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Conviction, Repentance, Forgiveness, and the Power to Change



Conviction  
Repentance  
Forgiveness  
And  
The Power to Change

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## Introduction

There is someone who is very close to me. I have known her for many years. As long as I have known her, she has struggled in her walk with God. I have watched her go through cycles of standing up to serve God, only to get knocked back down again. She has struggled with addiction to cigarettes for years. She would conquer it, then get sucked back down into it. Because she knew this addiction was wrong, when she was giving into this thing, she felt very condemned, which would cause her to feel so defeated that she would almost give up on serving God. She would really beat herself up more than the devil would.

This has become a vicious cycle in her life. Because of all of this, she lacks a strong, confident faith and trust in God. This hinders her relationship with God. This hinders her faith in God's Word. God's Word isn't working for her, so her faith is hindered. The problem isn't with God's Word, but it is a problem with her. All this blinds her from being able to see the power in God's Word to change. She sees that she isn't living up to God's Word, but instead of grasping how to change all this, she just beats herself up even more because God's Word isn't working for her.

I believe that in her heart, she wants to change, or she would have totally quit on God

years ago. The problem with all this is that when you are walking around carrying all this weight, then you are a target of the enemy. The devil will come along and eventually destroy them totally. Her house isn't built on the solid rock foundation, but she is living on the sandy shores.

I am writing this book for this person, but I am also writing this book for all the many, many people that I meet who feel this same way, who are going through this same struggle. I am writing this book with prayers that God anoint what I write, and that He leads me to write what He wants to be written so that these lives will be touched and change, that they will be set free from this deadly spiritual cycle. The devil surely has used this cycle to destroy so many down through the years. I am sure that this is one of his greatest plots to destroy God's children.

I have seen whole churches that are bound by this struggle, because pastors and teachers are not teaching how to get free, and stay free. It may be because they themselves are bound. Their people are bound because they are not walking with God, reading the Word, and letting God's Spirit lead them to see that they need to get out from under the bondage of what these people are teaching. They have fallen into an easy sleep, into compromise, and all this will



lead to spiritual death. In short, they are the walking dead.

How am I able to say for certainty, that there are many churches that are bound by this cycle? I can say it because of the doctrine that they teach, and the way that most of the congregation lives. You can tell when people are free. You don't have to be around them very long to see if they have the victory, and joy of the Lord in their lives. You don't have to sit in a congregation for very long to be able to feel whether they are free or bound, you can see it on their faces. There is real joy, peace, faith, and all the other fruits of the Spirit, that come when we walk with the Lord. He rubs off on you when you are around Him very much. The Word of God rubs off on you when you allow God's Holy Ghost to write it in your heart. There is a change not only in you, but in your world. If this isn't there, then a people of a congregation are bound.

You can tell by people's conversations whether they are bound in this cycle we have been talking about. They may even be talking about what the Lord is leading them to do, and what the Lord is telling them. But you don't bear witness that it is God. They may be talking about all the things that they are doing, but you know that God has convicted you of these same things, and you know that God has delivered you from those things, and you are

so grateful that He did. You catch yourself thinking, if He did that for you, then why isn't He convicting them, why is He letting them get by? You see, sin is sin, and God doesn't let us get by. He loves us too much for that. He sent us His Son to deliver us from it, so why would He not convict you. God isn't a psycho with a split personality. He won't convict you of something, and then let someone else get by. Now we're not talking about personal convictions here such as things that the Lord had led you to do, or not do, but we are talking about sin. What is wrong is wrong, and what is right is right when it comes to sin. We'll talk more about this in the chapters ahead.

Another clue that lets us know if a church or pastors and teachers are caught up in all this defeated cycle is that they have fallen into teaching this doctrine that anything is OK. They are teaching that what might be right for you, might not be right for me, and vice versa. They are teaching that it is fine to do whatever you want to because God loves you, and will forgive you. They teach that it is wrong to make people feel bad, or convicted, for their sin. This doctrine makes them feel wonderful. When they are caught up in this doctrine, they no longer feel defeated. But is this the truth? What will be the outcome when they fall into this way of life and stay there?

Now if you have fallen into this way of thinking, then bear with me. Give me a little of your time, and read this little book. Then consider whether or not you are right. If you are buying a vehicle, don't you spend time researching if that vehicle is the safest for you to drive? Shouldn't you give more consideration to the things that keep your eternal soul safe? Just read on. Give this that much consideration.

So by way of introduction, I am writing this book, and dedicating it to all those who feel like you are drowning. I am dedicating it to all those who are constantly saying that you are tying the knot at the end and just hanging on. Do you know that you don't have to "just hang on"? You can be established. Your life can be built on the solid rock foundation instead of on the slippery sand. Your foundation can be sure. You just have to build on that foundation that God gives us. You don't have to constantly feel that life is beating you. You don't have to constantly feel beaten up by the devil. You don't have to constantly go through the cycle of sin, and defeat. You can overcome. God's Word promises. His Spirit is there to lift you up. You will read more about all this, and the victory that you can find in God in the pages ahead. If you feel like you know all this already, then still read on. You may find some little golden nuggets in God's Word that you didn't know, and some maybe you have

forgotten. Let's read more about *Repentance, Forgiveness, and the Power to Overcome*.

I want to add a footnote here to the end of this chapter. We talked earlier in the chapter about how many are caught up in the doctrine that excuses sin. I want to add here Ezekiel 13:22-23, "Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life: Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I am the LORD." If you are preaching or teaching, or sharing and living this doctrine, you are warned by God to stop. You need to come out of this and stop it. Verse 24 tells us what the outcome of this can be, "So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I am the LORD." I don't care if it isn't the most popular message. I don't care if the whole congregation walks out when you preach or teach the truth. You have an obligation to preach the whole truth of God's Word, to tell people to stay away from sin. If they all walk out, it is better for them to walk out than for God to walk out on you.

## Chapter 1 Conviction

Several years ago, I started hearing people talk about how they didn't want to go to churches that made them feel bad about who they were, and what they did. They didn't want to feel convicted. Churches even took the altar out, because that was the symbol of conviction. I got pretty concerned about all that. Now, years later, I see why I was concerned. There are so many people, and churches who have no clue about what is wrong or right. Their lives are filled with junk. They live in turmoil. Their families are falling apart. They are on all kinds of medication to help them to stay together, but even that doesn't work. They have all kinds of addictions, but that only makes it worse. Why? Because sin is ruling in their lives, and sin is destructive. Sad to say many of them have no clue of what is wrong with themselves, and many of these are Christians.

And what are the churches like that give in to this? Wow. They are a site to behold. Flesh rules, so everything goes. They are a cesspool of backbiting, division-causing jealousy, sin filled messes that are definitely not a light to the world. They are definitely not a site where people can be delivered, healed, saved, and empowered. They are definitely not spiritual filling stations.

And the pastors and teachers of these churches? Let me give you some examples. I was talking just yesterday to someone who was telling me about a pastor that I have known for years. I really didn't bear witness with this guy, and I found out why. This man told me that this pastor would frequently take out of town trips with some of his buddies, and this guy had gone on occasion with them. This pastor goes on these little trips so that he can "let his hair down with his buddies and be himself". There is always a lot of drinking and other things going on during these trips. Sad to say, this isn't a young preacher, but a very old man, and he has been this way for many years. He is a man that many look up to, but one who Spirit led people always avoid. He thinks that his life style isn't being made known, but the Bible teaches us that our sin will be shouted from the rooftops. What is the doctrine that this gentleman teaches? You guessed it. The doctrine that we talked about earlier.

The saddest part of this man's life is that recently he lost his grown son in a tragic accident. Now I am sure that his son knew about his dad's lifestyle. That is what happens, you don't live in a vacuum, even when you think that you do. I wonder if this young man had adopted the same life style as his dad? I wonder where his son is spending eternity? After all, this man was "a light" in his son's life

that was directing him to the Lord, and to God's Word. What kind of an influence had this man been to his son? What kind of path had he laid down for his son to follow in his footsteps like sons so often do? Because of that, I wonder where his son's eternal destination is?

Sad to say, I believe that there are many, many, many, many preachers, teachers, and other workers for the Lord that are like this man. There may even be many of them who are like my friend at the beginning of this book, who are bouncing back and forth in this deadly cycle of trying to make it, and then being defeated, and rising up once again, to fall again. How long will it be before they fall into the category of people that are spoken of in Romans 1?

Romans 1 is a chapter that many people tear out of the Bible. We can't do that to any part of the Bible. We can't just discard the parts we don't like. If we do that, then we will suffer the consequences. What are the consequences for ignoring what is taught in this scripture? Read verse 32, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do that." Let's back up to verse 28 to see one of the outcomes of this. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are

not convenient.” Read on from there to find out what things plague the lives of those who live this way. Matter of fact, please be sure to read this entire chapter. It is full of these things. Read this and ponder about it. When you read this, can you really say that it is OK to sin willfully? What does God say about all that?

Let’s look at some other verses. I constantly hear as an excuse for not standing up against sin, people telling me that it is wrong to judge. Here are a couple of verses to consider. Read on to Romans 2:1 and 2, “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.” Yes, this does say that we aren’t to judge others; we shouldn’t condemn others. A rough translation of this verse is the old saying that says, when you point your finger at someone, you have three pointing back at you. Point your finger and look at it to see what I mean by this.

But we can’t stop there, we have to read on to verse 2 and on from there. “But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing



that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.)”

Now just in case we have anyone that is thinking that this verse is talking about the Old Testament law, then let's go to James 1:21-25, “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his

natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

You see, God loves us. Jesus said in John 10:10, “....I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” Jesus died so that we could have an abundant life, full of the blessings of God. Can we do that if we allow sin to bind us? Sin destroys. There is an old saying that goes like this: “Sin will take us further than we ever want to go. Sin will keep us longer than we ever want to stay. Sin will cost us more than we ever want to pay.” God loves us. He does mighty things to keep us free from those things that bind us. He sent His Son to die so that we could be free. We will talk more in a later chapter about all that God does to help us to stay free. How do you think He feels about our thumbing our nose at all He has done, and our making excuses to stay in our sin? How do you think that He feels when we continue willfully to do what we want in spite of all He has done to deliver us, and help us to stay free?

Sin is like a prison, whether we want to admit it or not. I recently was blessed to be able to take part in a graduation in a prison. New Life

Bible College has an extension program in the prison where prisoners can earn their degrees in Biblical Studies, and Chaplaincy. Blessed to be able to go with our college Administrator to be part of the award a degree to one of our students. What bothered me the most about being locked up was that there were so many locked doors. You came in the front door, then after they searched you, you had to go through another door, and that door was locked. You couldn't just go through it. Someone had to buzz you through. Then there was a locked door going into the passage between the security fences. Then there was another locked door going through another series of fences. Then you had to go through another locked door to get into the visitation room. We were attending a graduation in another room, and there was another locked door there. At every step of the way, you had to have someone with you who could buzz you through into each door.

When we got out, we went to a restaurant. After being in the prison several hours going through that, it felt really strange to be able to just open the door of the restaurant and walk in. It felt strange to be free to go where we wanted to go. I could imagine how a prisoner who had been in there for years felt when they came out.

Sin is a prison. It takes away our freedom. It takes away our ability to stay free in our mind, our heart, and our spirit. It takes the life out of us. It binds us up and steals everything from us. It locks us up in so many areas of our lives. It causes us to be locked up in a little room and under the devil's control. To be set free we have to have Jesus to unlock all the little rooms in our heart and mind where we are imprisoned. The sad thing about this is that when we are imprisoned, we strut around in our excuses acting like we want to be in prison, and sometimes manage to convince ourselves that we are happy there, and that it is the "in place to be".

God wants to deliver us, and keep us free. He has made a way for us to be able to go through all those doors to be able to get out of prison. It starts with conviction, repentance, and goes from there to giving us the power to change. Just like the doors in the prison, these are the doors to unlock us. Jesus is the guard that will guide us out, if we are just willing to admit that we want, and need to be set free.

Now let's go back and talk a little more about all this. When I started with this last section of scripture, I made the statement that many people say that you aren't supposed to judge. They say this so that they don't have to hear what you have to say, and feel convicted. They are right. That scripture in Romans 2:1

says that. But are we not supposed to tell the truth? Is that judging? Are we supposed to leave others around us in their prisons, when we, through the Word of God and the power of His Spirit inside of us, are carrying around the key to help them to be set free? Is that love?

Lets go back to the preacher that I mentioned earlier. When I found out about this preacher, it really tore me up inside to know what he was doing. I have known this preacher for probably more than 25 years. He is a major influence in our community. Sad to say, he is a walking time bomb, and what damage will he do to those he ministered to through his life when knowledge of his sin comes out, and it will? I am grieving for him. I am not judging him. God will do that. I commit that to God. I don't have anything to judge him with. If I had never had any sins, or faults, then I could judge him, but I am human, and have had my own things that God brought to light, and convicted me of. But I am not winking at his sin like this is OK. It is not. I care enough about him to know the truth, and to pray for him that he find the truth about his sin. I commit him to God who will judge him. I am very concerned about all this.

I know what it is like to be brought to conviction, and repentance, and I also know about the power of God to help us overcome. I am not judging him, but I will tell you the truth. I will tell you that God laid on my heart to

include his story in this book so that lives and hearts will be changed. I pray that God continue to convict him, and I wonder how long he has before he fits into the category that Romans 1 talks about, if he hasn't already crossed that line. I am very concerned for him. God has not led me yet to talk to him, but if He were to, I am obligated to tell him the truth. My feelings toward him are not judgment, but sadness. I know that God's righteousness will either lead him to repentance or it will cause him to be judged. I can trust God in His righteous dealing with the man. I can trust that God will do all he can do to lead him to repentance, and if he doesn't repent and change, and turn from his wicked ways, that he will eternally be judged. That is why conviction is so important. Because of conviction, we know that we are doing wrong. Because of conviction, like the scripture says, we are without excuse.

Here is just a note to add to this. It is important to stand up for the truth. God will use us in this conviction process to be a light to others. And it is important to know that if we don't tell the truth to those under our teaching, or those in our family, or those close to us, and anyone that the Lord leads us to tell the truth to then we run a risk of being judged ourselves. This section of scripture in Ezekiel 33:2-7 puts this plainly. "Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring

the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.”

Before I go into further explanation of that scripture, I want to say that we are all sons of men. We are all set to be watchmen. This isn't just talking about preachers, teachers, and ministry workers, but it is talking about every one of us. We all have a responsibility to share the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth with those around us. This includes family, friends, people we work with, people in our churches, acquaintances, anyone that the Lord leads us to share the truth with. If we make excuses for people's sin, and we don't

stand up for the truth, then if they die in their sin and go to hell, we need to know that we are held accountable. This is true for all of us, but it is especially true for those who are given positions as shepherds over others.

I think that the most tormented people in hell will be those who knew the truth, but didn't live it. It will be those who are in hell with those who walked beside them, those they failed to witness to, those who were under their charge, and they have to see their faces every day in torment. It is necessary not only for us to live the truth, but to tell the truth as well, to minister the whole truth and nothing but the truth to those around us. I am not just talking to preachers, teachers, etc. here, but I am talking to every child of God. God tells us all to go out and minister to those around us. We don't have to do this in a judgmental way, but we need to do it in the spirit of love. But we need to do it.

I want to talk more here about conviction. I had one of our high school students at our ministry's Christian school ask me a very good question. He had just gotten saved. At that moment, the first thing he thought about asking was, "I don't want to do wrong. How do I know what is wrong and what is right?" My first instinct was to answer him that we know that from the Bible. That is true, but also the Spirit of God convicts us. The Bible tells us what is wrong, but the Spirit of God writes it on our



heart, and enables us to be able to keep the Word. So that is how we know what is right, and what is wrong. God's Spirit convicts us, and His Word backs that up.

I am so glad that God's Spirit convicts us. I have thought about that many times. If it wasn't for that, none of us would be saved, and none of us would be able to stay saved, and stay out of the messes and the traps that sin so easily traps us in. There isn't an indefinite right or wrong so that everybody gets to choose what it is for them. People that believe that to be true are often emotional basket-cases. Thank God that here is a definite right and wrong. There is a truth. There are guidelines. This is what is wrong with a lot of people today. They have no boundaries, and they have no guidelines. They are going through life on a unicycle with no handlebars to grab onto, and they are out of control. I really feel sorry for young people. A lot of parents have lost sight of what is wrong and right, and their children are even further removed than they are. They have no guidelines, no examples, no truths, they are just out there floundering around without a glimpse of the shoreline. I am glad that truth is like a life preserver that the Lord throws us.

I am glad that He can convict us, and lead us out of sin, into a good life, an abundant life. You can't have an abundant life and a life filled

with sin. It doesn't work that way. Hebrews 12:1 says, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." We can't run a race with a cinderblock chained to our feet. It will not only cause us to fail to reach the finish line, it will choke the life right out of us. We have to lay down all the things that bind us, and the things that weigh us down if we expect to make it to heaven. We can't carry all the garbage around and be able to have an abundant life like God wants us to have. We will be like that cartoon character that always had a little cloud over him, with rain coming down and lightning hitting him all the time no matter where he went.

We have to lay all this junk down. To be able to lay it down, we have to be able to see that we have it. Human nature is to hide your head in a hole and think that there is nothing wrong. We won't know what is wrong in our own human flesh unless God shows us what is wrong in our life. Conviction is what He uses to show us. Conviction isn't just what He uses to lead us to Him before we are saved. Yes, that is part of the Holy Ghost's job. But He also convicts us of our sin every day. I praise God for that. Not only does He convict us, but He also brings us to repentance, and He empowers us to overcome that sin. Conviction

is where the process starts. We'll talk more coming up about repentance, and the power God gives us to overcome in the chapters coming up. Conviction is step one.

I just want to mention a little more about conviction. What does it feel like? How should we react to it when it comes? God was convicting me of a rotten attitude that I had picked up a while back. It could have caused a lot of problems in my life if I had let it continue. The devil had set me up for that reason. He had caused a situation, and had used it against me to create that bad attitude. God began to convict me of that attitude. At first I just rebelled against that conviction. If we aren't careful, we can do that. I was tired of putting up with all that junk, and I wasn't going to repent of my attitude, when what was going on was bad and needed to change. That was my excuse. I was going to have my little attitude no matter how bad God convicted me of it. I had just had my limit of the whole situation.

Because of that little attitude, I ignored God's conviction. I didn't want to deal with it. That is another mistake that we make. That won't fix things. Hiding your head in the sand makes you like an ostrich. When he hides his head in the sand the biggest part of him is sticking up like a target. I felt really bad. I have had God's conviction be so strong that I felt it physically. I knew that I knew that He was convicting me.

When God convicts you, you will know. You will feel this tugging at your heart, and this feeling like a weight that won't go away until you repent.

Well, if I had kept that attitude, it would have snowballed and gotten worse. Isn't that what attitudes do? So God kept on dealing with my heart. Isn't it wonderful that He doesn't give up on us? There is a little song that we used to sing in Sunday school that says, "Jesus on the inside, working on the outside, bringing forth a change in my life". He will keep dealing with us and dealing with our hearts, talking to us, explaining things to us, until we give in, yield, and repent.

That is what He did with me. He explained the situation to me so that I got a clear head about it. He showed me that He was God, and He was in control, not the situation. He brought me to repentance. I repented, and the load was lifted. He renewed my confidence, and trust. The Holy Ghost lifted me up above the situation, and gave me victory over it. I was able to bind it up by praying in the Holy Ghost. Then I was no longer under the pile, but on top of it all. But it all started with my recognizing, and responding to God's wonderful conviction. It didn't feel wonderful at the time, but it was wonderful because it was the key that led me out of that prison.

Here is a little note that I want to add here. If we aren't careful, we can start thinking that sin is just things like drinking, taking drugs, adultery. We can think of it as being just big things. Sin is every thing that separates us from God. One of the biggest sins that can destroy us is bad attitudes. My attitude was wrong. If I had allowed it to stew, it would eventually have separated me from God, and others that I was serving God with. It would have caused me to lose my victory in God. Attitudes such as bitterness, fear, rebellion, jealousy, and more are sins that can separate us from God. How do we know? When God convicts us of them, we will know.

Thank God for conviction. Whatever you do, don't make excuses for what you do wrong. That will only dull conviction. Don't play ostrich, and put your head under the sand. If you do that long, the devil will paint a target on your hind end and use you for target practice. And whatever you do, don't put off fixing things. That will just wear you out in the long run. And it is especially important not to rebel against God's conviction. Rebellion against God is a serious thing. The Bible compares that to the sin of witchcraft. I Samuel 15:23 says, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

When you know that God is convicting you, (and He will definitely let you know- you don't

have to worry about that) then the key word to remember is YIELD. Matter of fact, that is a key word for a lot of things in God. Don't run, don't procrastinate, don't rebel, don't do all those other things, but yield. Stop. Put it in neutral. Yield to God's Spirit. Hear His voice. And repent. That is the next step. Coming up, let's talk about repentance.

## Chapter 2 Repentance

Repentance is step 2 in this process. When I think about repentance, I am reminded of two little boys out on the playground. One reaches out and punches the other in the nose. The teacher, who is trying to teach him about repentance, makes him apologize to the other little boy, and he does so grudgingly. Then just as soon as the teacher turns her back, he punches the other little boy again, because he is mad he got caught. Isn't that how we do God if we aren't careful. He convicts us by His Spirit and we are caught. It is what we do in the next step that is important.

What do we do with conviction? I remember watching a little girl. I don't remember what she did wrong, but her mother gave her a little, tiny frown of disapproval, and this little girl's heart was pricked. She sat down with tears in her eyes, so dismayed that her mother was not approving of her. She was so sorry that she had let her mother down, because she loved her much, and she knew that her mother loved her as well. She immediately stopped what she had been doing, and I knew that she wouldn't do that again if she could at all help it. That is repentance. She loved her mother, and that love was evidenced by her repentance.

Now that little girl's brother was a different story. He was over there swinging upside down and all around on the monkey bars, shoving past other kids, and being all around rambunctious. His mother tried the same tactic with him as she had done with the little girl, giving him a look of disapproval, but that didn't work at all. It went right over his head. He was determined to have his fun. Then she spoke to him. That didn't work either. Then she yelled at him trying to get his attention, but he just ignored her all the more. Then she had to grab him by the arm, and spank his butt. That finally worked. For a little while anyway. But he was back at it in a short time. Why? What was missing? He never repented. He was never really sorry. If he would have been, he wouldn't have done it again so easily.

In watching those two children I started thinking about repentance. One repented, and the other didn't. One had to receive the punishment, and the other didn't. One was determined to do what they wanted to do, regardless of the consequences to the others around them. One was tenderhearted with love, and the other just wanted to do his own thing. One changed for the better, the one will only get worse unless something gets some sense into his little head.

We read in Acts 5:31, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior,



for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." To be forgiven of our sins, we have to repent. Acts 11:18 tells us, "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." God grants us repentance. We read here that it is a gift from God. Repentance is a path that will lead us to find life, and life eternal.

We should never take this lightly. Some people take the attitude that if they sin, it doesn't matter. It doesn't even matter if they continue to do this again and again. They are like that little boy. They take the attitude that it doesn't matter what they do; God will forgive them. So they use this as a license to do whatever they want to. This verse makes us see this differently. Hebrews 6:6 says that, "If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." When we continue to do this sin over and over without repentance, then it is just like we have crucified Jesus all over. You see, He died for our sin. He paid the price for you to be forgiven with His blood that was shed on Calvary. Should we ever take the attitude that because of this, we can do whatever we want to?

Romans 6:1-2 and 6 tells us, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that

are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" In other words, we aren't supposed to just continue sinning once we are forgiven. Forgiveness isn't a license to continue to sin. Praise God, He has made a way for us to get out of our sin. We are not supposed to stay there. Read the whole chapter in Romans 6 to see more about this. Please get out your Bible and read this chapter. Let me say it again, please get out your Bible and read this chapter.

Hebrews 12:16-17 talks about Esau "For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." There can come a place in our lives where if time after time after time after time we repent over the same sin that we commit over and over and over, then we may not be able to find a place of repentance. Why take that chance?

What are some of the reasons why people fail to repent? It may be that they get so condemned over their sin that instead of repenting and giving it to God, and allowing God to take it, they beat themselves up and beat themselves up over their sin. They are actually so hard on themselves over every little thing that they do that they can't get forgiveness or deliverance from something because they are so busy beating themselves up over it that they never let it go and give it to

God. They get stuck in repentance, and never go on to the next step of forgiveness, and finally deliverance, and freedom. Do you remember my friend that I mentioned at the beginning of this book? How he would go through cycles of victory, and then condemnation, but never found release. That is what she does. She takes the stick right out of the devil's hand and beats herself until she totally loses any hope of victory.

How can people who do this be set free? They need to see that Jesus died to take that sin, and forgive them. They need to take it to Calvary, lay it at the feet of Jesus, and let it go, rising up to overcome. They need to realize that when Jesus died to forgive them, they are forgiven. We'll talk more in the next chapter about the power of God's forgiveness. They need to realize that repentance is only one of the first steps. The others are forgiveness, and then the last one that leads to victory is God giving us power to change, and to overcome. We can't stop at repentance and stay stuck there. If we do, we will never find true victory the way God intends for us to. We will never find true victory of the kind that Jesus died to give us.

Another reason why people fail to repent when God is convicting them is that they are too busy making excuses for what they do. I have taught for nearly 40 years. Kids can come up

with the most outlandish excuses. From “my little brother ate my homework” to “my hamster peed on my assignment”, to “my mother got mad at me and threw it in the trash”. But the excuses that kids can come up with not to do what they are supposed to do is nothing compared to the excuses that adults can give God when they want to get by with their sin. He sees all. He knows their hearts. He knows what is going on. He is no dummy, but we act like He is when we are passing out our excuses. If we aren’t careful, all our excuses will cause us to go to hell. When we excuse our sin, we will die in our sin. The problem with our excuses is that they stop us from ever being forgiven. We have to repent before we can ever be forgiven. Excuses stop us from being responsible for what we do wrong, but they don’t lead to victory. We have to go through repentance to get to forgiveness. Then all that has to happen to get to victory.

Another reason why people fail to repent is that they procrastinate. They feel God’s convicting them, and they know that they need to repent, but they are too busy to take care of it at the moment. They are too busy for anything having to do with God. They are too wrapped up in the world, and all the junk of the world, to have any time left for anything God wants. If we are too busy for God, then one day, we will wish that we had set our priorities in line when we

have eternity to spend, just wishing that we had done it all different.

Sometimes the reason why people fail to repent is that they will not yield to God's Spirit convicting them. Some people are "mule-ish". They are stubborn and rebellious, or they are so proud that they will not admit that they are wrong and that they need God at all. Some just want their way, and they are not going to yield to God, or to anyone else for that matter.

Proverbs 16:18 tells us, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." When I think about pride, I am reminded of King Nebuchadnezzar. He was such a proud man that he set up a time when everyone in his country was to bow down and worship him. What was eventually the result of that? He was driven out of human company and lived with the wild animals. He even ate grass like an ox. He did this for seven years until He learned that God is the one who rules human kingdoms and puts whomever he wishes in charge. He was definitely humbled. When this was over, God restored him back to his kingdom, and he made this statement, "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." You can read his story in Daniel chapter 4.

If you are too proud to get down on your knees and repent to the God who created heaven and earth, then one way or another, one day or another, you will bow before Him and repent. Why not today? The Bible says that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. We are not the Lord of our life. Our will is not ruler. We will either find that out today, or one day when it is too late. Why not today?

The main reason why people fail to repent is that they really want to do what they are doing, and they don't want anyone, especially God, to tell them that they need to stop. They put all kinds of blinders on. They look around at what someone else is seemingly getting by with, and they think to themselves that they can get by with it, too. They listen to all the preachers that tell them that they don't have to repent, and that God isn't telling them that they have to. These people tell them that God loves them too much to make them feel bad for the wrong that they are doing. They listen to all the world's junk enough to ease their conscience and they never repent. When God looks at them, He sees their sin, not the blood of His son.

The only reason why the blood of Jesus won't cover your sin is because you have not repented of your sin, and you have not asked God to forgive you of it. The only reason why

the blood of Jesus won't cover our sin is because we have chosen that sin over God, His love, His grace, and His sacrifice for us. Or it is because we have chosen to continue in that sin over and over and over again even though God convicts us to come out of that sin.

You may be like the little boy on the playground with his teacher that we talked about at the beginning of this chapter. When our great heavenly Teacher tells you to stop that and enables you to stop it and to change, do you continue to do it again? When we think that He isn't there, and isn't watching, or when we find a good excuse, do we still do it? Or are we like the little girl that was so tender hearted toward her mother that she teared-up because she thought she had disappointed her?

Love is the key to understanding all this. God convicts us because He loves us. He doesn't want us to be destroyed by our sin, and even though we don't want to admit it, sin destroys. Sin not only destroys, but it kills us eternally. He doesn't want that for us, because He loves us. When we fall in love with Jesus, and in love with God, then we will be tender hearted toward Him. The more you get to know Jesus, the more you will love Him. The closer that you draw to Him, the closer He will draw to you, you will see Him as He is. When you see Him as He is, then you will love Him. You

won't want to sin. You won't want to disappoint Him, or cause Him pain. You will appreciate the sacrifice that He made on the cross, and you won't want to crucify Him afresh.

If you really want to get out of the sin rat -race then fall in love with Jesus. Ask God to create in you a new heart, a soft heart, one that every day prays, "God show me if there is anything in my life that isn't pleasing to you, show me if I am doing, or thinking, or feeling anything that isn't pleasing to you." Trust in His conviction. Then if you are, repent, and ask His forgiveness, accept His forgiveness. Then go on to overcome.

There is another reason why conviction is so important. One of the devil's greatest tools is condemnation. This is different than conviction. Conviction is when the Holy Ghost deals with our heart about the things that we do wrong. Condemnation comes when the enemy accuses us over and over for things we have done. Sometimes these are things that have been forgiven, and sometimes these are things that we haven't even done. The Bible says in Revelation 12:10 that the devil is an accuser both day and night. He will bring up everything you have done for the last 30 years, or more. He will create things to accuse you of that you haven't even done. He will use others to hold judgment over you. This all causes you to feel condemned, and the next step is giving



up because you feel like no matter what you do, you can't do right.

How do we escape this trap of satan? Trust God's conviction. Trust that God will convict you when you do wrong, and trust that He knows how to get their attention. Learn to tell the difference between conviction, and condemnation. If you feel condemned, then go to God, and ask Him to help you to repent, if this is something that He is convicting you over. Trust in His forgiveness. Then condemnation won't have the power to destroy you. We'll talk more about overcoming condemnation in the next chapter about forgiveness.

How important is repentance? I was at a funeral one day where there was a huge crowd of people. I asked the Lord how He saw this huge crowd of people. He said that He saw them in two groups. One group had the blood of His Son covering their sins. The other group did not. That really opened my eyes. We make this thing so hard. It is simple. There are two groups. One group that has been convicted, they have repented, and been forgiven so that Jesus' blood has covered their sins. When God looks at this group, He sees His Son's blood instead of their sin. The other group is those who still continue in the sins, and who have not repented and been forgiven so that what God sees when He looks at them is their sin.

When God looks at you, He isn't looking for perfection. He isn't looking for your righteousness because He already knows that your righteousness is just filthy rags. He is looking for His Son's righteousness. Let's read a little about our righteousness. We read that we are to follow after righteousness. Proverbs 21:21 tells us, "He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour." I Timothy 6:11 tells us, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." We know that we will reap what we sow. If we sow unrighteousness, then that is what we reap. Galatians 6:7 tells us this "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Matthew 6:33 tells us how to find righteousness. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

We are to seek righteousness, and follow after it. But how do we get it? Here are some ways:

Matthew 5:6 makes this promise, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Hebrews 12:11 talks about how God's chastening, His conviction and punishment when we don't listen, will draw us to His

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

Job 23:10-11 tells us that God will try us, and we will come out like gold. He knows how to cause His righteousness shine in us. “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.”

The main way that we receive righteousness is this. Galatians 2:20 tells us, “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.” This is how we find our righteousness, we find it by allowing our flesh man to be crucified so that we can live in Christ, letting His righteousness reign.

We will talk more ahead about how to find victory in the Lord, and how to find his righteousness. I just wanted to give you a glimpse of it here. If we become convinced in our minds that there is no way to live this thing right, then we will settle for our sin, and we won't repent, and move on to receive God's forgiveness. This itself will hinder us. You can

see from that little tidbit of scriptures that I have given, that this isn't so. You can make it in victory through Christ, and by the power of God's Holy Ghost. Even if you have tried and tried, and have given up because you have continued to fail, you can make it in victory through Christ. You just have to have the right tools. You just have to have some understanding that you may have lacked. Keep reading so that you can find the missing pieces that you need to know so that you, too, can overcome.

Psalms 129:23 tells us a prayer that we should continually pray. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts." We don't have to be afraid that we will do something that God won't convict us of. He will let us know. He will keep us from sin. He sent His son to die so that we would be forgiven, He will show us when we have failed Him. The only way we won't know is if we silence His voice. He loves us enough to do this. We are safe in His love.

Coming up next we will talk about the power of forgiveness. And then after that, the power to change.

### Chapter 3 Forgiveness

Let's talk about forgiveness. Forgiveness is the issue that so often gets clouded. I remember one of the first times that I realized this was when I heard a teenager make this statement, "I know I am forgiven. God loves me. So I can do what ever I want. I can smoke cigarettes. I can have whatever attitude I want to have. I can have sex with my boyfriend. It doesn't matter because God loves me and I am forgiven." Yes, God forgives us, but can we just do whatever because of that and get by? Lets take time to get this issue of grace worked out. Understanding it is a key.

We know that we have been forgiven because Jesus died for us. There are some that take this to the extreme. I heard a preacher preach this. He said, "We no longer have to ask for forgiveness, because Jesus died to forgive us. Because of that, we no longer have to repent or feel convicted. God won't make us feel bad. The Spirit won't make us feel bad." We have already talked about how that is not true, and given scripture about why it is not true. Thank God that this isn't true. We need to remember here that forgiveness won't happen unless we are convicted. It won't happen unless we repent and ask for God's forgiveness. All these things have to come before forgiveness. We can't skip a step or two and go right straight to

forgiveness because it is easier to do that. This isn't monopoly. It isn't a game. It has to be done the way God set it up to do.

It has been years since I saw this girl. I often wonder what her life is like. If she hasn't changed her way of thinking, it has been filled with sadness, and turmoil. Romans 12:1-2 would have offered her some good advise, but she was too deceived to hear it. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

It is God's grace that He forgives us, then makes a way for us to overcome. He doesn't leave us in our mess. (Sad to say, we have even used Romans 12:1-2 as an excuse to do wrong. I have actually heard this preached that there are three wills of God: one is good, one is acceptable, and one is perfect. Now I teach English, and I know adjectives when I see them. You can plainly tell in this section of scripture that this is talking about three words used to describe the one will of God. Not three levels of the will of God.) God wants us to find His will and walk in it so that can have a good life. That is our reasonable service.

No matter what the world says, we need to think God's way and prove that His will works. If we continually, habitually, and purposefully choose to disobey God and walk contrary to His will then we read in the section of Romans chapter 1 what will be our end. Hebrews 10:26 tells us "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

I have to be careful when I am talking about all this that I don't cause you to think you have to be perfect to serve God. I have known so many people who were hesitant to get saved because they were afraid that if they messed up, God would kick them out of His presence. We will sin, but the difference is that we can't willfully sin over and over and after coming to the knowledge that this particular thing that we are doing is wrong. If we barrel on past God's conviction, and we run every roadblock He puts up to stop us, then we will crash. That is a given.

We read in this scripture in Romans 10:16 how God helps us to overcome sin. "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." This is what forgiveness is all about. He forgives us, but He doesn't leave us there.

He empowers us. We will read more about this in the next chapter.

God knows that we are weak. He has been helping people get through this world for a long time. He knows us. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says, “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness....” Paul was telling us something that God had told Him about how His grace would keep him. He was telling him that His grace would keep Him, that His strength would enable Him. His grace is much more than just forgiveness. His grace strengthens us, and enables us. His love makes a way for us to be victorious. Yes, He forgives us, but He also does so much more. You don’t have to be afraid that you have to be perfect, and can’t. He knows you can’t. That is why He does all He does to keep us in His love. We just get in trouble when we refuse to let Him because we would rather have our sin.

I want talk a little here about God’s love. It is His love that will keep us if we have committed ourselves to following Him, and if we are yielding to Him so that He can keep us. My Mother loved me. She tried to tell me to leave certain attitudes alone when I was growing up. I was so rebellious. She constantly tried to tell me not to be. The things that I got into later that destroyed my life started by my attitudes when I was young. I didn’t want to hear



anything anybody told me. I wanted to do my thing my way. That was the beginning of my destruction. My Mom tried to get me to see this, but I went my way. I paid the price for my sinful attitude. She loved me enough to try to get me to see this, in whatever way she could, that I was doing wrong. Then when I repented and asked for her forgiveness, she forgave me.

God's love is even greater than my Mother's love for me, and we all know how great a mother's love is. He loves us. He tries to turn us around when our attitudes get on the wrong side. He deals with our hearts when we head out in the wrong direction. When we sin, and we repent and ask for His forgiveness, He forgives us, and then opens up to us how to overcome this. If we will just let Him. That is all grace. Forgiveness isn't about letting us get by. It isn't about letting us do whatever we want, even if it destroys us. That isn't forgiveness, and that isn't love.

Here are more scriptures about the power of forgiveness. Acts 5:30-31 tells us, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." God raised up Jesus to die so that we could be forgiven. Will He forgive you?

I John 1:6-9 tells us "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the

light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Isaiah 43:25 tells us, “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”

Isaiah 55:6-7 tells us, “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

Micah 7:18 says, “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.” The Bible says that as far as the east is from the west God will remove your sins from you. Yes, God will forgive you.

There are three aspects of forgiveness. We have talked in this chapter mostly about God’s forgiveness. The Lord’s Prayer teaches us another aspect of forgiveness. Matthew 12:6 tells us “And forgive us our debts, as we

forgive our debtors.” This and other scriptures let us know that if we have unforgiveness in our heart, then God won’t forgive us of our sins. We have to forgive others. Sometimes that isn’t humanly possible. However, if we ask God to help us to do this, then He will. We can rely on the Holy Ghost inside of us to enable us to forgive. Unforgiveness doesn’t hurt the people that we are refusing to forgive. It hurts us. It hurts our relationship with God, and with others. It can even cause physical problems, and emotional problems. Many studies of cancer have linked it to bitterness. That isn’t the only sickness linked to bitterness. Be willing to forgive. Know that if you are willing to forgive, through the power of His Spirit inside of you, God will help you to be able to do just that.

Another aspect of forgiveness is that we forgive ourselves. Jesus shed His blood for us to be forgiven. We often don’t forgive ourselves. We punish ourselves for everything wrong that we have done in our whole life, if we aren’t careful. The enemy, the devil, often uses this to discourage us from trying. When we fail to forgive ourselves, we dig a rut for ourselves that we can’t get out of. We can never overcome and move forward if we fail to accept God’s forgiveness.

I remember someone who went up for prayer at a service. She had been going through a

battle for a while. The evangelist told her that the devil didn't need to fight her, because she was too busy fighting against herself. He didn't have to. He had just set her in ambush against herself. She was her own worse enemy. Then he did something that really stuck in my mind. He said, "This is what the devil is doing to you." Then he pretended to hit himself in his head with his fist, then he pretended to hit himself in his stomach. He went from there to knock himself all over the platform, in a pretend fight against himself. He said, "See, this is what you are doing. The devil doesn't have to fight you. You are fighting yourself for him."

I have been through times like this myself, so I know what he was talking about. I remember that I went through a time of this that was really bad. The preacher would preach about something, and I knew every time that everything he preached about was aimed right at me, and nobody else. I started feeling like he had something against me, because he was singling me out every sermon. That was just an attack of the enemy. I finally went to him, after one such sermon, and asked him to forgive me for doing what he had preached about. I will never forget the look of surprise on his face when he said, "I never thought that you did that thing. That was the furthestest thing from my mind." That is when I realized what the devil had been doing to me. That was the beginning of my getting free from that condemnation.

There is a story that Jesus tells in John 8:11 about condemnation. This is the story of the woman who was caught in adultery. She accepted conviction, and repented. She asked for Jesus' forgiveness. He forgave her. Then he saw those around her who were ready to stone her to death for her sin. He made that statement that we all know, "He that is without sin among you, then let him first cast a stone at her." When they dropped their stones and walked off, He then told her, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

When I was first saved, God had saved me from a life full of sin. I had a lot of scars because of my sin. I hated myself because of the things that I had done. The devil didn't have to beat me up. I was too busy doing that myself. Because of that, I couldn't fully accept God's forgiveness. I remember so well how God delivered me from that cycle. He showed me the nail prints in His hands. It was so plain that I could almost see them with my natural eyes. He told me, "I did this for YOU." I knew that He died for the world, but I had never really gotten a glimpse of how He had done this for me on a personal level. He then told

me, “If you had been the only one, I would have done this just for you.” Wow. That was a glimpse of God’s love, and Jesus’ love that set me free from that self-destructive cycle I was caught up in. Think of those nail scarred hands. Jesus did that for YOU. If you had been the only one, He would have hung there on that cross for you. This is a song that the Lord gave me that talks about this.

### **He Would Have Died If I Had Been the Only One**

#### *Chorus*

*He would have died if I had been the only one.  
The blood that He shed would have fell if I had stood  
there all alone.  
Still His great love was so much more that He died for  
the whole world.  
Yes, He loves me like I was the only one.*

#### *Verse 1*

*Don't you know how precious you are how much Jesus  
loves you.  
Those nail scars on His hands, His feet, His sides, they  
were there for you.  
That crown of thorns that He suffered, that piercing in  
His side too.  
He would have hung there on the cross, if it had been  
only you.*

My question to you is this: Will Jesus forgive you? Can you trust in His forgiveness, and His love for you after that forgiveness? But here is the important thing. Praise God, He doesn't forgive us and leave us there in our mess.

He lifts us up and empowers us, enabling us to rise above it all in victory. Coming up in the next chapter, how we can find the power to overcome.

## Chapter 4 The Power to Overcome

In Romans 7:18-24 we read, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Can you identify with Paul?

Paul wrote this about a battle that he went through. He said that he knew that he needed to do certain things, and leave certain things alone, but there was something warring inside of him that kept him from doing this. Did he stop here and leave this as an excuse not to do right? No, he didn't. He explains how to find the power to do right in the rest of this chapter of Romans, and in the next chapter. We will read coming up about how he overcame.

We know from Paul's own words that he had this battle of overcoming flesh. Do we know that he overcame it? If you are going to take



directions from someone, you want to do so from someone who has been to that place or accomplished that thing, isn't that right? How do we know that Paul is someone whose directions we can trust to lead us to overcome our flesh? We know from reading most of the rest of the New Testament that he overcame. We can trust that he found out how to overcome, and listen to him tell us how.

Let's find out how he says to overcome this battle with our flesh. The key is found in Romans 8. Please read that whole chapter. Please read that whole chapter. In chapter 8 we read, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Now we have to rightly divide this scripture. These statements about no condemnation isn't an excuse to do whatever we want to, and not feel condemned about it. It is, however, comfort when we have repented, and assurance that we don't have to accept the devil's condemnation. So many people read that, and that is where they stop. They stop before they find the key to being able to press on. As we read further, we'll see further. Let's read past the word condemnation in this verse. It goes on to say this is a promise to those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit". What is that talking about? Let's read further to see.

We can overcome what Paul called in verse 24 “O wretched man that I am? Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” We can overcome this battle. The key to it is found in the statement “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”. What does that mean? Let’s read on in Romans chapter 8 to see. Please read that chapter before we start talking about it. Please read that chapter. Hey, please read that chapter. Thanks.

In verse 5 we read that those after the flesh mind the things of the flesh, and those after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. We read in verse 6 that if we are carnally minded it is death, and being spiritually minded gives us life and peace. I guess you could say that walking in the Spirit starts in your mind. Have you ever thought about who controls your mind? What I mean is, do you spend most of your thoughts on the things of God, or on the things of this world? Think about this. Start out this morning from the time that you woke up to now. Think about what you thought about the most. What did you concentrate on most during the day? Who or what was your main focus? How many times did Jesus come to your mind? How many times did God’s Word come to your mind? How many times did praising the Lord come to your mind? How many times did you yield your spirit to God’s Spirit to get direction for the next step? How many times did you yield your spirit to God’s Spirit to get help to

overcome an attitude, or to make sure that you had the right thoughts to do what you were doing? How many times did you ask God for the strength to do what you had to do? When you answer these questions, you can get a glimpse of what it means to walk in the Spirit, and you can get a glimpse of whether or not you are doing so.

If the things of this world are your main focus, then they control your thoughts, or feelings, and they control your spirit man. If the things of God are your focus, and you yield to Him, then the Spirit of God is controlling you, and you are walking in the Spirit. If you allow the things of this world, and your flesh, to control you, then the Bible says that is death. It says that you can't please God that way. In verse 14 we read that "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Wow, we can really see that it is important to walk in the Spirit, and not in the flesh.

Well, how do we do that? I think a key verse to explain how is found in Galatians 2:20, "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." How do we walk in the Spirit? We know that we are crucified with Christ. We are dead. Christ is in us, and He is our hope of glory. We need to let Him rise up and live in

us, and through us through His Spirit. This happens when we let Him do His thing, and we stop doing our own thing. That can only happen when we yield our self will, when we yield ourselves to Him, and let Him rise up in us. Then we live by the faith of the Son of God who loves us enough that He gave Himself for us.

I read that section of scripture for years and never noticed that one little two-letter word that changed my life. That little word is “of”. This verse talks about the faith “of” the son of God who loves me. It isn’t faith “in” the son of God. It isn’t our faith. It is His faith. It is the faith of Him. We don’t have to rely on our faith. When we submit our flesh to God, and yield to Him, when we yield our heart and mind to be controlled by Him, then we don’t have our faith, but we have His faith. Let’s talk a little more about that.

I used to read about the fruits of the Spirit that we are supposed to have, and they would just make me feel defeated. They are found in Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” I thought this verse was talking about all the things I had to have in my attitudes, and there were so many times that I didn’t have them that I would just get defeated when I read this scripture. Then I

noticed this little word “of”. Again, we see this little word, and it changes the whole impact of this verse. Whose fruit is this? Is it our fruit, or is it the fruit **of** the Spirit? Is it ours, or is it His fruit? You see, we can’t have these things on our own in our stupid flesh that is just filthy rags compared to God’s righteousness. These things are part of His nature, His Spirit. When we yield to Him, we take on His nature. We give Him control. Like the little song says, “Jesus on the inside working on the outside, bringing forth a change in our life.” When we yield our stinking attitudes, and our stinking thinking to Him, His Spirit can rise up in us, and can shine.

Now I know that some of you may be saying to yourself, “God wants us to use our mind, and the abilities that He gave us, because that is why He gave them to us.” Is that right? Is it all about our flesh and what we can do in the natural? How many times have you seen that this wasn’t true? When it comes right down to it, your best is filthy rags in God’s eyes. Who says so? God does. If you don’t believe me, look it up in the Bible. Cross reference filthy rags. I don’t care how great you think that you are. I don’t care how talented you think that you are, or how smart, or how spiritual in yourself, or how whatever you think you are, without yielding to God’s Spirit, and letting Him live through you, you are filthy rags. Give up, give in, and let His Spirit rule in your life. Until you do, you are nothing. You will not be able

to live for Him, or serve Him until you give up and let Him have control. You can try your hardest, but you don't have what it takes. When you give up, yield to God, and let Him have control of your flesh, then you can be victorious, and serve Him to the best of HIS ability. And believe me, His ability will be the best.

I am blessed to have an impossible job that is full of things that I cannot do. It is full of decisions that I have to make and those decisions can change people's lives either for the better or for the worse. It is full of challenges like counseling young people who are suicidal, and knowing that if I say the wrong thing, they could die. It is so physically demanding and emotionally demanding that I can't do my job. Every five minutes, somebody needs something. I am constantly called on to do things that I have no idea how to do. I have so many different "hats" that I wear that I can't remember which one I have on at the time, so many different offices that I hold that I am not sure which one I am in at the given moment. You may read over this and say, "I thought she said she was blessed to have this job?" That is exactly what I said.

I am blessed to have it. That is because it has taught me how to yield and let God use me. It has taught me how to yield and walk in the Spirit. It has taught me how to trust that I have the mind of Christ, and how to stop my mind, and put on His. It has taught me how to be

used supernaturally by Him, because I can't in the natural do what I am required to do. It has taught me to walk in the Spirit. It has taught me this because I know that I had better start my day yielding to Him, relying on His mind and not my own, relying on His strength because mine isn't sufficient, and listening to Him leading me, trusting in His guidance.

I know that I had better start my day by getting on my knees, maybe not always physically, but definitely in my heart yielding to Him, or I won't make it through my day without making a big mess of things. I have to start out trusting His guidance, and listening for that still small voice. I have to start out yielding to Him so that those fruits of His Spirit are a bigger part of me than my stinking flesh. If I don't, I know I will cause some kinds of havoc in somebody's life before the day's end. All that is what it means to walk in the Spirit. Am I perfect in doing this? No, I am still flesh. But through desperation I am learning how to do this more and more. What about those times when I am sick, or just so stressed that flesh pops up, or other times that I don't yield to God's Spirit? Well, I pay for it, and sometimes others pay for it. I learn from it, repent and confess, and God helps me overcome. After all, it's Him, not me.

When you come to the end of all you can do, then is when you find out what God can do

through you. That is where I live. That is where walking in the Spirit starts. First, you have to realize the need. We talked about that earlier. We read about how walking in the flesh is death, and walking in the Spirit is life. We read about how to even be considered as a son of God, we have to yield and walk in the Spirit, and obey Him. If we aren't yielding our flesh to His Spirit, we don't even know what we are supposed to do, and we definitely don't have what it takes to do it. How can we serve God if we don't walk in the Spirit?

I want to take a minute to talk to pastors, teachers, workers, evangelists, everyone who ministers in some way. How can you really be effective if you are walking in the flesh? All you will be is an entertainer, or a motivational speaker, unless you are filled up with the Spirit of God, and yielding to Him, letting Him flow through you and use you. You won't be effective. You won't change lives. You can't. Only God can do that. He won't be able to unless you yield to Him.

I hate when I see pastors using the title reverend. I can tell from this that they are not yielding to God's Spirit. I know my own limitations, and have to yield to be able to just live for Him, let alone serve Him in the ministry. I know that the only thing about me that is reverend is Jesus. I know that the only good thing in me, like Paul said, is Jesus. There is no way that I would lift up myself above him, and title myself as being reverend. He is the



reason I do what I do. He is the ability that I have to do what I do. He is the strength that I have to do what I do. He is the mind that I have to do what I do. He is the power that I have to do what I do. He is the results. Who am I to think I am reverend?

But wait a minute? Are ministers, evangelists, and workers, the only people who need to walk in the Spirit? Aren't we all called to minister wherever the Lord puts us? Aren't we all entitled to a life full of victory? We can't have a victorious, and abundant life if we aren't walking in the Spirit. God will have blessings ahead of us, and we will walk all around them, and never get to them if we aren't walking in the Spirit. God will have an abundant joy for us, but we will be too wrapped up in fear, and torment in our mind, and never feel the joy and peace that we can have in and through Him when we walk in the Spirit. We will constantly be struggling to help others, and always failing to do what is really needed because we aren't yielding to Him, and walking in the Spirit when we reach out to others.

So, I guess the key word here is yield. That unlocks walking in the Spirit. I had someone tell me that he just didn't understand what it meant when people said that he needed to yield. I told him that he needed to ask God to show him what that meant, and how to do it.

He went through a time not long after that where he went through hell on earth. Everything that could fly loose flew loose. When he was laying flat on his back under the pile, he knew exactly what it meant to yield. We can be so full of ourselves that we can't even see what it means to yield, and we can't see the reason why we should ever want to. We can't see why we should give up control of our lives. We have to be in control. We have to have it our way. Human nature says that to yield is a bad thing. As long as we are that way, we will never find the victory that Paul found when he said in Romans 8:37, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

We read in Romans 8:6, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Whether we want to admit it or not our carnal, fleshly mind is really stupid. It is so negative. It looks at things in all the wrong ways. If we need to go right, our carnal mind will tell us to go left. If we trust only in our own mind for guidance, then we will be always making the wrong decisions. We can't trust our feelings. Our feelings can be influenced by so many different things. If we trust our own mind, and our own emotions, then we will more than likely be deceived and find ourselves in every trap that that the enemy can set for us. We will eventually become so wrapped up in

lies, and this world's junk that we fall to the wayside. We will die spiritually.

I want to spend time here talking about the world's junk that we can get wrapped up and tangled up in. I remember the first time that I heard that people were so addicted to texting that they were actually driving while texting. I thought to myself that couldn't be true. After having nearly been run off the road several times by "texters", I believe it now. This and all the drama on the internet is so destructive. Facebook can be used by God, but it is also one of the biggest tools to destroy God's people. If the majority of the people in the world are doing something, then you might as well know that the devil is behind it, and his main agenda is using it to destroy God's people. You won't know this unless you are walking in the Spirit. God will show you the things that you need to stay away from, and you need to obey Him. That is walking in the Spirit.

Here is another example of walking in the flesh. Now this may seem weird at first, but bear with me. You will understand. I have a tendency to have an over abundance of yeast in my system because of having taken a lot of antibiotics when I was younger. I recently had a bad infection, and had to be on a high powered antibiotic for nearly 20 days. It left me

flooded with yeast in my whole system. Now yeast is weird. The yeast in my system craved sugar because that is what it feeds on. So I would get these sugar cravings that would be unreal. Before I knew what was going on, I would give into those cravings and stuff sugar in me like crazy. That was causing the yeast to grow even more, and it caused more problems. A side effect of yeast is becoming very irritable and anxious, all uptight. I became that way. Before I realized what was going on, I had done a lot of damage to the people around me. You can't be that way and work with young people who often have bad self-images anyway. My body was taking control in a bad way. My flesh was taking over. All this stuff in my body was wrecking my spirit. I had to realize it, and put my foot down. I had to put my body under subjection and let it know that it was no longer controlling my life. I had to get in the Spirit, and yield to God so that I could get out of this.

I was thinking about all this one day, and it came to me that this is just like what we all go through with our flesh if we don't get it under submission, yield it to God, and let Him have control. Isn't that right? Yeast was just making my flesh all the more powerful, but it is powerful enough to destroy us anyways without that. Your flesh can control you in so many ways. This yeast thing was one small example. Our emotions can get out of whack.

Our thinking get confused, scrambled by the world, and the enemy that attacks our mind. Our flesh can have us going south when we need to go north. We can't give into our flesh, like Paul said. If you want to find victory in your life, you have to learn how to submit your flesh to God, yield it to Him, and let His Spirit control you. He is inside of you. You are His temple, His dwelling place. He is waiting for the opportunity to help you to find an abundant and fruitful life through obeying Him, and allowing Him to live through you.

Why do we need to let Him do this? How many times have you thought that you knew that something was the right thing to do, but it turned out all wrong, and you had to pay the consequences? How many times have you let your feelings control your mouth and that left you wishing a hundred times that you had kept your mouth shut? How many times have you given up in despair because your flesh was telling you that there was no need to go on, and you found out later that you had given up just before the victory? How many times have you allowed these things to control you like fear, or rebellion, or anger, or jealousy, or bitterness, or any other negative emotion that the devil was using against your flesh to control you? How many times did you give up because you didn't have enough strength to go on and do what the Lord was telling you to do, instead of relying on His strength to go on?

How many times have your feelings gotten in the way of obeying God because the devil caused you to get a chip on your shoulder because of something somebody said or did that hurt your feelings? How many times has the devil pulled your chain because of using your emotions against you? How many times have you made really bad choices because your flesh was leading you instead of God, and the devil was leading your flesh? How many times have you listened to wrong counsel because you were seeking after people for guidance, instead of listening to God's Spirit? (Just a note here: I know many people who died because they listened to doctors instead of listening to God.) All these things and a thousand things more come because we are walking in the flesh instead of the spirit. If we keep on letting our flesh control us, we can eventually lose our victory, our walk with God, and even our lives.

We have a battle between our flesh and the Spirit of God in us. Our flesh doesn't want to be under the control of anybody, God or anyone else. That is the nature of flesh. The Spirit of God is in us waiting for us to yield and let Him have control. It is up to us to choose who is the master of our emotions, our choices, our wills, and our lives. (Sometimes I will talk to my self. When my flesh starts rising up, I will say, "Flesh, you shut up. I am not listening. You are not controlling me. Devil, you go away

and leave me alone.” I say that just in case he is what’s behind my flesh giving me such a fit. Just me doing that helps.)

So what do we do to win this battle? One preacher said it this way. He told that he had two dogs. He asked the congregation which dog would be the biggest and strongest. He answered his own question by saying, “The one that I feed the most will be the biggest and strongest.” Which will be the biggest and strongest in your life-your flesh or the Spirit of God in you? Which part will be in control? The one that you feed the most.

How can we feed the God side of us to make it stronger in our lives than the flesh? We can do this by reading the Bible, praying and spending time fellowshiping with the Lord, praising Him, listening to Gospel music, being with God’s people who are like minded, putting a priority on obeying God even when your flesh doesn’t feel like it. All these things will help you to yield your flesh, and allow the Spirit of God to become stronger than your flesh.

I can just hear a lot of you saying, “I don’t have time for all those things.” Isn’t it sad that the things that are the best for us, the things that will ensure our eternal salvation, we don’t have time for? Think about it. Isn’t that right? Maybe

we don't have time because we aren't doing what we are supposed to be doing. Maybe it is because we aren't putting a focus on what we need to focus on. Let me tell you a secret for having enough time to do the things that you need to do. Put a priority on serving the Lord. Make a commitment to Him. Yes, you have other things to do, but if you make Him number one, and walk in the Spirit instead of the flesh, you will have the time to get the things done that you need to do, and you will leave alone those things that the devil is putting in your live that will choke the life out of you.

I am reminded of the parable that Jesus told about the seed. You find it in Matthew 13. We read in verse 22, "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." There is so much junk that can steal your time, and eventually steal your soul. If you don't have time for God, then you will find yourself spending eternity in hell where you have plenty of time to regret that you didn't make time for the things that are important.

The Lord has led me to do something that has changed my life. He led me to start my day by listening to Gospel music. Sounds like a simple little thing. I used to start my day by watching



the Today Show, and that got to be nothing but junk. But it was a habit. It was hard to break that habit, but I did. This one simple thing, starting out my day by listening to Gospel music, starts my day by putting a priority on God. I start my day obeying Him, and yielding my flesh to Him. I often find myself praising Him, getting in the Spirit of God, and the Holy Ghost blesses me. That is a good way to start the day. That one simple thing changes my focus of my day, and changes how my day goes.

Now when I first started getting caught up in the Holy Ghost, praising God and letting the Holy Ghost pray through me, I was hesitant, because I would look at the clock and see that I didn't have much time to get ready. I would halfway do it, because I didn't want to be late for work. Then I discovered something. If you put God first, you will always have time. I'll get caught up in the Spirit, and pray and praise the Lord, and then when God is done, I will look at the clock. Only a few minutes will have passed, when it seemed like a lot longer. If you put a priority on doing the things God tells you to do, you will always have time.

One of the ways to put your flesh under subjection is to fast. That means that you don't eat anything for a day, or three days, or however long that God leads you to do so. Or

you can fast something that you are craving. When I was going through that yeast thing, I fasted sugar, because I knew that if I didn't, it would feed that yeast, and that could physically destroy me. My body went crazy at first, because it wanted that sugar, but I didn't give in, and that became easier. I did this with God's help. My flesh learned that God was in control of me, and it wasn't. When you fast, you teach your body that you are in control, that God is in control, not your flesh. That makes it easier to submit to God, and do what is right when it is important.

I want to add a note here about obedience. If you can't submit your flesh to God, then it will be nearly impossible to walk in obedience. If you don't learn to walk in obedience, then how can you effectively serve God? I think of Paul when I think of obedience. When we first meet Paul (or Saul as he was first called before God changed his name), he was a Christian killer. He was delivering Christians up to be killed. He thought that he was serving God. He thought that he was doing what God wanted him to do by getting rid of these false people. He was very zealous in what he was doing. But boy, was he wrong. He was doing what he was doing in the flesh, and it was the opposite of what God wanted.

I see this all the time. I see a lot of people who are out there zealously doing the opposite of

what God wants them to do, thinking that they are serving God. They just haven't bothered to yield their flesh to God's Spirit to find out what they are supposed to do. They are making messes of people's lives, thinking that they are doing God a service. If you are in the flesh, and you are not yielding to God, then you will destroy more than you will help. No matter what your intentions are.

I am reminded of a horse that I used to have when I was a teenager. He was so fast. His mother was a thoroughbred racehorse. He loved to run. I would just put the reins up on his neck. I wouldn't even have to nudge him on at all. He would take off like a bullet. There were about 15 people that rode with us, and he was the fastest of all the horses. But we never won a race. Why? He would never let me be in control. He would always get the bit in his mouth. The finish line would be over here, and we would be over on the top of another mountain way over on the other side. All his speed, and his natural ability was worthless, because he wouldn't yield his will. If we aren't careful, we will be like that horse. We will never reach the finish line. We will be supposed to do this certain thing, and will be spending all our effort on something else that will never amount to anything, because it isn't God's will for us to do. We have to learn to yield our will, and walk in the Spirit obeying God.

So, now that you have more understanding about how to walk in the Spirit, go back and read Romans chapter 8. Go back and read Romans chapter 8. Hey, go back and read Romans chapter 8 for a blessing.

God has given us a super charged promise to be able to super charge us to overcome our flesh. This is a gift that causes us to be able to spiritually walk on troubled waters. It is a gift that enables us to not only pull up from walking in the flesh, it empowers us to walk in the supernatural. Sad to say, it is a gift that many, many people never open. It is even a gift that many people think is not real, and think that it isn't for them, even though countless verses in the Bible talk about it. Read on to see what this precious gift is, and to open it for yourself.

## Chapter 5. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost

We know that the hour is late. Every day we see signs of the coming again of the Lord. Soon He will split the eastern sky and those without spot, wrinkle, or blemish will be caught away. Now is not the time to be defeated. Now isn't the time to lose our savor. We must be ready for His coming, or we will get left behind. We must be yielded to the Spirit of God more than ever before, ready to obey Him so that we can lead those we love to Him. How can we change the picture of today's church to be the one that is victorious. The key to unlocking the church is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. What difference can that make? Read on to see.

I have put together a little chart that illustrates how the Baptism of the Holy Ghost makes a difference.

With the Baptism—Power to Overcome  
Without the Baptism—Settling into compromise and defeat

With the Baptism—Boldness to obey God  
Without the Baptism—Excuses for why you can't and justification of sin and disobedience

With the Baptism—Comfort, overcoming fear and other bad fleshly emotions

Without the Baptism—Bound by fear, anxiety and panic attacks

With the Baptism—Ability to show the fruits of the Spirit

Without the Baptism—Fruits of the flesh being more prevalent than the fruits of the Spirit.

With the Baptism—Understanding and walking in the full counsel of God in the fullness of His Word

Without the Baptism—Not being rooted and grounded in the full counsel of the Word of God

With the Baptism—Peace with God

Without the Baptism—Rebellion that comes when you try really hard to do what you feel you need to do to be able to serve God, but you only fail because you are doing it on your own in the flesh

Without the Baptism—Struggle

With the Baptism—Release that comes when you let the Spirit of God control your life

Without the Baptism—Feeling empty, like there is something more

With the Baptism—Feeling satisfied.

Finally and most important:

Without the Baptism—defeat

With the Baptism—VICTORY

To sum this all up, here is a parable that Jesus told. It is found in Matthew 1:1-13. It is the parable of the 10 virgins. They were waiting on the bridegroom to come to the marriage feast and let them in. Five were wise and five were foolish. The foolish ones ran out of oil in their lamps. Their lamps went out. They went off to buy oil, but it was too late. When they were gone the bridegroom came. When they got back the door was already shut. "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." We need oil in our lamps to be able to stand in these last days. It will be the difference between having victory or defeat. We can't get it at the last minute. It won't work that way. In the Bible oil is often used to represent God's Spirit. Either we will be ready when the Lord comes, full of oil, full of His Spirit and the victory that brings, or we won't be. If we aren't, then it will be very hard to stand in the last days and inherit the promises of God.

It is harder not to believe in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost than it is to believe in it. It is harder not to be filled with the Spirit of God than it is to be filled. It is much harder to live a Christian life without the fullness of God's Spirit than it is not to have it. It is nearly impossible to do so without it. Do you long for more victory in your

life? Do you want to be able to overcome your flesh? Do you want to become a powerhouse for the Lord? Are you tired of your Christian walk being one step forward and two steps back? Keep reading.

The best way that I can begin a chapter about how we can get the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is by telling you about what happened to me. I had never heard about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Sad to say, this teaching sometimes has become a denominational thing. There are some denominations that teach it, and some didn't. I grew up in one that didn't. But God led me to go to a little church that opened up in the where I grew up. God led me to go to that church. I obeyed Him. That is where I first I heard about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. I received that teaching. I didn't discard it. I didn't file it in my file 13. I didn't trash it. I didn't turn it around and around and discard it because I couldn't understand it. I received that teaching. I hungered for what I was taught. I wanted everything that the Word of God had for me, and this was definitely in the Word of God. I accepted it. God did the rest. You can see how my receiving the Baptism was based on my obeying God, and on my accepting this. I was hungry, and God filled me. I sought this. The Bible says seek and ye shall find. It happened just that way.



At one of the church services, God led me to go up front and ask them to pray for me to receive the Baptism. I did. That is scriptural. We read in Acts 8:15 and 17, "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." I didn't receive it right then. I am not sure why I didn't. It may be because there were some more things that I needed to understand. Or it may have been that I was a shy person. When everyone gathered around and started praying for me, that was more attention than I was used to. For whatever reason, I didn't get it right then. Lot's of people do. That was the beginning of my receiving it.

I guess you could say that my experience came in two parts. Later on that same week I was riding around praying for someone that I had a deep burden for. I was grieved in my spirit for this person and what they were facing. All of the sudden I started speaking in tongues. That is when I knew that I had received the Baptism. Acts 2:4 says, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." The two go together. The Bible says that an evidence of receiving the Baptism is speaking in tongues. Some people have trouble understanding about this, but does that mean that it isn't real? In I Corinthians chapters 12, 13, and 14, we read about whole chapters

that talk about speaking in tongues. When I started speaking in tongues, I knew that I had received the Baptism. If you don't believe in this, then what about what you read in the Bible? You need to accept what God says.

Now I grew up in a home that didn't believe in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. It wasn't that we talked against it. It was just that we had never heard of it. This thing was all new to me, except for what little bit I had learned at the church I told you about. I didn't realize that speaking in tongues was subject to the person who was speaking. It is the Holy Ghost speaking through you in His language, but still you will be the one who will stop and start it. The Holy Ghost doesn't speak through you until you open that channel. I thought that I had to do this the whole time. The Holy Ghost poured through me. For a whole day I spoke in tongues. I guess I needed that extra power in a bad way. My life was changed on that day. As the old saying goes, I knocked the devil off my front porch and he landed way out in the yard. On the humorous side, I was afraid that if my family heard me they would think I was crazy so I stayed outside all day working with the horses. I was afraid that I couldn't make it stop. At least I had enough sense to not want it to. Speaking in tongues is an evidence that you have received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Let's talk a little more about speaking in tongues. In Acts 2:4 says, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." That is the first mention of speaking in tongues. This is written in the section of scripture that talks about the day of Pentecost. On that day, two things happened because of their speaking in tongues. Every man, no matter what his nationality and language, heard that message in his own native tongue. There was not a person there that couldn't understand what was said. Another thing that happened, news of what happened there was spread around the world. That was a supernatural happening, and everyone there knew that it was a miracle of God, a sign that God was surely in their midst. Those two things still happen today when people speak in tongues.

We'll talk more about how people can hear a message in their own tongues. First we will talk about how since this is a supernatural thing, people know that God is truly in their midst. That is one of the outcomes of speaking in tongues. People realize that God is supernaturally in their midst. Speaking in tongues is not a natural thing. When the Spirit of God speaks directly through His people, you can know that it is something that He is doing. That is one of the reasons why people have trouble accepting and understanding this gift of

God. People want things that they can control. They don't want things outside their own fleshly understanding. Sad to say, because of this they miss out on most of what God can do for them. They also fail to yield to God's Spirit, and never find the victory that comes when they do. If we don't yield to God's Spirit we can't walk in the Spirit. If we don't, then we let our flesh rule our lives and we suffer the consequences of this. Supernatural things have to be taken by faith. Supernatural things must be understood by faith. One example of supernatural things is salvation itself. Walking in the Spirit is another of those. When I first heard about the Baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues, I didn't understand it with my mind, but I knew in my heart that it was something that the Lord had for me, and it was something that I needed. So I reached out past my mind, trusted Him, and received it. That is what it means when we say we have to take it by faith.

When we speak in tongues, the Holy Ghost prays directly through us. He uses His own language. There are different kinds of tongues. We read in I Corinthians 12 a list of Spiritual gifts. In that list, in verse 10 we read, "...to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues". That is one purpose of tongues. I have been in church services where there was a lot of music, a lot of prayer, a lot of noise, and all of the sudden a holy hush

would fall on the congregation. God was ready to speak. Some blessed saint of God filled with the Holy Ghost would begin to speak in tongues. You could feel the power of God's anointing fill the church. Another saint would be given the interpretation of what was said. Many times this would be the very word of encouragement someone needed to hear. It would be the word of direction that someone had been seeking the Lord for, and only they knew the prayer in their heart, but God knew, and He spoke to them. I have known people to get delivered from things that had bound them for years, because of that Word from the Lord. I have known people to receive healing, because they were set free from the bondage that had held them in sickness, because of that Word from the Lord. Nothing is as powerful as that Holy Ghost message, direct from the throne of God. That is one purpose of tongues.

There are different kinds of tongues. In I Corinthians 14:4 we read about an unknown tongue. "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." Verse 2 explains what an unknown tongue is. "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him..." That is a prayer tongue. There is sometimes when we speak in tongues that no one will be given an interpretation. This is a

prayer tongue. God is praying directly, and our understanding what is said isn't what is needed. Talk about a powerful prayer. Have you ever had a burden to pray for someone, but had no idea of how to pray? God knows. His Holy Ghost will pray, and intercede through you. When He does, bondages are broken, deliverance and healing come, crooked places are made straight and streams flow in the desert. God knows exactly what is going on and when His Spirit prays through you it will be exactly what is needed. Talk about something that can stomp the devil. The devil can't understand and interfere with Holy Ghost filled prayers. Some times, too, I believe that the Holy Ghost prays in a language that the devil can understand. Nothing can bind the enemy like a Holy Ghost filled speaking in tongues prayer. Powerful.

Mostly in a church service the tongues, the messages that are given, will be ones that will be interpreted, not an unknown tongue. The Bible says that it won't help the people understand if they can't hear what is being said and understand it. So mostly there will be an interpretation, someone who is given the interpretation of what was spoken. Paul said in I Corinthians 14:18, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." He goes on in verse 19 to say, "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten

thousand words in an unknown tongue.” Prophecies are words from the Lord. Some prophecies are about future events, but many of them are not. They are simply direct words from the Lord. Guidelines for the use of prophecies and speaking in tongues in services are found in I Corinthians chapter 14. That is a good place to read to learn about tongues and how they fit in services. It closes with this in verse 39, “Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.”

I mentioned earlier in the chapter that there is a tongue that is actually a language that people speak, so that others who speak that language can understand what is being said, just like happened on the day of Pentecost. I remember a church service where an elderly lady was slain out in the Spirit, and began speaking in tongues. There was a girl there whose husband was Hispanic. This elderly lady didn’t know a word of Spanish, but she began speaking in perfect Spanish. I knew enough Spanish to know some of what she was saying in the natural without having someone interpret in the Spirit, but there was no need for interpretation. That message was directly for that girl whose husband was Hispanic. The Lord spoke and called that man by his nickname, a name that none of us knew in the natural. He told that girl that if she would stay faithful to Him and dedicate herself to Him,

her husband would come to church and serve Him. That was a known tongue. What an impact that had on that lady.

This story is another example of that kind of tongue. A man was walking outside the windows of a church. He was from an Indian tribe who at one time spoke a language that nobody speaks today. He heard from inside the church a little girl's voice telling him in his native language that he needed to stop running from God and give his heart to Him. This language was a language that few could speak. Talk about stopping him in his tracks. He ran into the church and to the altar. He knew that God had used that little girl to speak to him. Thank God for the gift of speaking in tongues.

We talked about how we can pray in tongues, which is the Holy Ghost praying directly through us in His language. That is the most powerful prayer that you can pray. I remember someone telling how they were on a plane. During the trip, the Holy Ghost started interceding through this man. He had no idea why, but he yielded to God's Spirit and let Him pray. This went on for some time. When they landed, he found out that there had been a systems failure. Then for no reason, the systems failure had fixed itself. Did it have anything to do with his praying in tongues? What do you think?



Bishop Goad often shares the story about how the Holy Ghost had started interceding through him one night. He had no idea why but he yielded and let the Holy Ghost have His way. Later on that next day he found out that a good friend of his had been stabbed at the very time that he had started interceding, praying in the Holy Ghost in tongues. His friend had nearly died, but for some miraculous reason, his condition had reversed. Did it have anything to do with his praying in tongues? What do you think?

One of the key reasons that we pray in the Spirit has been mentioned over and over in this chapter. When we pray in the Spirit we have to yield to God's Spirit. When we learn to do this, it can change our lives. Our human flesh wants to do its own thing. Human nature is stubborn about giving up its way. That is why so many people, those who have the Baptism and those who don't, fail to have victory in their lives. They won't yield to the Spirit of God in them. They won't listen to the voice of God. They won't let the Spirit of God lead them. Because of this, their life is always in turmoil. They constantly make the wrong decisions. Their flesh controls them. They are plagued with panic attacks, depression, anxiety, and all sorts of emotional problems. These things bind their health. The church as a whole today is plagued with these things. When we learn to

yield ourselves to God's Spirit, these things are not as powerful and they are not able to control us. The Spirit of God controls us instead. Many of these things are actually demonic oppressions. The devil can oppress Christians. He can't possess them, completely control them, because they have the Spirit of God in them. He can bring a devilish spirit down over their head like thick blanket that chokes out the Spirit. That is called "oppression". The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and speaking and praying in tongues takes that thick blanket and rips it away. God delivers. Flesh can't bind. His Spirit controls and brings victory. Speaking in tongues can strengthen you and bring spiritual victory in your life.

How can you receive the Baptism? The same way I did. Believe in it. Get hungry for it. Open up your heart to receive it. Make sure that you are obedient. Go to a church that believes this way. (As a note: If you go to a church that doesn't believe in the Baptism, then don't expect them to be able to pray for you to receive it.) Ask the Lord to fill you. Let them pray for you. Believe that you will receive. And accept it. It is a gift. Or you can seek God yourself. My grandmother and aunt received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with the gift of speaking in tongues sitting in their living room when we prayed for it. God can reach you where you are.

The Bible refers to the things of the Spirit as the gifts of the Spirit. We don't have to be perfect or super spiritual to receive it. I think that one of the things that often hinders people from receiving the Baptism and the gift of speaking in tongues is that people get afraid that they can't get it. That isn't faith. All the things of God are given to those that believe. I have talked to people who have prayed and prayed and nothing happened. The minute that they go up for prayer, they become afraid that nothing is going to happen. The more they try, the more this fear grows. That fear is what is hindering them. The devil is pulling a trick on them by using fear. He'll also use condemnation to stop you. Every time you pray for the Baptism, your thoughts may fill up with remembering all that you have done, all your sin, and all your past. Those things are behind you. They are under the blood. It is your enemy, the devil, who is reminding you of all this, who is condemning you. The Bible says that when we have repented, the blood covers our sin, and we don't have to be condemned any longer.

Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." If you are walking in Christ, not giving into the things your flesh wants you to do that is sin, but if you are giving into the Spirit then there is no more condemnation. You can

tell the devil to go away and leave you alone. If all that is happening to you, the best thing to do is to say, "I accept this gift that God has given me. I am meeting the requirements. I accept this thing by faith. I believe that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

I believe that one way to overcome all this fear is by reading over and over this section of scripture that we talked about earlier until you get it in your heart and mind. Luke 11:9-13 says, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 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?" God knows how to get through all this bondage and give you the Spirit. You are seeking Him. It is His job to find you and honor His Word. Believe that He will. It isn't so much dependant on who you are and what you do, but it is His job to give you this gift. It is just your job to receive it.

The word Baptism itself means to be totally and completely submersed. When we hold

onto a little bit of our self control, a little bit of our will, a little bit of our dignity so to speak, then we block God's Spirit from being able to totally fill us. When we trust God to the point that we release ourselves in His love to receive, then we can be filled with Him. We will never find complete victory in our life over our flesh until we do that. The key to submission is realizing how much you need this. When you get good and tired of your flesh and the mess that it makes for your life, then you will be more willing to yield to God. You will be willing to ask Him to fill you with His Spirit. You will be lifting up your cup to get it filled and God will fill you.

We need to realize that on our own, doing our own thing, not submitting to God's Spirit is why the church today lacks victory. It is why we lack victory in our personal lives. Until we submit to God's Spirit, we will not be able to do God's will, serve God, reach out to His people to minister to them. We will not be able to obey God's Word. On our own without submitting and yielding to His Spirit we can't keep ourselves from sinning, no matter how bad we want to do so. Yield your flesh and let God's Spirit fill you up.

I know people who have sought the Baptism of the Holy Ghost for years. They have been in scores of prayer lines. They have read every book that they could get their hands on. They

have tried so hard to receive it. Then they would just finally give up. That was exactly what they needed to do. They needed to quit trying. They needed to get into neutral gear. When they did, when they gave up trying so hard, God was able to do His work in their lives.

Sometimes people who have had a struggle with receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost have problems yielding to anyone. This may be because they have been so hurt by people that they have trouble yielding to God. God is love. If we have trouble yielding to other people's love because of scars that we have from being abused or hurt, then we won't be able to yield to God's love. If this happens to you, then ask God to heal you. He can heal the scars and wounds in our hearts just as He can heal the bumps, bruises, and diseases of your body. Ask Him to help you yield to Him. Ask Him to help you to receive His love. Seek His love. Yield to that love, and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost will come on its own.

Stop trying to receive it. Have you ever chased somebody down that wanted to give you a gift, and beat them up to take it away from them just when they were reaching out with it to give it to you. I guess not. Sometimes that is how we do God. This wonderful gift is one that He is holding out to you through His Word and His Spirit. When you receive a gift it is an act of

yielding. When you give a gift that is something that you do. When you receive a gift, you just let it be placed in your lap. Yield to God. Submit to His love. Receive this gift that He has for you.

For more about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and how to receive it, see my book titled *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost*. You can download this book and more of my books for free on my website at:

[www.freechristianonlinebooks.com](http://www.freechristianonlinebooks.com).

Or you can find it on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) in hardcopy.

## Closing

Through this book, I hope that you have learned the power of conviction, repentance, and forgiveness. I pray that you have learned that God doesn't leave you stuck in that cycle, but through the power of His Word, and His Spirit, He enables you to change. We have an almighty God who is able to make a difference in you, and your life.

In closing, I want to leave you with this thought. *What you settle for is what you'll get.* God offers you deliverance, the power to change, the power through His Spirit to live a victorious, abundant life. Is that what you have? Or are you settling for a lot less. God once showed me a picture in my mind. He showed me people crawling on the floor picking up crumbs. They were fighting over these crumbs. They were bragging about how big their crumbs were compared to others. Then He showed me what was just over their heads. There was a banquet table spread out with a huge feast. If they would only climb up and pull up to the table, they could have the feast, but they were crawling around settling for the crumbs. This is true for many of the things that God promises.

Why settle for the crumbs. Faith says press on, press on. Find out what God has for you. Find out what abundance He has for you, and walk in it.



You don't have to settle for a life filled with halfway living. You don't have to settle for sin. You can find the power to change.

Note From Author:

I pray that this book has opened up a new relationship with the Lord that is closer than you've had before, one full of the power to overcome.

If you have been blessed by reading this book, please try more of my books. They are available online at:

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Sandy Haga