaven, there must be the same here. Heaven sets the standard for a Christian's material world—enough to satisfy the desires born of God and enough "*for every good work.*"¹¹ Our legal basis for provision comes from the heavenly model given to us in Christ Jesus: "And my God shall supply all your need according to His

riches in glory by Christ Jesus."¹² According to what? *His riches.* Where? *In glory.* Heaven's resources are to affect us here and now.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Is there any unforgiveness in heaven? No! Heaven provides the model for our relationships here on earth. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God as dear children."¹³ These verses make it quite clear that our model is Jesus Christ...the One ascended to the right hand of the Father...the One whose Kingdom we seek. Once again this prayer illustrates a practical way to pray for heaven's reality to bring an effect on planet earth.

"And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

There is no temptation or sin in heaven. Neither is there any presence of evil. Keeping separate from evil is a practical evidence of our coming under our King's rule. This prayer does not imply that God wants to tempt us. We know from James 1:13 that it is impossible for God to entice us to sin. This kind of praying is important because it requires us to face our need for grace. It helps us to align our heart with heaven—one of absolute dependency on God. God's Kingdom gives us the model for the issues of the heart. This prayer is actually a request for God not to promote us beyond what our character can handle. Sometimes our anointing and gift are ready for increase of responsibility, but our character isn't. When promotion comes too soon the impact of our gift brings a notoriety that becomes the catalyst of our downfall.

The phrase *deliver us from evil*, as it is traditionally rendered, actually means, *deliver us from the evil one.* A heart modeled after heaven has great success in spiritual warfare. That's why it says, "Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."¹⁴

Jesus was able to say, *Satan has nothing in Me.* The believer is to be completely free from all satanic influence and attachments. That is the cry voiced in this prayer.

"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

The Kingdom of God is His possession, which is why He alone can give it to us.¹⁵ When we declare that reality we move into declarations of praise! All

brought the Scriptures we hear the declarations of praise similar to this one obtained in His model prayer declaring that *all glory and power* belong to Him.

One of the most important teachings that I have ever received came from Derek Prince about thirty years ago. It was a wonderful message on praise. In it he suggested that if we only have ten minutes to pray we should spend about eight praising God. It's amazing how much we can pray with the two minutes we have left. That illustration helped me to reinforce the priority of worship that I was learning from my pastor...my dad.

Once again, this prayer has two main objectives: (1) Minister to God out of an intimate personal relationship; and (2) bring the reality of His rulership (the Kingdom) to earth.

An outline of this Matthew 6:9-13 gives us the Kingdom approach to prayer:

1. Praise and worship
2. Praying for heaven on earth
 - a. Heaven's effect on material needs
 - b. Heaven's effect on personal relationships
 - c. Heaven's effect on our relationship to evil
3. Praise and worship

“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”¹⁶

Granted, this verse is not in the prayer model that Jesus gave in verses 9-13. But it is in the context of His overall message of the Kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount. In it He establishes the priority that encompasses all Christian values and objectives. *Seek His Kingdom first!*

Understanding this prayer helps us to realize the intended goal of all prayer—that the Lordship of Jesus would be seen in all circumstances of life. As the Kingdom of God confronts sin, forgiveness is given and change comes to the nature that had only known how to sin. When His rule collides with disease, people are healed. When it runs into the demonized, they are set free. The Kingdom message's nature provides salvation for the whole man—spirit, soul, and body. That is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It has always seemed to me that the phrase “and all these things shall be added to you” meant that if my priorities were correct He'd make sure I got what I needed. After understanding the model prayer better, I'm not so sure that was His intent. He was saying that, if we seek His Kingdom first, we'll find His Kingdom comes fully equipped. It brings with it His answer to our material and relational needs, and our fight against evil.

SETTING UP A NEW FRANCHISE

Suppose I owned a very successful restaurant and you wanted to purchase the right to a franchise. By purchasing a franchise of my restaurant, you would be investing your money to obtain its name and all that goes with it—menus, unique design, management program, and the quality of training for workers. You would be required to follow the prescribed standards established at the flagship restaurant. The color scheme would be the same, as would be the type of furnishings and menu items. The policy manual for employees and the management style would be copied from the main campus. In essence I would superimpose the main restaurant over each new location until all the locations looked alike.

When we pray for His Kingdom to come, we are asking Him to superimpose the rules, order, and benefits of His world over this one until this one looks like His. That's what happens when the sick are healed or the demonized are set free. His world collides with the world of darkness, and His world always wins. Our battle is always a battle for dominion—a conflict of kingdoms.

CREATED FOR RULERSHIP

We were created for intimacy. From that intimacy comes our commission to rule. Keep in mind that He views ruling differently than most of us. We rule through service. Many have made the mistake of thinking that Christians are to be the heads of all corporations, governments, and departments. As good as that may sound, it's actually a *fruit* of the true goal. Christ-likeness—*excellence with humility* is the real goal. Promotion comes from the Lord. If we spent more time developing a *Kingdom heart*, we'd have more people in key places of leadership.

Prayer is the simplest activity of the believer. Child to Father...lover to lover...conversation...sometimes spoken. Prayer is also one of the more complicated issues for us. Formulas don't work in this Kingdom relationship.

The honor that we have in being able to pray is beyond all comprehension. We are His representation on earth—ambassadors of His world. Our cries, all of them, touch His heart.

PRAYER, THE CHIEF ESSENTIAL

Intimacy is the main purpose of prayer. And it's through relationship that God entrusts to us the secrets of His heart, that we might express them in prayer. That's what He did with Simeon and Anna as He stirred their hearts to pray for the coming of the Messiah long before He was born.¹⁷ Even the return of the Lord will be preceded by the declaration of the bride: "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come'"¹⁸

If these things were going to happen anyway, what would be the purpose of prayer? God has apparently given Himself a self-imposed restriction—to act in the affairs of man in response to prayer.

God has chosen to work through us. We are His delegated authority on planet earth, and prayer is the vehicle that gives occasion for His invasion. Those who don't pray allow darkness to continue ruling. The enemy's greatest efforts at deceiving the Church are centered on the purpose and effect of prayer.

REPRESENTING ANOTHER WORLD

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁹ Paul spoke these words to the church at Philippi, a Roman city in the country of Macedonia. It enjoyed a Roman culture and the rule and protection of Roman government, all while living in Macedonia. Philippians understood very well Paul's charge about being citizens of another world. Paul spoke, not about going to heaven some day, but about living as citizens of heaven today...specifically from heaven toward earth.²⁰

We have the privilege of representing heaven in this world, so that we might bring a manifestation of heaven to this world.

EMBASSY LIFESTYLE

As ambassadors we live in one world while representing another. An embassy is the headquarters of an ambassador and his or her staff. It is actually considered a part of the nation it represents. So it is with the believer/ambassador. The Bible promises: "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you."²¹

Just as ambassadors of the United States have an income based on the standard of living of this nation regardless of what nation they serve in, so also ambassadors of the kingdom of God live according to the economy of heaven, though they are still on earth. All of our King's resources are at our disposal to carry out His will. That is how Jesus could speak of the carefree life—*consider the sparrow*.²²

As an ambassador, the military of the Kingdom I represent is at my disposal to help me carry out the King's orders. If as a representative of a nation my life is threatened, all of my government's military might is prepared to do whatever necessary to protect and deliver me. So it is with the heaven's angelic host. They *render service for those who would inherit salvation*.²³

This *ambassador mentality* is one I first picked up from Winkey Pratney. When he boards a plane, he reminds himself that while others may represent IBM and XEROX, he is there representing another world. I have followed his example and practiced this principle for close to thirty years. It has helped me to keep a clear perspective on the eternal purpose of every outing.

INTERCESSION OR COMPLAINT SESSION

One of the best reasons to not pray comes from watching some who do. Many who call themselves intercessors live depressed lives. I don't want to minimize the genuine effect of the burden of the Lord that comes upon us when we are praying effectively. It is real and necessary. But an unstable lifestyle has been promoted by those who claim to be intercessors, but have not learned to *release things* in prayer. The burden of the Lord takes us somewhere! I learned this the hard way.

I was taught early in life about the importance of prayer. My youth pastor, Chip Worthington, kept me on track with his teachings, as well as the many books he gave me to read.

I spent a great deal of time praying, and I carried that priority into early adulthood. But my focus in prayer often turned to my own spirituality...or should I say, the lack of it. I would rise early and pray late into the night. God honored the sacrifice I made, but my personal victories did not coincide with my elaborate prayer times. Instead, they seemed more linked to my acts of faith. Because my focus was still on me, there was little victory I actually could trace back to my prayers.

Travailing in prayer is not always a sign of true intercession. Many are not yet able to distinguish the difference between *the burden of their own unbelief and the burden of the Lord*. I now pray until I come into a place of faith for that situation.²⁴ When that happens, my perspective on the problem changes. I begin to see it from heaven's view. My role also changes. Instead of asking God to invade my circumstances, I begin to command the *mountains to be removed* in His name. It is from this place of faith (or rest) that I discover my role as the pray-er.

Pray until there's a breakthrough. Then exercise the authority given to execute His will over the circumstances at hand.

THE PERFECT STORM

Jesus was sleeping in the middle of a life-threatening storm. The disciples woke Him because they were afraid of dying. He exercised authority and released peace over the storm. It was the peace of heaven that enabled Him to sleep. And it was that same peace that subdued the storm. *You only have authority over the storm you can sleep in.*

If I am filled with anxiety in any given situation, it becomes hard for me to release peace—because I can only give what I have. Authority functions from heaven's peace.

Even after the disciples got their answer to prayer, a stirred storm, Jesus asked them about their unbelief. For most of us an answer to prayer is the reward for our great faith. In this case they got their answer but were said to be *small in faith*. He expected them to exercise the authority He had given them to quiet the seas themselves. Instead they asked Him to do it. We often pray in the place of risky obedience.

IN ADDITION

Correct theology alone has not enabled us to complete the assignment Jesus gave us 2,000 years ago. The Great Commission hasn't been accomplished through our vast resources of money or personnel. To see the kinds of breakthroughs that Jesus had we must embrace what Jesus embraced: the Holy Spirit. This special gift is the subject of the next chapter. There we will see how the realm of the Spirit is the realm of His Kingdom.

ENDNOTES

1. Albert Hibbert on Smith Wigglesworth—*The Secret of His Power*—Page 47, Tulsa, OK, Harrison House, Inc. ©1982.
2. John G. Lake—*His Sermons, His Boldness of Faith*—Page 313, Ft. Worth, TX, Kenneth Copeland Publications, ©1994.
3. See Hab. 3:2-4.
4. See Exod. 23:28.
5. See Rev. 1:1.
6. Ps. 22:3.
7. Ps. 144:14 NAS.
8. See 1 Cor. 2:9-10 and Eph. 3:20-21.
9. 2 Cor. 3:17.
10. Matt. 16:19 NAS, emphasis mine.
11. 2 Cor. 9:8.
12. Phil. 4:19.
13. Eph. 4:32—5:1.
14. Jas. 4:7.
15. See Luke 12:32.
16. Matt. 6:33.
17. Luke 2:25-38.
18. Rev. 22:17 NAS
19. Phil. 3:20.
20. More on this later in the book...
21. Josh. 1:3.
22. See Matt. 6:26.
23. See Heb. 1:14.
24. Sometimes the situation is bigger than we can handle in one prayer session. Obviously we are to continue sowing into that prayer need. But it does no one any good to do it under the "cloud" of our unbelief.

The Kingdom and the Spirit

*Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women
there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist;
but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.¹*

John the Baptist was the *high water mark* for all under the Old Covenant. But the least in this new era were born to surpass Him through their relationship with the Holy Spirit.

The members of our church and the students of the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry often embrace this privilege.

One student named Jason was ordering a meal inside a fast-food restaurant. Not content to share Christ only with those behind the counter, he began to speak past the cashier to three men in a car at the drive up window! After receiving his food, Jason left noticing they had parked to eat. He renewed his conversation with them and saw that the man in the back seat had a broken leg. So he climbed into the car with them and invited the Holy Spirit to come...and He came. The man began to curse. He had no understanding about the holy *fire* on his leg. They all jumped out of the car, and the injured man removed his brace and stomped his leg. He was completely healed! The three were so moved by God's goodness that they opened the trunk of their car, which was filled with illegal drugs. They dumped the narcotics onto the pavement, dancing on them and destroying them! Jason brought the three men to the Alabaster House, our 24-hour prayer house, and led them to Christ. The kindness of God led them to repentance. This is the normal Christian life.

The Holy Spirit is the agent of heaven who makes these kinds of encounters possible. Not only that, He makes them the norm for those who would follow.

THE NEW STANDARD

Jesus sets a standard with this statement—*John the Baptist was the greatest of all Old Testament Prophets*. He didn't do any miracles that we know of. His ministry was gloriously necessary, but not one we'd normally compare to some of the more spectacular prophets like Elijah or Daniel. Yet the One who knows all says he's the greatest. There is a truth contained in this passage that helps us to see our potential from heaven's perspective. It is such a wonderful truth that all of hell has made a priority of trying to keep us from its simplicity.

With that in mind, a more startling bit of news comes next—*He who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he*. He wasn't saying that the people in heaven were greater than John. There's no purpose for such a statement. He was talking about a realm of living that was soon to become available to every believer. John prophesied of Christ's coming, and went so far as to confess his personal need of it.

*"He who is coming after me is mightier than I...
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."²*

*Jesus came to be baptized...John tried to prevent Him—
"I need to be baptized by You..."³*

John confessed his personal need of Jesus' baptism. Not one of the Old Testament prophets, not even John, had what was about to be offered to the least of all saints. It is the baptism in the Holy Spirit that became God's goal for mankind.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit makes a lifestyle available to us to which not even John had access. Jesus whetted our appetite for this lifestyle through His example, then He gave us the promise of its availability.

AN ULTIMATE GOAL

There is a difference between immediate and ultimate goals. Success with an immediate goal makes it possible to reach an ultimate goal. But failure in the immediate prevents us from reaching our final goal.

Bowlers know this. Each lane not only has ten pins at the far end, it also has markers on the lane itself. A good bowler knows how his or her ball rotates as it is released from a hand. Bowlers will aim at a marker in the lane as an initial

target. Yet they receive no points for hitting it. Points are only given when the ultimate target is hit—the pins at the end of the lane.

Likewise, salvation was not the ultimate goal of Christ's coming. It was the immediate target...the marker in the lane. Without accomplishing redemption, there was no hope for the ultimate goal—which was to fill each born again person with the Holy Spirit. God's desire is for the believer to overflow with Himself, that we might "... be filled with all the fullness of God."⁴ The resulting fullness of the Spirit was different than anyone had ever before experienced. For that reason, the greatest of all Old Testament prophets could confess: "I need to be baptized by you," meaning, "I need your baptism...the one I was assigned to announce!"

The baptism in the Holy Spirit makes a lifestyle available to us that not even John had access to. Consider this: we could travel off of this planet in any direction at the speed of light, 186,000 miles a second, for billions of years, and never begin to exhaust what we already know to exist. All of that rests in the palm of His hand. And it's *this* God who wants to fill us with His fullness. That ought to make a difference!

AN OLD TESTAMENT PICTURE

Israel left Egypt when the blood of a lamb was shed and applied to the doorposts of their homes. In the same way, we were set free from sin when the blood of Jesus was applied to our lives. The Israelites soon arrived at the Red Sea. Going through that body of water is referred to as *the baptism of Moses*.⁵ Similarly, we face the waters of baptism after our conversion. When the Jews finally entered the Promised Land, they entered through a river—another baptism.

This baptism was not a departure from sin. Such was illustrated when they left Egypt. This new baptism would take them into a different way of life. For example: they fought wars on the wilderness side of the river and won. But once they crossed the Jordan River, wars would be fought differently. Now they would march around a city in silence for days, finally raising up a shout and watching the walls fall.⁶ Later they would experience the challenge of sending a choir into battle first.⁷ And then there was the time God intentionally sent over 30,000 soldiers back home so He could fight a war with 300 torch wielding trumpet blowers.

He makes the Promised Land possible, and we pay the price to live there. He'll give us His baptism of fire if we'll give Him something worth burning.

This baptism in the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of the Old Testament picture of entering the Promised Land. Suppose the children of Israel had chosen to cross the Jordan but became content to live on the banks of the river. They would have missed the purpose for crossing the river in the first place. There were nations to destroy and cities to possess. Contentment short of God's purposes would mean having to learn to live with the enemy. That is what it is like when a believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit but never goes beyond speaking in tongues. When we become satisfied apart from God's ultimate purpose of dominion, we learn to tolerate the devil in some area of our life. As glorious as the gift of tongues is, it is an entrance point to a lifestyle of power. That power has been given to us that we might dispossess the strongholds of hell and take possession for the glory of God.

THE KINGDOM COMES IN POWER

"There are some of you standing here who will not taste of death until you see the Kingdom come with power."⁸

Each time this is mentioned in the Gospels it is followed by the incident on the Mount of Transfiguration. Some have considered this to mean that what happened to Jesus on that mountain was the Kingdom coming in power. However, if that were so then why would Jesus need to emphasize that some there would not die until they saw the Kingdom come with power? Jesus was speaking of a much grander event. He spoke of the coming *promise of the Father*...the event that would clothe us with power from on high—the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Somehow I always thought that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was a one-time event; I received my prayer language and that was it. The Bible teaches differently. In Acts 2, we find 120 being baptized in the Spirit in the upper room. Yet, in Acts 4 we find some of the same crowd being *refilled*. Some have put it this way: one baptism, many fillings. Why? We leak.

Over the past decade, revival fire has been carried by Rodney Howard-Browne, and it has found a home in Toronto and Pensacola. People travel from around the world to these different *watering holes* because of an instinctive

hunger for more. In some places they stand in lines, waiting for prayer. In others they crowd around the front of a sanctuary waiting for someone to be used by God to lay hands on them and bless them. Critics have called this activity a "bless me club." Personally, because of my passion for the blessing of God I have little problem with those who return time after time to receive another blessing. I need His blessing. The problem is not in receiving more of the blessing of God. It's the refusal to give it away to others once we have received it ourselves.

The time spent receiving prayer has become a tool God has used to fill His people with more of Himself. It has become a method for this wonderful time of impartation.

THE KINGDOM, THE SPIRIT REALM

"But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you."⁹

Look at this phrase, "by the Spirit of God...the kingdom." The Holy Spirit encompasses the Kingdom. While they are not the same, they are inseparable. The Holy Spirit enforces the lordship of Jesus, marking His territory with liberty.¹⁰ The *king's domain* becomes evident through His work.

The second part of this verse reveals the nature of ministry. Anointed ministry causes the collision of two worlds—the world of darkness with the world of light. This passage shows the nature of deliverance. When the Kingdom of God comes upon someone, powers of darkness are forced to leave.

When a light is turned on, darkness doesn't resist. There is no debate. It doesn't stay dark for a few minutes until light finally wins. On the contrary, light is so superior to darkness that its triumph is immediate.

The Holy Spirit has no battle wounds. He bears no teethmarks from the demonic realm fighting for preeminence. Jesus is Lord, period. Those who learn how to work with the Holy Spirit actually cause the reality of His world, (His dominion), to collide with the powers of darkness that have influence over a person or situation. The greater the manifestation of His Presence, the quicker the victory.

THE VALUE OF HIS PRESENCE

By far the greatest gift ever received by us is the Holy Spirit Himself. Those who discover the value of His presence enter realms of intimacy with God never previously considered possible. Out of this vital relationship arises a ministry of power that formerly was only a dream. The incomprehensible becomes possible because He is with us.

I will be with you is a promise made by God to all His servants. Moses heard it when he faced the challenge of delivering Israel from Egypt.¹¹ Joshua received this promise when he led Israel into the Promised Land.¹² When Gideon received the call of God to be a deliverer for Israel, God sealed it with the same promise.¹³ In the New Testament, this promise came to all believers through the Great Commission.¹⁴ It comes when God has required something of us that is humanly impossible. It's important to see this. It's the Presence of God that links us to the impossible. I tell our folks, *He is in me for my sake, but He's upon me for yours*. His presence makes anything possible!

God doesn't have to try to do supernatural things. He is supernatural. He would have to try to not be. If He is invited to a situation, we should expect nothing but supernatural invasion.

HIS PRESENCE IN OUR SHADOWS

Part of the privilege of ministry is learning how to release the Holy Spirit in a location. When I pastored in Weaverville, California, our church offices were downtown, located directly across from one bar and right next to another. This downtown area was the commercial center for the entire county—a perfect place for a church office!

It's not good when Christians try to do business only with other Christians. We are salt and light. We shine best in dark places! I love business and business people and have genuine interest in their success. Before entering a store, I often pray for the Holy Spirit to be released through me. If I need something on one side of the store, I'll enter on the opposite end in order to walk through the entire store. Many opportunities for ministry have developed as I've learned how to release His presence in the marketplace.

People laid the sick in the streets hoping that Peter's shadow would fall on them and they'd be healed.¹⁵ Nevertheless, it wasn't Peter's shadow that brought

healing. There is no substance to a shadow. Peter was *overshadowed* by the Holy Spirit, and it was that presence that brought the miracles. The anointing is an expression of the person of the Holy Spirit. He is tangible. There were times in Jesus' ministry when everyone who touched Christ's clothing was healed or delivered.¹⁶ The anointing is substance. It is the actual presence of the Holy Spirit, and He can be released into our surroundings.

RESURRECTION IN AFRICA

Pastor Surprise is an apostolic leader working with Rolland and Heidi Baker of Iris Ministries in Mozambique. During an evangelistic crusade in which he was preaching, a 9-year-old girl died, which threatened to end the series of meetings. The entire village was stricken with grief. The next day Pastor Surprise went to visit the family, and the child's body was still in the hut where she had died the night before. As he was praying for the family, he happened to be holding the little girl's hand. He was not praying for her to rise from the dead, yet after a few minutes the young girl squeezed his hand. She was raised up about 12 hours after her death because someone was full of the Holy Spirit. He overflowed with the resurrection power of Jesus that filled him while he was trying to comfort the family!

A bottle is not completely full until it overflows. So it is with the Holy Spirit. Fullness is measured in overflow. When we get introspective, we restrict the flow of the Holy Spirit. We become like the Dead Sea; water flows in, but nothing flows out, and nothing can live in its stagnant waters. The Holy Spirit is released through faith and compassion, and faith and compassion are never self-centered.

FOLLOWING YOUR LEADER OFF THE MAP

History provides us with a lesson from a great military leader. Alexander the Great led his armies in victory after victory, and his desire for ever greater conquest finally brought him to the foot of the Himalayas. He wanted to go beyond these intimidating mountains. Yet, no one knew what was on the other side. Senior officers were troubled by his new vision. Why? They had gone to the edge of their map—there was no map for the new territory that Alexander wanted to possess. These officers had a decision to make: would

they be willing to follow their leader off the map, or would they be content to live within its boundaries? They chose to follow Alexander.

Following the leading of the Holy Spirit can present us with the same dilemma. While he never contradicts His Word, He is very comfortable contradicting our understanding of it. Those who feel safe because of their intellectual grasp of Scriptures enjoy a false sense of security. None of us has a full grasp of Scripture, but we all have the Holy Spirit. He is our common denominator who will always lead us into truth. But to follow Him, we must be willing to follow off the map—to go beyond what we know. To do so successfully we must recognize His presence above all.

There is a great difference between the way Jesus did ministry and the way it typically is done today. He was completely dependent on what the Father was doing and saying. He illustrated this lifestyle after His Holy Spirit baptism. He followed the Holy Spirit's leading, even when it seemed unreasonable, which it often did.

The Church has all too often lived according to an intellectual approach to the Scriptures, void of the Holy Spirit's influence. We have programs and institutions that in no way require the Spirit of God to survive. In fact, much of what we call ministry has no safeguard in it to ensure that He is even present. When our focus is not the presence of God, we end up doing the best we can for God. Our intentions may be noble, but they are powerless in effect.

When Jason began sharing the gospel through the drive-through window of a fast-food restaurant, his actions were *off the map*. Yet they bore fruit for the King.

COMPASSION AND THE RELEASE OF HIS PRESENCE

Jesus often healed after being moved with compassion. I frequently detect the leading of the Holy Spirit by recognizing His affection for someone else. Being drawn to a person through compassion usually means that there will be some realm of supernatural ministry to them—either with a word of encouragement or a miracle of healing or deliverance. Loving people is Christ's agenda, and surrender of my own agenda makes me available for His.

The Holy Spirit is the invading agent of heaven. In the next chapter we'll see why His presence terrifies all the powers of hell.

ENDNOTES

1. Matt. 11:11.
2. Matt. 3:11.
3. Matt. 3:14.
4. Eph. 3:19.
5. 1 Cor. 10:2.
6. Josh. 6.
7. 2 Chron. 20:21.
8. Mark 9:1.
9. Matt. 12:28.
10. 2 Cor. 3:17.
11. Exod. 3:12.
12. Josh. 1:9.
13. Judg. 6:16.
14. Matt. 28:19.
15. Acts 5:15.
16. Mark 6:56.