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On November 3, 1997, I was thinking about writing on the subject "In the Name of Jesus," when the Holy Spirit quickened to my heart that I was to write for the sake of recording history, to reveal actual occurrences in my walk with God. For that reason, the thrust of my writing shall hereafter be a first person account of what He has shown me and what I have learned along the Way, to which I can personally attest. That is why the newly added by-line appears in the heading of this letter.

Because of several occurrences over the past few months, I feel the need to share with you my concept of total commitment to the Lord. I never considered such a thing until I came to know Jesus personally¹ over thirty-two years ago. Prior to that event, I had been a Christian for years, was very active in our Church and was doing all I knew to do within the doctrinal beliefs and practices of that Church. This included a public confession of Jesus as the Son of God and baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.²

¹The Bible is replete with accounts of man's personal relationship with the Lord, such as 1 Kings 19:12; Isaiah 6:8; John 10:3; 10:27. Jesus alludes to this relationship many times, for example, as recorded in John's Gospel. And He will give that relationship to you today if you will trust Him by faith and ask. One word from God is more precious than all the treasures of the earth. To facilitate such a relationship, remove the wall from between the Old and New Testament, and the partitions from within the New Testament, put your eyes on Jesus and believe *by faith* what He said. In good conscience, I erected such a wall and partitions, lived behind them for years, was saved by God's grace and didn't know it. Then in 1965, as a result of prayer, one morning about 7:45 AM, in an instant of time, the Lord completely destroyed the wall and partitions I had built. They came down by faith, as did the walls of Jericho, when the Priests blew the trumpets and the people shouted. (Joshua 6:20). Neither of these two weapons was used in Desert Storm. "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence." (1 Corinthians 1:27 - 29).

²See Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38. I have been baptized by immersion twice. Once as a member of the Baptist Church at about twelve years of age; the second time as an adult man with a family, to become a member of the Church of Christ, a doctrinal requirement

But within the strict, biblical, legalistic, doctrinal teaching of that Church, I never grew to know Jesus personally. Neither do I recall hearing teaching or preaching on grace, the new birth,³ nor on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian today. It was only after becoming personally acquainted with Jesus, outside of the doctrinal teaching of that Church, that my faith took a giant leap forward. Then is when both the *need* and the *blessings* of total commitment became apparent. The Apostle Paul sums it up in these words, written to the Church in Rome:

"I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your *spiritual worship*."⁴ Here is what I see in that scripture: Under the law of Moses, the altar of burnt offering⁵ had four horns at the corners to which the sacrificial animal was tied. That bound animal was then under the complete control of and at the mercy of the Priest, as he raised his knife to slay the sacrifice. In like manner, *spiritual worship* or total commitment today means offering *ourselves* upon God's altar, as a living

for membership. In that Church, the salvation experience, including baptism by immersion, was emphasized to the exclusion of teaching/preaching on grace, the new birth experience and the Spirit filled/led life. Consequently that position leads one to believe that the acceptance or rejection of certain physical rules or regulations is very important to one's salvation. Retrospectively, I now view such restrictions as having nothing to do with checking indulgences of the flesh, as the Apostle Paul pointed out in writing to the Church in Colosse: "Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations---Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, which all concern things which perish with the using---according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh." (Colossians 2:20 - 23). While accepting that doctrinal position, I had absolutely no knowledge of the spirit world, no concept of the raging conflict therein and no idea of how to enter into the conflict as a combatant with spiritual weapons.

³John 3:1 - 21.

⁴Romans 12:1 (RSV, Italics added).

⁵Exodus 27:1 - 8.

sacrifice, under the complete control of and at the mercy of Christ Jesus, our High Priest.⁶ Only with that type of surrender or commitment, verbalized as a vow in prayer, do we give God unqualified permission to do with us as He wills. That is descriptive of Job who said, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him,”⁷ and of Abraham with Isaac on the altar of burnt offering,⁸ and of Jesus on the cross. And that’s you and me in total commitment to the Lord. Thereafter, since our *body* is the temple of the Holy Spirit,⁹ *spiritual worship* is not something we do exclusively when we go to Church, it is something *we do*, something *we live -- every day*.

On November 25, 1996, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, “Come boldly to the throne of grace.” The rest of that verse in Hebrews reads “...that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”¹⁰ This was the Lord’s second *personal* invitation to me to come boldly to His throne of grace for needs.¹¹ And this is in keeping with His words to me in January of 1996 to “Be bold in prayer.” It is also in keeping with His gentle nature to nudge me along in the right direction. Little did I know in November of 1996 what the Lord had in store for me, which He was leading me to do, one day at a time, one step at a time. At my request, He was calling me to a new ministry, the details of which He would later reveal, and for which He would train, prepare and equip me over the following six months. In retrospect, that is exciting. At times it is still awesome to me, that my asking the Lord to lead and direct me to do additional things to glorify the Name of Jesus in January of 1996, has

⁶Hebrews 4:14 - 16; 5:1 - 10.

⁷Job 13:15 (a).

⁸Genesis 22:1 - 19.

⁹1 Corinthians 6:19.

¹⁰Hebrews 4:16.

¹¹This personal invitation of God for me to come *boldly* to His throne of grace in time of need is representative of the personal relationship He wants to give to *everyone*. He does not show partiality, “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes bribes.” (Deuteronomy 10:17) “Then Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.’” (Acts 10:34, 35).

resulted in the shower of blessings I am presently in the midst of. I’m again reminded of James, who admonishes us that we don’t have anything, either because we don’t ask or because we ask for something to spend on our own pleasures.¹² I am fully persuaded that the key to my present walk with God was my prayer to allow me to *glorify the Name of Jesus*. And here is why: That prayer touches the very *heart* of God, and His answer reveals the very *mind* of God. In this way we become *one with God the Father and Christ the Son* and fulfill the prayer of Jesus, shortly before His crucifixion, that His followers would become one with Him and the Father, so the world might believe that God had sent Him.¹³ And that’s powerful! What He has done for others, He will do for you. To enlist in His army in these latter days, under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, is a great blessing which I believe will hasten his ‘soon coming.’ And He wants other volunteers. His blessing awaits your call.

PROPHECY TODAY A FASTING BENEFIT

One Saturday morning during the summer of 1995, I drove to a Baptist Church in Oak Cliff, the assembly point for a group who ministers to men incarcerated at Beto One Prison Unit in Tennessee Colony, near Palestine, Texas. I arrived at the Church about 9:15 A.M., parked my car and joined two members of the team, a man and a woman, who arrived ahead of me. The man was married and a retired Ph.D., DISD Principal. The woman was 45-ish in age, employed and single. Both were members of a Baptist Church. As I listened to their conversation, the woman mentioned a Sunday School class she attended where some of the Spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12 were in evidence, including the gift of prophecy. The retired Principal replied, “We don’t need prophecy anymore, we have the bible.” And that sums up the typical split opinion in the Church today. Most of the older, larger denominations do not accept the premise that through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, He still gives His gifts to men and women today. I was of that opinion over thirty-two years ago when the answer to

¹²James 4:2, 3.

¹³John 17:20, 21.

PROPHECY

a specific prayer abruptly changed my mind and my life forever. Here is something the Apostle Paul wrote on the subject, which explains why some receive these gifts and some do not. "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned."¹⁴ These gifts are received by faith, which comes by hearing this part of the bible taught or preached as truth. I can assure you that, without exception, when this part of the Bible, on which most denominations are either silent, or verbally critical, is taught and preached by faith, by a believer, Spiritual gifts will become manifested today. I happen to be in a Church where this freedom exists. Here is one example of what I mean.

I fasted from 8:00 A.M. on 12/16/97 to 8:00 A.M. on 12/17/97. The morning of the 17th I prayed in tongues and was given the following interpretation,¹⁵ which I have italicized, and in which there are no footnotes. However, I have numbered each section or verse for ease of reference in my comments following the prophecy. For those of you who are not familiar with Spiritual gifts, the gift of tongues with interpretation is equivalent to the gift of prophecy.

¹⁴1 Corinthians 2:11 - 14.

¹⁵In chapters 12, 13 and 14 of his first letter to the Church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul instructed the Church that the gift of tongues (without interpretation) is for self-edification and that he spoke in tongues more than everyone in that Church. In these three chapters of the Bible, Paul established an orderly manner for the operation of spiritual gifts in the public assembly. In my limited experience, prophetic revelation today may be (1) a word of comfort, enlightenment, encouragement, admonition or instruction for a specific person or persons, (2) revelation knowledge or enlightenment on scripture verses, (3) a word concerning the present or a future event or events. Such prophetic revelation, in keeping with Biblical principle, may come through a vision or dream (Joel 2:28), the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:10), a trance (Acts 10:10 [Peter]; 22:17 [Paul]) or by the gift of tongues with interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:26 - 28), which is the equivalent of the gift of prophesy.

¹Stay focused during the grey days to see My Light. Keep your eyes on Me. ²Continue to write what I have given you. Some will believe and be blessed. Do not be concerned over the others. ³Some will call out to Me as you have done; then I can answer their call to make their calling and election sure, as with you. ⁴My call is to all. For it to be effectual, one must hear and hunger for Me and My righteousness, then call out to Me. ⁵Then My answer awaits their call and Divine assurance is the result. ⁶This is how it works. My call to all to come unto Me. Then the hunger for Me. Then their call unto Me. ⁷My answer was prepared with My call which is to all from the beginning. ⁸My call is to all to come unto Me for blessing, reunion and sanctification for service. ⁹Salvation, rebirth and Spirit baptism are three stages of growth. ¹⁰Salvation is the greatest blessing of My call. Rebirth is the greatest blessing of My kingdom and Spirit baptism is the greatest blessing of ministry. ¹¹Salvation, rebirth and ministry are the three stages. As you hunger for each, my blessing awaits. ¹²The call of hunger never goes unnoticed. And my response is life to the hungry. Eternal life, blessing and abundance. ¹³Often-times hardship is necessary in preparation for ministry. In your case, for example, your time in the Church of Christ was spent in prison, imprisonment by doctrine, by something man does to himself through deception of the enemy which appeals to rational man through his intellect. ¹⁴I created no laws to get to Me. Man has done that. That is part of the deception of the times, of the enemy. ¹⁵He is so subtle because his appeal is universal to the world, destined to make one wise in his own sight, wise so as to appeal to his pride and vanity. ¹⁶This wisdom is sensuous, of the senses and intellect I have given, but used as man's master instead of his servant. ¹⁷The spirit must lead the soul and body for service to be effective in My kingdom. ¹⁸For My kingdom is Spiritual, that is, above the soul and body, hence the Spirit must lead its creation. ¹⁹The creation cannot lead the Creator. That is what led to Satan's fall. ²⁰Remember these words and be blessed. Amen.

I wrote the prophecy as it was given, then went back and read it several times to see what it said. Here are two things which were clear to me.

Verses 9, 10, and 11 are clearly a call for unity of God's people. Doctrine divides. Doctrinal differences must not continue to be a barrier to the unity for which Jesus prayed. I believe the basis for unity today is twofold: Jesus is Lord and the Bible is God's word. Among the Churches who accept these two basic premises, I see in verse 9 three broad classifications: (1) those with a strict, legalistic, salvation doctrine, (2) those whose doctrine includes

grace and the rebirth experience and (3) the Churches who accept baptism of the Holy Spirit, along with the Spiritual gifts, as evidenced in the first century Church. My prayer is that all three groups will tear down their walls and become one in Christ. Churches must not compete with one another. Our common foe should not be each other, but Satan, whose works Jesus came to destroy.¹⁶

Secondly, when I read verses 14, 15 and 16, I understood for the first time the significance of two trees in the garden of Eden.¹⁷ Here is the revelation knowledge I was given: Man is a triune being, spirit, soul and body.¹⁸ In the garden of Eden he was given a choice: life or death, or the fruit of the tree of life which is Jesus¹⁹ or the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (death). The knowledge of good and evil is Satan's bait to distract man from the tree of life. Then man becomes self-conscious, chooses darkness instead of light and hides himself from God.²⁰ When one chooses knowledge instead of life, he has the body (with its five senses) and the soul (the mind, will, emotions and intellect²¹) to guide him with no standard other than the world or himself. If he chooses good, he becomes self-righteous. If he chooses evil, he becomes corrupt. This is Satan's trap to lure man away from the tree of life. But if one chooses the tree of life, the body and soul become his servants instead of his master, since the Holy Spirit quickens (makes alive) man's

spirit²² and indwells him that Jesus might become his Lord. Adam's choice in the garden of Eden is the same as man's choice today: eternal life or eternal death. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not something you ingest physically, it is Satan's subtle bait to attract carnal man to himself and away from God. Through Adam's disobedience, he chose Satan's bait. That is why he died.²³ It is also why Jesus had to die, to pay the penalty for Adam's sin, so we could have His life eternally. His death fulfilled the Law of Moses: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a death for a death, a life for a life, when that law was nailed to the cross²⁴ to make way for God's grace and salvation, purchased with the blood of Jesus.

Once one chooses the tree of life, the battle is not over. At that point, one task at hand is to allow the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, to divide one's soul from his spirit²⁵ that he might be led by the Holy Spirit. This takes time. Jesus becomes Lord only as His Spirit, in communion with man's spirit, leads, guides and directs him. And this is facilitated by reading the Scriptures and praying desires which God gives to those who know Jesus personally. That is one reason why knowing Him is such a blessing. Thereafter, in communion, He draws you to Him with His love, which is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.²⁶

A characteristic of prophecy in the Church today is that you will know if the word given is for you, when you hear it or read it. To be credible, the prophecy must line up with the scriptures, witness with your own spirit and be subject to the judgement of other prophets, as the Apostle Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth, "And the spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets."²⁷

....more later, the Lord willing.

¹⁶1 John 3:8.

¹⁷Genesis 2:15 through 3:24 contain the story of these two trees in the garden.

¹⁸1 Thessalonians 5:23.

¹⁹Jesus said "I am the way, the truth and the *life*. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6).

²⁰After Adam and Eve sinned, they hid themselves from God, see Genesis 3:1 - 13. Sin covets the cover of darkness where man hides from God and ceases to pray. It was true with Adam and Eve and it is true of man today. One's prayer life reveals where he is in Christ. All sin in the world, the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and the pride of life, is of the tree of knowledge, see 1 John 2:16.

²¹The Bible defines the soul in this manner many, many times. For one interested in an in-depth study of the subject, I recommend a three-volume set of books written by Watchman Nee, **The Spiritual Man**, published by Christian Fellowship Publications, Inc., New York, N. Y.

²²Romans 8:11.

²³Romans 6:23.

²⁴Colossians 2:14.

²⁵Hebrews 4:12.

²⁶Romans 5:5.

²⁷1 Corinthians 14:32.