

# *Holiness*

*“We Shall Be Like Him”*

*Volume 3*

*By*

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# Changed For A Lifetime

*“For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.” (Hebrews 12:10)*

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Parents set goals for us. Moms pick out little mates for their children—in kindergarten! We set goals for how our children are to grow up and live a certain type lifestyle or have a certain vocation. There’s nothing wrong with having plans and goals. We need to have them, but let me ask you a question about your goals. How sanctified are they? Do you have the capacity today to make a 180-degree turn on one word? Do you understand what one encounter with a burning bush will do to your life? Do you have a clue what one Mount Carmel experience can do to the course of your life? Do you know what a road-to-Damascus encounter with God can do to your life? Like Matthew, do you understand that if while sitting at the moneychanger’s table you hear the words, “Follow me,” you’ll never be the same? Everything from that moment on is a separate life. It’s called sanctification.

Your sanctification was preordained and is predestined through your obedience. You’re not going to be able to wrap your mind around that, but you can believe it. In other words, God has a course set, and to the degree of your obedience it’ll be fulfilled in your life, and nothing can thwart the will of God. Nothing can oppose what God has chosen to do in your life as it pertains to your sanctification, but by willful choices of the flesh you can diminish the degree of God’s working to the point of not even being recognizable.

Parents have chastened us after their own purposes, the Scripture says, but “He for our profit” (Heb. 12:10). Teaching, chastening from God, and all the trials we experience are so “that we might be partakers of His holiness,” or, in other words, for our sanctification. Everything in our lives that’s been a chastening process, a trial, everything that’s broken us, everything that has melted us, has been for one purpose: to make us more holy. Can I ask you a question? Where’s the fruit of those chastening experiences? God put the pressure on you when His chastening came. Did it change you for only a week, a month? Then you didn’t receive the chastening of the Lord, because it’ll change you for a lifetime.

We’d like to think that we aren’t susceptible to the natural course, but that’s not true. I remember thinking when the Lord raised Janet twelve years ago how precious life was, and that I’d never take it for granted again. You know, that was the case for about ten years. This realization came to me over the last six months as the Lord said, “You lost sight of how precious it is.” The chastening of God can be for a lifetime and can radically change your course, if you’ll see it for what it is: your profit for His holiness. Oh, through the experiences in the years that followed, there were a lot of things that took place that brought holiness. I can now look at these and say, “Praise God, this is the fruit of it. This is the evidence, but not the full benefit that could have been there. There could have been more profit for the kingdom if I hadn’t lost sight of the purpose.” What are you doing with the chastening you’ve been through? What have you learned? How is it affecting your life at this moment? How many of you know it doesn’t do any good to spank Junior if he doesn’t change? It’s not solely to be punitive, but to bring about a sobriety and consecration for the glory of God. “*Cleansed to Serve, Pt. 2,*” October 20, 2002, Sunday AM

# The Cost Of Holiness

*“For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.” (Hebrews 12:10)*

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Hebrews 12 says that natural parents chasten us, but the Lord chastens us for our profit so that we might be partakers of His holiness. There will be no holiness without chastisement; so if you’re setting your course right now for holiness, then guess what? You’re setting yourself up for chastisement! It’s going to come in a lot of different ways. God is going to chasten you through His Word. He’s going to bring reproof to you by the Holy Spirit as you’re in prayer. Brothers and sisters are going to speak into your life. How ready are you for that? When you cry out to God, “Lord, I just want to be TOTALLY submitted to You; I want to be able to pray, ‘Not my will, but Thy will be done,’” then there will be a cup for you to drink. Most of us want sanctification without a price, without a cost, but it’s going to cost you everything. It’s going to cost you death to self. It’s going to cost you taking up the cross daily and following Him. It always costs to be holy, and the price is always the same. It costs your life. It costs the surrendering of your will, the daily offering up of everything to God.

What do you have that’s not on the altar? You’re not sanctified if it doesn’t all belong to Him. If God can’t put His hand on your home, your car, your job, your wife, your children, taking them from you while you say, “Blessed be the name of the Lord,” then you’re not sanctified. We’re talking about offering everything up. There’s nothing that’s our own. It’s wholly the Lord’s. This is the stewardship mentality

that God wants us to have so that He can be all in all. Everything else is a chastening process that brings us to the Gethsemanes where we just say, “Lord, if it’s possible, if there’s another way for this thing to be done, let it pass; nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done.” *“Cleansed to Serve, Pt. 4,” October 23, 2002, Wednesday PM*

# Holier By Chastening

*“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” (Hebrews 12:11)*

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The chastening is not joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness. What am I telling you? You are not going to get sanctified without paying the price of chastisement! You can't just say today, “Okay, I'm going to be holier tomorrow.” You want to know what the process is? Before you can be holier, you're going to need chastening. You'll have to be pruned before you can bear more fruit!

What is the chastening? The chastening can be God revealing your heart to you when you hold up the “mirror” of His Word. Chastening doesn't just come in tragic events or in physical ailments. Chastening comes primarily through the reproof of the Word of God. How tender are you to the Word of God right now? You know where you are! When you open the Word of God, how sensitive are you to hear what God is speaking to you at that moment? Have your devotions become just obligatory and habitual, or is there still an awe when this Book opens up and you encounter the living God? The greatest scholars in the world can sit right next to you, open this Book, and not hear a word that God says, because these things are spiritually discerned. What a privilege to open this Book and know the mind and heart of God! Is the excitement there? Is the awe still there? Is an appreciation for what the blood has effected still alive in you?

We're talking about the need for sanctification. How defiled have you become? How defiled is your mind? How defiled is your religion? How much of it is mechanical right now? How much is ritualistic, traditional, habitual, obligatory? How much burning zeal do you have to be back in the presence of your first love?

The chastening is grievous for the moment, but brings the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those that are exercised thereby. That word "exercise" means being energized or having it work in you. If the chastening doesn't work in you, if it doesn't change your course, it's ineffectual. So what do we do? We "lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (Heb. 12:12). When we've encountered God, there's a change not only in yourself, but in those around you. We begin to make the weak areas strong. We're all at different levels of growth, and nobody is growing on a total incline. I understand the cyclical, progressive basis of spirituality, but we need to identify where we are. Then strengthen the hands and the feeble knees, the Scripture says "and make straight paths for your feet lest that which is lame be turned out of the way" (verse 13).

Let's not lose the weak, but let them be healed, "and follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (12:14). "Well, how much of the world can I have in me and still be saved?" Without holiness, you're not going to see God! He's a holy God! "Well, what about those things in my life that I lack?" Sanctification will take care of that. When you're wholly pursuing God, His grace, His mercy, and His blood are effectual in all those other areas that still need to be glorified. The heart of sanctification causes us to be in the position of glorification! "*Cleansed to Serve, Pt. 2,*" October 20, 2002, Sunday AM

# The Experience Of The Thorn

*“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness....”* (2 Corinthians 12:9)

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His chastening is an expression of His love. Is this the Father you know today? We can know Him in His righteousness and in His harshness. God is harsh; holiness and justice are harsh realities. Truth is a harsh reality as it opposes the darkness that men like to move in because their deeds are evil. But we know the purpose and the heart behind the law, the love, and the holiness, and we know the purity behind the justice and the judgment. Do we know Him? Do we know the love behind the chastening? Do we know the perfection that’s coming from the patience that’s being learned?

“That I may know Him,” Paul said in Philippians 3:10. Why did Paul say that? Was Paul looking to be a great motivational speaker? What was it that he was trying to tap into? “That I may know Him!” Was it an ego trip so that he could say that he knew God better than anybody else? You see, Paul had to experience a thorn, and in that thorn God was revealing the sufficiency of His grace. Paul was saying, “I walked after the letter, and I was perfect in my generation. I’d experienced a knowledge about God, but through that experience of the thorn I came to know the intimacy of fellowship with Him. I just want to know Him more in that way.” Job cried out in that same vein, “Now I know that my Redeemer lives! He’ll stand upon the earth in the latter day, and He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords!” Fate does not exist. God is just, and His purposes are eternal for His own glory. *“The Knowledge of God, Pt. 2,” April 16, 2003, Wednesday PM*

# Into The Crucible Of Holiness

*“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.” (Hebrews 12:28-29)*

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You read of those in Hebrews who experienced great victories and endured great hardships, and the same faith produced it all. You don't know if you're going to come through and have a great testimony of the faithfulness of God, or whether you're going to endure but die in the midst of the cheers and screams of the Coliseum; but faithful is He who has called you! Can you say, “The Lord gives and the Lord takes; blessed be the name of the Lord”? Have you understood that God is allowing you to experience the trials and adversities of life that He might work in you a far more eternal weight of glory?

Which of those do you identify with in Hebrews 11? Those that were delivered from the lions' mouths or those that were devoured? Who are your heroes? Are they those that lived in caves and were adorned in animal skins? Paul knew how to abound, but he also knew how to be abased. Of course we would all like the abundance, but are you faithful through the abasement? Do you seek the Lord and say, “His grace is sufficient for me. I'd rather have the revelation with the thorn in the flesh than a sound body without the knowledge of God”? Where are the treasures now? I'm not talking about asceticism or that you have to try to make life as hard on yourself as you can. I'm talking about when God puts you there; you're not supposed to put yourself there. There's no merit in personal asceticism. It's by faith and in God's

grace. I'm about my Father's business. I won't be dissuaded by the flattery and prosperity, and I won't be discouraged by the adversity.

Our God is a consuming fire. I believe we're going to come into the crucible of God's holiness and righteousness in our day, because He's going to present to Himself a spotless, holy church. As we face these days ahead, let's ask ourselves if we are carrying weights now that are unnecessary. Are we easily bound by sin, or are we free to say, "I have come to do the will of Him that sent me; I have meat to eat that you know not of"? Let's examine our hearts and know what the Spirit is working in us. We'll know it by the way we responded to the last adversity in our lives. Could we count it all joy?

Father, we thank You for working in us through the trials and adversities of life. Sometimes we experience great trials such as disabilities and deaths, while other times we have minor trials, aches and pains, and the inconvenience of having only three cars instead of four! We become frustrated instead of being thankful. When the third car breaks down, leaving us with two, we begin to resent the fact that we don't have four new cars like the neighbor. We're a people, Father, that are in need of being so thankful for the grace of God! We think we merit so much, and all we deserve is hell. So how can we turn and judge You when You purify us, when You take away a little of our conveniences to make us more like You? Forgive us, Father, and give us a desire for holiness and the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Let it become the joy that's set before us so that we might endure. *"Endure Chastening, Pt. 1," September 5, 2001, Wednesday PM*

# The Availability Is In Us

*“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1)*

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“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:17). If you don’t come out, He won’t receive you. “Well, God wouldn’t do that. He’s a loving God.” He won’t receive you. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). You can’t write your own Bible. “And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises...” (2 Cor 6:18-7:1). Which promises? The promises are if you’ll come out, He’ll be your God; and if you’ll separate yourself, He will receive you. This passage does not say, “Having these promises, kick back and enjoy the anointing of God because if God is for you, nobody can be against you! Greater is He that’s in you than He that’s in the world! Your faith is the victory!” That’s not what that says. “Having these promises...” They’re promises! Is every promise of God in Christ “yea and amen?” Yes, but they’re not unconditional. The Lord promises you that if you’ll come out, He’ll receive you and be your God.”

“Having therefore these promises . . . let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). What a mouthful! Guess what? “Us” is involved. The ability to sanctify is in God; the availing (whether or not we will appropriate it) is in us. “It’s unto all,” the Scripture says, “but comes upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:22).

Every one of us can be sanctified. “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification” (1 Thess. 4:3). There’s no reason for you to be the only guy here not sanctified. It’s unto all. It is the will of God and without it, we’re not going to see God.

Are you willing to pay the price to be sanctified? Are you going to begin the process of cleansing yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit? The word “all” determines how long this process is going to take. You’re going to continue to cleanse yourself until how much of it’s gone? It’s going to take a lifetime, but you’ve got to get rid of all of it!

You cleanse yourself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit so that you can perfect holiness. You’ll never start this journey if you don’t have the fear of God. It’s the only thing that’s going to keep the motivation going, because you’re going to get distracted. The flesh is going to fail. You’re going to fail if you’re not moving in the fear of God, the reverence of God, the justice of God, the judgment of God. “*Cleansed to Serve, Pt. 5,*” October 27, 2002, Sunday AM

# Available For The Kingdom

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1)*

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As we look at this aspect of holiness, or sanctification, we’re not talking about how separate we are from the world, but how available we are for the kingdom. You see, most of Christianity today, sad to say, is just looking for a return to morality. Beloved, we need a revival! What’s motivating you in your pursuit of holiness and sanctification? Many times we’re just pleased with the fact that we’ve been able to overcome this power of sin. We see it as a victory. Our sanctification is a way of being proud of ourselves for being able to have self-discipline. That’s just pride and works. “Praise God! I have defeated another area in my life!” We like to check it off, put a merit badge on ourselves, and think we’ve really grown. We’re still in bondage to pride and trusting in the arm of the flesh.

The pursuit has to be an offering that is holy and acceptable unto God, which is our spiritual service. We’re not to be conformed to this world but are to be transformed so we can prove the mind and heart of God. That’s the fruit of sanctification. We have to ask ourselves what our motivation is. Why am I doing what I’m doing? In what strength am I doing it? This is being done so that nobody can do anything but boast in the Lord. It’s all for the fact that God would be glorified! People are to see this thing working in our lives. *“Cleansed to Serve, Pt. 4,” October 23, 2002, Wednesday PM*

# Consecrated To God

*"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." (1 Peter 1:15)*

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Holiness isn't something that's for super-saints or extraordinary Christians. Holiness is normative Christianity. First Peter tells us, "Be ye holy, for [the Lord is] holy." That's a declaration to all of us. Thessalonians says, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification [or holiness]." *"Cleansed to Serve, Pt. 7," October 30, 2002, Wednesday PM*

Some people seem to think that the holiness of God just speaks of character, purity, and a lack of defilement in a particular area. We understand the term "holy" means to be separate. When the Scripture speaks of God being holy, it talks about the fact that there isn't any other being like Him. He's in a category all by Himself. We're to be holy, for the Lord is holy; there is no other being like Him, and we are associated with Him. We've been reconciled to Him. We're sons of God, heirs and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. We're His ambassadors that are sent forth to represent Him. We are not at God's level of holiness, because God is distinct.

Our holiness is that of consecration. Something that's been consecrated has been set apart to be used for one purpose, and that's service to God. That's interesting, because if that is the case, we might think that we would have to be full-time, fivefold-ministry-gift ministers, but that's not true. We want to see if we're walking in the Spirit and walking properly in our involvement in the secular. We can make our involvement in the secular consecrated to God. With the indwelling presence of God in us, our very involvement in the mission consecrates the activity.

We should be consecrating what we're doing in the world, not being vexed by it. It all has to do with the awareness of what our task is and if we're properly representing God. You can go into the world and be a light, or you can go into the world and be vexed. You can go into the world and be salt—change lives, bringing about purity and preservation—or you can lose your saltiness, your savor. Then you're only worth being trodden underfoot (Matt. 5:13).

We want to take a look at what our lives are really about. I'm not just talking about kingdom things; I'm talking about everything in our lives: the secular, the mundane, our daily jobs. We need to look at the motive or ability behind what we're doing, because without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5).

Father, we ask that You would give us eyes to see and an ability to understand the warfare that's going on around us today in the battle for our souls. The same appetites are in us that are in every nonbeliever. Our bodies are no different than theirs. We desire to be gratified with the same things they desire—fame, success, self-will, ease. We're no different until we bow our hearts and understand the ransom that was paid by the death of Jesus and the blood that was shed to buy us out of Satan's power. We've been ransomed! Satan sent out a ransom note, and Jesus paid it. We've been brought back into the presence of a loving, holy God who says, "I don't want you sinning anymore. I have a mission for you. I want you to represent My love to a lost world. They're hurting. They think they have to make themselves better, and they can't. I've paid the price for them. What you've received freely, go share with somebody else; and they'll know the truth, and the truth will make them free. Those that the Son sets free are free indeed." *"The Real Holiness," July 29, 2001, Sunday PM*

# Accelerated Transformation

*“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind....”* (Romans 12:2)

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In presenting your body, you have to know what you’re presenting to God. You’re not presenting Him something that’s perfect. This thing is messed up, just like the world in which we live! It’s reeling, the Scripture says, like a drunk man (Isa. 24:20), groaning, waiting for the day of redemption (Rom 8:23). We live in an imperfect world, in imperfect bodies, so what we’re presenting Him is not perfect; it’s a body that’s waiting to be glorified. It’s in the process of sanctification and waiting for glorification because of justification. I’m justified; I’m being sanctified, and I will be glorified. But what we’re presenting Him now are bodies that are being sanctified, constantly having to be offered up to the glory of God.

Sanctification means “presenting for holiness,” or “presenting to serve God.” We daily present imperfect bodies which await the fullness of redemption and glorification. God will accept us just as flawed as we are, and He’ll use us for His glory if our hearts’ motives are right! Those flaws will become fewer and fewer. Because we present Him flawed bodies, the process of sanctification is accelerated, and we become more like Him. Sin loses its power, and the things that used to dominate us don’t dominate us anymore. The body of sin is destroyed, that henceforth we no longer serve sin (Rom. 6:6). The Greek word for “destroyed” does not mean annihilated; it means “made inoperative or no longer dominant.” “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom 12:1).

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” (12:2). Your body is not being presented to God if there’s not a metamorphosis, a transformation, taking place in your mind. We all know what metamorphosis is, right? Caterpillar—butterfly. Bill Bixby—the Hulk. You’re becoming something new and better! Your metamorphosis is not a bigger woolly worm; you’re becoming better. You’re becoming more like Him. Are you? Do you think more like Him? Do you think about Him first? Do you make decisions now because you’re cool, you’re an adult, you’re educated? Do you think you have control of your own life, or is Jesus Lord? Do you seek Him first?

You see, the renewed mind, the mind of Christ, doesn’t come to do its own will but the will of God. The renewed mind is the one that doesn’t assume it knows what to do but always seeks Father for wisdom first. What does the Word of God say? What would Jesus do in this situation? How much metamorphosis is taking place in us, or are we just like the world? It’s very important for us to realize what’s happening in our lives. What is God trying to say to us on a daily basis? What is He speaking to us through His Word? What is He speaking to us through our daily chastening process? Everything that happens in our life, beloved, is part of this transformation process to help us become more like Him. “Well, I don’t really need to be much more like Him. Actually, I think I’m doing a whole lot better than those other people.” You ought to think of yourself soberly and not as highly as you do. Maybe you ought to look at what’s really in your members and identify the war and where you are in relation to Christlikeness in His process of conforming you into His image. “*Spiritually Minded, Pt. 2,*” August 14, 2002, Wednesday PM

# Train Yourself To Be Godly

*“But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.” (1 Timothy 4:7)*

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The scripture in Hebrews talks about the fact that it’s by reason of use, experience, habitual doing, that we have the ability to discern good and evil (Heb. 5:14). Paul’s admonition to Timothy here to exercise himself to godliness is really talking about training or discipline. It’s the same training and discipline that fathers are responsible for in training their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This training isn’t just verbal instruction; it has to do with hands-on, detailed instruction by showing them and working with them. At times, Paul would use references to the Olympic games in speaking of preparation and training. We know Paul’s heart as he says to extend yourself—press on for the mark, the prize, the high calling of God in Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:14). What he’s talking about here to Timothy has to do with totally emptying self in the pursuit of the goal.

Paul tells him, “Train yourself to be godly.” “I’d like to be godly. I really would.” Do you know what? I’d like to be able to shoot 65 in golf! How many of you know that just wanting to do that will never make it happen? What’s it going to take? It’s going to take work, making that become the most important thing in your life as you begin to train for it. Paul also speaks in a military sense of abstaining from everything else around you, that you might achieve the goal of pleasing Him who’s called you (2 Tim. 2:4).

How badly do you want to be godly now? Are you training yourself for godliness? What are you doing? Are you making the same effort to be godly that you are to be physically fit? Are you making the same effort to be godly that you are trying to make yourself attractive with all of the chemicals, permanents, tattoos, makeup and hours and hours of strolling the malls to find the right garment that hides all of your ugliness? “Finally! I got something that makes me look thinner here and bigger here!” How much time did you take in prayer and the Word of God to develop godliness? It’s going to take more effort to be godly than it does to be successful in any of these other things in life, yet we all have the same natural tendency to want everything handed to us. We think that we’re the exception. “Doesn’t God know how busy I am? I’ve got other things to do.” Where our treasure is is where our heart is (Matt. 6:21). Is sanctification (holiness) the treasure of your heart? Is it something that you really have an appetite for? Then begin to train and discipline yourself through exercise and reason of use. It’s through doing this thing habitually, and it is a lifelong process.

The Holy Spirit enables and strengthens us in our choices and in the actual obedience. The power available in the person of the Holy Spirit will never allow us to fail. We’re not talking about sinless perfection, but doing all we can to exercise ourselves to godliness. Our failure is not that we momentarily made the wrong decision; our failure is in the lack of preparation and lack of exercising of ourselves to godliness. What are you doing in your pursuit right now? *“Choices, Pt. 2,” August 13, 2000, Sunday PM*

# Ready For The Higher Realm

*“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”*

(2 Timothy 2:1)

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Grace doesn't excuse us from being zealous and diligent and striving to obtain that for which God has apprehended us. Paul says, “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” The words “be strong” mean to demonstrate that strength. It's a showing forth of the effectual working of God in our lives. As you read through the context of this passage, you see that the man who is exhibiting the grace of God is always perceiving the need to touch that remnant, the faithful men that are able to affect others for the eternal kingdom from the eternal perspective.

He goes on to say, “You're going to be opposed . . . Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life” (2:3-4). There's the holiness, again, that we were talking about. To be effectual, the grace of God has to work in conjunction with our warring against the flesh, the world, and the devil. No man that has experienced the grace of God will entangle himself with the affairs of this life; nor will he marry or make covenant with them. Whatever your involvement might be with these mundane, daily affairs, you're always ready in a moment to move into the higher realm of the heavenly calling, into eternal values. You're always ready when drawing water at the well to stop what you're doing. Who would think that you're moving in the sovereign will and grace of God to draw water for this strange man and his camels, thereby affecting the lineage of the Messiah? Yes, we can be involved in mundane things but

always ready to move to affect the purpose of the kingdom. This is what Paul is speaking of in this chapter. Do you want to keep from frustrating the grace of God? We're to always look to please Him who has chosen us. This is the attitude of the man or woman that's been touched by the grace of God.

“And if a man also strive for masteries...” (2:5). Grace does not excuse you from emptying yourself out in striving and doing your best. Are you going through the motions, or are you doing your best? We all know that when we're not pursuing according to God's declared purpose and will that we get to experience the previous verse: He puts us into trials and tumults because of His love for us. He's not going to leave you hanging out there without pressing you into His image! That's why I said you can't bail in the trials. You have to learn and hear what God is saying to you. You have to be broken. You have to fall on the Rock and say, “Yes, God, forgive me! Restore me. Lord, not my will, but Your will be done.” That spirit will keep us from frustrating the grace of God. Paul goes on to say that the striving has to be lawful. In other words, don't get into the flesh. Don't allow self-righteousness or works of the flesh to become the method, but allow the method to be the works of grace. Where are you today? *“Grasping God's Grace,” July 11, 2001, Wednesday PM*

# Consumed With God's Glory

*"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*

(2 Timothy 3:12)

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If you're a doer of the Word, it heaps coals of fire upon those around you. The reason they hated Jesus was not that He stood up to proclaim the Word of God like the Pharisees, but that He did the Word of God, which was judgment against them for their disobedience and rebellion. Every time somebody chooses to do the Word of God, it shows that it can be done. The rest, the masses, don't like it. It's like the kid at school who always studied, got good grades, and everybody hated him. It's the same thing in the spiritual world. The majority stand back and say, "You know what's wrong? Those people just don't have balanced lives! Those people are extreme! They're fanatics!" No, they're Christians. "They're doing the Word of God, and I'm not doing it. It makes me mad that they're showing me up and showing that it can be done! My doctrine says you can't do it. They're doing it, and now I have to deal with that." Hatred arises because of their obedience.

When you live godly, you're going to suffer persecution. People are going to try to put out your light! To make a choice to move into this kind of holiness and walk in the Spirit, there's going to have to be a house cleaning. In the cleaning that started taking place under Josiah, they found the book of the Lord in the temple. It's kind of interesting that the task was bigger than they had anticipated. You'd think, "Praise God! We found the Word! It has been lost in the house of the Lord! We finally recovered it."

That's a powerful statement. "The Word of God was lost in the house of God!" As Josiah began to restore the nation and rebuild the temple, they found the Word of God. They began to read it, saying, "Whoa! No wonder we're in such a mess! Look at the judgments of God that have come against us because of our rebellion! We need to change things!" They began to make changes, but found that things were worse than they had thought. They had priests of Baal and Chemosh who were operating within the house of God. They had sodomites living within the confines, yet wondered why they were under the judgment of God. The deeper you look into your own life, the more groves and the more false priests you'll find abiding within your tabernacle. Only the Word of God can set you free. As you study, read, and do, you're going to suffer persecution.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:14-15). Scripture runs contrary to so many things in the natural—in our society and in natural relations. It goes against everything that is naturally within us to think about taking our children to the gates and "stoning them to death" in their rebellion. But, beloved, there's a higher calling and pursuit! It's not about the natural affection we have for our children; it's about the glory of God. Are we jealous for the glory of God? Whenever there are other little idols, we're never going to hear clearly. We can never be led by the Spirit until we're consumed with the glory of God, fulfilling the purpose of God, and representing the person of our God. *"Being in the Way, Pt. 1," July 22, 2001, Sunday AM*

# Knowing The Rest Of God

*“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” (Hebrews 4:1)*

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Are you at rest, ceasing from your own labors? You see, the one thing that Father did in my life in these last number of months, as we went down the homestretch with Janet, is to allow me to enter rest. I came into that place of being emptied of myself. I hated it in the natural; but there was a sweet fragrance of the Rose of Sharon instead of the foul smell of self-confidence. There was a real refreshing as I drank from the deep, still waters of the rest of God’s presence instead of from the chlorinated, immediately-accessible faucet of man’s understanding and ability. You can’t drink of those still waters by just running in and turning on the faucet. You’ve got to spend time in the presence of God! You’ve got to get alone in the green pastures! You’ve got to get quiet from all of the cares of this world! You have to focus on the other world—the other kingdom, the invisible city—or you won’t know the rest of God. Which tree entices you? Which fruit catches your fancy?

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Heb. 4:1). Israel missed the natural rest, the Promised Land. They died in the wilderness. There’s a rest that’s been promised to you now since Jesus has won this battle, since Jesus has established His church and His kingdom. There’s a rest of faith right now that belongs to those of us who have been regenerated, bought with a price. There’s a people who belong in a rest! He says, “You need to fear if you’re missing out on that. You need to be afraid if you’re not eating the

fruit of that rest.” You see, they didn’t partake because the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith. What are we doing with the Word we can all quote so fluidly? Are we living it or quoting it? Are we trusting in it or studying it? Is it rejuvenating our hearts, or is the legality of it condemning us and binding us through the pharisaical legalism that we misunderstand as holiness? There is no holiness in legalism. It’s just self-assurance, self-righteousness. You see, if there isn’t this rest that we’re talking about, then your holiness is not holiness. It’s legalism; it’s morality; it’s self-discipline. Holiness only comes by faith, by dependence upon God, by innocence! *“The Divine Rest, Pt. 2,” March 26, 2003, Wednesday PM*

# The True Spirit Of Holiness

*“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.” (1 Peter 1:15)*

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The word “conversation” means your living, your daily lifestyle. Holiness doesn’t have anything to do with the old-line Pentecostal traditions of how one was to dress. For the ladies, that meant no makeup, hair in a bun, white powder on the face, and long, black sleeves to the fingertips. It cracks me up that a lot of people from the Middle Eastern and Asian nations have a double standard. The women have all this stuff piled on, and you may see one eye peeking out. The husband is walking around wearing Nikes and Bermuda shorts. Are only women supposed to be holy? That’s not what the Scripture says. Christianity teaches a different holiness, doesn’t it? It’s a heart holiness. Christianity teaches modesty, sobriety, and discipline in our lives, but not some kind of outward holiness—“Oh, look how holy they are!” Pull all that stuff off and look at the ugliness of their hearts! Find out whether or not, like the Christians that have all the clothes piled on them, they are of a meek and quiet spirit.

We serve a God who is holy and requires us to be holy in all manner of living. Holiness is not in our morality alone, but in our consecration. Because He is holy, we’re not our own. What we should be involved in, the Scripture says, is the kingdom of God’s priorities and not our own. The apostle said, “[It’s no longer I that live] but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

Is that your testimony now, “It’s no longer I that live, but Christ”? We’ve quoted that scripture so many times it could roll off our tongues, and we don’t even think about what we’re saying. It’s not faith in the Son of God, but the faith of the Son of God. His lordship in me, His faith, enables me now to obey. As obedient children, we are no longer caught up in the former insanity and conversation of life. You begin to experience the true spirit of holiness that says, “Without Him, I can do nothing.” The true spirit of holiness says, “I don’t know how to go out or to come in.” The true spirit of holiness humbles itself and will not accept any other form of exaltation but God’s. I will humble myself, and I will not allow myself or man to exalt me, only God.

It’s a constant decision to die daily. You’re crucified daily, willfully choosing to represent Him and not yourself, realizing that you’re no longer your own. This vessel is holy; it’s consecrated. You can’t do with it what you want to do. You can’t abuse it with all of the latest fads, with neglect, or whatever else the world is telling you is the thing of the day. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. You’re not looking for victory over things like the bottle, cigarettes, or pornography. You’re looking for victory over self-will and self-worth, that you might be consecrated, realizing you only yield yourself as an instrument to God’s service (Romans 6). As you yield your members as instruments to righteousness, all of those other areas that you focus on trying to get victory over won’t appeal to you. “I have meat to eat that you know not of,” Jesus said. “My meat is to do the will of My Father.” *“The Real Holiness,” July 29, 2001, Sunday PM*

# Morality Or Holiness?

*“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Romans 8:11)*

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What does “quicken” refer to? This isn’t referring to our bodies being made alive in the latter-day resurrection. The Spirit can now bring to life this body that was dead and cause these members to be yielded to righteousness, Romans 6 tells us. Life can come out of the death that’s in our flesh when we mortify our flesh and walk in the Spirit. How does that happen?

“We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh” (Rom. 8:12). This means we are not to be dominated by the flesh or to live a habitual life pattern of fleshly behavior. Let me make the distinction. Fleshly or carnal behavior is trusting in works, legalism, self-righteousness, or the pharisaical mentality as it pertains to the morals and ethics of our generation. A lot of people are satisfied with that. The majority of professed Christians today are satisfied with morality, but God demands holiness. There’s a big difference between morality and holiness. Holiness means being set apart solely for God. It’s all for the glory of God; it has nothing to do with the creatures’ benefits, but the Creator’s majesty and glory. Where are we today in our walk, and why are we doing what we’re doing? Are we living a lifestyle because it makes us feel better about ourselves, it’s safer, or whatever else? Are we seeking to glorify God in all that we do and say? It’s very important for us to understand what we’re being called to in this walk in the Spirit.

You're not debtors to the flesh any longer, for if you habitually live after the flesh, you're going to die. This includes the works of the flesh, as seen in Galatians—a lascivious lifestyle, a life centered around self. He said, "You're a dead man. There's no life in you. If self dominates the life of Christ, the Spirit of God is not dwelling in you." If you have little spurts of morality, little spurts of serving others, it's not the Spirit. It's the flesh. Even those attempts to keep the law are an abomination in God's eyes. He's nauseated by the offerings of bulls and goats, the sacrifices, and feeble attempts to keep His law. He wants, once and for all, to dominate the throne of your life.

As we look at Romans 8, we see the need to empty ourselves. We are able to discern where we are in this by what our mind is intent upon, what we trust in, what we're occupied with, and by what is a treasure to us. Does it satisfy us? For those of us who are in the Spirit, there is nothing in the flesh that can satisfy us. When God calls us to walk away from certain things in the flesh to which the natural mind says, "How in the world could you do that?" we think, "What do you mean? There's no comparison! That has no worth to me. How could I leave that job? It's not that important. How was I able to leave my natural family? That's not valuable to me anymore." It's all compared to the glory of God. "*Methods of Mortifying, Pt. 2,*" August 5, 2001, Sunday AM

# Heart Holiness

*“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5)*

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Every one of us believers is a living stone in the temple of God. God doesn't live in buildings that are made by men's hands, but He does live within a spiritual tabernacle. God indwells the holy temple of the church, those of us who are believers. If we're that holy, living stone, then the question becomes this: “When I go out into the world, am I being affected by the world, or am I affecting the world?” I've been consecrated and set apart for the purpose of bringing light to a world that's in darkness, love to a world that's bound in hate and fear, and the assurance of the gospel that says, “You don't have to work out righteousness. You don't have to be better to be accepted of God. God loves you like you are, man. He'll accept you if you'll accept Jesus. Then He will make you what He wants you to be, but you can't earn it. You'll never be righteous enough. You'll never act good enough. It's by grace and faith. It's a free gift! It's not of works lest any man should boast.”

At the same time, we're to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). Men are to see our good works so that they might glorify our Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Oh, there are works involved, but it's God working through us to will and to do His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). How holy are we? Holiness isn't the old perception: “We don't smoke, we don't chew, and we don't run with girls that do.” We're not talking about living by a standard of observ-

able, behavioral holiness. We're talking about a heart holiness, evaluating why I'm doing what I'm doing.

We can do the right things for the wrong purposes and have the wrong motives. We can do our righteousness, like the Pharisees, to be seen of men. We can stand and say long prayers on the corners so everybody will think we're outstanding Christians, but out of the abundance of the heart proceed murders and envy and strife and adulteries. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "You're whited sepulchers! You're clean on the outside but you're full of dead men's bones!" How holy are we?

We can understand that by our sobriety. How serious are we? "Do you understand that your mission (should you choose to accept it) is to represent Me in a hostile world, a world full of hatred, bitterness, strife, envy, murders, and revelling? I send you as little lambs among wolves." Are we serious about the mission we're on, or are we really seeking our own agenda? Are we trying to get ahead like the Joneses or move up like the Jeffersons, distracted by all the attractions the world is dangling? That sobriety, or seriousness, is the discipline of our emotions and our lusts. Are we sober enough to be in the world but not of it? "*The Real Holiness*," July 29, 2001, Sunday PM

# Elevation Of Self-Will

*“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” (Titus 2:12)*

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Some think worldly lust is spending too much money on a new car, spending too much on our credit cards, or involvement in some type of lascivious behavior. Worldly lust is the elevation of self-will and self-importance, placing my feelings, my family, and my treasures above everybody else’s. That’s what is in the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). Pride says, “I’m the most important one on the planet. I’m the smartest on the planet.” It’s that subtle spirit we have to deal with every day, practically every moment of every day. I want to be able to identify worldliness and learn how to deny it.

Paul says that grace enables us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and by denying these things we will live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Titus 2:12). He doesn’t tell us that it’s done through legalism. It’s done in the Spirit, because look what the preceding verse says: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation...” (2:11). The word “salvation,” *soteria* in the Greek, means “wholeness.” The man who has been born again, who was lacking in the spirit life, now becomes whole; he becomes a total individual.

We’re no longer limited to the bondage of our lusts or to the sin that’s in our members. We now have the capacity in our spirit man to deny this ungodliness! Before, we were slaves to it and couldn’t help our-

selves. We were “carnally minded,” Romans 8 says, which is death. Ungodliness is death. To be carnally minded is to have our minds governed or controlled by worldliness; our minds are intent upon worldly things. We seek them and are in agreement with them. We agree that God has no right to control our lives.

The grace of God enables us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts that we might live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. I think it’s important for us to understand the biblical perspective on what God reveals worldliness to be. In the old-time holiness movements, worldliness was interpreted to mean certain forms of recreation—dancing and going to the pool hall. Worldliness had something to do with fashion and the length of dress hems. From that, we began to see worldliness as involvement in certain activities, and piety meant refraining from those things. There might be wisdom in refraining from certain activities, but that is not piety. There’s no holiness derived from abstaining from any of these activities; that doesn’t make us better. We may abstain because we are walking in the Spirit, because we are better off in the spiritual realm than some of our contemporaries, but abstaining doesn’t make us better. We have to understand what the Bible calls worldliness. Worldliness is not shooting, snorting, drinking, or smoking. Those are all consequences or the fruit of worldliness, but that’s not worldliness. To be a friend of the world, the Scripture says, is to be an enemy of God, or to be at enmity with God (James 4:4). Simply, worldliness is opposing the wisdom of God. *“Denying Worldly Lusts, Pt. 1,” February 13, 2002, Wednesday PM*

# Directed Towards Dependence

*“The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” (John 5:19)*

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The minute you catch yourself sneaking around and conniving to be exalted, find some way to humble yourself and serve. Don't appease yourself by saying, “I realize that tendency in me is wrong. I'm just not going to do that anymore.” Do something about it! Acknowledging it is not overpowering it. Choose to do what's right; choose the wisdom of God. Whenever you're tempted to exalt yourself, serve others. You'll begin to set up habitual obedience in doing what is righteous, and Satan's methods, his tactics, and his power will be broken.

Looking at these practical ways of dealing with Satan's tactics will free some of us. It will allow us to have great confidence in God and take us out of a performance mentality into a true rest in the grace and love of God. It will also create in us a new zeal for holiness and a desire to be free from what is holding this world in bondage. That fear is gripping men's hearts. You can see it in people's faces today as you walk around. “What's going to happen tomorrow?” I don't take any thought for tomorrow. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Matt. 6:34). We walk around in peace; they think we're stupid. We realize that God is calling us to be examples of the believer in this hour.

If the greatest sin is independence, Satan will use his tactics to move us away from absolute dependence upon God. Ask yourself

which direction you're moving in decisions you're about to make. Are you moving in a direction that makes you totally dependent upon God, or are you moving into an area that makes you dependent upon the arm of the flesh and the wisdom of the world? That begins to define which kingdom our faith is in and whether or not his tactics have had an effect on us.

Father, help us to be faithful in our daily skirmishes with terrorists: the demons, the sin that's in our members, the enemy within. Cause us to celebrate the victory that's been won by Your blood. Cause us to boast of the great power that resides within us in the person of Your Spirit. Give us the grace and faith to declare that sin's power is broken and to determine to walk in the Spirit so that we wouldn't fulfill the natural behavior and consequences of the kingdom of darkness. Make us, Father, as dependent as Jesus was. We fail to believe what was said. Lord, we hear the doctrine, but we don't believe it. We believe that somehow in Your own strength as Deity You walked victoriously, but You said that without Him You could do nothing. Without You, we can do nothing. Where is our dependence now? Where is the emptying of our independence? How much do we hate it? To what degree are the successes we've accomplished, that we try to attach Your name to, a stench in Your nostrils? Bring us to believe that in our greatest weakness, in our greatest moment of dependence, we're strong. That will bring us peace and rest. For that, we give You the praise, Father, in Jesus' name. "*Defeating Satan's Tactics, Pt. 1,*" September 26, 2001, Wednesday PM

# Divested Of The Natural

*“I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.”*

(1 Corinthians 15:31)

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Where are we in our pursuit, in our striving for perfection in the full knowledge of God? How hungry are we today for fellowship with the holy God that we sing about? We sing songs like “We’re Standing on Holy Ground,” and tears come to our eyes. We get all emotionally touched about the holiness of God, but do you know what holiness is? Holiness is not the best of the temporal. Holiness, the holy ground, is not on this planet, and it’s not in this life. It has no fellowship with anything temporal. Holiness is a complete divesting of ourselves from the natural into the spiritual, eternal realm. Nothing natural is holy in the purest sense. It can be sanctified and set apart and used for the glory of God, but it’s all going to be consumed in the majesty of His holiness!

When we talk about the holy God, remember what we’re talking about: a Being who is absolutely distinct. There’s no other like Him. When we talk about the omnipotence of God, the majesty of God, and the sanctification aspect of this holy God, remember that He is absolutely distinct and separate. Everything else is a byproduct of His will, His stated purpose, and His creative ability. There’s the misnomer of a great wrestling match between God and the devil and how they’re fighting for our souls. See sin and Satan for what they are: forces so powerful that we have no hope in defeating them, but so inferior to the power of God and the blood of Jesus Christ that they can’t even be compared to the uniqueness of God’s holiness, majesty, and sovereign power.

I want to stir our hearts to see that we're not looking for a visitation of God that'll cause us to barely get by. When God reigns in our lives, sin no longer has power over us! When we're in hot pursuit of the glory of God, when our hearts are consumed with worship and praise and we're walking in the Spirit, in the realm of obedience, the things that we so often struggle with have no power over us. You say, "If only I could live that way every day." Why don't we? Where do we see a limitation put on our walk in the Spirit? It's not in the Scriptures. Paul said, "I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:31). It's just a daily decision. "*Hard After Thee, Pt. 2,*" February 23, 2003, Sunday PM

# Free From The Mundane

*“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” (Ephesians 5:6)*

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We’re not doing our own thing; we’re about Father’s business. Everything we do, beloved, is for the eternal purpose, the kingdom of God. Sanctification is freeing yourself from all of the bondage and the delusion and the mundane, because holiness is just being separate from the mundane. Walk tomorrow consciously trying to free yourself from the mundane, and look for an opportunity to sow into the eternal, to hear the word of the Lord, and to speak a word in season. Prepare your heart to listen. Don’t force anything; wait and hear the Spirit of the Lord. Not only will the people that you contact be blessed, but you’ll be refreshed, understanding what real sanctification is all about. Real sanctification is not just about the fact that you didn’t eat the whole bag of éclairs or that you didn’t go to the R-rated movie. Real sanctification doesn’t have anything to do, from the eternal perspective, with works. It has to do with understanding that fleeing from those things is preparation for the eternal. It’s not what we don’t do; it’s what we’ve been set apart to do in the spiritual as opposed to the mundane.

Paul said, “Let no man deceive you with vain words” (Eph. 5:6). The deception is due to the attraction of the world. It comes from a lack of thanksgiving for being a people separated to God, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people set apart to bring forth praises unto God who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9).

Where are your treasures at this moment? Where they are is where your heart is. It's easy to tell. What excites you? What are you going to get up for tomorrow? "Well, I've got to go to work. Got to make a living. Got to buy a biscuit somehow." What are you living for?

In speaking about the eternal, Paul said, "You can't be partakers with these people. The wrath of God is going to come upon these children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:7). Disobedient to what? To the call of God on their lives. Here's the question that we're asking, and this isn't always an easy thing to know: What are you called to? "Well, I'm called to kind of wander and stumble around the body of Christ and not have a clue." Every one of us has been called and placed in the body, Corinthians tells us, as it pleases Him (1 Cor. 12:18). Where have you been placed? What have you been gifted to do? You'll never be at peace until you're doing it. You can have the Martha spirit, going around and serving in all the areas that you choose and enjoy. "I like fluffing pillows, and I like doing all of these different kinds of things." Fluffing pillows and taking pies to shut-ins isn't going to do it if God has called you to be a prayer warrior. Locking yourself in a room to pray and wear out hardwood floors with your knees (like Praying Hyde) isn't going to do it if God is calling you to take a pie across the street to somebody that's a shut-in.

What's your ministry? Are you sanctified? Do you know what the call of God is? Has the anointing been placed upon you? Have you been obedient to fulfill that function in the kingdom of God? "Well, I want to serve, and I have these goals. As soon as I get enough money saved up—once that's all set and I have some time—I really want to give myself to serving in the body." What has God called you to do now? "*Cleansed to Serve, Pt. 1,*" October 16, 2002, Wednesday PM

# Emanating His Glory

*“But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?” (2 Corinthians 3:7-8)*

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Tragically, we see the external, observable kingdom as being influenced, emaciated, powerless, full of leaven and compromise, as embracing the kingdoms of this world, as lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, and as seekers of the praises of men more than of God. Those in this kingdom are very comfortable with the world, and the world is very comfortable with them. There’s no light emanating from them, like the glory that came from the face of Moses when the people looked and said, “My God, put a veil on—the glory is too bright! We can’t even stand having you in our presence! The glory is overwhelming!”

Wouldn’t you love to go to work and have that happen? Wouldn’t you love to go to work and be able to hear people say, “Dear Lord, we’ve got to get this guy fired! The glory of God just emanates from him! The peace of God, the power of God, contentment, and the words of God are all that come out of his mouth. Dear God, let’s get rid of this guy.” Wouldn’t that be great? Wouldn’t you love to get fired for that reason instead of for sloughing off? That’s what it means to represent the kingdom of God.

There are too many Christians thinking just like the world. They think that they’re doing their employer a favor by showing up. “I showed up. Where’s my check?” You’re supposed to do something! You don’t

just show up and get paid for coming. The worldly man has the mentality that the universe revolves around him. We're to be different! They should see us pursuing a different treasure. We're a people that work as unto the Lord and that have an inner joy, praise God! "Joy I give unto you, not as the world gives. Peace I give, not as the world gives." *"Thy Kingdom Come, Pt. 2," March 27, 2002, Wednesday PM*

# Sanctified Contentment

*“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”*

(1 Timothy 6:9)

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They that will to be rich, when God hasn't ordained it, bring destruction to themselves. They will enter a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts. They'll be destroyed unto perdition. How sanctified are you? Are you sanctified enough to say, “You know what, bless God? God has called me to be average”? In our society today, “average” is a bad word. Most people don't want to work hard enough to obtain it, and those that are prideful look down at it as though it were some type of disease. The fact of the matter is we're all pretty much average. We don't like that, but that's how God made us. This is who we are.

Are we content with who and what God has called us to be? That's sanctification. It's being designed by God and totally set apart for the glory of God. Yet we want to be something else. “I don't want to be a brass ring. I want to be the Ark of the Covenant!” “I really believe that God has set me apart for gold. I see gold in my life.” The only gold that some of us are going to see is the fillings in our teeth when God slaps us upside the head to chasten us into righteousness! Where are we today as God is ordering our steps? This is real sanctification.

Without holiness, we're not going to see God. That doesn't refer just to when He comes to receive us unto Himself. It also means that without holiness, we're not going to “see Him” on a daily basis. I don't know about you, but I need to see God today. I have my devotions in

the morning down in my basement. After I get up, I do my reading on the Stairmaster and spend time seeking the Lord down there in prayer. I've heard more from God there than virtually anywhere else during that time alone, hearing what the Spirit of God has to say and just being quiet. It's just religion; it's just tradition unless you've been able to get quiet enough to be in His presence and say, "I'm not leaving until You've blessed me. I'm not letting You go. I need Your visitation. I'm consecrating my thoughts and my mind. I'm coming into Your presence boldly by the blood of Jesus, because I've got to see You today if I'm going to make it. I can't go out of here and expect to be victorious if You haven't gone before me and made a way. I will not be successful today if Your glory is not my rear guard. I can't hope to stand if I haven't put on the whole armor of God!" Do you realize the day we're in, beloved?

Holiness is setting this moment apart to understand why we're here and what we're going to do; it's preparation. "Yeah, praise God, here I go (as I run and jump in the car). Bless me, Lord. Keep me safe. Don't let some idiot run a light and kill me. Thank You." Are you able to go through the day in your own strength? Even if you're able to make it through the day in your own strength, are you content there? Does it feel comfortable? Do your garments (those filthy rags) feel comfortable, or are you looking for the priestly garments of Leviticus 8? How comfortable are you when adorned in anything besides the glory of God? Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. "*Cleansed to Serve, Pt. 4,*" October 23, 2002, Wednesday PM

# Holy Devotion

*“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:15-16)*

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How fervent, how passionate, is that love for your first love? Can you say it has grown? Love is supposed to grow. Genuine love grows; it doesn't remain static, and it surely doesn't wane. How can you not love Him more if you know Him better? That's what this sanctification process is all about. The more we get to know Him in the fellowship of His sufferings—as we've endured with Him, as He's comforted us, and we're aware of His lordship in our lives—it creates thanksgiving and worship in us. Beloved, where would we be today without the lordship of Jesus in our lives? We don't even like to think about it.

We saw that following the burnt offering came an offering in which hands were laid upon the sacrifice, and it was consecrated. The work of holiness began to affect itself in their lives. Do you know what happens at that time of consecration? Notice it follows what? “Worship.” We've been called, ordained, and set apart. We're a royal priesthood, a holy nation. Stop and think about it now. Here I am, set apart. God has said that I'm going to be as one of these instruments: the table of shewbread, the candlestick, the loaves. Whatever it is that's within the arsenal of worship and recognition of the holiness of God, ask yourself this question: Do I see that what I've been called to do is holy?

Some of you dug holes; some of you painted; and some worked on other things here at the church. As we shared out of Leviticus 8, what does it take to do that kind of stuff? This is not mundane; that's holy work. "Oh man, I was out witnessing to somebody, and as I laid hands on him, he got healed." That's fabulous! That's part of it, but that's no more holy than digging the hole to put the playground equipment in. How holy do you see what you're doing? Do you want me to tell you how holy it is to you and what worth it has? It's known by how much you're preparing yourself to do it. How much effort are you putting in to keep everything carnal out of it? The Lord who has called us is holy; therefore, be holy.

How holy are your devotions? How sanctified are you when you come in for your devotions? How holy is that time? How far down the road in your commute are you before you're doing your devotions? How far into the workday are you before you're supposedly consecrated and performing the ministry?

You know, we've missed sanctification. We think we're sanctified if we're not smoking, drinking, or dancing. That's not what consecration is all about! The priests could not enter in with any defilement; they had to make offerings. They had to be cleansed, because the God we serve is holy! He'll have no other gods before Him. We've erected religion and tradition. How much is worship, and how much is emotion? We can have great articulation, and it's just words. I'd much rather have the refreshing that comes as living water out of somebody's heart who's been in the presence of God. How is your worship? How are your devotions? How holy is that time that has been set apart?  
*"Cleansed to Serve, Pt. 4," October 23, 2002, Wednesday PM*

# Entering Into The Holy Place

*“For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.” (Hebrews 9:2)*

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We enter into that holy place, and in the holy place is the altar of incense. Are you a man or a woman of prayer? The incense that burns within the holy place is the perpetual prayer of the people, the sweet-smelling savor that accesses the nostrils of God in our praise and worship. When you’re worshipping, does it flow? Does the fruit of knowing His goodness flow from your heart after being in the presence of God? How easy is it for you to praise? I’m not talking about singing songs of praise that somebody else who’d been in the presence of God wrote. How much of your own heart pours forth prose and poetry? How much of your own heart quotes the Word of God and boasts in the majesty of the Eternal One in all of His holiness—who transcends knowledge, who leaves us dumb before His beauty? We fall broken at His feet and weep as we’re overwhelmed by His loveliness! We can say nothing but “Thank You!” because of His goodness.

There’s a table of shewbread in that holy place; it’s the bread of life, the meat that so many know nothing of, a satisfaction of doing the will of Him who sent us. There’s only one thing that satisfies, and it’s the bread of life. All of the things we think will make us content still leave us empty, don’t they? There’s only one thing that can fill that void: the love of God that we experience in His presence. Getting married is not going to do it. If you’re not full of Jesus, nothing else will fill you up. Fame and fortune are not going to do it.

There's access for every one of us. There's no caste system; this isn't the world where you have to earn status. "You that have no money, come, buy and eat!" You can become great in the kingdom of God. We do everything to be successful in the natural. How much effort are we putting into the spiritual realm to be like Jesus? All of these things that we're doing, beloved, are preparation.

Some of us have moved beyond the court of the priests, the altar, and the laver. Some of us have entered into the holy place, and we've taken the worship of God, the shewbread, and the incense. We've come into that place where the candles burn, where no natural light can enter. Nothing from the outside brings illumination, no natural light. Only the light of God, only wisdom, only inspiration is in that place. We need no illumination from the world and its wisdom. The illumination of the presence of God is called inspiration.

The greatest compliment that I ever received was when one of the real scholars of our day said, "I have all of the books that you have; I have all of these commentaries. Where do you get this revelation?" I said, "From the presence of God." They have huge megawatts of worldly wisdom, and I don't profess to have any of that, but I have this little candle I read by that I got from the holy place. It lets you see into the heart and mind of God. There's not a lot of confusion as to what you're seeing when you've accessed the illumination of God. It's pure; it's simple; and it sets a course that's straight and narrow. It doesn't illuminate a broad way. You can only see this path. Walk in it. That's what it takes to access the presence of God. Not a lot of men have acquired that over the years. "*Hard After Thee, Pt. 1,*" February 23, 2003, Sunday AM

# We Need The Holy Of Holies

*“My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.” (Psalm 63:1)*

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Tragically, a lot of people get hung up on the journey. There are volumes written on the subjects of prayer, fasting, and sanctification. We worship the access and forget about acquiring, touching the face of God! There's another room, beloved. It's called the Holy of Holies. Many of us are content with holiness when we need the Holy of Holies. We need the presence of God. We don't need just to be free from the world. We need to be in the presence of God, where He has chosen to put His name, where the shekinah glory dwells. It's that place where you're not consciously aware of His presence at all times. It would be great if every day the fire of God fell upon our lives, but it doesn't. It comes momentarily. The awareness of His manifest presence comes only a few times in a lifetime; but it will keep us waiting on our face before Him, knowing that He's ever present with us and that He'll never leave us nor forsake us!

Like Joshua, we're to be content to sit at the tabernacle and wait for the visitation of God, the treasure. It may happen only once, but what about a visitation where the coal is taken from the altar and put upon our lips? (Isa. 6:6-7) How many of those do we need in a lifetime? It may occur only once, like when you come before those to whom God has called you to minister with two tables in your hand, written by the finger of God. It doesn't have to be every day. One visitation will change your life forever. The prophet said, "I've purposed that I wouldn't speak anymore concerning these things, but Your Word is

like a fire in my bones!” (Jer. 20:9) Is the zeal of God’s house eating you up? His eyes are searching to and fro, looking for those to whom He can show Himself mighty (2 Chron. 16:9).

As the psalmist cries out, “My flesh [longs] for [you] in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is” (Ps. 63:1). Is your soul hungry? Are you taking time to access God through the typology of the tabernacle that was just shared? “Because [your] lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee” (63:3). Your lovingkindness is better than life! “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). “*Hard After Thee, Pt. 1,*” February 23, 2003, Sunday AM

# Everything To Bring Glory To God

*“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”*

(Isaiah 30:21)

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In Him I live and move and have my being (Acts 17:28). Without Him, I can do nothing (John 15:5). That’s holiness. It’s easy to quote this, but how much do you do every day without Him? “Well, you know, I do a lot of things. I get up in the morning and shave.” Did you do that in your own strength? “Well, yeah, it didn’t take much. I’ve got enough power to pull that razor.” How much intimacy are we talking about here? Beloved, shave to the glory of God. Of course you have the physical power to do this, but are you doing it as unto the Lord? How do you shave unto the Lord? Well, you prepare yourself to go into ministry; prepare yourself to carry the gospel into a world that’s dying. Everything that you do should be preparation to bring glory to God. Everything you do, do as unto the Lord, and that’s consecration.

I want us to see that there’s a call on every one of our lives. God places us into the body as it pleases Him (1 Cor. 12:18). Are you taking time to ask, “Lord, what’s my place in this? What am I supposed to do? I know what God had for me three years ago, but am I to continue as a faithful steward in that area, or is God possibly wanting to use me in another area for His glory and for His honor?” We talked about the prayerfulness for going to Africa and being a part of that work. There are a lot of folks among us just chomping at the bit. “Yeah, here am I; send me. I’m ready to go, bless God.” There are some that have the right motive, and there are others that just want to

go out of an excitement. “I’ve never been run over by a giraffe before. It would be a new experience.” Is God calling you? “Yeah, I believe He is, because I really want to go.” You know what? Most of the time you don’t want to. Yes, that’s scaring some of you now.

As God speaks to your heart, saying, “I’ve got a work for you to do,” just like Matthew, you have to leave your comfort zone. God speaks, and you get up from the tax table. The Lord just looks at you and says, “Follow Me,” and your life is never the same—just one word. A life that’s consecrated can hear that voice. If your life is too busy with your own will and you’re about your own kingdom, you can’t hear that still, small voice that says, “This is the way. Walk in it.”

The key to hearing God’s voice is not how much time you pray. It’s not how much time you read the Bible. Those things are very necessary, but it’s how quiet you can get. As you read the Word of God, it ought to quiet you down. It ought to bring peace and an understanding that God is preparing to speak. You see, God is not speaking to you when you’re reading the Bible. You’re reading what God has spoken. God speaks to you when His Word becomes *rhema*—when He specifically puts the words of this Bible into your heart and says, “This is what I’m telling you right now.” You have to get quiet to hear that; you have to be prayerful to hear that. Your flesh has to be brought into subjection, and the willingness to go is what gives the capacity to hear. What is God saying to you right now? Have you gotten quiet enough to hear? “*Cleansed to Serve, Pt. 5,*” October 27, 2002, Sunday AM

# The Walk Of Prayer

*“And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”*

(Genesis 32:28)

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The spirit of living in the supernatural is one that's free from self and lives for the glory of God. Walking in the supernatural is seeking opportunity to bring glory to God. Walking in the supernatural is the awareness of our worth as earthen vessels. Beloved, when we're broken and poured out, we have the glory and excellency of the Spirit of Christ inside us! Where are you today in your walk in the supernatural? Are you experiencing a fresh anointing? That's what this teaching has been for: to stir up the gifts that have been placed in us and to realize that every one of us has been given all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Walking in the supernatural is a walk of prayer. There is no righteousness, no true biblical holiness, no walk in the Spirit, without you being in your prayer closet. It begins with death to self on your knees before God. We want to live lives today in which everything is instant. That's another problem we found in many of the teachings on prayer: the expectation that God should move heaven and earth on our behalf when we recite one verse. Beloved, I want you to understand something. For us to live and walk in the supernatural will require nights of prayer like Jesus and Paul went through. It's going to take wrestling with God (as did the patriarchs of old) from which you get up limping, but your life is never the same!

Is your prayer life an easy life, or are you enduring and wrestling with God? Walking in the supernatural, beloved, is praying until your name has been changed. You're no longer a supplanter, a deceiver, a con- niver; you've gotten up from the presence of God. The Spirit of God has permeated your soul; now you can stand up, and your name is Jacob, "prince with God." Where are we in our walk, in living in the supernatural? It takes a little schedule changing. How dare you leave the presence of God until He's through with you! How can your steps be ordered of God when you're asking Him to fit into your time frame?

First Thessalonians 5 tells us that we are to pray without ceasing. Everything else ceases. Practicing the presence of God is being aware of His presence in our lives—the awareness that God is always dealing with us, speaking to us, changing us, cleansing us, and that His ears are always open to our cry, twenty-four hours a day, praise God! Before we speak, the Scripture says, He hears us! (Isa. 65:24) While we're yet speaking, the answer is already underway. Prayer doesn't change God; it changes you. Prayer doesn't initiate the hand of God; prayer is initiated by the hand of God! What happened was that you finally got on board. As you begin to pray, the answer begins to mani- fest. We're to pray without ceasing. We practice the presence of God. We're aware that everything we do must be initiated by the anointing of God or it's in vain. Do you live a life of prayer? Are you always listening for that still, small voice? Are you so sure of the path that you're on that you can't hear the voice of the Spirit? *"Living in the Supernatural, Pt. 9," December 8, 2002, Sunday AM*

# Filled With The Holy Spirit

*“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4)*

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Maybe you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You’ve heard about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. You’ve heard people pray in tongues. You may be able to mimic that, but where’s the fruit? Where’s the power? Where’s the holiness that results? Where’s the transformation that takes a meek Peter—backed down by a little woman—and stands him up to make a declaration in which the people are amazed at his power and boldness? What was the difference? It was the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

In obedience they gathered and prayed. “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:3-4). Here they are, a people now filled with the Holy Spirit. What did He say would happen? Acts 1:4 says, “I want you to tarry. I’m going to send the promise of the Father, and you shall receive power.” We’re not seeking the power; we’re seeking the promise. The power is the result. When it really manifests, you will notice a distinct difference in your life: an ability that wasn’t there before to die to self and to represent Him.

Peter then calls them to repentance. “You need to accept the free gift and the power of the name of Jesus Christ. There’s remission for your sins. And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise

is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call” (Acts 2:38-39). This is the fulfillment of the promise to Israel: being endued with power from on high and fulfilling the harvest of Pentecost. Where are we today? We’re a generation that still professes to speak in tongues, but where’s the power? We hold to a doctrine. Where’s the fruit? Are we properly representing the kingdom? The kingdom is represented by a people who walk in absolute dependence. We’ve been called to be a people who have the ability to speak the name of Jesus, lay hands on the sick, and cast out devils. Freely you’ve received; freely give. When you get up in the morning, do you strike terror in the kingdom of darkness? “Oh, no! He’s awake again!” Who are you?

Those of you who’ve never been filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, begin to believe God to fill you now. Begin to commit in your heart and say, “I’m going to pray, and I will not—I will not—back off this thing. I’m going to seek God. It’s His promise. It’s unto me, to my children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (Acts 2:39). I’m called of God. The promise is mine!” It’s your Father’s good pleasure. If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him (Luke 11:13)? “John indeed baptized with water, but there’s One coming who will baptize you in the Holy Ghost,” John said (Matt. 3:11). Jesus is the baptizer. As you pray, say, “Lord, please baptize me in the Holy Spirit. Fill me with Your presence and Your power. Let the promise be fulfilled in me. I want to be an ambassador. I want to move in power and in good works that men could see and glorify my Father.” “*Seen and Heard, Pt. 2,*” May 20, 2001, Sunday PM

# Don't Miss Out

*“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.” (2 Timothy 1:6)*

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Most of us here are pursuing the kingdom of God. We've been seeking a personal holiness, which has been the emphasis in our fellowship for a number of years. We need to take the benefits of that personal holiness, what He has done in us through our pursuit, and invest them in representing this kingdom in power, not just in word. Let men see the good works, not just in how we love one another. That's a great part of it, but God wants to express the good works through us as we freely share what God has given us through an understanding of Himself in the visitation. Not everybody has what we have, beloved. I'm not just talking about the knowledge, but about the awareness of the visitation. I'm talking about the ability to pray a prayer of faith and see people healed.

God is stirring hearts. There's a remnant being stirred in this last hour, praise God! Let not us who have the doctrine miss out on the experience. What are we doing to stir up the gift that's in us through the laying on of the apostles' hands? It's going to take a meek spirit. It's going to take an unlearning of everything the world has been pumping into our minds. We need to return to the simplicity of walking in the Spirit—of walking by faith and not by sight, of an assurance of the exceeding great and precious promises of God that will bring kingdom benefits to us.

As your children get a hold of this, don't discourage them. Don't try to put your unbelief on them by wrapping it in the garments of practicality and balance. This kingdom that you and I are a part of is not "balanced." It's balanced if you look at it in the absolute truth of the Word of God. It's balanced if you look at it from the absolute, unadulterated pureness of the justice of God, but it's not balanced by anything that your natural or secular thought process feeds into it. You cannot bring the world's thought processes into the kingdom and bring balance. It's leaven; it's unbelief. In this kingdom are promises that are "yea and amen." Do you believe that? Giving credibility to the other kingdom causes us to doubt and fear. We live in a day of great natural provision. I don't want you to move beyond your faith, but I want to encourage you to increase your faith. There's nothing in that other kingdom you can trust in. "*The Kingdom of Violence, Pt. 2,*" March 2, 2003, Sunday PM

# Used In The Mighty Times

*“And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.” (Exodus 4:2)*

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How hard have you tried to live a holy life, yet you keep failing? Your diligence is just not sufficient! The besetting sins continue to win out in your life. You think, “I’m just going to have to live the rest of my life this way.” No, you’re not. You just have to die to your own strength and confidence in your own abilities. You need to encounter the holiness of God in the wilderness, and then you’ll see the deliverance in the walk of the supernatural.

The Lord asked Moses a question, and it’s a question that each one of us needs to answer. God said, “What is that in your hand?” (Exod. 4:2) He was a shepherd, so it happened to be a staff, a rod. What do you happen to have in your hand? “It’s a wrench.” “It’s a computer.” What do you have to offer up to God today? “Well, Lord, it’s not anything that You could really use. I don’t have any real talents or any gifts.” God can use anything that you yield to Him. He chooses the weak things of the world (1 Cor. 1:27), so we qualify. It’s so that the glory and the excellency could be of Him and not of us.

What do you have to offer God today? “I can’t be used of God. I’m just a fisherman.” Are you willing to forsake your nets and follow Him? “There’s no way I can be used of God. I’m an accountant.” Like Matthew, can you get up from the table and follow Him? “Hail, thou mighty man of valor!” was the proclamation to Gideon, the coward. Isn’t it amazing what God sees when He looks at us? It’s because He sees not what we are but what every one of us can be. Men who

will make themselves available can be anything God ordains them to be. We can be frail fishermen, but the next thing you know we're walking on water, praise God! We can be cowards hiding on the threshing floor but become mighty champions of God, as Gideon who oversaw His army and knew the supernatural visitation of God.

Here's one of the greatest formulas ever set forth in the kingdom of God: "You have too many people" (Jud. 7:2). You think there is strength in numbers, but I'm telling you there is strength in purity! More is going to get done when you're jealous for the glory of God. More will get done with your little sling and five smooth stones than with all of the king's armor. What motivated David? It was jealousy for the glory of God. "Who do you think you are, you uncircumcised Philistine, that you would stand and defy the armies of the living God?" Is there a holy indignation that rises in you when this world's system talks about how frail our God is and how frail His church is? Does something rise up inside of you that says, "Bless God, I want you to know that we are people that are invincible! The gates of hell cannot prevail against the church of God. They can throw us in their dens of lions or throw us into their fiery furnaces, but we'll come forth rejoicing"?

Do you believe that today? Then what are you doing to prepare for it? That stuff doesn't just happen. These are men who had proven themselves faithful in the small things so that God could use them in the mighty times. If you study each of these lives, you'll find men who made choices to surrender everything to God, to eat the meat that others knew nothing about. *"Living in the Supernatural, Pt. 12," December 15, 2002, Sunday PM*

# What Is That You Have?

*“There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?” (John 6:9)*

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The eyes of the Lord are searching to and fro, and He’s looking for those who will go on His behalf, those in whom He can show Himself mighty. As we see in Isaiah, to encounter the living God is to have a live coal placed upon our lips and to see what manner of men we are. We’re horrified about seeking our own glory instead of the glory of God. As the doorposts of our lives are shaken, we want to become the tabernacles of the Holy Ghost and allow His holiness to abide in us. Then we’ll hear these words: “Whom shall I send?” We’ll be able to say, “Here am I, Lord; send me” (Isa. 6:8).

We’re a people desiring the presence of God, a people hungering for the holiness of God, a people desiring to be baptized in the fire of the Almighty that we might be conformed into His image. We’re a people willing to forsake the pleasures and treasures of Egypt and to identify with the reproach of Christ. We like to boast to others about how great we are and how much talent we have, and then we’re awed by His presence; but He’s not impressed with our lack. He knows who we are and how frail we are. He knows what our gifts are. He has given them to us, and all He’s asking is that they’d be used for Him. “What is that you have?” “It’s not a white stallion, just a little donkey.” “The Lord has need of it .” He entered triumphantly into Jerusalem, and the children cried, “Hosanna!” and the Word of God was fulfilled. What is it that God might use for His glory? “It’s just five loaves and two fishes. What are they among so many?” “Have them sit down

in companies of fifty.” Jesus took it, offered it to the Father, and blessed it. It was dispersed, the multitudes were fed, and twelve baskets of fragments were gathered up. What do you have to offer God today? It’s sufficient. Would you hold back five loaves and two fishes, insufficient for even one man, and deny the multitudes by not putting it into the hand of God? What you’re holding back won’t even provide for you, but if you’ll give it to God, it’ll bless all of us.

What do you have? Would you take those two mites and exchange them for the pearl of great price? That’s how God deals. That’s foolishness in the world, but that pearl has one price on it. The rich man had to sell everything to obtain it, and so did the widow with her two mites. It costs \$2 million for this person and two cents for another person, but everybody has to give everything. “We’ve forsaken all and followed You, Lord.” “Yes, and you shall receive in this life mothers and fathers, houses and lands, and in the life to come, eternal life” (Mark 10:30).

What is that? “It’s just five loaves and two fishes. Here.” “It’s just two mites. Here, Lord, for Your glory.” “It’s just a little donkey, but it’s Yours.” “What do you have? Is that everything?” “Yes, that’s all I have.” “I don’t think so, Ananias.” What are you holding back from God today while pretending to have given all? Would you lie to the Holy Ghost? “Is that right, Sapphira? Is this how it is?” “Yes!” “The feet of them that carried off your husband are at the door” (Acts 5:9). What do you have? You say it’s all God’s. What is that, from whom did you receive it, and to whom does it belong? Here am I, Lord; send me. “*Living in the Supernatural, Pt. 12,*” December 15, 2002, Sunday PM

# The Unobservable Kingdom

*“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:10)*

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As you and I move into this kingdom of light, the kingdom of God, the great ones are going to be the poor in spirit. “Poor in spirit” refers to those who are humble, or who have an attitude of dependence. “Poor” contrasts with the perception of wealth, might, worth, or ability. Those of us who think more highly of ourselves than we ought are living in another kingdom: the kingdom of self-will, the kingdom of independence. It’s not natural to empty ourselves for the benefit of others. It’s not natural to bow our knee to the will of God and live in complete obedience to the Word of God. It is not easy to subject ourselves to the wisdom of God and the doctrine of God’s Word when it conflicts with the natural observation in the observable kingdom.

This kingdom’s laws are effectual—they work. The law says, “Two plus two is four, and you’ve got to live by that.” We live in a kingdom that says, “Two plus two is four unless God wants to alter that.” Two plus two can become forty. You don’t know how the other thirty-six were added, but God has been glorified in it. The cruse of oil doesn’t fail and the meal doesn’t fail, because we’re living in a kingdom that’s without observation. It’s a kingdom in which He will never forsake us if we will humble ourselves and live in absolute dependence. It’s a kingdom whose citizens will someday be raised up to sit with Him upon His throne, and whose citizens are adopted as sons. There’s nothing like it, beloved. Its benefits are not always immediate, because many times they’re in the eternal realm.

The benefits of our obedience are not always immediate. In fact, sometimes it appears as though God has forsaken us. Sometimes it appears as though this other kingdom is actually winning. We wonder if it's really worth it, because blessed are those "which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:10). This kingdom that we're talking about, this kingdom that suffers violence, is a kingdom that requires us to have the character trait of humility. Because they hated Him, they're going to hate us. This kingdom is in absolute conflict, contrast, and opposition to the other. We're not only being opposed, but opposing. "The flesh [lusts] against the Spirit, the Spirit against the flesh...these [two] are contrary the one to the other: so that [you] cannot do the things that [you] would," the Scripture says (Gal. 5:17). This kingdom is offensive; we attack their kingdom. We are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, praise God! (Matt. 5:13-14) We're not playing this thing hoping not to lose. We're a people that set out against the enemy, and having done all, we stand (Eph. 6:13).

Are you being opposed by sickness? What are you doing about it? Do you have loved ones that are in bondage to darkness? What are you doing about it? "Well, I'm just kind of hoping that things are going to work out right." Where in the Scriptures do you see, "Hope that things work out right"? The Bible tells you what to do. It tells you how to deal with demons. It tells you how to deal with sickness. It tells you how to deal with false doctrine. It tells you how to deal with darkness. You reprove it! We're children of light. We have no fellowship with darkness. It is not a kingdom of passivity; it's a kingdom of violence! "I did not come to bring peace," Jesus said, "I came to bring a sword" (Matt. 10:34). *"The Kingdom of Violence, Pt. 1," March 2, 2003, Sunday AM*

# Heralding The Gospel

*“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.” (Matthew 5:13)*

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The Lord brought the foundational principles of the kingdom of God in the “Sermon on the Mount.” He laid down one of the primary responsibilities that we have as citizens of the kingdom. Our first responsibility is to walk in obedience and to emulate Him in every way. The second responsibility we have is the mutual love, care, and edification of the body of Christ. Our third responsibility is to declare and distribute the good news of the gospel. That’s why we’re here. Everything that the Lord has done is to establish this kingdom. The kingdom is made up of that three-pronged, or three-layered, foundation. The problem is that in a lot of churches today, ministries emphasize one of the three, and many times overemphasize to the point of ignoring the others.

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Matt. 5:13-14). We see in His revelation of the kingdom of God the responsibility we as believers have to be salt and light. You go into certain churches, and all you hear about is evangelism. You go into other churches, and all you hear about is discipleship. If we’re going to properly represent the Lord, we have the responsibility to be involved in all of these areas under the direction of the Holy Spirit and to see them not only being supernaturally

implemented, but supplemented. Unless the Lord builds the house, we're laboring in vain (Ps. 127:1). We're not just going to pick and choose whichever doctrine we think we like and what appeals to us, but we understand that the Holy Spirit orders the steps of His representatives and His ambassadors. Many times the emphasis changes in our lives, and it should change in communities of believers like this. Churches, then, shouldn't be locked into being known as a "discipleship church," an "evangelism church," or a "holiness church," but the church expresses itself in all of these areas.

Thank God for those that are ready, willing, and looking for opportunities to find a housetop somewhere that they can shout from. What we've received in secret, the Scripture says, we're to shout from the housetops (Matt. 10:27)! We've got some young people that are fired up right now, praise God! They're wanting to use all their spare time out sharing the gospel. I've got one thing to say about that: go for it, praise God! Don't let anybody hinder you, but you can go to an extreme. You can do that to the exclusion of the community. You can get so caught up in declaring the gospel that you're not refreshing yourself with His presence. Keep each aspect in its proper place, and let the Spirit of God order, declare, and provide the power necessary to effect His purposes. Each one of us needs to be involved in the heralding of the gospel. It's not an option. I can safely say that you are overemphasizing the other areas if you are excluding this third area of evangelism. You're not fulfilling the eternal purposes in declaring the kingdom of God without a bold representation of this gospel message in your daily lives. You are the salt of the earth, and if the salt has lost its savor, it's good for nothing. "*Seen and Heard, Pt. 1,*" May 12, 2001, Sunday AM