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Three times in the book of Revelation, Jesus is quoted as saying, "Behold, I am coming quickly."¹ A fourth time He said, "Surely, I am coming quickly."² The word *quickly* is translated *soon* in some Bible versions. To this believer, these words refer to the Second Advent, or second coming of our Lord, which zeroes in on the focal point of these passages: what does *quickly* or *soon* mean? Why hasn't He already come? What has delayed His coming? What can be done to hasten His coming? Perhaps the answer lies in this prayer by our Lord shortly before His crucifixion, "I do not pray for these [disciples] alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they may be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."³ The implication in this prayer is that when we are one in the Father and in the Son, *each believer* will be doing *the will of our Lord*, and I believe THAT, more than anything else, will hasten the *soon coming of our Lord*. For all believers to become one doesn't mean to change signs on the front of church buildings or appoint committees to resolve doctrinal issues. In the opinion of this writer, that would be a total waste of time, would delay His coming and will not happen. To become *one* means (1) for all believers everywhere to put their eyes on Jesus instead of our differences and ourselves, (2) to believe what Jesus said is applicable to believers today as it was in the first century, (3) to become hungry for Him, (4) to ask for guidance of the Holy Spirit to do specifically what our Lord desires of us,⁴ and (5) then continue to pray and wait⁵ by faith for the answer; and

¹Revelation 3:11; 22:7; 22:12.

²Revelation 22:20.

³John 17:20, 21 (brackets inserted).

⁴Read the Gospel of John for affirmation of this kind of prayer for guidance by the Holy Spirit.

⁵The waiting part is the most difficult. Often I have trouble with waiting because I want an answer NOW, "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31). Those who do not wait on the Lord

the answer will surely come. That is what I have done and why I know it works. And I am awed by God's response in giving me a ministry which I believe will hasten His second coming, *as I continue to walk in His will by doing what He has led me to do*. And that's exciting! The Lord's heart longs for others, like you, for example, who will unreservedly give themselves to Him as a servant. In case you are hesitant to do so, please remember that He will be tolerant and considerate of the present demands on your time and will not overload your schedule. You may do that, but He will not. Herein lies a call for wisdom. An abundance of blessings awaits such a commitment. Our Lord is not looking for ability but for availability. I am living proof of that fact.

One purpose of my current writing is to share with you how the Lord has led me into a new ministry I knew nothing about, then literally taught me how to do what He called me to do. He will do the same thing for you, but awaits your call to Him.

In my last letter, Christmastime 1997, I shared with you that beginning in January of 1996, I asked the Lord to lead and direct me to do additional things to glorify His Name, since I had some free time available in my personal schedule. I then related in chronological order His first five responses: (1) "Redeem the time." and "Be bold in prayer." (2) "I will give you a new ministry but expect the unexpected." (3) "Give away your watch." (4) "Holy Spirit rain on me." and (5) the Lord's purging and cleansing me in preparation for "the unexpected." In sharing with you what the Lord has led me to do, I do not imply that you should be doing the same things He has directed me to do. Quite the contrary. What I am saying to you is, "Ask Him by faith what you can do to glorify His

and proceed with their own idea of what God wants will 'grow weary in well-doing', become ineffective in the kingdom, experience burn-out and wonder why. When man seeks to reach out to God through his own efforts or through his own works, he seeks refuge in words and the result is 'babel.' When you pray and wait on the Lord for His guidance is when you 'shall run and not be weary' and shall 'walk and not faint.'

Name, or to hasten his soon coming and He will respond with HIS WILL FOR YOU.”

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

For some time prior to September 27, 1996, the Holy Spirit began to call my attention to the fact that after the resurrection, but prior to the ascension, Jesus appeared to a group of His disciples, breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”⁶ After this had been on my mind for a number of days, I was led by the Spirit to lay hands⁷ on the world by faith⁸ and then found myself saying, “I forgive the sins of everyone who has ever lived on the face of the earth from Adam to the cross; from the cross to this present day and everyone alive today on every continent, every island, every boat and ship in every harbor, river, stream, lake, sea and ocean all over the world.” As I finished, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, “That’s what Jesus did.”⁹ As these words were spoken to me, it was as though I was ‘lifted’ to a new position of boldness and authority in prayer, a position I had never before occupied. This was neither a vision nor anything ethereal. It was just a very real inward feeling. And this inward feeling was so vivid or pronounced, my thought was to look around to examine my new surroundings and see what they were like -- to see if anyone else was there. Not long afterward, I was in prayer with a group one evening and found myself saying bolder statements by faith concerning spiritual warfare, for example, than I had ever made before. It is interesting to realize in retrospect, that the Holy Spirit had said to me, “Be bold in prayer,” and was now in the process of teaching me what that meant so I could be obedient to that which I

⁶John 20:22, 23.

⁷The laying on of hands is an elementary doctrine of Christ. See Hebrews 6:2.

⁸See Matthew 8:5 - 13 for the account of Jesus healing the Centurion’s servant without going to his bedside. Distance does not negate faith; faith bridges distance.

⁹I didn’t do this because Jesus did it, I did so only as led by the Holy Spirit. Otherwise I would NEVER have done such a thing. I later became reassured that I was led to do this by the Holy Spirit as I related the incident to five other people around noon in the House of Prayer on October 22, 1996.

was instructed to do.¹⁰

Along with new boldness in prayer, there came some intensive teaching on forgiveness about which I had previously read in the Bible, but had never before clearly ‘seen.’ This insight, of course, was the result of revelation knowledge.¹¹ In my letter of 11/1/97, I shared some things I had learned on forgiveness, particularly on difficult or seemingly impossible cases of forgiveness, so that will not be repeated here. However, here is something additional I was shown. In the Lord’s teaching on prayer, the ‘Lord’s Prayer’ or the ‘model prayer’ as it is sometimes called, is generally concluded with Matthew 6:13.¹² But what I have been shown is that verses 14 and 15¹³ on forgiveness are a continuation of His *teaching on prayer*, since effectual prayer is not possible with an unforgiving heart toward anyone! And this includes sins against us whether the offender is dead or alive, or has no intention of restitution, or of asking our forgiveness under any circumstance. Unforgiveness

¹⁰In his prayer for guidance, the Psalmist David prayed, “Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.” (Psalm 143:10, NKJV). And Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (John 14:25, 26, RSV). The Apostle Paul also affirms the same thing when he wrote, “These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches...” (1 Corinthians 2:13, NKJV).

¹¹See Matthew 11:25; 16:17. Revelation knowledge came neither from flesh and blood or from the intellect during the time of Jesus, nor does it come that way today. It is revealed to babes, not to the worldly wise; to the lowly ones of a broken and contrite heart, as the Lord Himself said, “...for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you shall find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:29). And revelation knowledge comes only by and through the precious Holy Spirit. That is why it is imperative to accept all scriptural teaching concerning the work of the Holy Spirit as relevant *for today*, since He is the Author of the instructional manual for Life. When in doubt read instructions, is a good rule, and the instruction manual is the Bible. And the Spirit will teach *you* if you will ask Him. The reason I know is that He has taught me and continues to teach me as I seek guidance from Him.

¹²“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” Other authorities, some ancient, add, in some form, “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever, Amen.” (RSV including added note.).

¹³“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

harbored in our heart against *anyone* constitutes unforgiveness in God's heart against us. Therefore, we must forgive our friends and enemies alike, whose sin was either against us or someone else, or we will not be forgiven by God, and here is why. Forgiveness is a nonresistant act which absorbs the full force of evil and comes forth victorious. Unforgiveness perpetuates evil. When you 'take no offense' against the one who offends you, sin is defeated in *your* heart. But when you forgive the offender, *you* become the *aggressor* and evil is disarmed. Then is when forgiveness becomes "sharper than a two-edged sword"¹⁴ to defeat evil in the heart of both the offended *and* the offender. The act of Jesus in forgiving mankind struck at the very source of evil and defeated *him*. That is why forgiveness is powerful -- it defeats Satan, the source of evil. And I believe that is why on September 27, 1996, the Holy Spirit led me in the prayer of forgiveness of mankind to 'do what Jesus did.' That prayer opened a flood-gate of Spiritual enlightenment which I must give away. Forgiveness permits us to take a giant step forward in our relationship with man and with God. This is a powerful *kingdom principle* which yields abundant blessings.

IN THE FAST LANE

Within a few days of October 15, 1996, the Holy Spirit gave me one word, "Fast." At the time, I realized *fast* was descriptive of how you drive on the Interstate. I had also given consideration to "God's chosen fast" which is an admonition by God's prophet Isaiah¹⁵ to fast from wrong doing and turn to right doing -- and Isaiah lists the specifics involved. But here again, I went to Matthew 6 and discovered that instruction on fasting is the conclusion of the Lord's teaching on prayer!¹⁶ For example, in verses 16 and 17 He said, "*when you fast*" Here He does not say to fast, but assumes that His followers would do so. On the other hand, He does say that his disciples would fast after the "bridegroom" would be taken from them.¹⁷ The Bible records fasts of several types for periods of

¹⁴Hebrews 4:12.

¹⁵Isaiah 58:3 - 11.

¹⁶Matthew 6:16 - 18.

¹⁷Read Mark 2:18 - 20.

time from one day to forty days. And I had never fasted but I was told to do so. Armed with new revelation knowledge, I then started my 'lab work.' My first fast was for three days with nothing but water to drink. Surprisingly, at the end of the fast, I was not particularly hungry. I do not know why I chose three days. At the end of the fast I could tell no difference in my outlook and could detect no particular benefit derived from the fast. Over the next several months, I tried another three-day fast and several one-day fasts without any discernable benefit derived. I then began to wonder why I had been told to fast, since I could detect no fasting benefits. Questions began to arise in my mind, such as, why was I told to fast? How long and how often should I fast? From what should I fast? For what purpose should I fast? Then in early September of last year, Dale & I had dinner at the same table with Loretta Blasingame, an evangelist who was called to preach and given a healing ministry at thirteen years of age. In talking with her, I discovered that she was experienced in fasting, and had done more than one forty-day fasts (two or three, I'm not sure which is correct now). I then told her that I was unsure why, or how long I should fast and asked for her opinion on what I should do. Her reply was, "Why don't you ask the Lord?" So there you have it. This guy who writes letters about the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit had to have someone else say to him, "Why don't you ask the Lord?" And I did beginning on September 20, 1997. On September 22 we spent the night in a Bed and Breakfast in Bryan, Texas. About 7:30 AM the next morning, I was awakened with these words, "We take the 12th, 13th and 14th of each 30-day month and give it to the Lord." I immediately wrote the words on a note pad beside our bed. As I looked at what I had written, it didn't make sense at first. But then the light came, at least partial light on what I had been given: *Three days out of each thirty-day month is a tenth or a tithe of my time.* I then knew how long I was to fast and for what purpose. I was to fast for a tenth of my time and *give it to the Lord!* Any fast over a tenth of my time is a *gift* to Him. In the same manner, God through Moses instructed the Israelites that a tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree, in addition to the increase in their herds, crops and flocks, were the Lord's.¹⁸ And now it made sense

¹⁸See Leviticus 27:30 - 32; Numbers 18:21, 24; Deuteronomy 14:22, 23, 24, etc.

for the first time. When one has made an absolute commitment to the Lord of himself and all of his present and future possessions, the Lord is the owner thereof. A tithe, therefore, is not giving to the Lord at all; it is *returning* to Him a tithe of *His possessions* as an act of worship. This is literally fasting from, or denying one's self the use of, *one tenth of the Lord's increase and one tenth of the Lord's time*. Beginning with September 23, 1997, I began to fast for a tenth of the time with my fast days given to the Lord. As soon as I started this kind of fasting, I got immediate results. I began a fast at 9:00 AM on September 25 which was concluded at 3:00 PM on September 26. The morning of the 26th the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "Unforgiveness is as idolatry," which I shared in my 11/1/97 letter on **Forgiveness**. This was additional reinforcement teaching on forgiveness which began on September 27, 1996. Since I began to fast as a tithe given to the Lord, I can recall on two occasions receiving answers to two specific prayer requests the second morning after starting the fast. By way of explanation, when I fast, I go about my planned daily activities without interruption. My wife is usually the only one who knows of my fasting. This is in keeping with the teaching of Jesus: fast and pray in secret to receive the Father's blessings openly.¹⁹ And I know it works because I've tried it. The 'acid' test is not how well one may expound biblical theory, but whether or not one's biblical theory works.

ENJOY 'THE TIME'

Over the recent Christmas/New Year's holidays I learned something else about fasting. Three days before Christmas, I started a one-day fast at 8:00 AM on Monday, December 22. Before noon I began to develop a headache, which worsened during the day, and I wondered why. Then about 3:00 PM, on my way back from a trip to the supermarket, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "You don't have to fast, enjoy the time," and I knew 'the time' meant the upcoming holiday season. And so I immediately discontinued my fast, ate something and my headache disappeared. But listen to this. About 9:00 AM on December 29 I started another one-day fast (during 'the time') and at 9:30 PM that night I had such a headache that I stopped the fast. This had never happened before and I never expect it to

happen again. The lesson is this: *Listen to the Holy Spirit! Follow His guidance*. He wanted me to enjoy 'the time' and I disobeyed Him and have repented. This 'enjoy the time' response of the Holy Spirit reveals the very heart of God toward those who love Him and wish to serve Him. Something similar to this had happened to me previously, about which I hope to write in a future letter. Often times I am so slow in learning to walk with God, that I become discouraged. Then is when I discover that my eyes are on self,²⁰ one of Satan's main weapons. And then also is when, as a matter of will, I must turn my eyes upon Jesus, and praise Him and thank Him for taking me as I am. Once my eyes are back on Him, I am at peace and can start again. Thanks be to God, He is kind, considerate and longsuffering toward those who wish to serve Him, for you see *He* is the reward of our quest.

Please realize that I am not an expert on fasting. I understand that there are a number of good books on the subject written by very capable servants of God, none of which I have read. I heard a very well known evangelist say that fasting makes prayer ten times more effectual. I am not experienced enough to know about the validity of that statement in my life. However, I do know that the Holy Spirit would not have told me to fast if it was not important for me to do so. Although I am a learning novice in this area, I know that fasting for the right reason, as unto the Lord, sharpens one's spiritual perception or makes one more perceptive to the voice and leading of the Holy Spirit of God. *And what better reason is there for doing anything?!*

NEXT TIME

Many other things have been revealed to me, since my prayers for guidance in January of 1996, which I will begin sharing with you in my next letter....the Lord willing.

¹⁹Matthew 6:5 - 8, 16 - 18.

²⁰For a 'kingdom look' at the use of *self* as revealed by the Lord, read Luke 9:23 - 25.