

Now Concerning Spiritual Things
an historical account of one man's walk with God

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HOMECOMING

On more than one occasion the Lord has said to me, "Be not reluctant to share with others what I have given you." This letter is written in the light of that admonition.

The latter part of September 1942, I graduated from the U. S. Army Air Corp Aviation Cadet program as a fighter pilot, was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and given my silver wings by a Lt. General, who delivered the commencement address. I still remember the catch in his throat and the glint of a tear in his eye as he finished his address and wished each of the class of 42-H "Good luck and God's speed!" The emotion was prompted by the fact that the General had a son who also was a fighter pilot – and life among fighter pilots in 1942 during World War II was cheap and expendable.

A few days after graduation, I reported to South Plains Army Air Force Base in Lubbock, Texas, and routinely checked in with Headquarters, the Flight Surgeon and the Base Operations Office, where my name was put on the roster of active pilots available for duty. A clerk in the Operations Office by the name of Ruth Walling checked me in. A little less than a year later, Ruth and I were married on Saturday, August 14, 1943. No man has ever been blessed with a finer wife. We celebrated our fiftieth wedding anniversary on Saturday evening, August 14, 1993. Most of our family, including our three children, and many friends from in town and out of town were there for the occasion.

About a month before our party, I was out for my morning exercise and these words came to my mind, "Life is but a vapor that remains for a little while and then vanishes away."¹ I still remember where I was when I got those words. The *same* words came to me the next several mornings when I was out for

exercise. At the time, I realized what these words of scripture meant. And I fully understood that *life*, parenthetically inserted in eternity for a very brief, but for a very important moment, will determine where we will spend eternity. But I had no idea that these words were the Lord's way of preparing me for what He knew was just ahead.

Ruth had a heart attack on Wednesday, August 18 and died at 9:00 P.M., August 21, 1993, a week after our party. She had no previous heart symptoms. Past medical checkups showed no indication of a heart problem. Shortly after her funeral, I realized the Lord had given me the scripture thirty days in advance of her death to prepare me for what He already knew. Realizing retrospectively that the Lord had told me of her coming death did not eliminate the shock, the grief and the tears. But it was great consolation to me. In the words He gave me, I realized He was saying, "Ruth has accomplished what I sent her to do and it's time for her to come home."²

At the suggestion of my oldest son, Jim, Jr., I read a couple of books on grief recovery and attended a grief seminar conducted by a professionally trained Ph.D. I got very little from either of these efforts and ended up ministering to those in the grief seminar instead of being ministered to. Since the seminar was held at a north Dallas Church, I presume most (perhaps all?) of those enrolled were Christian, but were groping, as in the dark, for some meaning in life and death to hold on to. The smaller group I was in after the formal sessions each evening, had no concept of a personal relationship with Jesus, which Ruth and I had found to be the "missing part of the Christian puzzle." There are still many Christians who have not found that blessing. But please don't give up! I know whereof I speak. It's real. I live it every day. And I know it's for you. Read Luke 11:9 - 13 and claim it for yourself now!

Within a month of Ruth's death, the Holy Spirit

¹These words are part of James 4:14, which in its entirety reads, "Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." Bible quotations are from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

²Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 for a description of *homecoming* promised to everyone who accepts Jesus as Lord.

said to me, “It is not good for man to live alone.”³ I knew exactly where those words came from in the Bible and what they meant – that I was to remarry – but the thought was repulsive to me. Remarriage was the farthest thing from my thinking. And I promptly dismissed it from my mind. But in the Lord’s time and in His way, He put the desire in my heart. As I quoted words the Lord gave me in my last letter, “That’s the way it works at times.”

After Ruth’s death, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, “Play in nursing homes.” Since piano is a hobby of mine, I knew exactly what He meant by those words. But because I had played the piano infrequently outside of my living room, I was reluctant to do what I was told to do. With my sister’s help, I overcame the reluctance and called the nearest retirement center which was a complete care facility. My second trip to the center, I played for an Alzheimer’s group where I met Dale, my present wife, who was then employed by the center. Our meeting, of course, was known by and arranged for by the Lord, in the same manner that He compassionately told me of Ruth’s death a month before she died. Knowing the Lord personally is the greatest blessing of life and death and eternity.⁴

Ruth and I became one in marriage in a way and manner all of the world and, in my opinion, most Christians think unavailable and impossible. It started after we had been married twenty-two years and were introduced to the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit. There were never any questions about our roles in marriage. I was to be the provider and she was to be the keeper of our home, in her words, “as a woman, wife and mother, in that order.” We were happy and our marriage was stable. But several years after we discovered a personal relationship with the Lord, He spoke to Ruth one day and said, “Tell Jim you will be subject to him in all things.”⁵ As related by Ruth years later, her reaction was something like, “LORD! Do You know what you are saying to me?!!! There are times when that man hasn’t got sense enough to come in out of the rain! And You want me to do WHAT?!!”

³See Genesis 2:18.

⁴Read John 17:3 for the full impact of this statement.

⁵These words were the same as the admonition given to the Church at Ephesus by the Apostle Paul, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:22).

Then, of course, reality set in and she realized Who had spoken to her. Only in obedience to the Lord, with a great deal of reticence, she came to me and said, “I will be subject to you in all things.” I had no idea the Lord had told her to do this. I still remember where I was standing when she said this to me. And these words didn’t impress me at the time. I probably said, “OK, but what’s for dinner” – or something equally as profound. But when she said these words to me at the request of the Lord, *then the Lord was freed and free to deal with me. Until then the line of authority and responsibility to God in our household had not been clearly established.* Ruth’s obedience triggered a remarkable work in my life by the Lord. He then gave me a love for my wife reminiscent of those delicious early years of marriage. She was the object of my affection. Ephesians 5:25 came alive within me. AND I realized for the first time any mistake or failure of our marriage would be charged to me by the Lord. As the priest of my household, I was accountable and responsible to God for ALL DECISIONS. When you know this type of responsibility is given to you *by the Lord*, it engenders a whole new attitude. There was no longer any contest in the decision making apparatus in our household. I was the apparatus! Counsel is easily sought and received under such circumstances. And we became one, not two, in the eyes of the Lord and in the eyes of the world. Obedience to His Word will always produce the results He has in mind, for His Word will not return void.⁶

As a result of Ruth’s obedience, she was blessed, I was blessed, our children and our home was blessed in a way unattainable except by trusting in the words of the Lord and acting on them by faith. Although Ruth died on August 21, 1993, she lives on in her children, in the hearts and lives of those who knew her, and sought her counsel. More than one woman called her for an appointment to seek help for a marriage that was falling apart. As she would say, “A pot of coffee and a box of Kleenex were standard tools for such appointments.” Since she followed the Lord’s instruction in being submissive to me as the priest of our home, God abundantly blessed our household. “Behold to obey is better than sacrifice,

⁶As the Prophet Isaiah wrote, “So shall my word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it will accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11).

and to hearken than the fat of rams,”⁷ is God’s word on the matter. In concluding the story of Ruth’s *homecoming*,⁸ I would like to share with you some of her writing: “Truth Revealed” and “Marriage.” I commend to you her words and the Source of her inspiration.

TRUTH REVEALED

Truths revealed to us by the Spirit are meant for our own lives and growth and maturity, not so that we will have some great truth to teach others. Only after we “become” (prove) this truth can we pass it on as Truth. Truth is to make men free. Only after we are freed can we be used to free others.

MARRIAGE

A grain of wheat must die or it remains alone.⁹ In marriage, the two individuals must die as distinct persons if they are to become united as a single entity. The wife (as a single or distinct person or personality) must die and the husband (as a single or distinct person or personality) must die and out of these deaths comes a new life born of the union of two lives. The only way one plus one equals one (marriage unit) is through the death of individual persons. Otherwise one plus one equals two.

In marriage (or betrothal), the one (new) life is born and the two (old) lives begin to die. Every experience of marriage draws the two together as one only as it represents the dying of different parts of the individuals. Until everything individual (every distinct characteristic or trait) is dead (gone) from both can they really be totally one (complete, fulfilled, whole as a unit), visibly as one to each other and to the world.

Individual traits may seem to be desirable to keep, but so long as they are “for” or “of” the one person, they are not “of” the unit and must go. If they are good and worthy of use for the unit, they still must

⁷1 Samuel 15:22 (b), RSV.

⁸The Apostle Paul in his second letter to the Church at Corinth, wrote that to be at home in the body is to be absent from the Lord and to be absent from the body is to be present (or at home) with the Lord. (See II Corinthians 5:1 -19). I can assure you that Ruth’s *homecoming* at 9:00 P.M. on August 21, 1993 was a hallelujah time!

⁹John 12:24.

suffer a pruning and purging of impurities of the *one* self to be sanctified for use by the unit.

The same principle is involved in our spiritual life. Whenever we are committed to Christ, we become *one* (unit) with Him. Our life becomes His and His life becomes ours. He is in us and we are in Him. Then our old life (the flesh) begins to die away and fall off because of the new life that has already replaced it. In marriage this “dying” is affected in both parties until they are both perfected. Whereas in the spiritual union, Christ’s death is already complete and perfected and it is only *we* who have to be brought to perfection. But because He has already experienced the “death” in every way, he is able to strengthen and help us with love, mercy and compassion. And because we know that His (perfect) life is in us, we can be assured that nothing short of perfection in us will satisfy Him (or bring the unit into completion) and He will not stop until this work is finished. (That He might sanctify her – cleanse her – present her to Himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing – that she might be holy and without blemish.¹⁰) Only then, when the world (spiritual and physical) looks upon us, will they see Jesus – and not the wife – or the husband.

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one.”¹¹

GET READY

On page four of my last letter (October 1, 1998), I shared with you one paragraph of a prophecy, given to me by the Lord, concerning an exciting project¹² He has given me to do in preparation for an endtime event, the Rapture of the Church.¹³ The

¹⁰Ephesians 5:26 - 33.

¹¹Ephesians 5:31, RSV.

¹²The project involves preparation for the Rapture, an endtime event prophesied in scripture. It is the most exciting thing I have ever been engaged in. When my preparation for this project has been completed, I will share it with you. The fact that the Lord has spoken to me about preparation for an endtime event is beyond my comprehension of what I thought He might do in my life. Indeed the ways of our Lord are past finding out.

¹³Read I Thessalonians 4:13 - 18 and I Corinthians 15:50 - 55 for a description of this event.

prophecy was one of assurance, encouragement and admonition concerning the project. Since I believe the words may also be encouraging to others, I would like to share them with you. Here is the complete prophecy given to me the morning of September 4, 1998:

“You are in My territory doing the things I have told you to do. As you proceed by faith, doors will open, barriers will come down and the work will be done. Then the vineyard will bring forth an abundant harvest. The vineyard I showed you in a dream was a reality. The immaculately cared for vineyard – the pruned, staked vines, spaced evenly apart in straight rows – the tilled fertile ground, without weeds and grass, was My vineyard in your keeping. The immaculate care of the vineyard reflected the care given to the details of your life to keep it clean, neat and in order by doing the things I have told you to do. As you continue therein, the harvest will be abundant. But it will be My harvest because you have been obedient. It will be My harvest because you have walked by faith. It will be My harvest because it has been My plan.

My son be prepared for a change in your life. But do not be reluctant to change as I speak. It will be as it was with the crosses. I put the thought in your mind to quit making them, which you resented at first because you were uncertain of the origin of the thought. Then I took away the desire to make them and you accepted the change as My will. That’s the way it works at times. That is why I desire to give you the desire of your heart. When I put the desire there, the result is as though it was your desire first. But that is not so. It was first My desire given to you quietly, without fanfare. Then in the transfer, My desire becomes your desire and the work has begun.

My son because you have been faithful in little things, I will put you over greater things, things greater than you expect or imagine. But stay close to Me, prayed up and available. Again I say, do not be reluctant to accept the changes in your life as I lead, as I speak, as I nudge, for there is much work to do.

Keep the vineyard well cared for. Prune and water the vines. Keep the field clear of weeds and grass which can spring up and choke or impede the growth of the fruit for an abundant harvest.

The vineyard, my son, is the world – your part of the world I have given to you to tend. Tend it well for My harvest to be rapid and abundant. Tend it well so both the laborer and the Owner of the vineyard may rejoice together.

My son do not be reluctant to tackle ANYTHING I tell you to do. As you obediently respond by faith, I can lead you. Indeed nothing can prevent My leading you to accomplish that which I have sent you to do. What you are engaged in has been in the preparation stage for many years. The time to act is now. The time to be diligent is now. Behold today is the day of salvation for indeed your salvation draws nigh. Be attentive. Enjoy the work. Revel in My blessings. Peace, shalom, amen.”

A PRAYER AND FASTING SNIPPET

While praying the morning of October 13, 1998, the conclusion of a fasting day, I experienced something I’d like to share with you. By way of explanation, I usually follow a pattern in my daily prayers so as to touch all the bases. In the midst of my routine this particular morning, however, the desire to pray for specific needs of three people for whom I do not customarily pray, came to my mind and I responded. As I finished praying for the healing of one individual, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, “My son, it is not yet time for that. She must be willing and ready to receive before I can bless.” The response to my prayer concern for a second person was, “The reason she will not listen is because her heart is hardened. To receive, her heart must be ready, for with the heart one believes unto righteousness.”¹⁴ Concerning prayer for the healing of a third person, the words were, “The time is not yet.”

This was the first time I was given answers to specific prayer requests for named individuals while I was praying for them. And I have learned from these answers. For one thing, they may be used to guide my future prayers. A second thing is that there are conditions to receiving God’s promises for salvation, healing and other blessings. When those conditions are met, nothing can prevent the blessing from occurring. If they have not been met, the blessing cannot be given.

¹⁴See Romans 10:10 (a).