

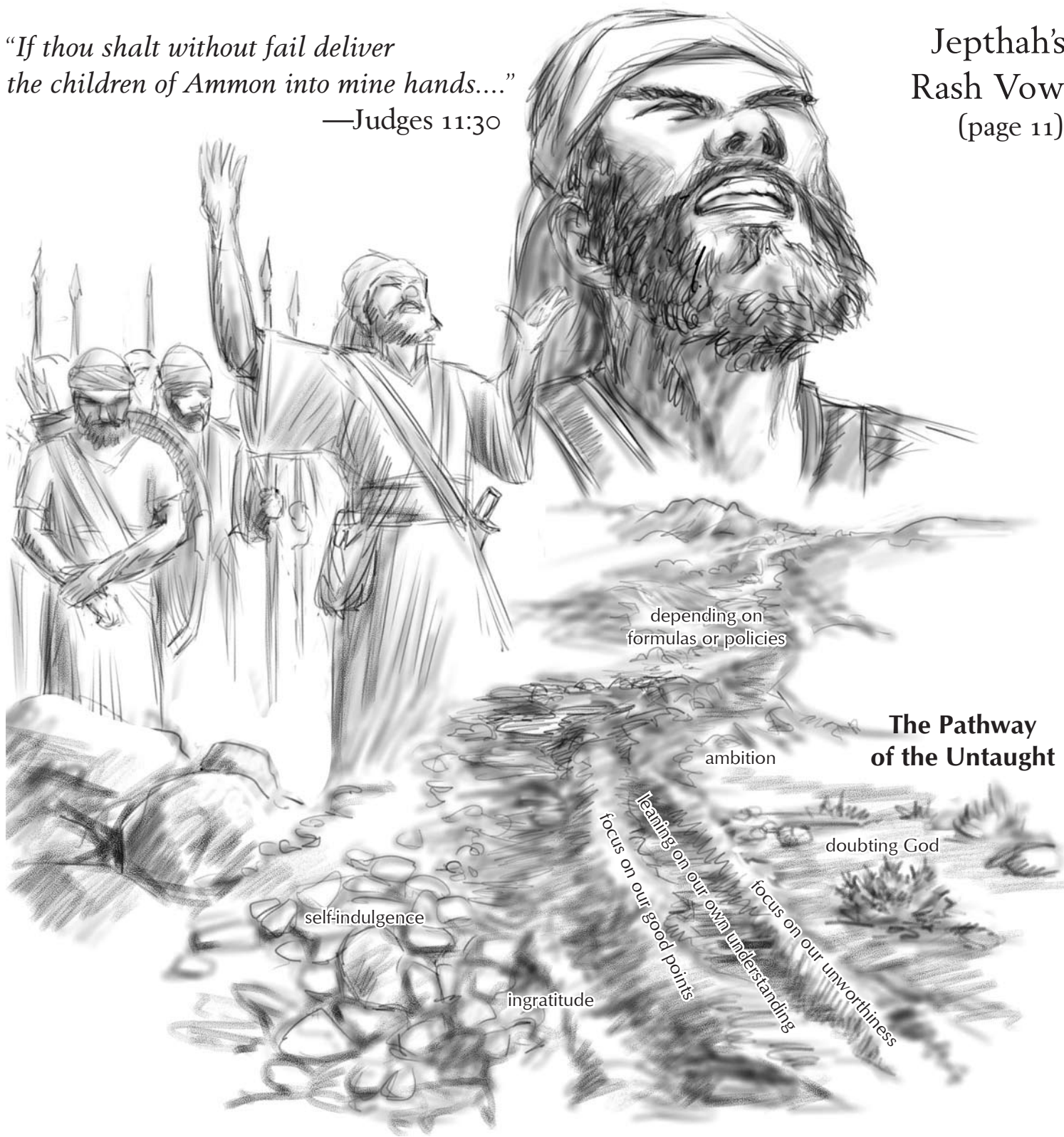
# FOUNDATION TRUTH

Number 21  
Summer 2008

*“If thou shalt without fail deliver  
the children of Ammon into mine hands...”*

—Judges 11:30

Jeptah's  
Rash Vow  
(page 11)



depending on  
formulas or policies

ambition

**The Pathway  
of the Untaught**

doubting God

focus on our good points

focus on our unworthiness

self-indulgence

ingratitude

leaning on our own understanding

## Dear Reader

*"Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me; When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil; When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me."* Job 29:2-11

Job was in the midst of his great trial, and the contrasts between the present and the not too distant past were very much on his mind. He was bereft of his children, his wealth was gone, his health was gone, and the respect he had been accustomed to from others was gone also. It is quite natural to compare current trials unfavorably with happy and prosperous times. And yet, Job's assessment of how things were going was different than the Lord's. Earlier in the trial, God speaks of Job thus: *"Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause."*<sup>23</sup> And although He has somewhat to rebuke Job later, yet he speaks again of Job in this way to Job's three friends: *"You have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job has. Now therefore take seven bullocks and seven rams and go to My servant Job and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept [his prayer] that I deal not with you after your folly, in that you have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job has."*<sup>42:7-8</sup>

Outwardly, it looked disastrous. In terms of feelings and circumstances, it was the worst time in Job's life. But in the heavenly

perspective, this trial was the proof of Job's integrity and trust in God, and a great victory was being won.

We don't have to go through as extreme a trial as Job to think in similar ways. When we are sick for a long time, it is quite natural to yearn for the days when you were well. When we feel the weight of the complex problems of life, we may yearn for the "simple" days of our childhood. If we suffer the loss of a loved one, we may yearn for the old days when we were happy together. These reactions are natural enough, but are they sound? Are they profitable? Do they give us courage in our trials? These comparisons are driven by our feelings, and put an emphasis in our hearts on the present suffering. But what is the heavenly perspective? *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*<sup>Rom. 8:18</sup> *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."*<sup>2 Cor. 4:17</sup> Here's more heavenly thinking: *"They returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."*<sup>Acts 14:21-22</sup> And still more: *"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."*<sup>1 Pet. 4:12-13</sup>

Let us seek the heavenly perspective in our trials, that we may prosper in our souls.

*"Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this."*<sup>Ec. 7:10</sup>

Love and prayers,  
The Editor



## About Us

We want to be of assistance to those who desire to live for God and make heaven their home, and we want to work with the Holy Spirit in stirring and awakening all others to the great necessity of doing so.

*Foundation Truth* is meant to be of general interest, but different articles may be of particular interest to different members of the family (which we attempt to indicate in the table of contents), but we look to the Lord for direction on what to include, and the structure may vary from issue to issue.

We publish *Foundation Truth* by faith, its only support being free-will offerings that God lays on the hearts of His children to keep this ministry supplied. If the Lord lays it on your heart to contribute, please make out any checks or money orders to Richard Erickson—we have difficulty depositing any monies made out to *Foundation Truth*.

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TIMELESS TRUTHS PUBLICATIONS was founded with the purpose of spreading the timeless truths revealed in God's Word. We publish literature that encourages folks in walking the straight and narrow road that leads to heaven. Our chief corner-stone is Jesus, and with our focus on Him, we try to avoid putting too much attention on any person or persons. If you are interested in knowing more about us and what we believe, feel free to contact us.

In addition to *Foundation Truth*, we also publish *Treasures of the Kingdom*, "Casting Up a Highway for the Children of This Generation," a quarterly magazine for children ages five to ten.

Back issues of our periodicals, including the former *Dear Princess* magazine, are available at our website, [timelesstruths.org](http://timelesstruths.org), as well as a growing collection of hymn sheet music and online books, tracts, articles and sermons.

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edited by Rick Erickson and others

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There came a night when they thought the end would come. The watchers, in love and pity, did what they could and waited. Finally one of them leaned over compassionately and asked, "Is there anything we can do for you, Faith?"

"Yes," came the weak response; "anoint me and pray for me."

In the long course of that illness, she had been anointed and prayed for twenty-seven times. But who had the heart to deny the request of a loved friend? Once more they anointed her and prayed, perhaps with less faith than at any previous time. But amid this awful suffering, Faith Stewart had never given up, and as they prayed once more, she felt the power of God, the healing power, touch her body, and she quietly said, "I am healed. Let everyone go to bed, and I will sleep and rest."

They were very reluctant to go, but finally all retired save one friend who insisted on lying down in the sick room until morning. That night sound, healing sleep came, and she rested all night. When she awakened, she looked and felt perfectly normal.

—Grace G. Henry, *Highways and Hedges*

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. - 2 Tim. 2:15*

## Pastoral Authority

### What is the extent of the authority of a minister of God?

This is an area that has a lot of confusion here among what is called the “Church(es) of God.” Some groups insist that a pastor in a congregation has authority even to “rule” the individual on personal matters like finances, etc, etc. This has led to some “pastors” doing awful things (adultery—claiming that they have powers over the bodies of the women—taking away people’s property, salaries, etc., etc.), just because they believe they have full powers over these people. Some have torn away homes of others, separating husbands and wives. Others teach that one pastor may be “above” other pastors and may be the “big shot” over them to rule and lead them as he sees fit.

### Reply:

There is not only no Bible for these things; there is clear Bible teaching **against** them:

*“Not for that we have **dominion over your faith**, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.”* <sup>2 Cor. 1:24</sup>

*“Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”* <sup>1 Pet. 5:3</sup>

*“But whoso [preachers, pastors, anybody] shall offend [cause to stumble] one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”* <sup>Mt. 18:6</sup>

We see how personally Jesus takes it when whoever truly causes it to be difficult for someone to live saved. *“That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.”* <sup>1 Th. 4:6-7</sup> It is quite possible to go beyond. Go beyond what? Answer: Go beyond holiness. Sin against others. Wound their weak conscience so they are left struggling. Be warned: **the Lord is the avenger of all such.** When you offend the least of His little ones, you offend **Him**, and you are going to have to answer for it to Him. Little good it will do you to stammer out an explanation that you did it for their good when Jesus Christ is personally offended with you for going beyond holiness. And I ask you, “Are you an example of how believers should act toward one another when you go beyond holiness?” You will answer for it. *“He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* <sup>Heb. 10:28-31</sup> “Oh!” you say. “I haven’t done all that. At the most, I was too zealous for the saints to live close lives.”

Jesus says that you are guilty if you cause one of His sheep to stumble. I tell you, “He takes it personally!” If you go beyond, you are in grave danger of the

excruciatingly fair judgment of Him who is indescribably holy and pure.

*“But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.”* <sup>1 Cor. 8:12</sup>

*“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, **Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.**”* <sup>Mt. 25:40</sup>

*“But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.”* <sup>Lk. 12:45-46</sup>

*“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, **all of you be subject one to another**, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”* <sup>1 Pet. 5:5</sup>

This scripture is all-conclusive. It teaches the submission of every believer to every other believer. The rule of holiness applies to all. The living presence of Christ in each believer is the basis of submission of each believer to the other. No big “I”s and little “you”s. The poet put it like this:

“The Bible is our rule of faith,  
and **Christ alone is Lord**,  
**All we are equal in His sight**  
when we obey His word;  
No earthly master do we know,  
to man-rule will not bow,  
But to each other and to God  
eternal trueness vow.”

And this is scripturally sound.

But what do these scriptures mean, then?—

*“Obey **them that have the rule over you**, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give ac-*

*It is quite possible to go beyond.*

*Go beyond what?*

*Answer: Go beyond holiness.*

count, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Heb. 13:17

"Salute all **them that have the rule over you, and all the saints.**" vs. 24

"And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest **will I set in order when I come.**" 1 Cor 11:34

"For though I should boast somewhat more of **our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed.**" 2 Cor 10:8

"Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, **according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.**" 2 Cor 13:10

"These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke **with all authority.** Let no man despise thee." Tit. 2:15

In discussing what is **not** going beyond holiness in the authority of a minister in God's church and in discussing what is going beyond holiness, it is necessary to state some basic truths.

(1) No minister can save someone else. Indeed, no minister can save himself. We are all utterly dependent upon God's grace and mercy to be accepted of Him at all, and to grow, prosper, and stay saved.

(2) No minister can compel someone else to be saved. Jesus only has voluntary servants. Compulsion that forces or binds someone to do something is not of God. Satan binds. Satan forces. Jesus **knocks**. Who has better right to force the door of any heart? But He **knocks**. "**If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.**" Rev. 3:20 Jesus draws. Jesus woos. Jesus brings us to the service of voluntary love because He first loved us. We continually choose and re-choose over and over to keep loving Jesus. God puts a high value on voluntary love for Him.

(3) The doing of things is not as important in the eyes of God as **the motive** for doing them. It does no good and does a great deal of harm to force people to do good things when they are not convicted of them out of personal love for God. It is an act of hypocrisy to do something that seems to indicate that I love God when I am actually doing it for another reason. A

wife that acts as if she loves her husband, but actually does not and has another motive for the act, is deceptive and guilty of fraud. The same is true of husbands. I may insist on others doing things of which I personally am convicted out of love to God; but if they do not do them **because they love God**, then it is not acceptable service in the eyes of Him who continually sees the motives of the heart. I am convinced that many people are doing things for reasons other than love for God. Perhaps it is public pressure; perhaps their pastor requires it of them; perhaps they simply have been trained in the habit and tradition of whatever they are doing; perhaps it is simply self advantage. Whatever the motive, God sees it and accordingly values or does not value the things done/not done.

One minister I know stubbornly contended that "it was good for them anyhow"; but he lied. I am afraid that he, too, did a number of things out of something other than love for God. I am afraid that his

sinners, hypocrites, and His sheep. This is the work of the ministry. We are to serve, to minister. We are to be the servants of all (Mt. 23:10-12; Lk. 22:25-27). Yes, ministers are the servants of sinners and hypocrites, as well as the sheep, for Jesus' sake. It is a disgrace for a professed minister to be a "prima donna"; that is, self-seeking and demanding of privileges. It is a disgrace for a professed minister to lord it over the people. We are ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20), and are commissioned to represent Him to the people. God is interested in the insides of people being made right first, for Jesus knows that if a man is right on the inside, the outside will become clean, also. Notice how He condemned the Pharisees. "**Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.**" Mt. 23:25-26

*I may insist on others doing things of which I am convicted out of love to God; but if they do not do them because they love God, then it is not acceptable service in the eyes of Him who continually sees the motives of the heart.*

zeal for outward conformity arose from something other than love for God. No, it is *not* good for them. It is hypocritical and misleading, and **God will not accept it**. He knows **why** people are doing what they do. A great number of people are "serving" the Lord out of self-interest, not out of genuine love for Him. It would be better to know hardly anything and really love God than to know a lot about serving Him and hardly love Him. This business of living for God really comes down to truly loving Him and wanting to please Him because you love Him.

Now Jesus calls some of His children to the serious and weighty responsibility of communicating and holding without compromise or excess the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ before all. All would include

We that are ministers of the Lord Jesus are entrusted with the responsibility of buying **the everlasting gospel** ourselves so that we are ensamples of what the gospel does, and we are to never to surrender it (Pr. 23:23; 1 Th. 2:1-5). We are entrusted to hold this (1) by how we live, (2) by what we say, and (3) by whom we receive and (4) to whom we extend sympathy. This everlasting gospel accurately and clearly depicts what is acceptable service to God. Amid all the darkness and confusion of this world, the gospel is a lighthouse to God. If we fail to warn, we will answer for it. If we mislead or bend the gospel, we will answer to Him for it. We are given authority from God to hold the gospel clearly and rightly before all others that they might see what God requires of them. If people will not

listen to or acknowledge the gospel, then we are obligated in the fear of God to honestly and truthfully label that response (or non-response) for what it is and warn all others of the consequences.

It is our responsibility to “*cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*”<sup>Is. 58:1</sup> “*These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*”<sup>Tit. 2:15</sup> And we are to accomplish this incessant crying out against all sin and the necessity of holiness **without strife** of a fleshly nature.

“*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*”<sup>2 Tim. 2:24-26</sup> Our Lord has left us an example of this in His earthly ministry. “*He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.*”<sup>Is. 42:2</sup> When he answered Pilate’s

*every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*”<sup>2 Cor. 10:3-5</sup> But note that the nature of this warfare is such that it never infringes on the right of men to make their choice. It may go so far as to handicap or block opposition to the truth (Acts 13:6-12) so that others may exercise their right to choose, but it leaves the final judgment of others to God. There is no **oppression** in it.

It is the responsibility of each true minister of God to so conduct himself as to be able to obey God in preaching the gospel with liberty. Paul tells us “*of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.*”<sup>Gal. 2:4</sup> And he continues with his reaction, “*To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.*”<sup>vs. 5</sup> To be faithful to God and His truth, we must be willing to pay whatever price is necessary. This may mean breaking friendships, fellowships, family ties, and church ties, **but**

**Jesus must be first.**

It may mean that people don’t like you and your reputation is destroyed, but being faithful to Jesus is far more important than anything else. Eventually, you are going to answer to

**the Chief Shepherd.** Oh, what will you tell Him? Will you have been a good steward over that which He committed to you?

In *Remove Not the Ancient Landmarks*, the minister says, “A minister’s right to speak is a priceless treasure. Without it, he becomes useless as a minister and overseer of the flock of God and a watchman on the wall to warn of approaching danger.” The minister goes on to trace the effects of letting down in presenting the gospel:

It is evident beyond question that the necktie has served as a mouth stopper in the hands of Satan. He who wears a tie has no right to speak against a string of pearls that a woman wears around her neck. Anything and everything that could be said for or against either of these could also apply to the other in the same way. Likewise the woman who wears the string

of pearl beads around her neck would have no right to speak about the person who wore some other kind of jewelry. And this person who wears the jewelry, of whatever kind it is, would have no right to speak about the person who wore make-up, etc. And so on and on it goes, one thing after another, while the minister is helpless to prevent it. They have forfeited their right to speak.

“Oh,” but you may say, “I know ministers who really preach it straight and cry out against those kind of things.” Yes. But is there any authority back of it? Is it effectual that they do? Do not these things continue to increase, among those who profess to be the Church of God of this day, and also many other lines of worldliness, without letup? We all know this to be true, and it is for no other cause than that the ministers in this movement who cry out against these things have forfeited their right to do so and consequently all their crying out is weak and ineffectual. The fact that these things are cried out against by some and yet increases only adds weight to my argument at this point.

—Ostis B. Wilson, Jr.

I was riding in a car with another minister that I knew, and we were leaving a rented campground wherein we had attended services. The campground was rented to many different churches at times, and was equipped with baseball fields, etc. I remarked that I was glad that none of us were minded to use those facilities. The minister said, “If some of us had started playing baseball, I would have run out there and stopped it. They wouldn’t have been able to continue.” This is **going beyond**. What good would it do to stop the game, if the game was still going on in their hearts? And just how far would he go to control things? Would he throw them in jail if he could? Beat them? Put them in the stocks? How would he do these things meekly? How could he be blameless and harmless? How could the people see the spiritual issues beyond him?

So... should we just shrug our shoulders in resignation and do nothing? No. We must hold the truth of the matter before the people, even at the cost of our lives, if necessary. So we just have to preach at people in meeting? No, we can preach on the field. We can call on God to help us. But if we take things into our own hands,

*And we are to accomplish this incessant crying out against all sin and the necessity of holiness without strife of a fleshly nature.*

question, He said, “*My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*”<sup>Jn. 18:36</sup> Jesus did not practice mob tactics; He was not a sensationalist nor did He manipulate people with passionate speeches appealing to their earthly desires. He did not believe that the ends justified the means. On the contrary, He knew that defending holiness by stepping out of holiness means that you have already lost it, and **He never stepped out of holiness.**

But is there not spiritual strife? Yes, certainly. “*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and*

our very efforts will mar the conception of the gospel in the hearts and minds of those who need help.

By the time we get to where we **make** the people do right, the entire concept of choosing to do right out of voluntary love to God is lost. The heart of the thing is gone. No matter how apparently advantageous the formula. “Well,” you may say, “if it is compromised away, it is lost, too!” Yes, **it is lost either way**. The whole idea is for it *not* to be lost.

We notice in the Bible that one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is **longsuffering** (Gal. 5:22). “*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.*” <sup>Eph. 4:1-2</sup> We have watched those who give place to the great zeal to **compel** right behavior. They have little grace for longsuffering, lowliness, or meekness. Forebearance, either.

There is something about the “mastery-of-others” path that leads to arrogance and pride. One becomes dangerous and is feared. It is all the difference in forcing a woman to become your wife, as compared to winning her affections. It is the difference between a marriage where the head of the family lords it over the wife or where he dwells with her according to knowledge.

Let’s try a few synonyms for *compel*: bully; bulldoze; dictate; dominate; enslave; force; intimidate; lord it over; oppress; overmaster; repress; ride roughshod over; subjugate; suppress; terrorize; trample down; trample upon; tread down; tread upon; tyrannize; walk all over.

Just think of it!—I will **bully** people into living for God. I will **dominate** people into living for God. I will **intimidate** people into living for God. I will **terrorize** people into living for God. They must **submit**.

GOD FORBID!

“*And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.*” <sup>Lk. 9:54-56</sup>

Now, as to one minister lording it over the rest, all the previous scriptures apply. Each true minister is but one of the sheep, just specially used to preach and hold the gospel. The following scripture should settle the matter with all honest hearts:

“*But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. **But so shall it not be among you.***” <sup>Mk. 10:42-43</sup>

“*Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.*” <sup>1 Pet. 3:8</sup> ➔

## God Helps a Computer Programmer

One morning I arrived at work in the midst of quite a turmoil about problems that had happened with the nightly computer processing. Certain records appeared to have been dropped that were supposed to remain on one of the files. The people working on the problem had determined that it had happened at the end of the previous week, but hadn’t resulted in noticeable problems until the following Monday night. The supervisor identified the only program in the system that he knew was designed to drop any records, and it was one I had made some changes to late the last week. So I was put in the hot seat, and I was given two tasks: 1) identify the actual body of records that were dropped, and figure out how to get them back onto the file, and 2) find and fix the problem in the program, so that it didn’t do more damage the next week (it was a weekly process).

Well, identifying the missing records wasn’t too difficult—someone had already identified the specific backup of the file that was just before the records were dropped. It turned out there were over 7,000 of them (only about 25 to 30 records should have

been dropped), and I created a process to put them back on the file, which would involve removing them from user access for up to half an hour.

The second problem, however, proved more difficult. I had made some changes to the program the previous week to fix an earlier problem that had been identified, but as much as I studied the program logic, I could

Well, the test proved something, all right.

not figure out any reason for the dropping of all those records that shouldn’t have been dropped. It occurred to me that I ought to pray, but I was so involved in trying to study the problem that I put it off a little. Then I stopped to earnestly beseech the Lord for help, but I found the devil putting in my mind the thought that it was no use, I’d already searched unsuccessfully. I resisted that thought and the feelings of futility that came with it, and set myself to trust the Lord to help me. (You can probably guess how the story ends now, can’t you?)

The Lord has a sense of humor and knows how to deal with our silly little self-confidences. After praying, it occurred to me that I could perform a simple test to demonstrate that the program really wasn’t the culprit after all, or in the unlikely event that it was, to give some clues as to where the problem lay. I was still minded to believe the problem lay somewhere else, and ran the test with that thought uppermost. Well, the test proved something, all right. It proved that the program was the culprit, and gave me clues for just what type of problem in the logic to look for. By careful examination of the record that wasn’t dropped, and the logic of the program, I found the problem. And yes, it was right in the logic that I had added, all right.

I made the fix, retested the program (it now worked correctly, thank the Lord), and announced my “guilt” and the solution to those who had been involved in the problem. By the time I went home everything was back to normal, and I got to marvel at God’s ability to humble me and enable me to think clearly at the same time! ➔

# TELL WHAT HE'S DONE FOR YOU

Refrain

Oh, tell what He's done,

what He's done

love of love,

so

strong and true;

## Healed from a Heart Attack

Dear Ones,

On August 21, 2008, around 2:00 a.m., my husband and I were spending some time together as he had just arrived home from work. As we talked, I felt an uncomfortable sensation in my chest. It felt like something squeezing my heart with rather firm pressure. I brushed it off as nothing, maybe some heartburn, and said nothing to my husband. After a few minutes, my husband went into the kitchen, as I was going to prepare a snack. I sat on the bed feeling this uncomfortable, odd sensation and prayed, "Lord, You know what is going on with me. You see my husband's need for me to fix some food for him. Please give me strength."

The pressure in my chest became more intense, and I was suddenly, terribly hot. As I began tearing off my clothes, pain shot through my chest, feeling like it was being ripped inside. I could feel my heart racing and suddenly realized this was not heartburn; something was really wrong. I was praying, but there was no relief. Mustering all my energy, I called my husband. He was terribly alarmed. I told him, "Pray—there is something wrong with my heart." He prayed, then tried to call my parents for prayer. They were visiting in my grandmother's home and had their phone turned off. There was no reaching them.

We felt we needed an agreement in prayer from other saints and called some brothers and sisters in Oregon. I was not able to communicate with them how severe the pain had become, but Husband told them we were in a crisis, and it was so reassuring to know they were ready to pray and were confident that God was there with us in the midst of this trial.

My chest felt like it was being weighed down with a big truck, it was so hard to breathe. I have suffered from allergies before and had difficulty breathing, but this was far worse. I felt that I was dying. The faces of my parents and my sister flashed through my mind, along with the thought, "It doesn't matter that I won't see them again here, I will see them on the other side." I heard the saints praying, but it was far away and I really didn't comprehend what they were saying. In that time where I felt life slipping away, I am so thankful that there was no fear. I truly was at peace. I had no desire to call for medical help. If my time was over on earth, I was ready to see Jesus and go home.

Then it washed over me into the depths of my soul that this was not God's time for me to go. He had other plans. He still wanted me here to be a help-meet to my husband, a mother to our daughter. I was not feeling any better, but I began to have confidence that no matter how I felt, I wasn't going to die. I began to pray inside my soul that God would give me the ability to pray aloud, in agreement with the other saints. God gave me just enough relief to be able to do this. In tears, I poured out my heart before God, consecrating to suffer as long as He chose. It seemed that the more I prayed, it became clearer to me that God had given this physical battle to deal with spiritual battles. Even while I was still in pain, my heart was lifted with hope and courage that God was there, measuring out this trial, watching over us. I had felt alone and overwhelmed, but God opened my eyes to Heaven's great cloud of witnesses. The pain was still oppressing my physical heart, yet

spiritually, my heart began to soar upwards to God's throne in thankfulness and gratitude that He never leaves us alone. It may feel that it is our darkest hour of suffering, yet Jesus is still there. He truly cares and never afflicts willingly.

After quite a bit of prayer was offered, asking God for relief for the pressure and pain, one sister suggested we sing "Faith is Believing" in victory and expectancy of God. As the saints lifted their voices in song, God reached down and touched my chest, relieving me of all pressure, pain and suffering. In that one instant, my health and energy was restored. As the last notes died away, I said in a perfectly normal voice, "The pain is all gone." Our souls were filled with heaven's glory and we praised God together.

My heart has been overflowing with thanksgiving to our all-wise Lord. In my heart has been ringing the song,

"I thought I needed sunshine,  
but the Lord sent a rain,  
I thought I needed healing,  
but I got my share of pain,  
I've been looking for a mountain top,  
but a valley's all I see;  
Jesus seems to always know  
exactly what I need."

I had thought I needed health, because my husband needed me to fix food. Jesus knew I needed pain and suffering at that moment. When I did make that snack, only a couple of hours later, it was a blessing like few other cooking experiences. I thought I was going to die because I felt my life slipping away, but God planned healing instead. In our humanity, we often look to how we feel and what seems best to us or most likely to happen. It is really just a guess; we don't really know



what we need. Jesus knows. No guessing. He really knows exactly what we need each moment of our lives. Not only that, but Jesus measures each trial we need with His love, and promises to carry us through without giving us more than we can bear.

Jesus has done so much, so what is our part? We are to trust. Put our lives, our questions, hopes, and fears all into His hands and walk in faith, doubting nothing. What a blessed life of trust is available to each one of God's children. To each of His own, God reaches out His hands and says, "Trust Me. Put your hands in Mine, doubting nothing, only follow."

"I'll follow Jesus here,  
I'll never, never fear,  
Though Satan's tempting pow'rs assail,  
And though I'm tempted sore,  
I'll trust Him evermore,  
For thro' His grace I shall prevail.

"I'll follow by His side,  
Whatever may betide,  
Though perils thickly throng the way,  
Though billows deep may roll,  
There's naught can harm my soul,  
For He is with me night and day.

"I'll follow all the way,  
I'll never, never stray,  
This world no more can win my love;  
I've left it all behind,  
More lasting joys to find,  
My treasures all are stored above.

"I'll follow, follow on  
Until the crown is won,  
And heaven's gates unfold to me;  
Then with my harp in hand,  
I'll join that happy band,  
And praise Him through eternity.

"I'll follow, I'll follow,  
I'll follow Jesus all the way;  
I'll follow, I'll follow,  
To the home of everlasting day."

Because of Jesus,  
Abigail Danielsens 

## A Call in the Night

*Ring... ring.* The sound seemed muffled and far away. *RING... RING.* It must be the telephone. Half asleep, I hoped someone would answer it.

*RING!* My sister's bed creaked and footsteps dashed down the hall. Silence. Was she too late? A muffled voice assured me that connection had been made.

*Murmur-murmur-murmur.* What time was it, anyhow? 2:40 am. It must be a call for prayer. Sleepily I asked the Lord to help whomever-it-was with whatever-was-the-problem. Not very specific, I'll admit.

Should I get up, Lord? Maybe I really wasn't needed. "Gather to the sound of the trumpet." That's what Nehemiah said to those scattered upon the wall. I pulled myself out of bed and went to join the fray.

"Sister Abigail's having heart pains," my father whispered, as I entered the office. My sister was kneeling in prayer. I joined the circle around the speaker phone.

"Lord, we are sorry if we have been hard of hearing. Please help us," the halting voice over the line was etched with pain. "We are willing to suffer just as—just as long—as You see best." The sob in the sister's voice could not be hid, and a surge of sympathy filled me. What could we say or do to help?

*Isn't it time to practice what you preach? Just last evening you were telling someone that God has victory for us in the worst situations, weren't you?*

Yes, I had. And how much easier it is to say than to do. But I still believed it. The Lord was worthy of our complete confidence. I knew it was true and I meant to live by it.

As the faltering petitions continued, my mind tried to sort out the situation. Only a few weeks before Sister Abigail had gone through a severe affliction which had lasted six days. We had rejoiced in the healing then, but now she was suffering again. In the blackness of night it is easiest to remember the pain and fears. And easy to lose sight of all the precious blessings which the Lord had multiplied to us abundantly in the trial. Somehow the healings

of the past didn't feel so real in the face of this present affliction.

Feelings. Like a storm cloud, they pressed in around us. As a battle to clear the skies, I lifted my own voice in prayer. "We are looking to You, Lord. We know You are our very present help in trouble. You've allowed the sufferings to pile in on us, but we aren't discouraged. We are trusting You."

The inspiration of God's Spirit is often talked about. But it is in the moment of the crisis, when the need is as real as life and all talk is worth nothing, that "*the prayer of faith*"<sup>Jas. 5:15</sup> has to be more than a figure of speech. If God is real, He is real when there is nothing to prop Him up or defend Him. "*I have declared, and I have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.*"<sup>Is. 43:12</sup>

And so it was in that hour of need. No longer was it our battle against the pain and our struggle to take hold of the promises alone. The promises were ours and our Lord was there with us. He was our Healer and no past experiences would rob us of what He came to give us. We would not be confounded. So we prayed on in inspired confidence.

"You have a purpose in sending us this trial, Lord. We believe that You want to increase our faith. You want us to importune before You and keep trusting despite the unbelief around us. This world is full of those that don't believe in Your desire to heal us and help us. O Lord, You wondered if there would be faith on the earth when You came! Help us to trust You in a way that pleases You!"

"Please, pray for me," Brother Jonathan's voice interjected on the line. "I just don't know why God is allowing this trial. Abigail was doing so well, and now this!" His voice broke in anguish. The dark clouds of despair were engulfing his vision, and he couldn't see any way out.

"We can't go by our feelings," my father spoke up. "So often I am tempted to think that there is no help when I need it, even when God has proven true time and time

again. He is faithful. We must put our trust in that.”

“O God, don’t let Abigail die,” Brother Jonathan’s voice quavered. “I can’t live without her—I know I could with Your help, but I need her so much!” His pathos was touching, but the forbidding gloom was not. It was drowning out all hope and confidence in the ability of God. “But why does she have to suffer like this?” he groaned. “Doesn’t God even care? What if He let’s her die? I won’t be able to live without a wife!”

“What are you looking at, brother?” I challenged him. “Those dark pictures are not from God! The devil is the one who seeks to destroy us. Wasn’t it just last week that you were testifying how God had revealed His love to you in healing your wife? We must put our faith in Him and not look at our feelings.”

“Oh, I don’t have much confidence at all,” he faltered.

“Confidence is not feelings. Confidence is believing in God’s power. It is stating that He is stronger than our foe. He is not de-

feated. He loves us!” The spiritual conflict rose up before my vision, and I gloried in the ability and goodness of my General. Could any hold a candle to what He could do? Never!

“Faith is believing the promise is true,” we sang. “Trusting in Jesus your strength to renew!” As the words of confidence flowed from our hearts, we prayed that this brother would be brought out into the light of faith. The Lord answered our petition in a marvelous way.

“Jonathan, I have no more pain,” Sister Abigail’s voice said as we finished the song.

A note of wonderment and awe flooded across the line as Brother Jonathan echoed the words—“Abigail says she has no more pain! Why did God do this for us? What is He trying to tell me?”

“That He loves you,” we replied, with a full heart of joy.

“But He just touched her, like that! I don’t deserve it. I wasn’t really believing anything would happen, because God wouldn’t help

me until I was all straightened out. I thought she would suffer for a long time. But now God’s made her well! I guess He must really love me.”

“Oh, yes. Let us thank Him,” my father said with feeling. Our hearts were filled with the reality of the very present Help in trouble—our God who was worthy of our fullest trust.

“Can we sing ‘The Love of God?’” Sister Abigail asked. As her clear voice came across the line, we rejoiced in the proof of the heavenly touch. Yes, the love of God was real, and how gracious!

As we marveled over the victory together, Brother Jonathan said, “I see now. God doesn’t send us afflictions because He wants us to suffer, but because He wants to teach us something. How good He has been to us! And I’m so thankful that you were willing to be woken up to pray with us. It didn’t bother you?”

“No, not at all,” my father said. My sister and I agreed. It was a victory we wouldn’t have missed. ➡

## Heavenly-Mindedness

from *Heavenly Life for Earthly Living*, by Charles E. Orr

Spiritual-mindedness is equal with heavenly-mindedness. To have a spiritual mind is to have a heavenly mind. “*To be spiritually minded is life and peace.*”<sup>Rom. 8:6</sup> The writer of the Philippian letter said, “*Let this mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus.*”<sup>Phil. 2:5</sup> Jesus was heavenly-minded. He minded not fleshly things. While on earth, He lived more in heaven, in thought, than He did on earth. This is true of all who live heavenly or who possess the mind of Christ.

Jesus had a correct view of human life. He knew how to meet all of life’s problems. He had the knowledge and the power to solve all of life’s difficulties. We are to yoke up with Him, and meet life with Him. Yoked with Jesus is the only triumphant way of meeting and bearing the burdens of life. When we have Christ’s mind, we can know Christ’s ways and can turn things of life to our use as He did. He knew how to make use of everything in life to aid Him on in His life’s work. So we, armed with the mind of Jesus, hold the

secret of using everything that comes to us in such a manner as to help us on in the heavenly way. We hold the secret of having affliction to work out for us an exceeding, eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17).

When having the mind of Jesus, we learn that difficulties, hardships, obstacles, afflictions, and persecutions are to be woven into the fiber of our character and make us more like Him. When we meet the scourgings, the buffetings, the threatenings as He met them, we grow into His beautiful likeness. The purpose of God in allowing afflictions to come upon His children is to make them more heavenly. The divine nature is developed in us under the chastening rod. When we have the mind of Jesus, and it is fully operating in us, everything in life takes its proper place. We see things as they are and for the purposes they were intended. We walk above earthly things. We are in bondage to nothing on earth, not even to death. The grave has lost its victory. We stand a conqueror over all the world. We

are reigning in this life. The world lies subject at our feet. We triumph in the same way that Jesus triumphed. In Colossians are these wonderful words, “*And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*”<sup>Col. 2:15</sup> “It” here means the cross. They who nailed Him to the cross thought they were triumphing over Jesus, but they were only nailing an end to the old law system and working for Him the very thing He came to earth for. He made a show of the persecuting powers openly by making them His conquests. They did for Him that which heaven planned from the foundation of the world and made Him the Savior of the world. By this, He worked out the glorious plan of salvation, and through this, He will enjoy the fellowship and companionship of the redeemed throughout all eternity. When men, even though it be by persecuting us, help us to the very position we desire, we triumph over them in the thing they have done. ➡



# JEPHTHAH

a man who misunderstood God

**N**ow Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman. Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him." Jdg 11:1-3

God here acquaints us with the unfair pressures that shaped Jephthah's life. It wasn't Jephthah's fault that his father sinned and put him in such a predicament. Nor was it fair for the other sons of Jephthah's father to treat him in such a way as to make him feel obligated to leave the country, especially since he seems to have achieved some merit in his life: "Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour." It is a further measure of just how respected he was for his valour that (in spite of the thrusting of him out of the home) when the Israelites were in trouble with the Ammonites, they went to him for assistance (see vs. 4-11).

And so this man, Jephthah, responded to a life-or-death crisis. He would either prevail against the children of Ammon or they would prevail against him and his people. The trial would either make him or break

him. To fail would be utterly disastrous; to succeed would mean everything.

Such pressure as this brings out a great deal of what we have. And we are given a picture of how Jephthah thought and how spiritually prepared he was for the crisis of his life by the conversation between Jephthah and the king of the Ammonites.

In verse 12, Jephthah asked the king of the Ammonites, "What is wrong? Why do you want to fight us?"

This king replies to Jephthah, "Israel took away our lands [300 years ago]. Now restore them" (vs. 13).

Jephthah then makes a long reply to the Ammonites in verses 14-27. Basically he says that the lands were not taken because Israel just wanted them. The Israelites merely wanted passage through the lands of Ammon (and Moab) to get to Canaan. But these countries would not give that passage and attacked Israel. They were defeated and their lands taken, but not because of Israelite aggression. Furthermore, they have had 300 years to recover their land and had not done so. Jephthah concludes, "Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon." vs. 27

This argument reveals a great deal of knowledge *about* God and His dealings in the past with the Israelites and their neighbors. It is accurate knowledge. God had indeed done those things, and it had happened as Jephthah related it. *What is missing is a current relationship with God, characterized by faith and confidence in Him.* Jephthah knows *about* God, and his knowledge *about* God is correct, but **Jephthah doesn't know God!** Think of this! He is facing the greatest crisis of his life, and he doesn't *know* God! He only knows about Him.

All of this comes out in the vow that Jephthah made. "And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering." vs. 30-31

A man that knew God and had faith in Him would not feel the necessity of making the vow that Jephthah made. He would understand that God did not want or take pleasure in such an extreme commitment. *Jephthah misunderstood the character and nature of God.* He thought within himself that God was of a nature

Think of this! He is facing the greatest crisis of his life,  
and he doesnt KNOW God!

to be moved to help by the extremity and severity of his sacrifice, and *he still thought this (as did his daughter), even when the full extent of that rash vow became apparent.* The awful tragedy of the whole matter is that God was not as Jephthah understood Him. God was all too willing to help and did help them, but God took no pleasure in Jephthah's vow. As the Lord said at a later time to the Israelites, "*They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind.*" <sup>Jer. 19:5</sup>

Now God could have delivered Jephthah from the consequences of his rash vow, just as God delivered the Israelites from the Ammonites. God could have fixed it so that Jephthah's daughter, his only child (vs. 34), did not come out of the house, but God let it be. God let Himself be misunderstood. God let the matter proceed as it did. There were reasons why Jephthah had not gotten to know God as God really is, and the narrative stands as a warning to all of mankind of what we can get into if our heart is not taught of God. If we only know *about* God, rather than knowing Him as He is.

Please note that Jephthah *still* didn't know God even after his ignorance bore terrible fruit. His daughter didn't either. She felt the "necessity" of her father keeping his vow (vs. 36). At terrible cost, the vow was kept, and still they knew not that God took no pleasure in it.

There are many Jephthahs today who imagine that God requires or delights in such and such a thing. Many of these imaginations proceed from a profound misunderstanding and misinterpretation of what God is and what He has done in the past.

"*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.*" <sup>Mt. 23:25</sup>

It is clear that this rash vow of Jephthah was *excess*. Excess is defined as "The state

of surpassing or going beyond limits; the being of a measure beyond sufficiency, necessity, or duty; that which exceeds what is usual or proper; immoderateness; superfluity; superabundance; extravagance." Think of what it means to be guilty of *excess* in the eyes of God! A lack of Holy-Ghost-inspired temperance. The strain of people trying to please their idea of what God is without being taught of Him how to worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

"*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.*" <sup>Eph. 5:18</sup> We are quite willing to say that there is no excessiveness in the requirements and dealings of the Spirit of God. Verily, He requires only reasonable service (Rom. 12:1), *as He defines reasonable*. Now folks who are of a mindset to think that the Lord doesn't care, that He is rather indifferent to much of how we live or do; they also do not have a rightful picture of what God is like, either. Their problem is not the strain of making rash vows; they are more inclined to go to excess in the opposite direction and conclude that God doesn't really require much of anything. And so we see that if we are not led by the Spirit of God, we will be led by *something*, and that something will be of a tendency to excess in one direction or the other. One end of the human reaction scale is compromise and the other end is fanaticism. We submit to your thinking that the right path is not on the human reaction scale at all. Only the Divine Mind knows how we should walk and do (Jer. 10:23), and He wants us to know Him and His way for us. "*But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.*" <sup>Jer. 9:24</sup> It is not in being a "moderate" as we define what moderation is. It is being taught of God in our heart and the fruits that follow of really knowing Him. "*It is written in the prophets, And they shall*

*be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*" <sup>Jn. 6:45</sup>

The story of Jephthah and the untaught hearts of the children of Israel does not end with the eleventh chapter of Judges. It continues into the twelfth. Even the deliverance that God had given the Israelites from the enemy without (the Ammonites) did not unite them. There arose internal dissension over who got left out of the victory, etc., and soon Israelite was shedding the blood of Israelite. When God does not keep the house, even when He in mercy gives relief and help for certain needs, things still do not go well overall, for human effort is in charge. When we do not understand God or His ways correctly, it is not enough to recognize that an individual is really, truly saved (an Israelite). Human wisdom will impose artificial barriers and means of identifying which camp you are in. Are you an Ephraimite? "*Say now Shibboleth.*" <sup>Jdg. 12:6</sup> And if you can't say it just right (by their definition), they will slay you, spiritually speaking. This is the same thing we read about in Revelation 13:17, "*And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*" In Jephthah's time, you were rejected and slain if you couldn't say "Shibboleth." In Revelation, you are rejected and cannot buy or sell if you do not have the "correct" number or name.

The professed Christian world is divided into a multitude of lands, all professing to be Israel. Many people who sing,

"We reach our hands in fellowship  
to every blood-washed one,  
While love entwines about each heart  
in which God's will is done"

have not the faintest idea of a fellowship really based on just being saved. They recognize what they think is saved... *plus something*. This *plus something* can be as simple as being saved *plus* "attending our services." The disciples applied an additional test of fellowship beyond salvation

**When God does not keep the house, even when He in mercy  
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**A son that properly understands the character and love of his father expects good things, nor is he disappointed.**

when they forbid the man casting out devils in the name of Jesus to continue “because he followeth not with us” (see Lk. 9:49-50). Jesus reproved them for forbidding him. They misunderstood the character and nature of God. We see then that a lack of understanding God leads to more of a lack of understanding of God. It just gets off further and further. The rash vow of Jephthah was grievous, but the civil war was infinitely more so.

God wants to be properly understood. He is seeking for true worshipers who want to know, yea, who will not be satisfied with anything else than to really know, what He is really like (Jn. 4:23-24). Oh, He is *seeking* for those who want to know Him as He is! There are so many diligent, careful, *false* worshipers who hold in reverence “another Jesus!” <sup>2 Cor. 11:4</sup>

If we misunderstand God’s motives and His character, we are at enormous disadvantage in pleading His promises or properly interpreting what He does or does not do for us. A son that properly understands the character and love of his father *expects* good things, nor is he disappointed. “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then,

*being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”* <sup>Lk. 11:11-13</sup> Do you see from this scripture that God *wants* to bless you? Do you understand that He is on the giving hand, a God that is near “and not a God afar off?” <sup>Jer. 23:23</sup> To properly understand God is to really admire and adore Him. It will stir firm confidence (faith), complete trust, and rest. “When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.” <sup>Pr. 3:24</sup>

“God loves to be longed for,  
He loves to be sought,  
For He sought us Himself  
with such longing and love:  
He died for desire of us,  
marvellous thought!  
And He yearns for us now  
to be with Him above.”

God’s standards are not peculiarity for the sake of being peculiar. He does not delight in us being strange to worldly minds around us just to be strange. It is *strange* and *peculiar* to really live holy. It is strange and peculiar not to hold grudges and forgive others their trespasses. It is very strange to be humble and meek, to be little in our own eyes. It is completely foreign to natural human nature to live a surrendered, consecrated life without

any ambition other than to please God and be accepted of Him. And God takes pleasure in such a dedicated, plain, careful life. He knows when it begins to *become an end in itself*, too. He knows when it is too loose and gives undue liberty to the flesh, and He knows when it is strained, stretched, and characterized by rash vows. God is not a God who delights in human stretching and straining. God is not pleased by fanaticism. God is not pleased by compromise.

God knows when our idea of His salvation is characterized by too much leaning to our own understanding—a reasoned salvation of human effort mostly, rather than being filled with the Spirit. There is vastly more to God than intellectualism. God is able to bring you into His pavilion until your soul is filled with a sense of His greatness and your appropriate and right-ful (humble) relationship to His bigness. He not only saves us from sin; He can save us from ourselves and the inappropriate use of our capacity. It does not have to go with us as it did with Jephthah. Jephthah did not have to do as he did. He could have settled on this reality: “God has delivered Israel all down through the years. I’ll just trust Him to deliver us again.” How infinitely better this would have been than the path of the rash vow! ➤



## **A lesson from a vase . . .**

*My daughter was in the process of removing the tulips and daffodils from a vase, when I particularly noticed the unusual beauty of the open tulips. Once the flowers were removed, the empty vase was handed over to me at the sink. As I was proceeding to wash it out, my attention was drawn to the fact that this empty vase was not at all pretty. As I was pondering this, the Lord brought to my mind how we are all like this vase. In and of ourselves, we are not spiritually attractive, but when the flowers of God’s grace are put into our souls, we become full of spiritual beauty. Oh, let us be filled with God’s flowers!*

# One in Christ

EPHESIANS 4:13  
Clara M. Brooks

Della F. Byers; *har.* by Andrew L. Byers

1. As sweet strains of heav'n - ly mu - sic Blend in one har - mo - nious sound,  
2. Not like waves up - on the o - cean, Toss - ing wild - ly, roll - ing high;  
3. Blood-washed pil - grims on the high - way Chant the sweet, me - lo - dious strain  
4. Love, the theme of all their prais - es, Doth in ho - ly bond u - nite

So the mem - bers of Christ's bod - y In blest u - ni - ty are found—  
Or the tem - pest's great com - mo - tion, As it sweeps a - cross the sky;  
Of their free - dom from con - fu - sion, An - gels join the glad re - frain;  
All their hearts, in Him made per - fect, Turned from dark - ness un - to light;

One in mind, and one in spir - it, One in doc - trine, faith, and love;  
But like twi - light, gent - ly steal - ing O'er the ver - dant, shad - y lea,  
One with all the hosts of heav - en, There their names are writ - ten down;  
Thus the saved in Christ to - ge - ther Dwell in sa - cred u - ni - ty,

One in name— oh, pre - cious un - ion, Like the an - gel hosts a - bove.  
So the ho - ly saints in Zi - on Rest—from all their sins set free.  
Je - sus on - ly, Je - sus ev - er, In their hearts as King they crown.  
In the se - cret of His pres - ence— Hid a - way, dear Lord, in Thee.

# Sweetly Resting

PSALM 94:22  
Mary D. James

W. Warren Bentley

1. In the rift - ed rock I'm rest - ing, Safe - ly shel - tered, I a - bide;  
2. Long pur - sued by sin and Sa - tan, Wea - ry, sad, I longed for rest;  
3. Peace which pass - eth un - der - stand - ing, Joy the world can nev - er give,  
4. In the rift - ed rock I'll hide me, Till the storms of life are past;

There no foes nor storms mo - lest me, While with - in the cleft I hide.  
Then I found this heav'n - ly shel - ter, O - pened in my Sav - ior's breast.  
Now in Je - sus I am find - ing, In His smiles of love I live.  
All se - cure in this blest ref - uge, Heed - ing not the fierc - est blast.

## Refrain

Now I'm rest - ing, sweet - ly rest - ing, In the cleft once made for me;

Je - sus, bless - ed Rock of Ag - es, I will hide my - self in Thee.

# The Nature of Divine Trust in the Redemption of the Body

**F**or I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God... We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, **the redemption of our body.**" Rom. 8:18-21,23

Now man was created a little lower than the angels (Ps. 8:4-5; Heb. 2:6-7), because he has a mortal body made of the dust of the earth. As long as he stayed in the Garden of Eden and was able to eat of the Tree of Life, this mortal body was sustained indefinitely. But as a result of the fall of mankind, death (both spiritual and physical) came, and man was sentenced to a life of toil, ending in physical death. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. 3:19 Had man been allowed to stay in the Garden of Eden after he sinned, then he would

**God's healing plan for the body is perfectly suited for our needs in the days of our flesh.**

have had access to the Tree of Life and been immortal (Gen. 3:22-24), so he was expelled and sentenced to toil, suffering, sickness, and death. God knew that man would fall, and He had already devised a way of *redemption and restoration of both soul and body* from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:20). He began to prepare man for the coming of the Redeemer, first giving him a promise (Gen. 3:15), then progressively educating and preparing mankind with a foundation

for faith in Christ (Gal. 3:24-25). As the poet said,

"How firm a foundation,  
ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!  
What more can He say  
than to you He hath said—  
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?"

The record and depth of God's dealings with man as portrayed in the scriptures is comprehensive and complete. As Brother Peter said by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."<sup>2 Pet. 1:3</sup> The crowning touch of what God has provided for us is in the gift of His Son, both in His life and in His death. Everything necessary for *soul and body* is included in our Lord's atonement for us and His ungoing intercession for us. "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases."<sup>Ps. 103:2-3</sup> **God's healing plan for the soul** is perfect and includes a Guide, even the Holy Ghost, to accompany us in the days of our flesh. **God's healing plan for the body** is perfectly suited for our needs in the days of our flesh, too. The soul can be perfectly restored to the same purity that Adam and Eve from creation to the fall. The *redemption of the body* will be completely accomplished at the resurrection, when this corruptible will have put on incorruption (1 Cor. 15:53-54).

This article is about the promise of bodily perfection in the resurrection and the present forerunner of that perfection in the healing provisions that God has made for the body in this current time. For He is "the LORD that healeth thee."<sup>Ex. 15:26</sup> We want to discuss **God's healing plan** for our bodies, Satan's substitutions and deceptions for that plan, and the balance between human understanding and faith in God.

With respect to the immortality of our bodies, we are in a similar position to the saints of the Old Testament. They trusted

God for the salvation of their souls, yet they were not privileged to experience the power and grace that were made available by the better Sacrifice. It was the best deliverance of the soul available then, but vastly inferior to the new heart possible in the New Testament. They longed for it and desired to look into it as well as experience it, but they could not (Lk. 10:23-24; Heb. 11:39-40). We of the New Testament spiritual deliverance are in the same position to those who will be resurrected unto the resurrection of life and of Jesus, who is the firstfruits of them that sleep. Just as a child of God of the Old Testament who found New Testament salvation was amazed at the difference, so we also will be amazed when our corruptible is made incorruptible. And just as the Old Testament brethren experienced *tastes* of that which was to come, even so we also experience *tastes* of what God can and will do with these imperfect bodies now. This is what we generally call *divine healing*, to distinguish it from other attempts to help the body when afflicted, but it would be more accurate to call it *divine trust*.

Now the Bible specifically tells us that "no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it."<sup>Eph. 5:29</sup> There are those who think that spirituality consists of abusing and hating their flesh, but they are deceived. Their very abuse is yet another function of that flesh, being a voluntary humility and neglecting of the body (Col. 2:18,23). There are those who teach and hold that spirituality consists of a perfect indifference to the body and its needs, but that, too, contradicts the scripture quoted above.

We accept the truth of Ephesians 5:29, just as it is stated. Our flesh is dear to us. (The flesh of Jesus was dear to Him.) God made us that way. And this presents us with a spiritual problem, for being two-fold beings, there is cross purpose between the earthly part of us (our bodies) and the spiritual part of us (our souls). This conflict is expressed in many scriptural texts.



*“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”* <sup>1 Cor. 9:27</sup>

This scripture was penned by divine inspiration by a man who was wholly sanctified. As with all of us (except for Jesus), he was born with a corrupted nature, that predisposes the soul to the appetites of the body, the natural flesh. Man was created without that fleshly corruption in his spirit, but he became tainted and his offspring were under sentence of defilement as a result of his sin (Rom. 5:14; Gen. 1:26-27; 5:3). In the New Testament, a way was made so that this defilement could be purged away, and Brother Paul had experienced the sanctifying power of God, the purging that he might bring forth more fruit; and *yet he still had a body, a natural flesh*, possessing appetites and desires that could bring him to sin again. But he testified that he kept victory over the body, lest he should be a castaway.

*“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, 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.”* <sup>Gal. 2:20</sup> Please note that the spiritual life, a life of victory, is **now, in the flesh**. Salvation gives us power over our own bodies by faith in the Son of God.

Not only does salvation gives us power over our own bodies to say “No!” and “Thou shalt not!” but God takes the subjection of our flesh to our spirit and uses the conflict to refine the soul and draw us closer to Him. We are appointed to have bodies while in this world, and *“all things [including this] work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* <sup>Rom. 8:28</sup>

Brother David tells us, *“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.”* <sup>Ps. 119:67</sup> And he adds in the next verse, *“Thou art good, and doest good.”* <sup>vs. 68</sup> We might say that God is too good not to afflict us. He knows the importance of it. We won't make heaven without it, dear saints. All that are over there have come through great tribulation (Rev. 7:14), and that tribulation involved their flesh, whether in sickness or persecution or

death. Again, Brother Paul says, *“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.”* <sup>1 Th. 3:3</sup>

Many a person has gotten saved because God reached him in his afflictions, and many a person has stayed saved because of his afflictions. Eliphaz observed that, *“man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.”* <sup>Job 5:7</sup> He was right about that; God has ordained that we are *born* unto trouble. We are in a place of trouble, in a body of trouble, but that trouble is appointed to us for our good, if we will take it right. For God has appointed us mercy and healing in our trouble. He is *“the LORD that healeth thee.”* <sup>Ex. 15:26</sup>

It is the normal nature of mankind to evade the true meaning of life, to attempt to have nothing (or as little as possible) to do with their Creator as they can. They are like Jonah, fleeing from the presence

A Christian who was in a great deal of trouble was recounting to another Christian the various efforts he had made to find deliverance, and concluded by saying, “But it has all been in vain, and there is literally nothing left for me to do now but to trust the Lord.”

“Alas!” exclaimed his friend in a tone of the deepest commiseration, as though no greater risk were possible—“Alas! has it come to that?”

The attitude of those who “trust the Lord” (?) like this, could be summed up as having as little to do with God as possible. He is the last resort. He will not abide by human desires, so to speak. They really don't wish to have anything more to do with Him than is unavoidable, but when they are in serious trouble, then they want Him to do as they wish. If He doesn't answer prayer then, bitterness and unthankfulness are manifested.

**We accept the truth of Ephesians 5:29, just as it is stated. Our flesh is dear to us. God made us that way. And this presents us with a spiritual problem, for being twofold beings, there is cross purpose between the earthly part of us (our bodies) and the spiritual part of us (our souls).**

of God, booking passage on whatever ship they can find. *“But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.”* <sup>Jon. 1:3</sup> He just wanted to **get away** from the presence of the Lord. He paid the *fare* (a high one, no doubt) to try to escape the presence of the Lord. To put it in today's words, he said to God, “Why don't you just leave me alone?” And most men are just like this. They don't want God intimately involved with them. They resent what they view as His intrusions. They just want to do what they want to do. If it was up to them, they would never be sick a day in their life, nor would they ever have any trouble in the flesh.

I am sorry to say that a lot of professing Christians are like this, too. Sister Hannah Smith tells us about two of them in *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*:

How different this all is from really trusting God! From leaning on His breast. From trusting His wisdom as well as His power. His love as well as His unerring accuracy in weighing out what we need, regardless of the inconvenience, pain, or sorrow that it brings.

“It is blessed to serve Him  
and do His good will,

For so precious to me is His love;  
Let my talents and time all be given to Him,  
Till He calls me to meet Him above.”

Truly, *“Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.”* <sup>Ho. 10:1</sup> As long as we attempt to serve God out of self-advantage, instead of real love for Him, then we are but an empty vine. We get nothing out of our afflictions and trials. They work us, instead of us (with God) working them. In that sad, empty state of heart, Satan's lie about Job is only too true of the empty vines of Israel. *“Doth Job fear God for nought?”* <sup>Job 1:9</sup> Job was not an empty vine, for he truly loved God. When God

permitted him to be afflicted within God-defined limits with all that the wrath of hell could devise, he said, “*Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*”<sup>Job 1:21</sup> His wife (an empty vine) did not take the trial so well. Bitterness and despair were her lot. She was not able to worship in her affliction, as her husband was. But the man of God said, “*What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*”<sup>Job 2:10</sup>

Here then is the foundation of trust in God: a perfect resignation to the will of God, a complete resting in the hand of God. “*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*”<sup>Job 13:15</sup> It is to say, “God knows what He is doing. I know He loves me. No matter how bad it gets; no matter how much my flesh cries for relief, I will trust and not be afraid. *He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*”<sup>Job 23:10</sup> God does not look at suffering as we do, but it is our privilege to have our outlook changed, until we see as He sees in our trials. Then, with the apostle, we can say, “*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*”<sup>2 Cor. 4:18</sup>

This understanding that God knows best flies in the face of all fleshly wisdom. Our natural understanding would have us believe that we would be better off to never be sick a day in our life, that it would be better if we would always have enough money, and really, it would be just fine if things would always go well with us. The poet confessed:

“Had I the choosing of my pathway,  
In blindness I should go astray,  
And wander far away in darkness,  
Nor reach that land of endless day.”

And with this, the Word of God tells us, “*For now we see through a glass, darkly.*”<sup>1 Cor. 13:12</sup> “*For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly.*”<sup>Rom. 8:20</sup> God has not promised us that we will not have trouble (Jn. 16:33), but *He has a way through our troubles* that will accomplish things in our lives. It means a great deal to take *God’s way* through our afflictions and problems. It means a great deal to embrace

our trials as from the Lord and let the Holy Ghost teach us how to get the good from the battle—how to work the trial (for the good), rather than the trial working us.

It is fleshly human nature to avoid problems, especially by exercising good sense and discipline. (And just how much good would we get out of **not** exercising good sense and discipline—being buffeted for our faults, as it were? [1 Pet. 2:20]) It is a natural trait of mankind to esteem those who so manage their health, their income and expenses, and their relationships with others so as to avoid trouble. But God is wiser than man and knows when we need

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to be afflicted. He knows how to get our attention and get it fast, too. He knows how long we should pray in our afflictions without apparent result—how long we should be *tried*. God knows what we should learn in each trial, and He knows what will happen to us if we are not tried, and what will happen if we are tried and do not get the good out of the trial.

“When I thought I needed sunshine,  
The Lord sent a rain;  
When I thought I needed healing,  
I had my share of pain.  
I’ve been looking for a mountaintop,  
But a valley’s all I see—  
Jesus always seems to know  
Exactly what I need.”

“*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*”<sup>1 Pet. 5:6-7</sup>

When we began to lose the attitude of trust in God—*divine trust*—we are inclined to take things into our own hands and feel that God should listen to us and do as we see best about our afflictions. We began to feel entitled to answers to our prayers, and self-pity began to creep into our attitude when God doesn’t an-

swer as much or in the way that God has appointed. Like the man seeking healing from leprosy (2 Ki. 5:11-12), our minds and prayers fill up with fleshly-originated expectations, rather than Holy Ghost inspired faith. With respect to the healing of our bodies, we slip from *divine trust* into an attitude of *divine healing*, and, unless we get help, the result is that this turns into less trust toward God and more trust in some of the various ways of men. This is what happens to people who attempt to trust God *all the way* with their bodies, their finances, and their relationships with others, unless they are blessed by the Spirit of God to get the good out of their afflictions. The divine trust turns into a code; such as, “trusting God for our bodies means staying away from the medical profession”; or, “if you are college-educated and qualified for a career in business, you will not be able to trust the Lord for your means as you should.” People who have strong faith do not divide it between the hands of men and God, and people who live completely consecrated, dedicated lives are distinguished by their simplicity and lack of entanglement in the affairs of this life, but *there is far more to it than just these things*.

**Every trial is designed by God to draw us closer to Him.** If you are not drawn closer to God and enabled to worship Him in your trial, you are not getting all out of the trial that God has appointed for you.

### The Outward Form of Trusting

“*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*”<sup>2 Tim. 3:5</sup>

This form of godliness involves much more than trusting God for our afflictions. It is comprehensive in every direction, but it can easily be seen that any attempt to serve God without a complete consecration to do His will and let Him have His way with us will result in “*denying the power thereof.*”

I sat once in an auditorium at a private church school, where a teacher was having the children act out a story from the Bible. When the story narrative came to where Jesus healed the sufferer, the teacher hesitated. She knew that the church there had no standard of trusting God exclusively for

their bodies, yet she also knew that the Bible informs us that He healed. Finally she said, "Then Jesus said, "Take him to the doctor!" I was very grieved. I told the Lord I was sorry to have to witness that. This was not even the form of trusting God.

I sat in campmeeting after campmeeting in a certain place where one day of the meeting was put aside for special fasting and prayer for the sick. At a certain time, in a "healing service," people would come up to be anointed according to James 5:14-15. This was the tradition. (Back in the distant past, God had blessed the people greatly and healed many. I have heard reports of abandoned crutches, wheelchairs, etc., that were left at different meetings. Those who brought those things abandoned them because they did not need them any more.) This tradition of a healing service was fervently defended by the pastor, *but it was extremely rare for anyone to testify to being healed.* They would not drop the custom and go farther down the road of no blessing, but they did not get much from God, either. I lived in that place for a while, and it was a fact that most of the people in that congregation did not trust God exclusively. There was a stigma on going to the doctor, so they didn't say much about it. If they were in a serious predicament, then they typically went, with some exceptions. Most of the rest *doctored themselves.* Scarcely anyone was getting any blessing out of their afflictions. They had long ago lost *divine trust*, and they were in the process of losing *divine healing*, too. They had lost *divine trust* in other areas of their lives, too, and pretty much were led by human wisdom, tradition, and conditioning.

Anything less than perfect trust in God is a denial of Him. We see that an attempt to turn the promises and ability of God to our own ends is simply regarding God as a vending machine. It is to say that He is there for our convenience and need, while we largely carry on as fleshly wisdom doth suggest. This doesn't work. God won't honor it. It leads to skepticism and unbelief. It leads to fear and anxiety, instead of confidence and expectation. It leads to a

form of godliness, lip service to trust, but destroys the humility and consecration to let God lead and plan and guide as He sees fit. This, in turn, denies the mighty power of God. He would like to heal; He would like to work miracles, but we do not trust Him in a way that lets Him work as He wants to work.

In the Old Testament, God worked with the people of Israel in their physical protection from other nations. He promised them, "*The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face.*"<sup>Dt. 28:7</sup> "*There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*"<sup>Josh. 1:5</sup> They were surrounded by enemies to their national security, but they were promised protection and help, if they would serve God with all their heart. "*But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.*"<sup>Dt. 4:29-31</sup> As long as they kept His covenant with them, He did just what He had promised, and they were blessed.

The sad record is that Israel did not keep the covenant with God, so He allowed them to be taken over by their enemies. When they humbled themselves and returned to Him, then He would deliver them again. After a time had passed of this backsliding and returning cycle, they began to get more sophisticated about things. They began to seek other nations around them to help them. Naturally, they put their trust in that; otherwise they wouldn't have made an affinity with them in the first place. *Their trust in other things was a denial of God, His promises, and His ability to help them on His terms.*

We have a scriptural record of one of the kings who sought out the help of man.

*"And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians."*<sup>2 Chr. 16:12</sup> Here is another case of **either/or**. It was a matter of trusting **God or the physicians**. Why did Asa not seek the Lord? He had in the past. Well, he backslid from the standard of trusting God that he had once had. He didn't backslide over the afflictions with his feet. He stopped trusting God in another matter before that. "*And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, **Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand. For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars. Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time.***"<sup>2 Chr. 16:7-10</sup>

At one time, Asa had trusted God **completely**, when the Ethiopians and the Lubims came against him with very many chariots and horsemen. He **relied on the Lord**, and God delivered him. But then, Asa failed to trust God completely. "*Because thou **hast relied** on the king of Syria, and **not relied** on the LORD thy God.*" No doubt, Asa would have said that he was trusting God, too. He certainly didn't see it as **either** the king of Syria **or** God. **But that is how the Lord saw it.** God wants *all* our trust. This is plain. When Asa trusted God completely, God helped him. When Asa didn't trust God **completely**, then God regarded anything less than perfect trust as a denial of Him. This is borne out by what happened in Asa's soul. When the seer told him the truth, Asa got mad and put the

**"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chr. 16:9).**

man of God in prison. He also oppressed some of the people at the same time. We see that something happens inside people when they do not totally trust God, and that something is not good. After Asa didn't trust the Lord with the matter of the king of Syria, he just went on with a life of less-than-trust in God, and in the end, he died that way, trusting the physicians (in vain) and not relying on God. Surely, we cannot serve two masters. They are different. To serve one is not to serve the other. We cannot trust God and the

physicians. They are not workers together with God.

*"Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD."* Jer. 17:5 *"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is."* vs. 7 Notice again the **contrast**. Trusting in man and trusting in God are **two different things**. One brings a curse from God; the other brings a blessing. You may say, "Well, this only applies to trusting the Lord with respect to military alliances, etc." It

certainly includes that. It also is a general principle that applies to all trusting in the Lord.

Eventually, Israel got so far away from God that they were just like the nations around them that knew not God. This is what happens when people start dividing their trust between God and man. Their allegiances shift, and eventually the predominant inclination in them comes out on top. Christians that attempt to trust God and man will end up trusting man, unless they get help.

## It was happening again, and I seemed powerless to stop it...

It was late morning, and circumstances had prevented me from planning my day ahead, so here I was with (apparently) hours of free time ahead, and plenty of tasks to fill it with. It should be no problem figuring out how to productively use the day, right? Wrong.

I grew up endeavoring to avoid work a great deal, and unfortunately succeeding a lot of the time. It wasn't good for me. I had gotten saved at age 12, but had an inconsistent and rocky experience, and didn't get steady enough in living for God to start responding to the training He had for my character until my late teens. When I had my time "scheduled" pretty full (school, full-time work, etc.), I found that I could fairly easily get help from the Lord to be diligent and increasingly industrious. But when I had to be a self-starter, overcoming obstacles, figuring out things on my own, managing my own time, I found (and still find, at age 50) that deeply-ingrained habits of thinking and coping stood between me and being an overcomer. They will become obvious to you, I think, as I describe how the day unfolded for me.

I wandered down to the barn, a 30'x60' building with a number of stalls (formerly used for animals) along one side, and a shop and an open area making up the other side. As a family, we had recently begun a long-deferred and long-needed reorganization of the barn, and most of the stalls were properly organized now, but my shop still had a great deal of organizing needing to be done.

I walked into the shop, and began to look things over. I had heard this folksy saying once: "If you have to eat a frog, don't look at it too long." The idea is that if there is something unpleasant to be done, don't spend a lot of time looking at the job before doing it. I looked at that shop, and the longer I looked, the more my courage drained away. I prayed for

help to do something useful, and the Lord gave me courage to clean and put the chain back on an electric chainsaw that was sitting on the work table, and then put it away in a "proper" place. Well, that was encouraging, but there still remained a great deal of "stuff" to find proper places for (whether in the shop, at the dump, or elsewhere, remained to be seen). I went back up to the house for lunch, feeling a bit worn out with too much looking at the frog, and only a little "chewing," so-to-speak, on one of its toes.

After lunch, I began to ponder different alternatives to work on, and the voice of discouragement kept coming up with reasons that each one of the alternatives wouldn't work, at least not then. A sense of paralysis was coming on me, and I couldn't shake it off. My wife prayed with me, and then I prayed as well. The Lord showed me a step I could take to show Him that I was setting my will to get help, and that I really meant that I wanted His help to get the victory here. It was a small, physical thing—getting on the treadmill and walking energetically for ten minutes to get the physical

*"It was a small, physical thing... I did it."*

lethargy driven away. I did it. Then I asked with growing faith for help and direction, and the Lord pointed out a project that I could get started on (tearing the old roof off our rabbitry). I began, and found myself with an almost frantic energy flowing into the task, as if the Lord was making up for lost time. I finished that task that day, and the spirit of depression had fled. Thank the Lord for victory!

Many of you have long since overcome these types of character flaws, or by the Lord's mercy never had them or were trained out of them early, but I want to tell you that God is bigger than every character weakness we have and has the victory for us! ➡

We are surrounded with germs and other enemies to our bodily health and well-being. We are outnumbered and outmatched. We can and do get into considerable trouble. A lot of things can and do go wrong. It is really something to trust God fully, to serve Him with all the heart, not to lean to our own understanding (Pr. 3:5-8).

### The Medical Profession

Many people acknowledge that there is something fundamentally wrong with the medical profession. Even professionals in that system are afraid of it in its excesses. I read of a doctor who observed the attempts of the doctors to keep people alive when they were practically living vegetables, and he tried his best to arrange things so that he wouldn't end up like that. When he came to that, they got him, too, in spite of all his attempts. The right-to-die movement is a backlash against these things.

It would be incorrect to say that the medical profession doesn't do any good. There was a time when it could be truthfully observed, "If all the medicine in the world was thrown into the ocean, it would be better for mankind, but worse for the fishes." That is no longer so. We live in a time when knowledge has been increased, and this knowledge makes a great difference in the treatment of disease and affliction *of the body*. The medical profession is pretty good, on the whole, at patching up the body, but they totally ignore the soul. It is completely lopsided. It completely ignores God's healing plan, which is comprehensive, and yields spiritual benefits, social benefits, and physical benefits.

Suppose an afflicted man went to the doctor, and the doctor said, "I know what's wrong with you in your body. You are suffering from \_\_\_\_\_. But I've been praying about your case, and I'm not certain it is time to treat you yet. You need to forgive another man who has done you wrong, and you need to soften and humble, so you can be a better husband to your wife." We all know that it doesn't work that way, nor would the patients stand for it. The medical profession is man's answer to the the creature (us) being made subject to vanity, not willingly. And it is an answer that ignores God's purposes and deal-

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ings with us. I am sure there are some God-fearing doctors and nurses, but I am equally sure that the God-fearing attitude is completely at cross-purposes with the general spirit and attitude of the medical profession and most of its patients.

"Well," you might say, "perhaps it is better than you think." No, it is worse than you think. Whether you attempt to be your own medical profession and doctor yourself, or you trust the trained man or woman in the medical profession, you run squarely into this truth: "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*" <sup>Is. 55:8-9</sup>

Elijah ran headlong into this truth when he gave way to despair when threatened by Jezebel. He told God, "*It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life,*" <sup>1 Ki. 19:4</sup> but he was wrong. His thoughts were not God's thoughts. It wasn't time for him to leave here in God's scheme of things, but he thought it was. You see, we just don't know what we are doing. We don't know how to interpret what is happening to us, much less how to treat it or end it. We don't understand the eternal significance of things very easily, if at all, until God helps us out.

If the medical profession was allowed to figure out a way to make people live for another hundred years, would they not try it? But what would the spiritual ramifications be? Please read Genesis 6:3 and Psalm 90:10. If God twice changed the average duration of man's existence in the flesh for his spiritual welfare, then what do you think would have happened if God had left this up to us? Beyond any doubt, there is an ambition in man to live forever, and profound indeed is the effect of physical death upon mankind. Do you see the awful arrogance of human wisdom, the fierce independence and rebellion, the willfulness? "*Let us break their*

*bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*" <sup>Ps. 23</sup> Yet, you, professing Christian, are willing to say, "I think I can trust the accumulation of knowledge and skill (the medical profession) with my bodily needs. *I know how to direct my steps.*"

### False Faith—A Show of Wisdom

Then there is the other side of this. People who would believe that we have no part to play. These folks would have it that if the blood is pumping from a wound, it would be less than faith in God to even apply a bandage. They would tell me that if I have sugar diabetes, to modify my diet is to have less than faith in God. And one should not take vitamins, etc. These folks would eliminate all nursing care, thinking that God would be glorified thereby. Such scriptures as Matthew 6:31 are wrested to contend that we should not use a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7) or follow the admonition of Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. 5:23). These excesses, too, do not bring about the blessing that God has for His trusting children.

People under the influence of extreme zeal do things and advocate things that not only don't bring about a healing from the Lord; they bring a reproach. In truth, their extreme zeal actually hinders God from doing what He would like to do for them. If He touches them in what they are "trusting" Him to do, it would actually be harmful and hurtful to them. There are people obstinately going through the outward steps of trusting God who are not going to get answers to their prayers from Him, for He loves them too much. We knew of one sister who became fixated on the idea that God would only be pleased if she fed her baby with breast milk, and she begged God to help her, for her body would not produce enough of the needed nourishment, and her baby was suffering. God did not answer her prayers, and finally she humbled down and submitted to God. Another sister was determined not to take vitamins or any kind of concentrated food

that she would not normally eat, although she was so afflicted that she could not eat normally or get the nourishment that she needed through the usual way. She was actually adding starvation to her affliction and getting weaker all the time. The devil had the advantage of her and had gotten her in a no-win situation. God was withholding answers to her fervent prayers. She thought the determination of her will was faith, but it wasn't divinely-inspired faith. It took considerable humility for her to back down from her own ideas to where God would bless her and inspire faith. When she did so, God helped her.

There is a balance in using this world, without abusing it (1 Cor. 7:31), in this matter of bodily healing, as well as in other matters. (One brother got it in his mind that God meant for him to be supported by offerings without working for a living. He was a young minister with a family, and God didn't do as the young brother expected. He thought he would stay unentangled (2 Tim. 2:4) by living in this way, but he learned that God has appointed toil. What if God had supported him with offerings? What message would have come out of his life to other young men?) And I can easily lean to excess, or go too far the other way, without divine guidance. That is why divine trust cannot be reduced to a formula, but we must *"trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."*<sup>Pr. 3:5</sup> We need the Spirit of God to teach us how to live. We need what we read of in Isaiah 30:21.

There is something in fleshly human nature that is greatly impressed by the sensational. The dramatic healing. The miraculous change for the better. Resurrections. Miracles. "If I could just see someone definitely, unmistakably healed, then I could have faith," I have heard different ones say. This is not so. They think it is so. It seems to them that a miracle would have that effect. I am thinking about a dear man who said that every now and then. Eventually, I learned that he *had* witnessed a miraculous healing! It was unmistakable. It was definite. *And it did not make a bit*

*of difference!* He kept right on saying that afterwards. If you pinned him down and asked him about that miracle, he still couldn't have faith. He couldn't have faith, because he was attempting to bring forth fruit for himself. That living to himself brought forth an empty vine.

The Word of God puts this thought before us: *"Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."*<sup>Jn. 4:48</sup> I know one person who will not live for God because he does not see signs and wonders. He says that he can't find anyone who regularly experiences the signs and wonders that he reasons should be normal for those professing the truth. "I don't want to live saved all by myself," he states. Why not? Do you not feel your need of being reconciled to God more than that? There is more that hinders him than just that, but it is just as Jesus said. This man has a fixation on signs and wonders (Mt. 16:4).

I am satisfied that God knows when I need a dramatic miracle and when I don't. I do not experience a dramatic miracle in all my afflictions, but I do get a blessing—I do get the benefits of God's healing plan. I trust Him to do what should be done. I trust Him for grace to bear whatever He sees fit to allow me to bear.

### God's Healing Plan

There is a certain frame of mind and of heart that must come about before the purposes of God will be satisfied, and those purposes are so crucial to our spiritual welfare and the welfare of others, that God knows that the gain is worth the pain. There is a maturity of both fervency and faith, compassion for others, and a sense of the great love and wisdom of God as we catch the vision of what God is after, and this enables us to pray effectively. *"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray."*<sup>Jas. 5:13</sup> You can see that this praying while afflicted is *not just to be healed*, but it is fervent, effectual praying *that the will of the Lord be accomplished in the affliction*. This purpose of the Lord may be simple, or it may be quite involved and take a good bit of time.

*"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."*<sup>Heb. 10:36</sup> Many, especially those who hold divine healing just as a dry doctrine, think that the following scripture is just matter-of-fact, *"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."*<sup>Jas. 5:14-15</sup> It is not just matter-of-fact; there are profound depths in the words, *"the prayer of faith."* The prayer of faith is not a prayer of man's devising; it is a *dictated prayer*. Men cannot pray it of their own accord; it must be inspired of the Holy Ghost. He will not inspire it until the purposes of God are realized. When the Holy Spirit inspires the prayer of faith, then the following scripture is fulfilled: *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."*<sup>1 Jn. 5:14-15</sup> *"According to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."*<sup>Eph. 1:11</sup> A careful reading of the scriptures in James that follow the fourteenth and fifteenth verses will instruct us in the alignment that God wants us to make with His will and purposes. *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*<sup>Jas. 5:16</sup> Also read verses 17-18.

It is glorious, indeed, to experience that marvelous welling-up of faith that comes when we are right in sync with the will and purpose of God about a specific petition. We can say from experience that is impossible to keep asking after that inspiration of faith comes. Petitioning is turned to praise. My wife and I, a minister, and another brother watched in awe as our little girl, who had been almost in a coma for quite a while, with her little chest heaving and struggling for breath, was touched instantly by the power of God

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and slid off of her mother's lap and began to play. She was just as well as she could ever be, although a moment before, she was in a deadly fight with affliction. Both my wife and myself were anointed to pray the prayer of faith, and suddenly it all came together, and we could no longer ask—it was turned to praise. Well do I remember the irresistible surge of pure confidence that God heard and was going to heal her! It was *impossible* to keep on asking for healing. One *knew* it was done, and in a twinkling, it was done. All the benefits of God's healing plan, I say, *all*, were ours at that moment and afterwards.

Now, we do not know how to pray as we ought (Rom. 8:26), and God deals and works with us as He sees best in His mercy and love, so many receive the benefits of God's healing plan without understanding just what is going on. I am persuaded that He wants us to understand more than we do, and to whole-heartedly cooperate, too.

If God meant for us to all be healthy and unafflicted all the time, He could certainly accomplish it, but that is not His plan. The glory that fills the soul and the incredible healing power of God produce an awe in all who are privileged to experience it, and as our reaction is as is recorded in Mark 7:37, "*and were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well*". We read of seasons of faith and healing, such as is written in Acts 5:15-16, where they brought all the vexed and sick out for healing, and how they were *all healed, every one*, and we get the impression that the gospel can bring about the abolition of all human suffering. Like the people who tried to make Jesus king so that He could miraculously feed them and solve all their problems (Jn. 6:14-15), we become elated and get things out of perspective. It takes a lot of grace to handle much in the way of miracles. There is more to it than the miracles. We might say that it takes an even greater miracle to handle the divine touch. To see how it fits in the overall scheme of things that God

is doing. To not get carried away with a zeal that is not according to knowledge (Rom. 10:2). It may seem strange to speak of this when the abiding problem of our time is unbelief and hindered faith with little or no results, but it is so. Many prayers to God for healing are hindered because the desires of the heart prompt an asking that is amiss. The petition just doesn't fit with the over-all purpose of the Almighty (Jas. 4:3; 1 Jn. 5:14-15). And so we come to realize that, in the mind of God, all His divine healing of the body, in its very nature, is *temporary*. It is temporary, even if the affliction never comes back on us, for the body itself is temporary in its corruptible state.

*"Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother."* Lk. 7:12-15 This was a marvelous miracle, was it not? But it was *temporary*. Eventually, according to the appointment of God for him (Heb. 9:27), the man died again, and he is awaiting the general resurrection right now, along with all the rest of the departed, including his mother and everyone else present at his first physical resurrection. We readily see that the marvelous touch of God, with all the benefits that accrued to his mother and others, was simply *a foretaste of immortality, a temporary overriding of the subjection of the creature to vanity*. Its main value is not the value to the physical body, but to the eternal nature of man, both individually and collectively.

(In this sense, it is like the forgiveness that God gave men for their sins in the Old Testament. "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth*

*not iniquity.*" Ps.32:1-2 That blessing was just as real to the Old Testament saint as is the blessing of our healing to our body now. And just as the sin principle was not removed in the Old Testament, for the blood of bulls and goats could not purge away sin [Heb. 10:4], so the decree of the vanity of our flesh is not removed in the New Testament when we are healed in the body.)

With this thought of the transient nature of God's blessings to the body, we come face to face with one of life's great lessons from the hand of God. **It is not what happens to us in life that matters so much; it is how we take it.** Even miracles and healings from the hand of God can be taken wrongly and actually do us damage. We read of the leper's healing in Mark 1:40-45. He came very humbly to Jesus and was inspired with faith in God and was healed. But Jesus added some commandments to his healing. "*And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.*" Mk. 1:43-44 We are sorry to read that he did not keep this charge from the Lord, but went out "*and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter.*" vs. 45 This

**It is not what happens to us in life that matters so much; it is how we take it.**

had several consequences, none good. We cannot disobey Jesus without great damage to our soul. We do not read that his leprosy came back on him, but we are quite confident that his disobedience was not good for him. Mark relates another example of this (Mark 7:32-37). God is not only hindered from blessing as He would like to bless by a lack of faith (Mt. 13:58), but by this aftereffect. If God tells you not to tell what He does for you, you had better not tell. If God tells you to tell, you had better tell. There is more to it than just the healing. A great number would value their healing more than they would value their Healer, so they are not healed. They ask amiss.

When God didn't heal Brother Paul of an affliction (2 Cor. 12:7-10), he humbled himself and continued to seek until he got an answer. (It is our privilege to always get an answer [Mt. 7:8].) That answer was that God meant for him to bear that affliction. At that point, Brother Paul humbled his heart, and brought his will (by grace) into submission to God's will and purpose. Then he testified, "*Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*"<sup>2 Cor. 12:9-10</sup> His blessing in submission was so great that he "took pleasure" in the unpleasant. It took just as much all-sufficient grace for Paul to take pleasure in his infirmities as it took for him to trust God to heal him. How pliable was the brother in God's hands! How easily shaped and molded to the purposes of God! The brother readily saw and testified that the purposes of God in the afflictions were the same methodology that God used in his reproaches, necessities, and persecutions.

**"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you" (Phil. 3:13-15).**

He said earlier in the same letter, "*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*"<sup>2 Cor. 4:17-18</sup> As the poet said,

"But Thou art making me, I thank Thee, Sire.  
What Thou hast done and doest,  
Thou knowest well,  
And I will help Thee: gently in Thy fire  
I will lie burning; on Thy potter's wheel  
I will whirl patient,  
though my brain should reel;  
Thy grace shall be enough to quell,  
And growing strength perfect, through  
weakness dire.

"I have not knowledge, wisdom,  
insight, thought,  
Nor understanding, fit to justify  
Thee in Thy work, O Perfect!  
Thou hast brought  
Me up to this; and lo!  
what Thou hast wrought,  
I cannot comprehend. But I can cry,  
'O enemy, the Maker hath not done;  
One day thou shalt behold, and from the  
sight shalt run!"

"Thou workest perfectly. And if it seem  
Some things are not so well,  
'tis but because  
They are too loving deep, too lofty wise,  
For me, poor child,  
to understand their laws.  
My highest wisdom, half is but a dream;  
My love runs helpless like a falling stream;  
Thy good embraces ill,  
and lo! its illness dies."

—George MacDonald

The Bible gives us a wonderful and exhaustive record of healings from God of all kinds. There is a rich source of understanding available to be interpreted to us by the Holy Ghost. Verily, it contains everything we need to get to the place that God has for us so that we might obtain all that we need. There are (1) dramatic miracles in the records, and there are (2) gradual changes, and there are (3) records of sufficient grace to bear things.

Not much is said about Job's healing. The record focuses on the spiritual benefits. A great amount of detail is given to us about the wisdom of men which was used by Job's friends (?), delving into things which they did not understand, and the damage it did them. Not much is said about his wife—even whether she even got any help.

There are other "glory grabbers" that hinder our faith and frustrate God. If there is a disposition to give the glory to people... our church... our ministry; God will not give His glory to another.

### The Redemption of the Body

There is coming a time when the sorrows and cares of this life will only bring a little smile of remembrance to those who are accepted by Him at the end of this life. "*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in*

*us.*"<sup>Rom. 8:18</sup> And, after the resurrection, that same body that was used as an instrument of instruction and tempering through suffering will be ours again, and we will know as we are known. But, oh, how changed! The corruptible will be made incorruptible. The redemption of the body will be complete.

Those who have gone on into glory before us can see the entire subject in perspective. Do you think for a moment that they regret their suffering in this life? Would they take matters into their own hands if they had it to do over again? Can you hear them saying "Amen" to this scripture? "*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*"<sup>2 Cor. 4:17</sup> Was it not worth it? "*Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*"<sup>Jas. 5:11</sup>

Beloved, God has a healing plan. It is infinitely superior to the healing plans of men. It addresses all the needs of mankind: physical, spiritual, and socially. It is given for specific purposes for this time side of eternity and offers tastes of a promise that will be gloriously fulfilled at the resurrection.

"*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*"<sup>Phil. 3:10-12</sup>

"*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*"<sup>Phil. 3:13-15</sup>

We pray that all of God's children will experience the blessings that come in pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.







# Highways to Zion

**B**lessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the highways to Zion." Ps. 84:5 (ASV)

Zion represents (spiritually) the place where truth dwells, where people get real help from God and really please Him. What does it mean to have "highways to Zion" in our heart?

A highway in a literal sense is a main road, usually connecting cities or towns, and often raised above the surrounding terrain to form a dry path in wet weather. To understand the spiritual sense, we must first recall that the natural state of a man who hasn't had their heart changed by God is described thus: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jer. 17:9 Perhaps we could say that such a heart is much more like a wilderness or maze than a highway to Zion. The message of the forerunner of Jesus was characterized in this way: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Is. 40:3 When people asked John the Baptist what they should do to prepare themselves for the kingdom of God, we could say that all his counsel (to publicans, soldiers, etc.) was instruction on making a highway in the wilderness or "desert" of their heart for God. Again, we read: "The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul." Pr. 16:17 Young's Literal Translation renders it: "A highway of the upright [is], 'Turn from evil,' Whoso is preserving his soul is watching his way." Whether you are seeking salvation or walking with God, a setting of the will to "turn from evil" is an important part of making or maintaining a "highway to Zion."

During the time the judges ruled Israel, there was a time when the ark of God

was captured by the Philistines. But God wouldn't suffer the symbol of His presence to be treated lightly, and inflicted the Philistines with mice and tumors ("emerods") wherever the ark of God was housed. Finally, in desperation, the Philistines returned the ark of God in a curious way: "And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh." 1 Sam. 6:11-12 The "kine" were two milk cows that were separated from their calves, and then yoked to the cart and allowed to go where they would. In this way the Philistines were testing to confirm that it was really God that had afflicted them instead of some series of "coincidences." In describing the actions of the cows, I appreciate the way Young's Literal Translation renders it: "And the kine go straight in the way... in one highway they have gone, **going and lowing**, and have not turned aside right or left." Animals don't have souls, and although they have individual personalities, a considerable amount of their actions are by instinct. Milk cows just separated from their young will start lowing and seek to be reunited with them. These cows had their instincts overridden by God to "go straight in the way" to the border of Israel, without turning aside, and yet they still were left with their natural instincts enough to be lowing for their calves. "Going and lowing." Jesus, our example of someone maintaining a "highway to Zion" while down here, showed us this pattern of "going and lowing," when He prayed "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me:

**"Going and lowing."**

**We remain human, with our natural desires, hopes, and preferences, but our will must be set for going God's way and not our own.**

nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." Mk. 14:36 We remain human, with our natural desires, hopes, and preferences, but our will must be set for going God's way and not our own.

I quote now from another incident about a highway: "And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still. When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri." 2 Sam. 20:12-13 This is a gruesome story involving jealousies, murder, and working to put down a rebellion against King David, but I am noting here a lesson about highways. How many times have you found yourself in stop-and-go traffic, backed up for a long way, because of an accident on the other side of the highway? Until the evidences of the accident are removed, people just naturally slow down to look, and the effect on the free flow of traffic on the highway is tremendous. This is true on the spiritual highway also. I enjoy number puzzles, and recently was working on a book of a certain type of these puzzles that I found fascinating. I came to a point where I realized that when I went to spend time

with the Lord, the thoughts of doing these puzzles appealed to me more. My spiritual “traffic” was grinding to a stop. I threw the book of puzzles in the garbage, and within a short time, the Heavenly traffic was in much better shape, thank the Lord. We must be ruthless about getting distractions off the highway to Zion!

In another place we read, “Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.”<sup>Is. 62:10</sup> We live at the end of a gravel driveway up a short, steep hill. The hill section had old, broken-up paving on it, and it was getting so bad that some cars would “bottom out” in one of the potholes. We finally had the hill section graded and paved last fall, and now it is much like a little stretch of highway. During the winter, however, we had snow fall on it several times, and it became very slick. We took pains to shovel off the snow when friends were expected, but even so, one slid off near the bottom, and we had to use chains and a come-along to get them back on the road. Then this spring we noticed gravel accumulating on it (this is a shared driveway with our neighbor, and gravel from their parking area was being carried onto the paved part by the traffic). Just a few days ago I took pains to sweep the gravel off, and noticed several places where a stone would be partially imbedded in the road bed, beginning to break it up. A highway requires constant maintenance, and may the Lord help us to cooperate with Him in maintaining the highway to Zion in our hearts, particularly in removing those little “stones”—whether they be little places where we cling to our own ways, or little prejudices of our own that we want the truth to agree with, or anything else that can begin to seem to us as part of the “road,” but are really wearing it out.

God’s highways are different than ours: “Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation

*have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.”<sup>Is. 49:8-11</sup> God sets Himself to help people with these highways, and then provides the life-giving traffic. He has release from bondage to sin, He calls us to honesty with Him and ourselves (“shew yourselves”). The picture is encouraging and beautiful, but there is something alien to our nature in His ways: “I will make all my mountains a way.” Men avoid mountains, tunnel or blast through them, seek the lowest passes over them, but God makes His mountains themselves into highways.*

I have been assigned the responsibility of being “Disaster Recovery coordinator” at my work. This responsibility has been a big trial to me. The task involves responsibility without authority, so I’m forever needing to get managers to help and commit to the work. The task involves working with several different government agencies (besides the one I work in) and trying to get busy people with many pressing assignments to take time to methodically plan for something neither they nor I want to happen (and are reluctant to consider the likelihood of happening). It is difficult to determine just what is necessary to handle something that doesn’t happen regularly, and I like working on familiar tasks and with familiar people.

A little while back, our supervisor stated at a staff meeting that she wanted us all to be working on things we “felt passionate about.” In my mind I began to consider this as a way of escape from my trial. I wrote her an email describing some areas I enjoyed working on, and how much better I felt just thinking about not having this responsibility when the project is over (after the project of developing disaster recovery plans is over, it becomes a “program,” to maintain and periodically test these plans).

And I did feel better, just thinking about not having to do this any more at some point! Well, this manager doesn’t respond often to emails (she gets about a hundred a day); and as I went to work the next day, with no response and the prospect of continuing to work on this project, I began to get more and more depressed—maybe “oppressed” describes it as well. I found myself unable to motivate myself to move forward—any task I could conceive related to this project looked to me as unlikely to succeed and probably incorrect, or at the least, ineffective. I was sitting at my desk, feeling paralyzed and depressed, so I called home for prayer. My wife prayed with me on the phone and then had my family pray for me after she hung up. I found myself consecrating to continue this responsibility indefinitely, whether I failed or not, as long as the Lord wanted me to. I accepted this mountain as “a way,” and the Lord began to exalt it. I found grace and strength to try a few tasks, and I got more cooperation than expected. Although this task remains a trial to me, I have found the place of blessing and grace in it. God’s way of escape in this trial was not the way I thought I had found, but His own, particular way.

Most of what I’ve been writing is directed primarily toward those who are on the road to Heaven, but God has something for those who have left it (or never yet started on it) as well: “Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities. How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.”<sup>Jer. 31:21-22</sup> God is calling you to turn your heart and your actions back to what He has shown and will show you is right. And to make it possible to have a changed heart, a heart that has a “highway to Zion” in it, He sent his Son Jesus, born of a virgin—“A woman shall compass a man”; “a new thing in the earth”; a provision to create a new heart, and make a new creature out of you.

Will you seek to make a highway in your heart for God? Will you maintain a highway to Zion in your heart? God will do His part if you do yours. ➤

**I accepted**

**this mountain as “a way,”**

**and the Lord began to exalt it.**

# “His Name Is John”

In the first chapter of Luke, we are told of Zacharias and his wife, Elisabeth. They were an example of what a couple should be. *“They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”*<sup>Lk 1:6</sup> This was a beautiful testimony of lives lived as lives should be lived, but God had also given them a great trial. *“They had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.”*<sup>vs. 7</sup> In this day and time, barrenness is not necessarily regarded with the grief experienced in other times, but we can be sure that Zacharias and Elisabeth had been devastated by it. Their community valued children as a true gift from God, and barrenness was mourned and lamented. Furthermore, the existence of the entire Israelite nation was the result of the miraculous birth of Isaac in the old age of Abraham and Sarah (just as the existence of Israel after the spirit is the result of the miraculous birth of Jesus of a virgin).

We are certain that Zacharias and his wife had fervently prayed that God would give them a child for many long years. But it *seemed* that God had ignored their earnest supplications, and finally the natural biology of womankind exerted itself, as God has designed, and it ceased to be with Elisabeth after the manner of women. What a time that must have been for this God-fearing, loving couple! At this point in the story, we find some of the marvelous story “in between the lines,” which is undeniably there, yet is not told directly. We know it was there because of the penalty applied to Zacharias for his unbelief (vs. 20). We see that God *expected him to believe*; and, since God is always fair and just, we realize that there had been promptings, preparations, which were given to the brother for the purpose of helping him to *not be afraid* of the angel’s promise. And we find this pattern verified

over and over in the Word of God. Even the most *outrageous* expectations of faith are reasonable service, after all, because God goeth before His own and winnoweth their path.

So, although we are not told in detail of God’s preparation of Zacharias, we can be sure that it happened because God is faithful. Zacharias *was expected to believe*, and the first thing the angel said was, *“Fear not.”*<sup>vs. 13</sup> He said this because Zacharias *was* troubled and fear fell upon him. The reaction of the brother seems very natural to us. If he had not had the power of speech removed from him as a result of his unbelief, we would feel that he was entirely justified in his reaction. We observe in passing through this story that many are struck dumb with respect to something God has for them because of unbelief. They can still talk in a general way, perhaps, but they have no testimony in the trial God has appointed them. They just don’t have it. They just didn’t get it.

The good news is that Zacharias profited by his affliction. It was a chastening of the Lord for his profit, and he got the profit. When family pressure arose to name the child according to custom (and how strong an influence is human custom and tradition!), then both Brother Zacharias and Sister Elisabeth *resisted* and *resisted successfully*. We are given the details.

*“Now Elisabeth’s full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.”*<sup>vs. 57-61</sup>

How many things are done for this

reason! “I don’t know anyone else who sees this as you see it.” This avoids the all-important question of whether the matter is right or wrong. And, since they were unable to convince the mother of the need of respecting the ways of men (and what is wrong with naming him after his father?), they tried the father.

*“And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.”*<sup>vs. 62-63</sup>

**“His name is John.”** This ranks right up there with the blind man’s statement, *“One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see,”*<sup>Jn. 9:25</sup> and many other hotly-contested stands for truth. Brother Zacharias had learned the lesson. **God is always right, and I am going to do it God’s way regardless of the cost.** The lesson is well worth the tuition. See also Proverbs 3:5-7.

*“And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.”*<sup>Lk. 1:64</sup> We see that God took no pleasure in the dumbness affliction of His child (Lam. 3:33), and just as soon as the lesson was completely mastered, God removed the affliction. The kinfolk test was the final part of the trial necessary to accomplish the purpose. We see immediately that the parenting of Brother John the Baptist and many others things depended on this mother and father getting the lesson that God had for them; and so it is with us.

How carefully and diligently our heavenly Father works with each of His children to mold us and shape us to the holy pattern! *“And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.”*<sup>Is. 30:18</sup> *“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”*<sup>2 Cor. 6:1</sup> ➤

*The good news is that Zacharias profited by his affliction.  
It was a chastening of the Lord for his profit, and he got the profit.*

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*“O my Father, if this cup may  
not pass away from me, except  
I drink it, thy will be done.”*

—Matt. 26:42



Jesus' Prayer of  
Self-Surrender  
(page 25)



**“Going and Lowing”  
on the Highway to Zion**