

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

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**HOW TO KNOW
THE WILL OF THE LORD FOR YOUR LIFE
PART ONE**

I am unaware of other writing on the subject I have chosen for this series of letters.¹ And yet, I believe no subject is of more importance to the Church today than this one. My reason for this opinion is that I believe the Church is poised on the brink of the next worldwide event prophesied by the scriptures. This conclusion is not based on what someone else has influenced me to believe. It is based on something the Holy Spirit has led me to do to help prepare the Church for this worldwide event. It may be another four to six months before I can make a public announcement concerning this project. Between now and then I plan to write about some things which I believe will be helpful to prepare the Church for this occurrence. This series of letters on how to know the will of the Lord for your life will be my first planned effort along those lines.

I am walking in the will of the Lord for my life on a daily basis doing things He has specifically instructed me to do. This experience has been one of the most gratifying times of my life. In mid-1995 He began preparing me for most of the things I am doing now.² Since then I have made some mistakes, but each time He corrected me He placed within my heart a longing to serve and please Him. His corrections have left no feelings of guilt and have drawn me closer to Him. On one occasion His correction was firm but neither harsh nor condemning and afterward I was left completely at peace. The Lord has told me that my obedience to His instruction is changing lives in several parts of the world. In this series of letters I will share with you how He has led me to do the several things I am presently involved in. This will include some of His words of direction,

encouragement, correction and instruction that I received along the way. The Lord has said to me, "Be not reluctant to share with others what I give you. Some will believe and be blessed. Do not be concerned about the others." He has also told me to "Use the incidents," meaning to write about what actually happened to me as I sought His leading and guidance. Therefore in these letters I will share with you how the Holy Spirit revealed His will for my life -- what He did and what I did -- how He led me on a day-to-day basis, first, to know and then to do the Lord's will. What He has done for others He will do for you -- if you are willing to pay the price. God is not a quick fix but a permanent solution. But the payment price -- your life -- is the greatest leveraged investment you will ever make. True ministry is like an ice berg. It takes the invisible seven-eighths to birth the visible one-eighth.

The two most important things for every Christian today are (1) to know and (2) to do the will of the Lord. Nothing, absolutely nothing, supercedes those two things in importance. The main reason is that *those two things determine the way you will begin and spend eternity*. And I'm not talking about salvation. Rebirth³ secures salvation.⁴ But there is more to salvation than being saved. Being saved is only the beginning of one's new spiritual life just as physical birth is only the beginning of one's new physical life.

Note these words the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed -- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the

³See John 3:1-8.

¹There is nothing in my library of books, audio and video tapes on this subject. However, since my search for other writing has not been extensive, there may be excellent material on this subject, that has escaped my attention.

²Preparation actually began on November 27, 1965 when the Lord awakened me from my spiritual lethargy. However, more specifically He began to reveal many of the details of my present ministries in mid-1995.

⁴Ten characteristics of a born-again Christian are listed by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:1-13. According to Paul's description, Christians are chosen, holy and without blame (verse 4), adopted (verse 5), accepted (verse 6), redeemed and forgiven (verse 7), abound in all wisdom and prudence (verse 8), know the mystery of God's will (verse 9) and are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (verse 13). These ten characteristics are descriptive of a Christian's spirit or spirit-man. Since man is a triune being, his spirit is saved, his soul (mind, will and emotions) is being saved and his body will be saved.

last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'⁵ To the church in Thessalonica Paul wrote similar words on the same subject, "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, (those who have died) lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be *caught up*⁶ together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."⁷

These two quotations from the pen of the apostle Paul describe the same event: the *catching up together* of Christians, or the *Rapture*⁸ of the church immediately preceding the seven-year *tribulation* period on the earth.

⁵1 Corinthians 15:50-54.

⁶The phrase "caught up" translates from the Greek word *harpazo*, (Strong's #726) which means "to seize upon with force" or "to snatch up." Another usage of this word (*harpazo*) is that of God's Spirit carrying someone away. This usage is illustrated in Acts 8:39 where Philip, upon completion of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, is raptured or "caught up" and divinely transported from the desert to the coastal town of Azotus. In a similar fashion, the church, in a moment of time, will be taken from the earth to heaven. Hallelujah!

⁷1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (Parenthetical explanation added).

⁸"Some critics have noted that the word *rapture* is never used in the Bible. While this is true of most English versions, Latin translators of the Greek New Testament *did* use the word *rapere*, which is the root of the English term *rapture*. Many contemporary theological terms have been derived from a Latin base. Throughout much of the history of the Western church, Latin was the accepted language of theological discussion. As a result, many theological terms developed out of this language (for instance, trinity, millennium, imminence). *Rapture* is also such a word. There are many terms used in the New Testament to refer to the rapture event. To claim that the rapture should be dismissed on the grounds of language is naively incorrect. [Excerpted from **Fast Facts on Bible Prophecy** by Thomas Ice & Timothy Demy, Harvest House Publishers, p.163]

This end-time event (the Rapture) triggers God's time clock to begin the seventieth week of the seventy weeks of years as prophesied by the prophet Daniel.⁹ These seven years (called by the prophet Jeremiah "the time of Jacob's trouble"¹⁰) will be a period of unparalleled suffering which will embrace the entire earth, as referenced in the book of Revelation.¹¹ The tribulation will culminate with the battle of Armageddon which will immediately precede the second coming of Christ. The Church, however, will escape these calamitous events.¹²

Everyone "taken up" in the Rapture *will then stand before the judgement seat of Christ*, the purpose of which is to pronounce *righteous judgments* only, since everyone who is raptured will be saved. But these righteous judgments will exclude deeds of men which do not glorify Christ. Deeds and good works done which glorify an organization, an institution or an individual instead of Christ will be burned up. A Christian who participates in such will not lose his salvation, but will be saved as by fire as his good works are burned up.¹³ For that reason it behooves us to know the will of the Lord and to walk in that will on a daily basis. And knowing His will for *my* life evolved out of a *personal relationship with Him*, as confirmed by Jesus¹⁴ not long before He was crucified.

It is interesting to observe that our salvation is by grace through faith (in Jesus as Lord), not of ourselves nor of works lest anyone should boast,¹⁵ *but that our judgement will be based on works*. The apostle Paul in writing about the judgement seat of Christ states "each

⁹See Daniel 9:24-27.

¹⁰See Jeremiah 30:7 (b). The most extensive biblical comments on the tribulation are found in the New Testament book of Revelation, Chapters six through nineteen. The seven-year tribulation period is also referred to at least fifty-two times in nine old testament books with twenty-two different terms. [See **Fast Facts on Bible Prophecy**, written by Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy, Harvest House Publishers, p.65]

¹¹See Revelation 3:10.

¹²Revelation 3:10.

¹³See 1 Corinthians 3:12-15. We will stand before the judgement seat (bema) of Christ for either a reward received or a reward lost.

¹⁴See John 17:3.

¹⁵See Ephesians 2:5, 8 & 9.

one's *work* will become clear"¹⁶ and "If anyone's *work* which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward."¹⁷ And Jesus said, "And behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his *work*."¹⁸

"And to her (the wife of the Lamb) it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the *righteous acts of the saints*."¹⁹ Following the rapture of the Church and the judgement seat of Christ we will be clothed with *righteous acts* or with *righteous deeds* or *works*. And this will be our "clothing" when we return to reign with Christ during the Millennium²⁰ and throughout eternity. For this reason we must not take lightly the precious privilege of being redeemed by the blood of Jesus. There is great opportunity (and yes, great responsibility) connected with our redemption.

This is emphasized by Jesus in one of His parables of the kingdom of heaven.²¹ In the parable, a *man* traveling to a distant country gave talents to his servants. To one he gave five talents, to another two and to another one, to each according to his own ability. The one who received five talents traded with them and made another five talents. Likewise he who received two gained two more also. But he who received one talent dug in the ground and hid his lord's²² money. It is interesting to observe (1) that the two servants who received five and two talents respectively, *put them at risk* by trading (implying faith) and (2) that each one gained a one-hundred percent return for their lord. It is also interesting to note that both the five-talent and the two-talent servants **received the same rewards**: (1) commendation by the lord of the servants, who was originally called a "traveling man," (2) recognition of their *faithfulness* in caring for the "few things" with which they were entrusted, (3) the promise of future authority to "rule over

many things,"²³ (4) rewards that were based on relative (not specific) performance *which were unrelated to ability* and (5) immediate entrance (present tense) into the joy of their *lord*.

The third servant, however, met with catastrophe! He made accusations against his lord, was afraid (which implies a lack of faith) and returned only the one talent he was given. The lord then instructed: (1) "take the talent from him, and give to him who has ten talents" and (2) "cast the *unprofitable servant*"²⁴ into the *outer darkness*. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."²⁵ The term *outer darkness* is used three times²⁶ by Jesus as recorded by Matthew and in each case reference is made either to *sons of the kingdom* or *the kingdom of heaven*. Understanding of these teachings will vary among bible commentators, but suffice it to say, being in covenant relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ *is not to be taken lightly!*

I had wondered about the one talent servant and what this teaching meant and it occurred to me to ask the Lord for an answer.²⁷ Not long afterward (within a day or two, as I recall), He responded to my prayer. Here is what He said to me in that light intuitive still small voice, "The talent he buried was Me!" I shared that with Bill Powell, a good friend of ours, who said with immediate discernment, "That'll preach!" And it will. Here is additional scriptural support for the statement: "Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."²⁸ And then additional emphasis is provided by

²³This phrase, *rule over many things*, is prophetic of the time when we who are raptured will return to earth in our transformed bodies to rule and reign with Christ for one thousand years. See Revelation 20:4.

²⁴This one talent man is called a *servant of the lord*, not an enemy of the lord!

²⁵See Matthew 25:28, 30 (Italics & bold emphasis added)

²⁶Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30.

²⁷On a number of occasions I have waited too long before asking the Lord to give me "revelation knowledge" on a scripture verse that I do not understand, whereas this should be the first thing I do. The author of a book is always the best source of information on its content, and the bible is no exception to that rule.

²⁸John 12:42, 43 (Italics added).

¹⁶1 Corinthians 3:13 (a) (Italics added).

¹⁷1 Corinthians 3:14 (Italics added).

¹⁸Revelation 22:12 (Italics added).

¹⁹Revelation 19:8. (Parenthetical insertion and italics added).

²⁰Read Revelation 20:1-8.

²¹Read Matthew 25:14-30 for the complete parable.

²²Observe in the parable that the **man** traveling to a far country upon his return is called **lord** by each servant.

Jesus Who said, “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father Who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father Who is in heaven.”²⁹ It appears that the one-talent man may have loved the praise of men more than the praise of God and he paid a high price for his worldly love.

Here is a summary of Adam Clarke’s commentary on the one-talent man’s *outer darkness* experience, as cross referenced to Matthew 8:12: “The kingdom of heaven is here represented as a nuptial festival held at night in a lighted banquet hall. Those excluded from the banquet were in *outer darkness*, i.e., on the outside of the banquet hall. And because they were shut out in darkness, they were not only exposed to shame, but also to hunger and cold.” I leave to you the conclusion on the meaning of *outer darkness*. But suffice it to say, I am irresistibly drawn to the privilege (opportunity) we have to serve our Lord Jesus Christ, for “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”³⁰

Here are five reasons why *you* can become a part of the most effective group in the Church universal:

(1) The wisdom of age. The large majority of you who read my letters have wisdom that comes only with age. The young think that they shall never die and that the old were never young. The gift of wisdom that God gave to Solomon was given to no one before or since according to scripture.³¹ But that gift did not include the wisdom that comes with age. For proof read what Solomon wrote when he was young and what he wrote when he was old.³²

(2) Discretionary time. Because of the advances in commerce, industry and technology over the past eighty years, the work force of America has more discretionary time now than ever before. For proof look at the financial status, the entertainment and recreational activities of the typical American family today. How we are willing to use our discretionary time is a *key* to

discerning God’s will for your life.

(3) *You* are special. God told young Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.”³³ Through the prophet Isaiah God said to Jacob (the man) and to Israel (the nation) that He “formed you from the womb.”³⁴ God likewise knew *you* before you were formed in the womb! *You are that important*. He has something for you to do that no one else can do as well as you because of who you are, what you are and where you are *right now*. God knows your life from the end to the beginning.³⁵ There were special things planned for you before you were born. Finding and walking in that plan is the greatest blessing of Life.

(4) You are wealthy -- by developing and third-world country standards. You didn’t have to walk half a mile this morning barefooted with a plastic jug to get water. Stewardship is important. How you use what you have been given is one of God’s measures of your life. It is also one way your life will be measured at the judgment seat of Christ.

(5) The ‘stigma’ of age. If you feel that you are too old, or if age is a problem, don’t forget that the biggest job God ever gave to a man was given to an eighty year-old guy with a stick.³⁶ The greatest potential force in the Church today is the senior adult group that has reached retirement age in good health and has financial resources never dreamed of fifty years ago. I am in that group and am in the most productive time of my life, spiritually speaking. And this age group will continue to grow larger. It is never too late to start.

. . . . more later, the Lord willing.

²⁹Matthew 10:32, 33 (Italics added). In principle, this is similar to what Jesus said about forgiveness. If we forgive others, He will forgive us. If we don’t, He won’t! (See Matthew 6:14, 15).

³⁰1 Corinthians 2:9.

³¹Read 1 Kings 3:3-12.

³²Read the Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes.

³³See Jeremiah 1:5 (a).

³⁴See Isaiah 44:1 (a).

³⁵See Isaiah 46:10 (a).

³⁶The eighty year old man referred to was Moses who left Egypt when He was forty years old after “killing his Egyptian,” fled into Arabia in the land of Midian where he stayed for forty years prior to being called by God to lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt. See Acts 7:23-30. The first time I heard the “eighty year old man with a stick” statement was when Ben Kenchlow used it while speaking to the International meeting of C.O.P.E. in Dallas about eighteen months ago.