

power for
abundant
living

victor paul wierwille



Power For Abundant Living

by Victor Paul Wierwille

Since the second century, Christians as a whole have been almost totally unaware of any special power to be used in everyday living. Yet the promise of Jesus Christ in John 10:10 is that He came so His followers "might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." Why then are Christians so frequently not evidencing the more-than-abundant life? Dr. Wierwille, the author of this book, attributed Christians's physical, mental, financial and all other problems to one underlying cause - and that is lack of using their spiritual abilities.

Why don't Christians prosper? Dr. Wierwille says, "It begins with the problem that the Bible is not understood when read. The Bible is not understood because we have never been taught how to understand it." Not having been taught the basic keys to tap into the power promised by the Word of God, many people remain unread, unlearned, perhaps very skeptical - certainly powerless.

What's the truth about evolution?
Can there be contradiction in the Bible?
Is Christianity really practical?
What is the purpose of my life?
How can we overcome fear and worry?
What is the unforgivable sin?

The author has not always held the position that the Bible is *the Word of God*. "At one point I believed that the Word of God was full of myths. At one point I could have quoted you numerous theologians, but I could not have quoted you the accuracy of God's Word." Yet gradually Dr. Wierwille began seeing how the Bible fits together, and that it is not riddled with errors and contradiction when the original revelation is understood in its entirety.

This book sets forth in written form a twelve-session class (also called "Power for Abundant Living") which Dr. Wierwille has taught to thousands of people - Christians and non-Christians, believers, doubters and skeptics - across the United States and elsewhere around the world.

The Scripture used throughout this book is quoted from the King James Version unless otherwise noted. All explanatory insertions by the author within a Scripture verse are enclosed in brackets. All Greek words are italicized and printed with English letters.

**Power for
abundant
living**

p o w e r f o r abundant living

The Accuracy of the Bible

Victor Paul Wierwille

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The Way International
New Knoxville, Ohio 45871**

Other books by Victor Paul Wierwille

Receiving The Holy Spirit Today

The Bible Tells Me So

Volume I, Studies in Abundant Living

The New, Dynamic Church

Volume II, Studies in Abundant Living

The Word's Way

Volume III, Studies in Abundant Living

Are the Dead Alive Now?

Jesus Christ Is Not God

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Part I

The Power of Believing

Introduction

The Abundant Life

Jesus' proclamation as recorded in John 10:10 is the foundational Scripture for this book.

I am come that they [believers] might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

This verse literally changed my life. My wife and I began in the Christian ministry, plodding ahead with the things of God; but somehow we lacked an abundant life. Then one time I was especially alerted when I read from the Word of God that Jesus said He had come to give us life more abundant. I was startled into awareness. As I looked about me at communities where I had served and among the ministers with whom I had worked, the abundant life was frequently not evident. In contrast to these Christian people, I could see that the secular world of non-Christians were manifesting a more abundant life than were members of the Church. Thus I earnestly began to

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pursue the question, "If Jesus Christ came that men and women might have a *more abundant life*, why is it that the Christian believers do not manifest even an abundant life?"

I believe most people would be thankful if they even lived an abundant life; but The Word says Jesus Christ came that we might have life not just abundant, but more abundant. If His Word is not reliable here in John 10:10, how can we trust it anywhere else? But, on the other hand, if Jesus told the truth, if He meant what He said and said what He meant in this declaration, then surely there must be keys, signposts, to guide us to the understanding and the receiving of this life which is more than abundant.

This book, *Power for Abundant Living*, is one way of showing interested people the abundant life which Jesus Christ lived and which He came to make available to believers as it is revealed in the Word of God.

This is a book containing Biblical keys. The contents herein do not teach the Scriptures from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21; rather, it is designed to set before the reader the basic keys in the Word of God so that Genesis to Revelation will unfold and so that the abundant life which Jesus Christ came to make available will become evident to those who want to appropriate His abundance to their lives.

Chapter One

The Fountain of Living Waters

The first and most basic key for power for abundant living is that *the Bible is the revealed Word and Will of God*. This key is the greatest secret in the world today. It is a secret not because God is keeping it to Himself; it is a secret because people have not believed. Most people do not believe that the Bible is the revealed Word and Will of God. They take out one segment of the Word of God and insert another. But to be logical and consistent, either the entire Bible is the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation or it is not the Word of God anywhere. Knowing that the Word of God is the Will of God is the primary step in our search for power for abundant living.

Jeremiah 2:13 says,

For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

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To whom is God talking? He says, "my people." He is not talking to people who are on the outside of His fold; He is talking to those within the fold when He says, "... my people have committed two evils; [first] they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters ..." God is a fountain as opposed to cisterns which belong to people.

A fountain has an unlimited supply of water. When people forsake God who is a fountain, they hew out for themselves cisterns which are man-made and which hold only a limited amount. If the cistern is a fifty-barrel one, fifty barrels is the maximum supply a person can get from it. When people forsake God, the fountain of living waters, they hew out for themselves, not fountains, but cisterns. Furthermore, those cisterns are broken cisterns; always leaking away their limited supply.

I too was like a broken cistern at one time in my life. I too had hewed out for myself a supposedly valid theological system. I had read this, I had read that, I had concluded this, and I had concluded that; but just when I needed power, I didn't have the necessary resources. When I needed the limitless supply of living water, all I had was an empty hole. This dilemma is what brought me to the years of Biblical research; the questing for a solution to my empty cistern spurred my start in the Biblical field.

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Have you ever asked yourself or considered what is the greatest sin you can commit? If you asked the residents of your community do you know what they would say? One person would say that the greatest sin is murder; someone else would say that it is adultery; somebody else would say something else. You would come up with a multiplicity of answers as to the greatest sin.

What does the Word of God say concerning this question? Matthew 22 tells us.

Matthew 22:37,38:

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.

If that is the first and great commandment, then what is the first and great sin? By simple logic breaking the first and great commandment of not loving God - of loving something else more than we love God, putting something ahead of God - hewing out our own religious systems, our own ideologies, our own thinking patterns - rather than adhering to the divine revelation of God's wonderful, matchless Word.

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Look at Hosea 4:6,

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge

Again God is talking to His people when He says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge ...". This lack of knowledge is not in science, philosophy, newspapers or the latest movies. If God's people are being destroyed today, there is only one reason: a lack of knowledge of the Word of God. This lack of knowledge of the integrity and the greatness of God's Word - that the revealed Word of God is the Will of God - is the reason His people are being destroyed.

Many times people say to me in my classes on Power for Abundant Living, "Dr. Wierwille, you sure get excited about your Biblical research." That is right; why shouldn't I be enthusiastic about the greatness of God's Word with its message of unlimited resources? When I was playing basketball, I was involved and enthusiastic. I became concerned and had tremendous zeal for that sport. Why not have a tremendous zeal for the greatness of God's Word which is much more lasting and rewarding. A man is admired for being a football or basketball fan; but when he dares to get excited about the greatness of God's Word, people think that this Biblical fan has a "screw loose." Surely there must be something wrong with

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our scale of values. The Word of God is so tremendous, so wonderful, so rich, that when Jesus Christ said He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly, we should naturally respond with excitement. Not only do we need to have a knowledge of the integrity and the accuracy of God's Word, but we must also get the zeal, the enthusiastic believing, the concern that other men and women might know that the Word of God is the Will of God.

Chapter Two

Availability, Receivability, Usability

1

In order to tap the resources of the power of God, one must know first of all *what is* and *what is not* available from God. There are some things that are not available today; and if they are not available, we can pray until we are exhausted and we still will not receive an answer to our prayers. If we want to effectively tap the resources for the more abundant life, we must find out what is available to us, what God has promised us. In the secular world we constantly apply this principle. Take, for instance, this book which you are reading. Could you have gotten it if it were not available? Certainly not. Spiritually the same is true. We must find out from God's Word what is available.

As an example of availability, III John 2 tells us what God desires for us.

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou may-

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est prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

The will of God is that we may prosper. He never meant for the Christian to be poverty-stricken and down-trodden in any segment of his life. He meant for the Christian believer to prosper. Furthermore, God's will for every believer is that we "be in [good] health, even as thy soul prospereth." God never meant for the Christian believer to be sick; sickness is never glorifying to God. He never meant for the Christian believer to be full of frustrations and fears and anxieties. God meant for us to prosper and be in good health. Since the Word of God is the Will of God, prosperity and good health must be available.

Let's check other examples of availability.

Philippians 4:19:

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

God's will is to supply all our *need* - it doesn't say *greed*. If God is going to supply all our need according to His riches in glory, a supply to fill it must be available. If the supply is not available, then He cannot fulfill our need.

Look at II Corinthians 9:8.

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And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

How are we going to have all sufficiency in all things if it is not accessible to us?

Check Romans 8:37, another wonderful record in God's Word telling us some of the things that must be available.

... in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

If we are going to be more than conquerors in every situation, it must be possible. How could I be more than a conqueror if the power were not available?

Read Ephesians 3, beginning with verse 16.

That he [God] would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.

How am I going to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man if it is not possible?

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Ephesians 3:17-19:

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;
that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

May be able to comprehend with all saints what
is the breadth, and length, and depth, and
height;

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth
knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the
fulness of God.

"That ye might be filled with all the fulness of
God." How am I going to be filled with all the fulness
of God if it is not available?

How am I going to be able to apply the principles
of the Word of God and find out what God wants me
to do if I do not know the promises in His Word? The
first thing that we must find, in our quest to tap the
resources for the more abundant life, is what is avail-
able. There are hundreds of different promises in the
Word of God that will enable us to prosper and to be
in good health. One cannot utilize, one cannot oper-
ate, any more than those promises he knows. How
many do you know?

There is only one place where we can possibly go
to find out what God has available to us and for us:

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we must go to the Word of God.

Many times the things that people have said God does, His Word says just the opposite; things that they say He does not do, He declares in His Word that He does. In this book, *Power for Abundant Living*, let's be sure in our Biblical quest for the more abundant life that we first find out what is available so that we as God's people will not be destroyed because we lack knowledge. When we know what is available, then we can learn the other principles that are involved in making our life more abundant so that we can manifest the greatness of the power of God.

2

When I was a young lad, my mother would say to me on Saturday night before I went to town, "Be a good boy." This admonition actually never helped because one cannot make a boy good by telling him to be good. People seldom read the Word of God by being told they have to read it- People never tap the resources of prayer by being told that they ought to pray. I do not tell you that you ought to read the Bible; I teach you *how* to read it. I do not tell you that you ought to pray; I tell you *how* to pray. I do not tell you that you should believe; I teach you *how* to believe.

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It is important that we know *how*. Since birth, we have been taught how to receive material things. If we had not been taught how to receive a material object, this book could be available, but we would not know how to go about taking or receiving it. So it is with the Word of God. Spiritual things may be received on the same basis as we receive this book in the natural or material realm. In this book, not only do we look for what is available from God, but we also discover how to receive that which is available.

For many years I moved among groups in which I constantly heard people preaching sin, condemnation and hellfire, and other negative subjects. These well-meaning ministers were not telling people how to get rid of sin, they were just saying that it was wrong. To tell someone that something is wrong does not help him to overcome it. I learned this lesson the hard way.

In the town of my second congregation lived a man who was an alcoholic. For about two years many of us had prayed that this man would come to church so that he could hear the sermon which I had prepared on the abuses of alcohol. Finally one Sunday morning when I least expected him, he came and sat in the last pew. As I walked to the pulpit having just noticed his presence, I thought, "Well, goodness, here he is this morning." I put aside that morning's sermon and I

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went into the files of my mind and brought out the sermon I had developed on the misuse and the sin of excessive drinking. I preached with all the strength I had. When I finished, I patted myself on the back for having preached with such zeal against drinking that I thought God would have to move over someone in the spiritual realm and give me a special place in heaven.

I walked from the pulpit to the vestibule of the church where a minister shakes hands with the people as they leave the sanctuary. As this poor alcoholic passed through the handshaking line, he had tears in his eyes. He limply shook my hand and he said, "I came to church this morning to find out *how* to get out of what I am in, but all you did was put me in deeper." He cried, "If you want to know about alcoholism, I can tell you more than you will ever know." That response cut me to the bone. I thought I had preached a tremendous sermon. But this man walked out saying he came to church trusting that maybe I would tell him how to get out of the dilemma he was in; instead I had merely told him less than he already knew.

I quit shaking hands and returned to my office where I knelt in prayer next to my office chair. I hardly ever kneel when I pray, but somehow that morning I dropped next to my chair and I asked God

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to forgive me. I promised the Father that if He would forgive me, as long as I lived I would never preach a negative sermon, I would never condemn anybody. Why? I want to teach people how to tap the resources for the more abundant life, not the less abundant life

I cannot help what people have been in the past; all I can do is to teach that what they were in the past can be forgiven and forgotten and that they can move on with the greatness of the power of God. This is why we must not only know *what* is available if we are going to live the more abundant life, but we must also know *how* to receive the spiritual things of God. After we have received from God, in the third place, we must know what to do with these spiritual things.

3

First, what is available; second, how to receive; and third, what to do with it after we have received. For example, here is this book. It is available and I know how to receive it; but unless I know what to do with it after I have it, I still cannot utilize it for the purpose for which it was designed. I knew the book was available; I knew how to receive it; but then if I used it as a garden hoe, it would not serve very well, would it? It is not designed for that. This book was designed for reading. In the spiritual realm we must know what

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to do after we have received what is available. There are people who know what is available and they know how to receive something; but when it comes to knowing what to do with it after they have it, they are entirely at a loss and especially so on the subject of the holy spirit. To find proper usage we must again go to the Word of God.

I believe that the Word of God is the Will of God and that if we are going to know the will of God, we must go back to the Word of God. One cannot listen to the man on the street He says, "Well, this is God's will." He may be right and he may be wrong. You and I can be accurate and sure only if we go to God's Word, No one can know the will of God without knowing the Word of God. The Bible is, the revealed Word of God; this Word of God means what it says and says what it means, and God has a purpose for everything He says, *where* He says it, *why* He says it, *how* He says it, *when* He says it, and *to whom* He says it.

If we are going to tap the resources for the more abundant life, we must not only know what is available, how to receive it, and what to do with it; but we must also get our needs and wants parallel. If our needs are light and our wants are heavy, we are not balanced. If our wants are light and our needs are heavy, we will never get an answer. When we believe,

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we get results in prayer if our needs and our wants are equal.

Look at Matthew 18:19.

... If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

In the Greek text the word "agree" is "sym-phonized." If the two people agree, they are in harmony; they have their needs and wants parallel because "it shall be done."

John 14:13 is another tremendous truth.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Whatsoever we ask in Jesus' name, having our needs and wants parallel, He is going to do.

In John 15:16 is another wonderful promise.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain:

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that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

If we know what is available, how to receive it, what to do with it, and have our needs and wants parallel, then whatsoever we shall ask shall be done unto us.

There is another promise in I John 5:14.

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

If we have our needs and wants parallel, we can ask anything according to His will. How can we know His will without knowing His Word? His Word is His Will.

One more great truth is that God's ability always equals God's willingness. Many people say that God is willing, but He is not able; others say He is able, but not willing. This may be true of men, but not of God. A man may have the ability and lack the willingness, or have the willingness and lack the ability. For instance, let's say I am stranded along the highway with a flat tire and need a jack. You come along that highway, stop and say, "Hello what can I do for you?" And I say, "Well, I need a jack"; but you do not have a

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jack either. You are willing to help me, but you lack the ability. On the other hand, let's say you would come along the highway and you do have a jack, but you will not let me use it; then you have the ability, but you lack the willingness. This is never true with God. God's ability always equals His willingness - they are always harmonious. What God is able to do, He is willing to do; and what He is willing to do, He is able to do.

Let us look at Romans 4:20 and 21.

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief

And [But] being fully persuaded that, what he [God] had promised, he was able also to perform.

God's ability always equals God's willingness.

Numbers 23:19 contains a phrase that I want to point out. "God *is* not a man, that he should lie ..." God's promises are always true and dependable.

In Romans 11:29 we read of the permanence of God's gifts.

For the gifts and calling of God *are* without re-

pentance.

When God gives something, these gifts and these callings of God are always without repentance; God does not withdraw or take them away. Whatever God has promised that He will perform, that He will honor when men and women believe God's wonderful, matchless Word.

I want to give one more example to illustrate that God's ability equals His willingness.

Hebrews 11:11 :

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

Sara brought forth this child because of the promises which God had made many years before for "she judged him faithful who had promised." Who had made the promise? God. What God promised He kept when Sara believed. So, too, what God promises in His Word, He will honor when *we* believe.

If we are going to tap the resources for the more abundant life, we have to go to The Word to find out what is available, how to receive, and what to do with it after we have it. We are going to keep our needs

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and our wants in balance, recognizing that God is not only able but willing to perform every promise set forth in His Word.

Chapter Three

Believing Equals Receiving

In every Scriptural account in the Word of God where a miracle took place or where God did a mighty work, the principles pointed out in the previous chapter were present. The persons involved knew what was available, how to receive what they needed, and what to do with it after they received, and they had their needs and wants coordinated knowing that God's ability equals His willingness to keep His promises. When these keys are understood, we can read any place from Genesis to Revelation and see this pattern.

As an illustration, let's begin with Mark 3:1.

And he [Jesus] entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

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The man had a need. The synagogue was the place where people worshipped, where they were taught, where people of God were to meet and have their needs met.

Verse 2,

And they [the Pharisees] watched him [Jesus], whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

Why did these so-called religious leaders watch Jesus? Because they wanted to accuse Jesus if He did any healing on the wrong day of the week. These people were surely interested in the man who had the withered hand, were they not? No. They were only interested in whether Jesus acted at the right place, at the right time, and with their blessing. This man with the withered hand was at the place to expect help, but what had he received? Nothing.

Verse 3,

And he [Jesus] saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

The moment the man stood forth he knew he was separating himself from the onlookers and that he would receive the same criticism they were leveling

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against Jesus.

Verse 4,

And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they [the leaders and the Pharisees] held their peace.

Do you know why? The leaders in the synagogue were not interested in whether the man was delivered or not; they were interested only in one thing - exposing Jesus.

Verse 5,

And when he had looked round about on them with [compassion? NO. NO. It says] anger

We have always been taught that if a person is a real Christian the only thing he ever does is love. Don't you think that Jesus Christ loved? Wasn't He all love? Yet, Mark 3 records that He looked around about on those synagogue leaders with anger. Jesus was really irritated, The idea that Christians and men of God have to go around patting everybody on the back all the time is a distorted concept. Sometimes men of God have to take a stand against those obstruct

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ting the power of God. Jesus looked upon them with anger.

Verse 5,

And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man [with the withered hand], Stretch forth thine hand

In an analysis of this section from Mark 3:1-5, the first thing we see is what is available. The command stated what was available. The command was "Stretch forth thine hand." That appeared to be an impossibility because the man's hand was withered; he could not naturally stretch it forth. Yet Jesus said to the man the withered hand,

... Stretch forth thine hand. And he [the man] stretched *it* out

The man with the withered hand who had this tremendous need, stretched out his hand. He did the impossible. How? He believed. *Believe* is a verb and a verb shows action. The man believed that what Jesus said was God's will; therefore, he stretched his hand forth. Once you have the promise of God, the "how" of receiving is to believe literally what that promise says. It appeared impossible for the man to stretch

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out his hand. Yet this man, believing what The Word said or what God said by way of Jesus Christ, stretched it forth.

... and his hand was restored whole as the other.

He did not receive his wholeness first and then stretch forth his hand; it was in the stretching forth that he was made whole. Before one receives anything, he must act as though he already has it and then he receives.

Whenever I read this record from Mark 3, it reminds me of the times I was practicing the principles of the greatness of God's Word in other countries of the world. On one occasion when I was teaching in Jubbulpore, India, a lady who had worked in a mission service for thirty years was delivered by God's power of a number of sicknesses which appeared incurable. This deliverance caused such a stir in the city of Jubbulpore the morning after the miracle occurred, that when my family and I were ready to board the train and leave Jubbulpore, hundreds of people gathered at the railroad depot. This crowd, which was composed mainly of Hindus, wanted me to lay my hands on them individually because they thought that I must have some special power in my hands since I had laid my hands on the woman the previous day. They felt that if I just laid my hands on

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them, they too would be delivered. Just before the train on which we were traveling moved out of the depot, a high-caste Hindu, whose paralyzed arm was hanging limp at his side, ran up to our railroad compartment. He said to me, "Will you pray for my arm?" However, he immediately added, "But I do not believe in your Jesus."

What would you have done? I asked him if he believed God would deliver him. He said, "I believe that God will heal me if you pray for me, but I do not believe in your Jesus." So again I asked him, "Do you believe God will set you free?" And he said, "I believe God will heal me, but I do not believe in your Jesus." I laid my hands on him and I prayed that God would set him free in the name of Jesus Christ. When I finished I said to him, "Now lift your arm." He began to put it up and suddenly he thrust up both of his arms. He leaped and shouted with tears streaming down his face. Once he had lifted his arm a little, he realized the miracle. He was totally set free. About then the train began moving and I said, "Praise God; thank God that you were healed in the name of Jesus Christ."

At the next stop a man came to our compartment in the train saying that he was representing his master who wanted to come and meet the man of God. He said his master was so-and-so, a member of Parliament

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in New Delhi, who was also riding on the train. The member of Parliament then came to our compartment to tell Mrs. Wierwille and me that what he had seen in Jubbulpore was the most tremendous Christian event he had ever witnessed - that a man of God would bless all God's people irrespective of whether they were Christian or Hindu. He offered us the keys to his city and said that any time we wanted to minister in India, the doors of India and the Far East would be open to us to teach the accuracy and the greatness of God's Word.

In Mark 3, as well as in Jubbulpore, both persons had the promise of God; both men believed, and when they believed, they acted; and when they acted, their hand and arm were restored whole. The *how* of receiving is believing. When their needs and wants were in balance, they received. After knowing what is available, how to receive, and what to do, a person then believes and finally acts upon his believing in a positive way.

Look at the power of believing as defined in Ephesians 1:19.

And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who [do one thing] believe

Ephesians 3:20:

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Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

He is not only able to do things abundantly, but *exceeding abundantly*. Believe and then receive.

The law of believing is the greatest law in the Word of God. As a matter of fact, it is not only the greatest law in The Word, it is the greatest law in the whole world. Believing works for saint and sinner alike. In Mark 11 this great law of believing is set forth.

Mark 11:12,13:

And on the morrow [this is the last week of Jesus' life here upon earth], when they [Jesus and His twelve apostles] were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply [perchance] he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not *yet*.

Jesus went to the fig tree hoping to find something thereon, but "... the time of figs was not *yet*." Do you mean to tell me that Jesus was ignorant? Would I go to an apple tree if it were not time for apples? Do

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you think that Jesus would go to a fig tree if He knew it was not the right season? What is the situation?

There are two trees in the Bible designated as the people's trees: the coconut palm and the fig tree. It was never stealing to take fruit off either of those trees no matter on whose land the tree stood. If I had a fig tree in my front yard, you could walk over and help yourself to the fruit of the tree anytime because it was a people's tree. In the record of Mark 11, Jesus was coming from Bethany to Jerusalem and He was hungry. That does not mean that He was starving to death. He was hungry as we get hungry for a snack. He wanted a little bit to nibble on, so he saw a fig tree and he walked over hoping to find something. The time of figs was not yet and Jesus knew that. However, as the leaves come out on this species of fig tree, there are little buds which are as sweet as candy. It was not time for the mature, ripe figs; but if the tree did not have any buds, Jesus knew that it would not have any figs later on. Now watch the story develop.

"And Jesus answered and said unto it" - Jesus was speaking to the fig tree. Can you imagine the neighbors looking at Jesus, can you imagine the apostles scratching their heads wondering what Jesus was doing talking to that old fig tree? Let's look at the record.

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Verse 14,

And Jesus answered and said unto it [If you ever want to receive the power of God you have to be specific. He did not beat around the bush; He spoke to the tree.], No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard *it*.

Jesus and the apostles returned to Bethany that very day.

Verse 20,

And in the [following] morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

The death of a tree is generally noticeable first in the upper leaves, then down the branches, and finally the roots. But this tree died backwards and overnight.

Mark 11:21,22:

And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

The "original" text read, ".. Have the faith of

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God." Observe verse 23 carefully.

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

This is the great law in the Word of God. "... Whosoever ..." It does not say Christian or non-Christian; *whosoever* means *whosoever*. "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and ... cast into the sea and shall not doubt ... but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." In other words: say it, believe it, and it will come to pass.

Then Jesus reiterated this truth in verse 24.

Mark 11:24:

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have *them*.

The law of believing is the greatest law in the Word of God: whosoever says it, whosoever believes, will act and receive.

Chapter Four

Believing: Faith and Fear

There are two types of believing: (1) positive and (2) negative. We either have faith or fear. We must recognize that believing has both a negative and a positive side.

We are what we are today because of our believing. We will be tomorrow where our believing takes us. No one ever rises beyond what he believes and no one can believe more than what he understands. We believe what we believe because of what we have been taught. We think the way we think because of the way we have been led.

Believing is a law. As one believes, he receives. On the negative side, fear is believing; fear is believing in reverse; it produces ill results.

There is basically only one thing that ever defeats the believer, and that is fear. Fear is the believer's only enemy. Fear is sand in the machinery of life.

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When we have fear, we cannot believe God and have faith. Fear has ruined more Christian lives than any other thing in the world.

If a person is afraid of not being able to hold his job, do you know what will happen? He will lose it. If one is afraid of a disease, he will manifest that disease because the law is that what one believes (in this case, what one believes negatively), he is going to receive. People have a fear of the future; they have a fear of death. Fear always encases, fear always enslaves, fear always binds. This law of negative and positive believing works for both Christian and non-Christian. When we believe, we receive the results of our believing regardless of who or what we are.

The Word of God demonstrates negative believing in the Gospel of John. Isaiah had prophesied, hundreds of years before, that when the true Messiah came there would be one miracle which He would do that had never been done before. This one miracle, opening the eyes of a man who was born blind, would prove He was the Messiah of God. This is the miraculous record in John 9.

John 9:1-8:

And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth.

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And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

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Even the neighbors were not sure of what was going on.

John 9:13 and 18:

They brought to the Pharisees [the heads of the temple and the synagogues got involved] him that aforetime was blind.

But the Jews [the Pharisees] did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

First the neighbors were involved, then the religious leaders, and next the parents were called in.

John 9:19-23:

And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

These *words* spake his parents, because they

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feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

Put yourself in this situation. If you had a son who was born blind and he was healed of his blindness, the least you as a grateful parent could do is to admit, "Yes, Jesus Christ healed him." But these parents did not say this. Why were they not able to be the kind of parents one would have expected? They were inhibited from testifying as would have been fitting because they were full of fear - "for fear of the Jews." Fear enslaved them, fear stopped these parents from being the kind of parents they really should have been. Therefore the parents said, "He is of age; ask him." These Jews had already agreed that if anybody said that Jesus was the Christ, that person would be put out of the synagogue.

This action does not mean much to us today because if a person is thrown out of one church, the church on the next street corner is glad to have him. But it was not that way at the time of Jesus. When a man was ostracized from the synagogue, people would not talk with him; he could not attend the synagogue; he could not buy or sell goods. Do you see why the parents were enslaved by fear of what

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would happen to them?

These parents were not the only ones in the Bible who manifested fear. In John 20:19 is a record of the disciples.

Then the same day at evening [This is the day of the resurrection appearance of Jesus.], being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

The disciples were behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. Fear always puts us behind closed doors; it always binds us; it always enslaves us.

Years ago I knew a minister whose wife had passed away leaving him with seven children. About a year later he married another woman who had five children and they lived happily together. About a block and a half away from them lived a woman who had just one son. The woman with the one son was always frustrated, always nervous, always afraid, while this minister and his wife who had twelve children never seemed to worry, to be upset, or to have the least anxiety about their children. When the woman's child started to kindergarten, the mother would walk with him across the street to the next block where the

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kindergarten was located for fear he might get run over by a car. When he was in the first grade she did the same thing, the second grade, and the third grade. One time the boy's mother called on the minister and said, "I don't understand why I am so nervous and upset all the time. I have just one boy to care for; and you have all these children and nothing ever seems to happen to them. You live without worry." He replied, "This is how we live. My wife and I get the children around the breakfast table; that is the only time we get our whole family together. When they are all seated, I do the praying. I pray like this: 'Lord, here we are all together at breakfast. They are all going out to school and other places today, so I leave them all in your protection and care. Thank you. Amen.'" He believed God would answer his prayers and he relinquished them to the Lord's protection. His children flourished.

About a year later the woman's only son was coming home from school early. Mother had not met him at the street corner. As the boy walked out into the street, he was hit by an automobile and killed. I went to the funeral service of that boy, and guess what the minister preached? "God now has another rose petal in heaven." Imagine that! That the God who created the heavens and the earth should want to kill a little boy because God needed another rose petal in heaven. Do you know what killed that little boy? The fear

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in the heart and life of that mother. She was so desperately afraid something was going to happen to her little boy that she finally reaped the results of her believing.

What one fears will surely come to pass. It is a law. Have you ever heard about people who set the time of their death? When somebody says, "Well, this time next year I will not be here," if you are a betting man, bet your money; you are going to win. If a person makes up his mind that this time next year he is going to be dead, God would have to change the laws of the universe for the person not to be accommodated.

A number of years ago a man came to see me about his fear. He told me that according to insurance statistics in the United States a traveling salesman is supposed to wreck his automobile every so many thousands of miles. This man had already driven ten thousand miles more than the average salesman, and his fear of an accident was becoming an obsession. He was losing business day after day and week after week because of this fear. He came to me and I explained to him the law of believing. The man changed his believing and has not had an accident to this day.

The world around us builds fear in people. The psychology prevalent in our society today is fear. If

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you do not use this brand of toothpaste, you are going to have an increased number of cavities; you are afraid of increasing your cavities so you buy this kind of toothpaste. If you do not do this, you are going to get that. It is all based on fear.

Have you ever picked up a newspaper and noticed how positive the stories are? Ninety per cent of what one reads in the newspaper is negative. Automobile accidents, murders, suicides - all negative. Why? Because this is what people have been living. We have been living on negatives so long that when somebody else comes along with a positive diet, we think he must be crazy.

Proverbs 29:25 says "The fear of man bringeth a snare ..." Every time a man has fear he is ensnared, 'he is bound.

Isaiah 8:12:

Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them to* whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

These people were being enslaved as a nation because they were afraid of other people. Yet The Word said, "Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid."

There are many examples like this in The Word. I

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am just selecting a few.

Jeremiah 49:24:

Damascus is waxed feeble, *and* turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on *her*

The reason she had waxed feeble and tuned to flee was that she was afraid.

Job 3:25:

For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

Job received that of which he was afraid.

Psalms 34:4:

I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

As long as he was in fear he was encased.

II Timothy 1:7:

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

God did not give us fear so fear must come from some other source. If fear came from a source other than God, then it has to be negative. Fear is always

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wrong.

Remember in John 20 the disciples, also known as the twelve apostles, on the day of the resurrection were behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. But observe these same men fifty days later.

Keep in mind that, under ordinary circumstances, no adult changes drastically in forty or fifty days. But Acts 2 tells of common human beings who within fifty days from being full of fear became men of great boldness and great conviction. I want to focus on (1) the law of believing both negative and positive and (2) the cause of their change.

Acts 2:4 tells that all these men were filled with the holy spirit and then we read verse 14.

Acts 2:14:

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.

Where was Peter fifty days before? According to the Gospel of John, he was behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. But now Peter stood up with the eleven and lifted up his unquivering voice unto them, "Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem,

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be this known unto you, and hearken to my words." Where did he get that boldness? What changed him from being a man full of fear to being a great man of confidence?

Acts 2: 22,23:

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

Fifty days previously Peter certainly would not have said this. Why is he not afraid to say it now?

When I was attending seminaries and being instructed in homiletics and other arts of the ministry, I was told that when a person preaches a sermon he should never say *you*, but to always say *we*. Peter must have gone to the wrong seminary because when he was preaching here he said, "*You* have crucified Him *and you* have slain Him."

Acts 3 contains a record of events after the day of Pentecost.

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Acts 3:12 and 14:

And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you.

That is boldness. Peter was no longer full of fear. Something must have changed this man.

Peter and John were then taken into custody because they were too bold.

Acts 4:23-29:

And being let go, they went [returned] to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, 'thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, 'and the sea, and all that in them is:

Who, by the mouth of thy servant David hast said. Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

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The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done -

And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants

"Grant unto thy servants" a holiday, a vacation? No. We think it should say this because, after all, if we have been out there working for the Lord, carrying out the ministry, being imprisoned, whipped, and persecuted, certainly we ought to have a vacation with pay. When Peter and John came back and got in this prayer group, they said,

... Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness [not with hesitancy, not with reluctance, not with fear.] they may speak [what the people want us to speak? No.] thy word.

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They prayed for more boldness. As long as they were full of fear and behind closed doors, they had nothing to fear but fear itself, but once they got boldness and preached the Word of God, they accomplished work for the Lord. Men were healed, set free, and saved. Peter and John, however, were thrown into prison; but when they got out, they went back to the little prayer group and believed for more boldness. "Give us more of the boldness, Lord, that we may speak thy word."

Acts 4:30,31:

By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with [hesitancy? No. They spake the Word of God with] boldness.

What made them speak the Word of God with boldness? Verse 31 says that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." In Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost the twelve apostles received the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Verse 31 of Acts 4 says that they were all filled with the Holy Ghost "and they spake the word

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of God with boldness." What changed those men? Between the resurrection record and Acts 2 there is nothing that could have changed the men except the new birth which is the power of the holy spirit which came on Pentecost. I have never seen one person get rid of his fear until he became born again of God's Spirit, filled with the power of the holy spirit. If you want to get rid of your fear, your frustrations, your anxieties, you have to be born again by God's Spirit, filled with His power. That is what changed Peter and the rest of the apostles and that is the power which will change your life.

Peter and John prayed. And when they prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled. They were all filled with the holy spirit, and they spake the Word of God with boldness. I always become amused when I read that, thinking that if the power of God moved like that today in most of our churches, we would have many funerals. People would be shocked to death if the place was shaken where they prayed. In Acts 4 what they prayed for was boldness that they might speak The Word. Nothing but the power of the holy spirit in the Living Word in an individual takes the fear out of him.

That is what took the fear out of my life. I used to be afraid of my own shadow; I was afraid of meeting people, especially people in academic circles, in high

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political circles, in elite religious circles. Today I have no fear within me. Why? I believe that the power from the Holy Spirit is within giving me the boldness, the enthusiasm, the dynamics to stand up for the integrity and the greatness of God's Word.

Fear builds unbelief. This is why fear always defeats the promises of God. Jesus Christ did many signs, miracles and wonders in places like Galilee and Capernaum in Galilee; but in Nazareth, his own home town, He could not do much.

Matthew 13:53:

And he [Jesus] did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Could He not do many mighty works there because He had changed? No. Jesus had not changed; the people had changed.

Unbelief is believing; it is negative believing. On the negative side is doubt and on the positive side is confidence. Confidence versus doubt; trust versus worry; faith versus fear. Doubt, worry and fear are negative believing. Confidence, trust, and faith are positive believing. These laws work with precision not only in the Word of God but in our own lives.

Carefully note that there are two specific types of

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negative believing regarding spiritual power spoken of in the Bible: *apistia* and *apeitheia*. *Apistia* refers to those people who have never heard or who have never heard enough to believe; *apeitheia* refers to those who have heard but refuse to believe what they have heard.

Apistia is the unbelief of those who have never heard or who have not heard in enough detail to believe. For instance, if I have not heard enough of the Word of God to be saved, I have *apistia* unbelief. Look at Romans 10.

Romans 10:13-15:

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? ... how shall they believe in him of

whom they have not heard?" These people were unbelievers in that they had never heard the Word of God so that they could believe.

Matthew 13:53-58:

And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works?

Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?

And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

He could not do much in Nazareth because of the people's unbelief, *apistia*. Although Jesus tried to

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teach, the community would not hear enough to believe because they did not think He could know anything since He was illegitimate, and thus they could not believe. Do you know what the people of Jesus' community said to Him? "Is this the carpenter's son? He is illegitimate because everyone knows that Mary was pregnant before she and Joseph came together in marriage." Contrary to what they thought, however, Jesus was not the carpenter's, son; He was the Son of God by divine conception, born of Mary but conceived by the Holy Ghost, as the Word of God says.

"Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?" The original text gives emphasis as follows: "Is not this the carpenter's son and his mother called Mary (You remember her.), and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and that Judas (Was he wild!), and his sisters, (Weren't they something.), Are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?" "The community said that Jesus could not have such power because they looked at the family and said, "Nothing good can come out of this man. We know that family." Therefore, they would not hear enough to believe. They had unbelief (*apistia*).

"But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not with-

out honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief [*apistia*]."

Luke 2 contains one verse of Scripture that for many years I was not able to understand.

Luke 2:42:

And when he [Jesus] was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

I knew that according to Jewish law, a boy became a man, going through Bar Mitzvah, when he was thirteen. But Jesus was taken to the temple when He was twelve. I could not understand it so I considered that there might be a mistake in the text. I looked in every critical Greek text that I could find and checked every other source I could think of; but I never found Jesus to be thirteen when He went to the synagogue. Every text concurred on the age of twelve. Finally I came across an old piece of literature which explained that according to ancient Jewish law when a boy was conceived illegitimately, this child was brought to the temple at the age of twelve instead of thirteen.

This explains why Jesus could not communicate with the people in His own hometown. They thought that a child conceived illegitimately certainly could

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not have great knowledge or do wonderful works. They were offended by Him, would not listen to hear enough to believe when He spoke, 'and thus suffered from apistia, unbelief.

In the critical Greek texts the word used for the second of the two types of unbelief is *apeitheia*. *Apeitheia* refers to those who have heard but still refuse to believe what they have heard. To illustrate, if I have heard enough of the Word of God that I could be saved but refuse to believe that Word of God, I have *apeitheia*.

Noting Romans 11:30, we find this type of unbelief, not for an individual, but in reference to Israel and the Gentiles as nations.

Romans 11:30:

For as ye in times past have not believed
[*apeitheia*] God, yet have now obtained mercy
through their unbelief [*apeitheia*].

The Gentiles had heard but refused to believe, as it states in Romans 1:21, "Because that, when they [the Gentiles] knew God, they glorified *him* not as God...."

Again Hebrews 4 clarifies this *apeitheia* type of

unbelief.

Hebrews 4:6:

Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief [*apeitheia*].

It was first preached to them. They heard enough to believe but they refused to believe.

Fear which culminates in unbelief is due either to wrong teaching or ignorance. Wrong teaching may be corrected or overcome by right teaching; while ignorance may be corrected or overcome by instruction.

If a person is full of fear because he is ignorant regarding a particular subject he may overcome this ignorance which causes fear by right teaching or right instruction. For instance, a child who is afraid to sleep in the dark is full of fear and wakes up screaming in the middle of the night. Why is that child fearful? Maybe because he has been wrongly taught. Perhaps the child was frightened by someone's saying that if the child was not a good boy, he would be put in the closet and the boogie man would get him. That child is full of fear because of wrong teaching.

On the other hand, suppose an adult is afraid of

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the boogie man in the closet. That is ignorance. He ignores the facts. For a child it is wrong teaching; but for an adult, it is ignorance. Fears, whether from ignorance or wrong teaching, are always encasing and always enslaving and they always defeat us because when we have fear in our lives, we cannot act positively on the promises of God's wonderful, matchless Word.

Matthew 10:16 is a positive record showing that God never meant for His believers to be ignorant; He meant for them to be bold and full of believing, full of power, full of positives.

Matthew 10:16:

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

God wants us to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

Romans tells us that we are to be wise concerning that which is good. The Epistle of James declares that God gives us wisdom: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God," who gives wisdom. God never meant for His Church nor His children to be ignorant; He meant for His Church to be wise; He wanted us to know the score.

Believing: Faith and Fear

Do you know from where this wisdom comes? It comes from the Word of God. Psalms 119:105 says that the Word of God is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, and thereby imparts wisdom. Isaiah tells us that the Word of God imparts wisdom regarding salvation, that even a fool need not err therein. The way is so simple and so plain. I John 3:2 says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God ...". It is the Word of God that imparts wisdom regarding our sonship relationship with Him. II Corinthians 2 tells about the devices of Satan of which we are not ignorant. We are not stupid and should not act unwisely.

The Gospel of John says that the Word of God imparts wisdom regarding the future life, the return of Christ, and heaven. The Word of God gives us wisdom regarding every subject necessary for man's complete knowledge of his redemption and of his salvation. This gives us confidence to manifest positive results. We need never fear for we are not ignorant; we have knowledge of God's Word.

Part II

The Bible

is the

Word of God

Chapter Five

The God-breathed Word

II Timothy 3:16 has great significance in our study of power for abundant living. It tells that The Word is God-breathed.

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

The first word in II Timothy 3:16 is "all." Every time "all" appears, one must ask himself what the word "all" means, because in the Bible the word "all" is used in one of two ways: it is either *all without exception* or *all without distinction*. *All without distinction* means everyone in a certain designated class or group. If one wrongly considers the word "all," he will never rightly understand the Word of God or get its full impact.

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John 12:32:

And I [Jesus], if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.

Is that *all without exception* or is it *all without distinction*? The answer is obvious. We know that not everybody in our community is a Christian; therefore, not all without exception have been drawn to Him. All who have believed, all without distinction, are the ones who have been drawn.

Hebrews 2:9:

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man [for all men].

Is the word "every" (or the word "all") *without exception* or *without distinction*? Did Christ taste death for all men without exception or for all men without distinction? He died for all without exception that whosoever wants to be saved can be saved. Christ died for every man without any exception and because of this anyone can be born again by God's Spirit.

In II Timothy 3, where it reads, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God," "all scripture" means

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without any exception from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21.

The words "all scripture" are followed by the word "is." "All scripture *is* ..." The word "is" must be italicized. Where it is not italicized in a King James Bible, it was either a proofreader's oversight or a deliberate act for the printer's convenience. All italicized words in the King James Version are words which have been added to the text by the translators. One of the major reasons I have my students use the King James Version is that this version points out what has been added to the Stephen's Greek text from which it was translated.

Before going further, let us understand one thing. If a person deletes a word that is italicized, the Word of God has not been touched. The italicized word was added anyway so that by dropping it The Word itself is not touched. This becomes very important as we go further into the accuracy of The Word.

To go another step, there was no verb "to be" in the original Hebrew or Aramaic languages. There was a verb "to become." In other words, the words "is," "are," "was" and "were" literally were not in the original Hebrew and Aramaic.

This becomes very interesting in the first chapter of Genesis. Genesis 1:2 says "And the earth was ..."

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Here the word "was" is not in italics; it is in regular print. Genesis 1:2 continues: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep ..." The second usage of the word "was" is italicized. This tells us that the first word which is translated "was" is not the word "was"; it is the word "became." But the second "was" is added. Therefore verse 2 literally reads, "And the earth became without form, and void; and darkness upon the face of the deep." It *became* without form and void. God did not create it this way. If the word "was" is left in the text, "And the earth was without form," it appears to say that God created the earth this way. To the contrary, the earth *became* this way as Isaiah 45:18 substantiates.

For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens;
God himself that formed the earth and made it;
he hath established it, he created it not in
vain

The words "form" and "void" in Genesis 1:2 are the same words used in Isaiah's "not in vain," *tohu bohu*. God did not create it without form and void. The earth became that way.

Let us go back to II Timothy 3:16. Observe carefully, "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God ..." These five words, "given by inspiration of

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God" are one word in the critical Greek texts. The word is *theopneustos*. This word is composed of two root words: *theo* and *pneustos*. Taken in parts, *Theo* is "God" and *pneustos* is "breathed." *Theopneustos* literally means "God-breathed." "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" equals "all scripture is *theopneustos*" or "all scripture is God-breathed."

Now we ask, does God breathe? You and I breathe, but does God? John 4:24 records that "God is a Spirit ..." The Greek texts delete the article *a* and simply say, "God is Spirit." Furthermore, the Word of God says that a spirit has no flesh or bones. We cannot view a spirit with our eyes. Yet II Timothy 3:16 says that God breathed. We must search out exactly what is meant when God is attributed human characteristics. What does "God-breathed" mean?

Have you ever asked yourself what should be emphasized in the Word of God? If the Bible is God-breathed, *theopneustos*, and if the Bible is the Word of God, can you imagine for one minute that God would allow any mortal the privilege of deciding what should be emphasized in the Word of God? In this word, "God-breathed," *theopneustos*, is a great truth that has taken years to ferret out and study.

God is Spirit so God does not breathe, but we do.

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Whenever the Bible attributes human characteristics to God, as does this particular Scripture in II Timothy, it is called a *figure of speech*. The figures of speech in the Bible from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 are God's markings in The Word as to that which He wants emphasized.

A figure of speech is not something to be guessed about. Figures of speech are legitimate grammatical usages which depart from literal language to call attention to themselves. For instance, if we have not had any rain for a long time, I could say, "The ground is dry." This would be a plain statement of fact. The dust is blowing around and the cracks are gaping. But if I say, "The ground is thirsty," that is a figure of speech. The figure of speech is always more vivid than the literal statement itself. When I say "The ground is dry," I place an indistinct idea in your mind; but the moment I say "The ground is thirsty," then you have a clear picture. A figure of speech always augments, always vitalizes, the statement.

The Word of God is to be accepted literally whenever and wherever possible. But when a word or words fail to be true to fact, they are figures of speech. Figures of speech have a God-designed emphasis which must be grasped and understood in order to fully obtain the impact of The Word. Men are prone to use figures of speech haphazardly, but in

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the Word of God figures of speech are used with divine design. Each and every one of them may be accurately catalogued and analyzed with precision. There is absolutely no guesswork. Except for the figures of speech and the Oriental customs and mannerisms, The Word is literal.

There are 212 different figures of speech used in the Bible. As far as I can calculate, throughout history there must have been approximately 220 different figures of speech. Two hundred twelve of these are used in the Bible; sometimes there are as many as 40 variations of one figure. It is easy to see what a monumental opportunity for research the field of figures of speech is.

This figure of speech, "God-breathed," is so tremendous that I am taking this time to develop its greatness. Once you understand this, hundreds of Scriptures will become very plain to you.

God is Spirit, yet II Timothy says that "all scripture is God-breathed." This figure of speech is called in the Hebrew *derech benai adam* which translated means "ways of the sons of man," bringing God down to the level of man. Now the Greeks took *derech benai adam* and translated it *anthropopatheia* meaning "pathos of man." The Romans used this figure and called it *condescensio* in Latin from which is

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derived our English word "condescension." Whenever the Word of God attributes human characteristics to God, the figure of speech is called in Greek *anthropo-patheia* and in Latin, *condescensio*. This is the Holy Spirit's emphatic marking in II Timothy 3:16. The emphasis is not on the word "all" or on the word "scripture." The emphasis is on the source, *God-breathed*. God put the emphasis where He wanted it; He marked it by this figure of speech.

Another example of *condescensio* is Exodus 4:14 which says, "And the anger of the Lord was kindled." God is Spirit; He has no anger. When the Bible says the anger of the Lord, what figure is it? *Condescensio*. Isaiah 52:10 says, "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm ..." Does the Lord have an arm? No, He does not, but I do and you do. "To make bare the arm" is the figure *condescensio*.

What exactly was the process by which the God-breathed Word came about? The key to answering this question is in the Word of God.

II Peter 1:21:

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

"Prophecy" is uniquely used in this verse of Scrip-

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ture When the average person thinks of prophecy, he thinks of foretelling the future. This definition is one of the usages of the word "prophecy," but is not the only 'one. The word "prophecy" can also mean "forthtelling."

Isaiah's prophecy of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and John's prophecy of the return of Christ (which is still in the future) are examples of foretelling. Some of the Word of God is foretelling. The verb "prophesy" also means "to forthtell, to state, to set forth, to speak forth." "Prophecy" literally means "that which is foretold and that which is forthtold." The whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation is either foretelling or forthtelling. "For the prophecy [all that which is foretold or forthtold, everything from Genesis to Revelation] came not in old time by the will of man ..." The Word of God, which foretells and forthtells, did not come by the will of man. Many theologians and religious leaders have taught that whenever a Biblical writer wanted to write he sat down and penned a part of the Word of God. The Word of God does not say that. Moses never sat down in the desert and said, "Well, now I think I am going to write the Word of God," and then got out his shorthand pad. He did not scratch his head and write, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "I like that." No. The prophecy came not by the will of man; in other words, man never willed the Word of

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God. He never sat down and said, "Now I will to compose Genesis" or "I will to compose Matthew." "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man" This is basic to our understanding of a fundamental background of how The Word came about.

The Word of God never came by the will of man, "... but holy men of God spake ..." Holy men of God spoke. Who are holy men? Men who believe God are holy. The Bible was not written by God-rejectors, unbelievers or skeptics. The Bible was written by holy men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

I have asked many people about this verse, "Who did the speaking?" And do you know what they say? The Holy Spirit. That is not what the verse says. It says, "... holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost." It does not say God spoke; it says holy men of God did the speaking. That is what The Word says and that is what it means.

Do you know why there is such a difference between the books of Amos and Isaiah, between the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of John? Can you speak with any vocabulary other than the one you have? For instance, if you have never heard of the word "idiosyncrasy," you can not use it. One can only use the vocabulary that he possesses. That is

exactly what The Word declares in II Peter 1:21, that holy men of God spoke. They used their own vocabularies and their own modes of expression. The Gospel of Mark is short and choppy: "and immediately," "and straightway," "and forthwith." These words are used because the writer of the Gospel of Mark was not a highly-educated man with a flowery vocabulary. But the Gospel of John is different. John wrote, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." How beautiful! Why? Because of John's style of writing. Amos' writing was terse; he was a herdsman. Isaiah used beautiful expressions. This accounts for the differences in writing styles that are found in the Bible. Holy men of God did the speaking and writing; they used their natural vocabularies. But they spoke *"as they were moved by the Holy Ghost [Spirit]."*

What does it mean to be *".. moved by the Holy Spirit"*? II Timothy 3:16 tells that all Scripture is God-breathed. Here in II Peter 1:21, The Word declares that these men were moved by the Holy Spirit. Whatever is "God-breathed" or to be "inspired of God" is to be "moved by the Holy Spirit."

Some people teach that God took the arm of

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Moses and shoved it around and, in this way, made Moses write what God wanted written. No. It does not say "pushed around by the Holy Spirit"; it says, "... moved by the Holy Ghost." People are always guessing and offering opinions rather than reading the declared accuracy of God's Word. What is it to be God-breathed and moved by the Holy Spirit? Galatians 1:11 contains this record.

But I certify [guarantee] you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

If the gospel had come after man, he, Paul, would have received it by the will of man and that would have been a contradiction with the rest of The Word. II Peter 1:21 emphatically states that The Word did not come by the desires of man. It did not come by the will of man. Galatians says, "... the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*..." Then there must be another way to get information. All learning in our sense-knowledge world of mathematics, science, history and such - all our information comes by the will of man. But in contrast, Paul said of his writing in Galatians 1:12,

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

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The Word came "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Now let us put these verses together.

II Timothy 3:16:

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God [God-breathed], and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

II Peter 1:21:

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

Galatians 1:11,12:

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

In II Timothy 3:16 is the "God-breathed word" which in II Peter 1:21 is to be "moved by the Holy Spirit" which in Galatians 1:11 and 12 is "revelation."

There is a mathematical axiom involved at this point: "Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other." Therefore, God-breathed word = moved

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by the Holy Spirit = revelation; or God-breathed means to be moved by the Holy Spirit which is revelation.

Before we go deeper into this particular verse in II Peter, let's look into the Old Testament and see how those holy men of God spoke who received this revelation. We have seen from John 4:24 that God is Spirit. God being Spirit can only speak to what He is. God cannot speak to the natural human mind. This is why The Word could not come by the will of man because the will of man is in the natural realm. God being Spirit can only speak to what He is - spirit. Things in the natural realm may be known by the five senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. But God is Spirit and, therefore, cannot speak to brain cells; God cannot speak to a person's mind. It is a law and God never oversteps His own laws. The spirit from God had to be upon these men, otherwise they could never have received revelation as Paul declared in Galatians. Numbers 11:17 helps explain revelation.

And I [God] will come down and talk with thee [Moses] there: and I will take of the spirit which *is* upon thee, and will put *it* upon them

God is Spirit and He could reveal Himself through

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the spirit from God which was upon Moses. Then Moses, having a mind, used his vocabulary and wrote the revealed Word of God. That is the exact means by which the Word of God came into being.

A man of God, in Biblical usage, was a man upon whom was the spirit from God, also called the "spirit of wisdom" because God as Spirit is wise. Joshua was one of these men as told in Deuteronomy 34:9.

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.

Every man in the Bible who wrote the Word of God had the spirit from God on him. There is only one author of the Bible and that is God. There are many writers but only one author. God is the author while Moses wrote, Joshua wrote, Paul wrote, David wrote and many others wrote. God being Spirit spoke to the spirit upon the holy men and told them what He wanted said. Then the men of God used their vocabularies in speaking what God had revealed. "For the prophecy [all that is foretold or forthtold] came not... by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost [Spirit] ." The original, God-given Word literally contained no errors or contradictions. Why? Because God was its author.

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Holy men simply wrote down what God revealed to them. This is how we got the God-breathed Word. It truly is tremendous.

Chapter Six

That Man May Be Perfect

After establishing how the Word of God came into existence, the next step in our building process is to find out what is the function of His Word. Let us look again at II Timothy 3:16.

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God-
[God-breathed], and *is* profitable for doctrine,
for reproof, for correction, for [which is] in-
struction in righteousness.

All Scripture from Genesis to Revelation is profitable. The Scripture does not put you in the red; it keeps you in the black. What is it profitable for? It "... *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." All Scripture is profitable in three areas: (1) doctrine, which is how to believe rightly; (2) reproof, which is to rebuke at the places where we are not believing rightly; and (3) correction, which is to put us back to right believing. The entire Word of God will do just that. It will

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teach us how to believe rightly, it will reprove us at the places where we are believing wrongly, and it will correct us so that we can again believe rightly. All three of these are "instruction in righteousness."

Many times a critic of the Bible comes along and says, "Well, the Bible is not true. I feel that there are too many contradictions; the Bible really is just another book among the rest of them." This is not the testimony of the Word of God. The testimony of the Word of God is that all Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for doctrine, which is to teach us how to believe rightly, how to believe positively. If we are going to tap the resources for the more abundant life we must know how to believe rightly. To the people who say that the Bible has lots of error in it, I would like to state that the true Word of God is accurate from Genesis to Revelation. The errors have come in by man propounding those errors. Men have brought their opinions and desires into The Word. When men come and say that they do not believe the Bible, we must remember that the Bible was never written for the unbeliever, the agnostic, or the infidel; the Bible was not written for the God-rejectors and the God-deniers. The Bible was written for men and women who want to find answers. The Word of God is given to men and women who want to tap resources for the more abundant life. This is why the critic who comes from the outside to the Word of

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God has no footing to stand on to judge The Word because The Word has already judged him.

The Bible was written so that you as a believer need not be blown about by every wind of doctrine or theory or ideology. This Word of God does not change. Men change, ideologies change, opinions change; but this Word of God lives and abides forever. It endures, it stands. Let's see this from John 5:39. "Search the scriptures ..." It does not say search Shakespeare or Kant or Plato or Aristotle or V.P. Wierwille's writings or the writings of a denomination. No, it says, "Search the scriptures .." because all Scripture is God-breathed. Not all that Wierwille writes will necessarily be God-breathed; not what Calvin said, nor Luther, nor Wesley, nor Graham, nor Roberts; but the Scriptures - they are God-breathed.

John 5:39:

Search the scriptures; for in them ... ye have eternal life: and they [the Scriptures] are they which testify of me.

The Scriptures tell us the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ, and about God; this is doctrine - it is right believing.

John 17:8:

For I have given unto them the words which

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thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

Jesus gave them the words which God gave to Him, the Scriptures, the Word of God. John 17:14 says, "I have given them thy word ..." Without the Word of God, which is right believing, you and I could never walk in the greatness of the power of God.

John 17:17:

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

The Word is truth. This is the testimony that The Word gives of itself. Eventually we have to come to the testimony of The Word itself and let it speak. We never bring God's Word down to our level; we always bring ourselves up to the level of God's Word. Never come to the Word of God with your skepticism, your doubt, your opinion. You come to the Word of God and let it speak for itself and then you reevaluate and readapt your living to the integrity and the accuracy of God's Word.

What else does the Scripture do besides give doctrine? It is also profitable for reproof. The Scripture reproves us when we are not believing rightly. The

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Word tells us where we are off; it admonishes us for our wrong believing. No man has a right to reprove any other man. The Word of God has to do the re-proving because what I might allow in my life, somebody else might not allow in his life.

Romans 14:22:

Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

I have experienced people's reproof when they did not like the ties that I wore, to cite one example. I was then moving among circles that taught if you offend somebody by what you do, you should quit doing it. So I got rid of the old tie and found out that the next tie offended someone else. I tried every which way to please people because people were re-proving me for wearing this or wearing that. I have come to the place in my life that I am concerned about what God thinks and not what people think. I take my reproof not from what people say, but from what The Word says. These Scriptures are God-breathed and these Scriptures are profitable for right believing. Where we are believing and acting wrongly, The Word reproves us.

After doctrine and reproof, what is the third thing the Scripture does? Not only does it teach us right

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believing and reprove us when we are not believing rightly, but it corrects us. The Word of God is profitable to correct us, to bring us back to believing rightly once more. Parents should utilize this technique in training their children. Most of us as parents say, "Don't do that." Seldom do we add the correction and tell them what they ought to do. But that is exactly what The Word does. It tells us where we are believing wrongly; but then it gives the correction and tells us how we can get back to right believing.

There are many examples of correction in the Bible. Take David, for instance. David was off the ball. He found beautiful Bathsheba and then had her husband shot while in the front lines of battle so that he, David, could have Bathsheba as his wife. A few people knew about the sequence of events leading to David's marriage, but nobody had a right to say anything because David was king and every woman in the kingdom was technically the property of the king or belonged to the king. However, there happened to be a little prophet whose name was Nathan with whom God had a conversation. One time God said to Nathan, "Nathan, you go over and tell David that he has sinned." And Nathan said, "Oh, Lord, not me. I don't want to go to David because old David is handy at chopping off heads." But the Lord insisted, "You go over and tell him about a man who had many sheep and his neighbor had just one little lamb and

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that little lamb was so precious to him that he took it to the table with him and he took it to bed with him; he mothered it in his bosom. You tell him that story. Tell him how the rich man once had a visitor. And instead of taking one of his own sheep to feed his visitor, the rich man went over to the neighbor and picked up his one lamb and butchered it."

So Nathan went to see David and he said, "King David, something terrible happened in this kingdom. A rich man had company coming, and do you know what this man did? He went over to his neighbor and got that one little lamb that was so precious, the only thing the poor neighbor had, and he brought it to his home and slaughtered it." Nathan told David the whole story. David became very angry and he said to Nathan, "You tell me who the man is. Give me his name and I'll have his head chopped off." Nathan looked David right in the eye and he said to him, "You are the man."

How would you like to have been Nathan? If Nathan had gone down there with any other story, do you know what would have happened to him? David would have had Nathan beheaded. But God told Nathan what to say so that David would trap himself. The moment David said, "Let me know who it is," Nathan said, "You are the man." At that moment David recognized the truth of what Nathan was

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bringing from God and David said, "Well, I am sorry." He turned to God and asked God to forgive him. Then it says in the Word of God that David was a man after God's own heart. He was not after God's heart when he was out fooling around with Bathsheba and having Uriah killed; no, but when he was back in line, David was a man after God's own heart. When we rightly divide The Word and we walk in the power of it - then we are men and women after God's own heart.

So all Scripture is God-breathed, profitable for doctrine - right believing, for reproof - reprimanding when we are believing wrongly, and for correcting us - for putting us back in line for God. This is instruction in righteousness. Isn't that a tremendous verse of Scripture when we examine it closely to see the greatness of God's Word.

After having the function of God-breathed Scripture - doctrine, reproof, and correction which are instruction in righteousness - disclosed in one concise verse, God follows with the next line in II Timothy 3 by giving the purpose of the God-breathed Word.

II Timothy 3:17:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

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The purpose, as it says, is "that the man of God Let us see who is a man of God. The word "man" in this usage means "one who is a spokesman for God, one who speaks for God."

Deuteronomy 33:1 :

And this *is* the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

Moses was a man of God because he spoke for God. Deuteronomy 18:15 reads,

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.

Moses was this man of God. He was a prophet, one who speaks for God. The greatness of this is that every time that a believer speaks the accuracy of God's Word, he is like a man of God. When you speak the accuracy of God's Word, you are as a man of God. When we speak His Word, we are speaking as though God Himself were speaking.

God's purpose is "that the man of God [the one who speaks for God], may be perfect" Somebody may come along and say "perfect." The Word of God says we are to be.

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The Greek word for "perfect" is used only this one time in the Bible which makes it especially interesting in Biblical research and accuracy. The word "perfect" is the Greek word *artios* used as an adjective. *Artios* is defined in two ways. One way is describing a ship when it is equipped for its voyage, having on it everything needed to make a successful trip. Whenever that ship is so perfectly outfitted that it lacks nothing, then the word that is used in Greek is *artios*. The other usage of *artios* regards the ball-and-socket joint. As the ball of the hip fits into the socket, for example, is called *artios*. If one should have even the tiniest foreign particle in the ball-and-socket joint of the hip, the pain would be excruciating.

God's Word declares the purpose of the Word of God is that the man of God may be perfect, without one foreign body there to cause a blemish. The purpose is for the man of God to be so perfect that he has everything that is ever needed in every situation, not lacking one thing. He is completely prepared for a successful voyage.

Then in II Timothy 3:17 comes the next word: "That the man of God may be perfect, throughly .." The word is "throughly," not "thoroughly." I have asked hundreds of people in classes to read this verse of Scripture, and 99 out of 100 will read that word "thoroughly." When we do not read what is written,

That Man May Be Perfect

how can we expect to understand the Word of God? People are constantly reading into it. Our minds project rather than read. It is basic that we read what is written. II Timothy 3:17 does not say "thoroughly;" it says "throughly." You may ask, "What is the difference?" You see, I can wash hands thoroughly, but I cannot wash my hands throughly. "Throughly" implies an inside job whereas "thoroughly" is for the external. The purpose of the Word of God is that the man of God may be perfect, not on the outside, but on the inside.

If the word "thoroughly" is in your Bible, it is a proofreader's oversight. If it were typed accurately, the word would always be printed "throughly" One cannot have perfection on the outside unless he first has perfection on the inside. The purpose of the Word of God is that the man of God may be perfect on the inside as a starting point.

"That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished ..." At this point, the translation has failed to communicate the impact of this verse. The word "furnished" is from the same root word in Greek as the word "perfect." The Greek word for "perfect" is *artios*; the Greek word for "furnished" in II Timothy 3:17 is *exartizo*. *Exartizo* is a verb whereas *artios* is an adjective. Literally it says, "That the man of God may be perfect, throughly perfected ..." Not only is

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the man to be perfect, but he is to be through and through and throughly perfected.

In two short verses of Scripture, The Word tells us both its own function and its purpose.

II Timothy 3:16,17:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

What a foundational revelation to our study and understanding of the Word of God!

Chapter Seven

Man Shall Not live By Bread Alone

Man's basic spiritual problem is not believing the integrity of the Word of God. Very few people believe that the Word of God is accurate, that it means what it says and that it says what it means. Thus man is in a constant dilemma in his quest for truth; he has no touchstone for truth because he will not go to The Word and study its integrity and accuracy.

In Matthew 4:4 the Word of God declares,

... It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Notice the words "out of the mouth of God." God has been attributed a human characteristic, but God does not have a mouth. Again the figure of speech is condescensio, the Holy Spirit's marking for emphasis.

Man cannot sustain himself solely on a diet of

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physical food; he needs Ms food supplemented by every word that comes from God. Man cannot live by words that come from men, from different writers, from different theologians or from different church groups, but by words that come from God.

Man does need physical food for the maintenance of Ms physical body. But a man has more than just his physical body to care for. A man's soul needs nourishment also. Man's soul cannot be sustained by mashed potatoes, gravy and steak. Matthew 4:4 declares that man shall live not only by bread "but by every word fl.." He needs not just a word here and a word there; not one verse here and another verse there; "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The Word of God is that food required by man so that he may renew his mind and thereby manifest the more abundant life.

Spiritual weakness and spiritual inability can be due only to an improper diet, that is, the neglect of the Word of God. For the most part, spiritual anemia caused by the neglect of the Word of God may today be attributed to the fact that the Bible is not understood when read. The Bible is not understood because we have never been taught how to understand it. Who has taught us figures of speech? Who has taught us what revelation is? Who has shown us the accuracy of The Word? That is why we have stories about the

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dust-covered Bible. One cannot really blame people for this. The blame should lay with those of us who have been preachers and teachers because we have not communicated The Word to today's man.

But what about the people whose Bibles are not dust covered and neglected, and yet they are still spiritually weak? Their spiritual malady must be caused by wrong usage of God's Word. The improper usage means that the Word of God is not being rightly divided. Some of us have been instructed to read the Bible at least once a day; but when we are through reading our daily Scripture, what do we know? We have not learned anything because we have not understood it. What happens when people fail to understand The Word? They succumb to all the doctrines and theories of man. These spiritually-hungry people are blown around from pillar to post with each new philosopher or new idea. The fleeting shadows of a few great names rather than the Word of God hold people spellbound. Far too many people believe what they have received from man and then endeavor to have their beliefs corroborated by going to the Bible and selecting Scriptures to substantiate their ideas.

A woman once wrote to me regarding one of our broadcasts. She had appreciated my preaching because it agreed with what she thought. Suppose the teaching had been The Word and that it had disagreed

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with what she thought. Would her beliefs have changed the Word of God? Whether or not we believe, it is still God's Word.

Several years ago I was teaching a class in a Southern state. After the second session a man came to me and said, "I think that this is the most logical Biblical teaching I have ever heard, but," he said, "it is upsetting me because I have always held other opinions and I do not want to change my mind. You are confusing me." This gentleman did not finish the class because he already had his mind closed. That was his privilege, but God's Word is still Truth whether or not we believe it.

When two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen are sparked together, water is going to result. I do not care whether you pray or do not pray, whether you are Christian or non-Christian, whether you believe or you do not believe; it does not make any difference because the law is that two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen is water. God's Word is as infallible as that. This is why we should honestly come to the point that we allow the Word of God to take pre-eminence in our lives no matter what ideas, no matter what theories, no matter what opinions we may have held. We must come to The Word, let The Word speak, and then adjust our thinking according to the integrity and the accuracy of The

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Word. After we have let The Word speak, we must accordingly harmonize our beliefs, our actions and our living.

II Peter 1:3 says about The Word,

According as his [God's] divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.

God by His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. If we want the things that pertain to life and godliness, we have to go to God's Word. If one plays football, he must go by the rules of the game of football. So logically, if we want to know God's will, where do we go? To the commentary, to the theologians, to the encyclopedia, or to last Sunday's sermon? No. We go to the Word of God.

I Thessalonians 2:13:

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

They received the Word of God which they heard of

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Paul. People could have said, "That is just Paul talking," but they did not. Paul says that the Thesalonians "received the Word of God which ye have heard of us ... not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

The Word declares of itself in Psalms 12:6,

The words of the Lord *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times;

If the Bible has the words of the Lord then these words must be undefiled and absolutely pure. They are "... *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."

Psalms 119:162:

I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.

Do you rejoice at The Word as one who finds great spoil? Would you rejoice at The Word as much as you would if you found a thousand dollars?

I Corinthians contains another testimony from the Word of God regarding the integrity of God's Word.

I Corinthians 2:13:

Which things also we speak, not in the words

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which man's wisdom teacheth, but [words] which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

If these are words which the Holy Spirit teaches, then we ought to wash out our ears, get the cobwebs out of our minds, and begin to study The Word for its inherent accuracy.

Jeremiah 15:16:

Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word [The Word, not what people said about it, not what some theologian wrote about it] was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart

This does not mean that they found the Bible or The Word and chewed it or physically ate it. When The Word was found, they digested it; they lived on it; it was their life, their heartbeat.

The Word is almost unbelievable because it is so true. Too many ministers like to talk around The Word by taking one verse of Scripture, reading that verse as the text for the day, giving illustrations from Shakespeare and Newsweek, coming back and quoting the verse of Scripture, pronouncing the benediction and going home. How much of The Word then has the congregation learned? None! When the people

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ate The Word as recorded in Jeremiah, they ate the *pure* Word. We must preach the *pure* Word.

All God's creation is marvelous; but of all God's works, the greatest of His works is His Word.

Psalms 138:2:

... for thou has magnified thy word above all thy name.

God has magnified His Word above His Name. It does not say that about the stars or the planets. He set His Word above His name for He underwrote it; He put His name underneath it, He guaranteed it. It is just like a check. When I write a check for a thousand dollars, I put my name underneath it. The check is only as good as the signature. How good is The Word? The Word of God declares that it is as good as God for God signed His Name to it. The Word is as much God as God is God. What God said was, was; what God has said is, is; what God says will be, will be. Do you see why we must come back to the integrity and accuracy of God's wonderful Word? We cannot trust man's word because man blows about being here today and gone tomorrow; but the Word of God "liveth and abideth for ever." That Word endures.

Chapter Eight

In the Beginning Was The Word

The beginning of the Gospel of John states,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word
was with God, and the Word was God.

Notice there are three usages of the word "word" in verse 1.

John 1:2:

The same was in the beginning with God.

Logos means "word" or "communication." God is spoken of as the *logos* because He *is* The Word. Christ is the *logos*, God's Word in person; while the Bible is the *logos*, God's Word in writing.

Which *logos* is John 1:1 speaking of? "In the beginning was the *logos*, and the *logos* was with God, and the *logos* was God." The word used in this verse is both the written Word, which we speak of today as

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the Bible, and Christ, The Word in person.

The key to understanding John 1:1 and 2 is the word "with." If any other Greek word were used for the word "with" except pros, the whole Bible would crumble. The word pros means "together with, yet distinctly independent of." That is exquisite semantic accuracy. Jesus Christ in the beginning was together with God, yet He was distinctively independent of Him. The written Word was originally with God, yet distinctively independent of God. This is its remarkable usage because it refutes the erroneous teaching that in the beginning Jesus Christ was with God to start everything. This is not what The Word says. It says that He was with Him, but the written Word was also with Him. How? In what you and I would express as "in the mind of God." God in His foreknowledge knew of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew of the prophets to whom He could give The Word, and of their faithfulness in writing and speaking The Word. This was all with God because of His foreknowledge. Do you know that you were with God from the beginning if you are a born-again believer?

Ephesians 1:4:

According as he [God] hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world

If you were chosen before the foundation of the

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world, where were you? Do not tell me that you already have lived in eternity with Him. No, but in the foreknowledge of God, God knew that some day you would believe, you would be born again of God's Spirit. That is why The Word says that He chose you and that you were in Him before the foundation of the world.

Observe another corroborating Scripture.

II Thessalonians 2:13:

God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

We were with Him from the beginning as Jesus Christ was with Him, as the written Word was with Him, and yet distinctively independent of Him. This explains the importance of the use of *pros*.

By deductive logic, if God is perfect, then the *logos*, Jesus Christ, has to be perfect. If God is perfect and Christ is perfect and The Word is given as holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, then God's Word must be perfect also.

God is perfect, so Jesus Christ is perfect, so the revealed Word of God is perfect. Consequently the words which make up The Word must also be perfect.

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This is why if any other word had been used than the preposition *pros* in John 1:1 and 2 the whole Bible would fall to pieces because of imperfect usage of words. To have a perfect Word, the words must be perfect and the order of the words must be perfect.

Have you ever asked yourself why John 3:16 is placed exactly where it is? Why is Galatians 5:4 exactly where it is? Why is I Corinthians 12 where it is? Why is I Corinthians 14 where it is? If they were at any other place the order of the words would be imperfect. A chain is no stronger than its weakest link. This is true of The Word too. If The Word can be broken at any one place, The Word crumbles from Genesis to Revelation. Either the whole Bible is God's Word from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 or none of it is God's Word. Someone may say, "I believe John 3:16, but I do not believe I Corinthians 14, where Paul says, 'I would that ye all spake with tongues'" If one can believe John 3:16 and throw out I Corinthians 14, then I can believe I Corinthians 14, and throw out John 3:16. What have we got? Nothing. Men's opinion. All must be God's Word or none of it is.

God is perfect, The Word is perfect, and, therefore, The Word means what it says, and says what it means. God has a purpose for *everything* He says, *where* He says it, *why* He says it, *how* He says it, *to whom* He

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says it, and *when* He says it.

At one point I believed that the Word of God was full of myths. At one point I could have quoted you numerous theologians, but I could not have quoted the accuracy of God's Word. There was a time in my life when I did not even believe the words "Holy Bible." I did not believe in the miracles, I did not believe in the second coming. I was just a rank unbeliever. I learned my unbelief in the schools I attended which taught that the Bible is full of errors, that the Word of God is full of myths, that it has a lot of forgeries in it. If a minister does not believe that the Bible is God's Word and if he thinks that it is full of myths and forgeries, what would be the man's actions if he followed what he believes? He would get out of the pulpit if he were honest with himself.

I have very little respect for those who stand in the pulpits or stand behind podiums and declare, "This verse is all right, but that one is an interpolation, and that other one is a myth." Men want to teach us that the book of Genesis had four or five different writers in the first few chapters. That is a presumptuous teaching when the Word of God declares that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Which are you going to believe - God's Word or men's opinions? We should be concerned about the integrity of God's Word.

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We have failed to walk in deliverance in this our day and time because The Word is not real, it is not alive, it is not dynamic to or in us. Consequently most people are spiritual cripples, spiritual hitchhikers. They ride along on somebody else's beliefs. Many people today would much rather read and study the literature of the hour than the literature of eternity. Why? Because the word of man has had pre-eminence over the wonderful Word of God. If what man says contradicts what The Word says, they stick to man's word rather than The Word. If we want deliverance, if we want to tap the resources for the more abundant life, then God's Word demands that we study and live by this matchless Word.

Chapter Nine

Mightily Grew the Word of God and Prevailed

When the Word of God prevails, the power of God manifests itself in a tremendous way. This is documented in Acts 19 where the prevailing Word revolutionized not only a community but also a complete section of the world in a short period of time.

Acts 19 records that Paul went to Ephesus and found certain disciples there. He ministered the power of the holy spirit into manifestation, "and all the men were about twelve." Verse 8 begins the record that demonstrates the dynamics of the prevailing Word of God.

Acts 19:8:

And he [Paul] went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

For three months Paul went into the synagogue

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and showed them the Word of God. But three months was all he stayed because unbelievers spoke evil of that way.

Verse 9,

But when divers [many] were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he [Paul] departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

Paul went into the synagogue for three months preaching and teaching the Word of God; but when they refused to believe the Word of God, Paul separated the believers. He said, "You people who want to believe come with me; we are going over to the school of Tyrannus. The rest of you who do not want to believe the accuracy of God's Word just stay here at the synagogue." Actually it was not Paul who broke up this synagogue. The hardened and evil-speakers with their unbelief were the ones responsible for the break-up of the Ephesian synagogue. What a break it was, for verse 10 says,

And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia [Biblically, "Asia" referred to Asia Minor.] heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

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In two years and three months all Asia Minor heard the Word of God. In our day and time, with our multi-million dollars spent for foreign missions, publications, newspapers, radios, televisions and all other media, this event has never been repeated. We have never reached all Asia Minor with the Word of God in one generation. But the Apostle Paul and a handful of believers accomplished the feat in two years and three months. Either God has changed or Paul and these men who studied at the school of Tyrannus had tapped into something which they utilized to its capacity.

As a matter of record, each of these men acted boldly after being filled with the power of the holy spirit and knowing God's Word. As these men learned, they taught The Word to someone else, who in turn, taught other individuals so that all of Asia Minor heard the Word of God in two years and three months. This evangelistic campaign began under the ministry of one man.

Verse 11 tells us what happened.

And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.

When Paul believed The Word, preached The Word, and taught The Word, special miracles came to pass.

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This stir which began in Ephesus with the Word of God prevailing had a reverberating effect. People whom Paul had not taught tried to get into the act too, but their actions boomeranged on them.

Verse 13,

Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them [themselves] to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying

In Acts 19:13 people with evil spirits tried to cast out evil spirits. This verse will give one trouble until he understands that a more powerful devil spirit has command over the less potent devil spirits. Just as in the army when a captain tells the private to jump, the private does not ask how high; he simply jumps. That is what these various devil spirits were doing. These exorcists were endeavoring to cast out devil spirits by other devil spirits in the name of Jesus saying, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches. Come on out."

Verse 15,

And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

These sons of Sceva, chief of the priests, were cast-

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ing out devil spirits by other devil spirits. But one of these devil spirits came out and talked back to the sons and said, "Wait a minute. Jesus we know and Paul we know, but who in the world are you?"

Verse 16,

And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Can't you just see those frenzied fellows running away? Once the devil spirits were aroused, the man, in whom the devil spirit was, attacked these fellows, jerking off their clothes and beating them around so that they ran out of the house naked and wounded.

Verse 17,

And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

Verse 18,

And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

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Verse 19,

Many of them also which used curious arts

Do you know what curious arts are? Curious arts are a part of the entire E.S.P. field; for example, ouija boards which we are selling every place today for kids to play with because we want children to get started right in the spirit world. We tell them it is just a nice little game to play with. In truth it is a little game to open their minds to devil-possession which will later control and use the children at the spirit's own will.

Today very few people know the difference between an evil spirit and a good spirit so we go along and say that God gives all. We make just one basic mistake - which god? The Bible says that there are two gods - one is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the other god is the god of this world called Satan. Later on I am going to show this to you from the Word of God, line by line and word by word.

Acts 19:19:

Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

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Think how much 50,000 pieces of silver would be in present-day currency. Verse 20 gives the fulfilling joy and greatness of the ministry in Ephesus.

Acts 19:20:

So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

What grew? Not man's opinion. The Word of God grew and the Word of God prevailed. When that Word of God prevails, things begin to happen in our lives, in our community, and in our society. But as long as the growth of the Word of God is stunted, as long as people do not understand the fullness of God's Word, it can never prevail. God meant for His Word to prevail. God gave us His Word that we might lead people out of darkness into the glorious light of the gospel of redemption and salvation to make known His will.

All Asia Minor was revived by the ministry of one man. When The Word again becomes real, revival will break out again. People will be saved without newspapers, without radio, without television, without the cooperation of all the churches of a community. When we start living The Word, The Word begins to permeate our everyday lives. It is the Word of God that sparks faith for rebirth.

Romans 10:17:

So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

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Faith does not come by hearing what *Look, Life, Time*, or the *Reader's Digest* has to say. Faith comes by hearing one thing - the Word of God. The Word of God builds believing so that a man can be born again by God's Spirit and filled with the power of the holy spirit. The Word of God is faithful. What He has promised He is able to perform. His Word is the same yesterday, today and forever. Believe that Word, speak that Word, and it produces the same results today that it produced at any time in the history of civilization since that Word was given. The Bible says that we are to abide in The Word and that we are to let this Word abide in us. To the end that we abide in The Word, this Word takes the Master's place in our lives.

I have never seen a man, woman, boy or girl whose soul was not thrilled when this Word of God started to unfold to them. Why? Because the Word of God reveals mysteries, as it says in Romans 16:25 and 26. The Word makes us wise unto salvation as II Timothy 3:15 tells us. According to Acts 17:11 we are to search the Word of God for truth. We do not search any secular sources for truth. We must search the Word of God because the Word of God is the Will of God. Once we know His Will and let it prevail in our lives, then we will see the power of God in manifestation.

Chapter Ten

The Rightly-divided Word

Time and again I have heard the statement that God's Word causes trouble in a community or in a church or in our society. After frequently hearing that and after searching The Word as to why there is division and lack of accord among Christians, I wrote a study entitled "Why Division?" Division comes not from the Word of God; it comes from the unbelief of those who refuse to believe the integrity and the accuracy of God's Word.

The subject of this chapter is the accuracy of God's Word and a workman's responsibility to that Word. II Timothy 2:15 is our point of departure in studying this topic.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The one great requirement of every Biblical stu-

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dent is to rightly divide the Word of Truth. The Bible, the Word of God in its originally-revealed form, is the Word of Truth. But when it is wrongly divided, the true Word does not exist. We have the Word of Truth only to the extent that the Word of God is rightly divided. Everybody at one time or another divides The Word. The question is not whether we divide The Word; the question is whether we rightly divide it.

Acts 17:2 is a verse of Scripture which a minister once handed to me. He said, "Dr. Wierwille, you are always talking about preaching nothing but The Word and not going to outside sources, but do you know that the Apostle Paul did not always use the Word of God, that he reasoned with people logically from outside The Word?" Then he quoted Acts 17:2 to prove to me that the Apostle Paul went outside of the Bible to reason with people about spiritual matters.

Acts 17:2:

And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures.

Did Paul reason with them from outside of the Scriptures? That is what the minister said, but that is not what The Word says. It says that he "reasoned with them out [out] of the scriptures," not *outside*

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the scriptures. That man divided The Word. Again, the question is whether he rightly divided it. We must study to show ourselves approved unto God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed by *rightly* dividing The Word.

Let me give another illustration of how people wrongly divide The Word. A man had been in a prayer meeting after which he came to the home of two students of the class on Power for Abundant Living. He said to them, "You know, we have just had the most tremendous meeting. We prayed until we had prayed the Holy Spirit into the meeting."

The Abundant Living student said, "Do you mean you prayed 'so fervently that you prayed the Holy Spirit into your prayer group? I thought that God is the Holy Spirit and that He is everywhere present. How could you pray Him in?"

"Oh," the man said, "we did."

So the students asked the man to give them the chapter and verse. He turned to the book of Jude and gave this verse to prove that they had prayed the Holy Spirit into that meeting.

Jude, Verse 20:

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on the most holy faith, praying in [in] the Holy Ghost.

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Did he divide The Word? Yes. But did he rightly divide it? Is that what "praying in the Holy Ghost" means? Look again. "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost."

Anyone can take the Word of God and make it mean exactly what he wants by taking it out of its context or by adding to it or by deleting certain words. The story goes that a man once said that he could prove from the Bible that there is no God. He quoted from Psalm 14:1, "*There is no God.*"

Psalms 14:1:

The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God....*

Does that verse say that there is no God? Yes, it does. It says, "There is no God." So one can go to the Bible and prove just what the man said. He just forgot to include the first part of the verse, "The fool hath said in his heart..."

A person can prove anything from the Bible by isolating a text or by changing it around. Anyone can substantiate a theological viewpoint by manipulating Scripture.

II Timothy does not tell us to divide The Word; it tells us to rightly divide it. II Timothy 2:15 is the only

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place in the Bible where the words "rightly dividing" are found. Again a singular usage in the Word of God shows that the expression is uniquely and dynamically significant. The English words "rightly dividing" are the Greek word *orthotomounta*. *Orthos* means "perfectly right" or "perfectly straight" *Temno* means "to cut." Putting these two words together in the word *orthotomounta*, translated "rightly dividing" in the King James Version, literally means "a perfectly right cutting." Its intricate nuance of meaning is that there is only one way to rightly cut The Word; all other ways are wrong cuttings. The teaching that many people give - that as long as you are sincere everything is wonderful - is not the teaching of The Word. II Timothy 2:15 says that we are to "study to show ourselves approved unto God by rightly dividing." There is only one way to rightly cut The Word; all other ways are wrong cuttings. Now do you understand why we have splits, denominations and sects in so-called Christianity? They stem from the wrong dividing of The Word.

The first word in II Timothy 2:15 is "Study." The very first thing a person must do to rightly divide The Word is study. He is not told to study commentaries or secular writers; he must study The Word. If we are ever going to rightly divide The Word, we have to study The Word and not what people say about it.

For years I did nothing but read around the Word

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of God. I used to read two or three theological works weekly for month after month and year after year. I knew what Professor so-and-so said, what Dr. so-and-so and the Right Reverend so-and-so said, but I could not quote you The Word. I had not read it. One day I finally became so disgusted and tired of reading around The Word that I hauled over 3,000 volumes of theological works to the city dump. I decided to quit reading around The Word. Consequently, I have spent years stu-dying The Word - its integrity, its meaning, its words.

Why do we study? Because God expects us as workmen to know what His Word says.

I Corinthians 12:1:

Now concerning spiritual *gifts* [matters], brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

Since God would not have us ignorant, there is only one way He would have us to be - smart.

We are to study to show ourselves approved unto God, not to man. You do not study to show yourself approved unto the leading financier in your community, or to the heads of your denominations. Whether men approve you or not isn't of primary importance; the primary thing is to stand approved before God. And the only way you are going to stand approved

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before God is to study and rightly divide The Word.

Romans 16:10:

Salute Apollos [who is] approved in Christ....

It does not say that he was approved in the community or by the society or in the denomination, but he was approved in or of Christ.

Acts 2:22:

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God ...

We study to show ourselves approved of God because we are workmen who do not need to be ashamed of our workmanship. If I were a carpenter and built a house with joints and mortises that were gaping, I would stand in disapproval for my workmanship when the owner came to look. A workman is approved or not approved by the people who employ him. So we study The Word that we may be approved before God because we are held accountable to Him for our workmanship.

Matthew 12: 36,37:

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give [an] account thereof in the day of judgment.

For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by

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thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Romans 14:12:

So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

The Word says and means that everyone shall give an account of himself. To have God's approval we must study The Word and study it in the right way. The right way is the right cutting of the Word of Truth to have the true Word.

Jesus Christ, God's only-begotten Son, rightly divided The Word. According to Luke 24:44 Jesus divided the Old Testament into the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. "Psalms" means "writings" in Biblical usage. I had been taught to divide the Old Testament into the books of the Law, the books of History, the books of Poetry, the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets. I put them into five categories whereas Jesus Christ put them into three. Who do you think was right? Jesus Christ rightly divided The Word.

Psalms 116:15 is another verse which is frequently wrongly divided. This is a verse of Scripture which we often hear at a funeral when a good man of God has died.

Psalms 116:15:

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Precious in the sight of the Lord *is* the death of his saints.

We say, "It is precious, it is good, in the sight of the Lord that he is dead." Talk about wrongly dividing The Word! It is not good in the sight of the Lord that Herman died or that John died or that Mary died because they cannot help God any after they are dead. The only time they could help God is when they were alive. The word "precious" in the text is "costly."

We speak of a diamond as a precious stone because it is costly and rare. The more costly it is, the more precious it is. This is what is meant by "precious in the sight of the Lord *is* the death of his saints." It does not cost God anything when an unbeliever or a God-rejector dies. They have not done anything for God anyway. But if a believer died, it would be costly to God. That is why the Psalmist said, "Costly in the sight of the Lord *is* the death of his saints."

The Word of God is the true Word only when it is rightly divided. When it is wrongly divided we have error at the particular place where it is wrongly divided. To illustrate, if I rightly divide the Word of Truth on salvation, I will have the true Word on salvation. But if I wrongly divide the Word of Truth on the subject of the Holy Spirit, then at that place I do

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not have the true Word. Naturally I will be sincere on both salvation and the Holy Spirit; but sincerity is absolutely no guarantee for truth. Sincerity is wonderful, but it is not synonymous with truth. I like sincere people, but I have also been hoodwinked by them. The insincere people have never deceived me, but the sincere people have.

Sincerity or insincerity is not the determining factor for truth. The Word of God is Truth. When we rightly divide it, we have the true Word; when we wrongly divide it, we have error.

In the matter of standing approved before God, people are again in disagreement. People say that we stand approved before God if we pray a certain way or if the flowers are on the altar at the right place. It does not make a bit of difference to God where the flowers are on the altar. It may make a difference to us, but it does not make any difference at all to God. The Word of God says we study to show ourselves approved unto God by rightly dividing The Word. To the end we rightly divide The Word, we stand approved; to the end we wrongly divide it, we do not stand approved. We must come to the position of using The Word as our authority. Christian believers can never be brought together On other extraneous, superficial, ritualistic matters. They can only be brought together when they stand approved before God by rightly dividing The Word.

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An example of people trying to stand approved of God is a sadly ridiculous commentary on so-called Christians. Many years ago when I was doing research in the archives of the University of Chicago Divinity School, I came across a clipping from a newspaper on a denomination which had two factions. The cause of the rift was the question whether or not God originally had created Adam and Eve with or without navels. Incredible! One group said that Adam and Eve did not have navels while the other faction believed that God had given both Adam and Eve navels. The one group built a new church just across the street from the old one and called their new denomination the First Church of the Navelites. Christians bring disapproval to themselves when they become side-tracked on such irrelevant matters.

It does not make any difference to God whether one wears a long dress or a short one; it does not make any difference to Him whether I wear a tie or whether I do not. I could teach The Word just as effectively with a tie as without one. The greatness is not in what we wear or how we adorn ourselves, but whether we rightly divide The Word. This Word of God is the greatest thing in the whole world and rightly divided it gives us the true Word; it gives efficacy, power, exuberance and the more abundant life which Jesus Christ, made available.

Chapter Eleven

The Translations of the Word of God

In proceeding as a workman, there is basic information which must be kept in mind, the first of which is that no translation or version of the Bible may properly be called the Word of God.

The Bible from which I have been quoting is called the King James Version. It is not the King James translation. If I had the King James translation in my hands, I would have a Bible that is worth a great deal of money as a collector's item. Once a translation has been made from an original text, like the Stephens Text from which the King James was translated, the first copy is called a translation. When scholars begin to rework the translation in any way, it becomes a version.

Now I said that no translation, let alone a version, may properly be called the Word of God. As far as anybody knows, there are no original texts in existence today. The oldest dated manuscript is written in

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Estrangelo Aramaic. There is a possibility that some of the older Estrangelo Aramaic manuscripts will pre-date 434 A.D. What students or scholars refer to as originals really date from 430 and later. These manuscripts are not originals - the originals are those which holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. At best we have copies of the originals. When I refer to the Word of God, I do not mean a copy or a translation or a version; I mean that Word of God which was originally given by revelation to holy men.

Since we have no originals and the oldest manuscripts that we have date back to the fifth century A.D., how can we get back to the authentic prophecy which was given when holy men of God spoke? To get the Word of God out of any translation or out of any version, we have to compare one word with another word and one verse with another verse. We have to study the context of all the verses. If it is the Word of God, then it cannot have a contradiction for God cannot contradict Himself. Error has to be either in the translation or in one's own understanding. When we get back to that original, God-breathed Word - which I am confident we can - then once again We will be able to say with all the 'authority of the prophets of old, "Thus saith the Lord."

Note carefully the following about The Word:

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(1) there are no original texts in existence today; (2) there were no chapter divisions in the original manuscripts; (3) there were no verse divisions in the original manuscripts. Chapters were first put into the Bible in 1250 A.D. Verses first appeared in the Geneva Bible in -1560 and then in the 1611 translation known as the King James.

God cannot be blamed for the error in the division of verses or chapters. Chapters and verses are good only for quick reference. But we must keep in mind that chapters and verses are all man-made and, therefore, devoid of authority in rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

Let us look at some examples of poor divisions in chapters and verses.

Genesis 1:31:

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Then comes chapter 2 which begins with "thus." That first word immediately tells me that something is wrong because "thus" shows the result of what has already been said. Chapter 1 closed with "And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." And chapter 2 begins,

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Thus the heavens and the earth were finished,
and all the host of them.

Verse 2,

And on the seventh day God ended his work
which he had made; and he rested on the sev-
enth day from all his work which he had made.

Verse 3,

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified
it: because that in it he had rested from all his
work which God created and made.

Verse 4,

These *are* the generations of the heavens and of
the earth when they were created

Verse 4 is an entirely new thought. The first three verses of chapter 2 finish the thought of the first chapter. The second chapter should begin with verse four, "These *are* the generations .

John 2 is another example of bad chaptering. One of the reasons the story of Nicodemus has not been understood is that we have never read the verses preceding it as part of the context. John 2:23 should

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logically be John 3:1.

Now when he [Jesus] was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did

Verse 24,

But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*,

Verse 25,

And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

Chapter 3, verse 1,

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

Reading those three verses before beginning the present third chapter explains the context for the Coming of Nicodemus. Jesus knew what was in Nicodemus. With this introduction or background to the setting of the story, Nicodemus is easily understood.

John 7:53 is an example of a chapter that is divided in the middle of a verse.

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And every man went unto his own house.

Chapter 8, verse 1 begins,

Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

It should read, "And every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the mount of Olives." Then there should be a chapter division to begin, "And early in the next morning he came again into the temple ..."

If chaptering was not in the originals, what about chapter headings? Chapter headings are also not part of the original God-breathed Word. Chapter headings are found below the chapter markings and are usually in italics. These are what man has added. An example of an erroneous chapter heading in some King James editions is Isaiah 29. Chapter 29 heading says, "The heavy judgment of God upon *Jerusalem*." The heading on chapter 30 says, "God's mercy toward His Church." The text says in Isaiah 1:1, "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." Either the man who put "To the church" at the top of chapter 30 is wrong or The Word in Isaiah 1:1 is wrong.

Paragraphs and center references are all man-made. Paragraphs are interpretations of what the translators think. They indicate when one subject is complete and

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when a new paragraph should begin. Sometimes translators fail to recognize proper subject division. Center references, which run down a long column in the center of each page, tell what the editors think has some connection with that verse. Sometimes they are right, sometimes they are' wrong. All these markings have been added and they can confuse the average new student in the Bible because he may think they have been given by God Himself.

God gave the original Word. He is not at all responsible for the errors that men have introduced by their chapter headings or by their center references or by their paragraph markings. Man made all those mistakes.

Punctuation is another man-made trickery. If you want the Bible to say something to substantiate your theology, all you have to do is to manipulate the punctuation. The Word of God can be made to say something that it does not really say by just putting in a comma. Each translator followed his own plan or his own pattern which makes all punctuation devoid of divine authority.

Let us observe the punctuation in the book of Luke.

Luke 23:43:

And Jesus said unto him [the malefactor],

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Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Some translations have the comma after the word "today" so that is read, "Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee To day, thou shalt..." The King James puts the comma before "today" while other translations put the comma after "today." Why? Because one group teaches that the moment one dies, he goes to heaven, while other groups teach that the moment one dies, he does not necessarily go to heaven for there is a period before going to heaven. If there is a waiting period between death and heaven then He could not say to that malefactor, "Today you are going to be with me in heaven," for the malefactor would have had to wait a duration. On the other hand others say man goes to heaven immediately after death so that comma before the word "today" fits in with their theology.

If a man is going to heaven today, heaven must be available. Some teach that heaven is available. If they had studied The Word, they would know that heaven is not available. However, this verse talks about paradise and paradise is not heaven. Heaven is heaven and paradise is paradise. When the Word of God says "paradise," it means "paradise." Paradise is present in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, at the end of which paradise is no longer accessible. It is not again available

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until the book of Revelation which speaks of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.

Paradise is always a place upon earth. If we are going to paradise, it has to be available. Was Jesus saying to the malefactor that day, "... Verily I say unto thee To day," or was it ".. Verily I say unto thee, To day ..."? Since paradise was nonexistent on the day of the crucifixion, Jesus had to say to the malefactor that sometime in the future he would be with Him, not in heaven, but in paradise.

Let us read the sentence with the literal accuracy of the word "paradise" in mind.

... Verily, I say to you To day, thou shalt [the day is coming in the future when you are going to] be with me in paradise.

This fits with the rest of the Word of God. One little comma has caused so much error in dividing The Word.

Another example of a grave punctuation error is in Acts 21 which, when I first saw it, I found difficult to believe. I had been taught that the men of God in the Bible - like Abraham, and Paul, and John - never made mistakes. These men were on a pedestal while we other lowly Christians stared in awe with mouth

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agape at such men to whom we thought we could never aspire. The record of the Apostle Paul in Acts 21 gave me quite a jolt when the error in using a comma was discovered.

Acts 21:4,
And when he [Paul] would not be persuaded,
we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be
done.

This verse, the way it is punctuated, obviously says that they endeavored to persuade the Apostle Paul to change his mind and not go to Jerusalem; but when Paul would not change his mind, they finally said to him "All right, Paul, go out and do the will of the Lord. Go to Jerusalem." But this is not what it says.

To understand the background of this situation, let's go back to Acts 20:22.

And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there.

Paul was bound in the spirit. To be "bound in the spirit" means that one is not spiritually free. Paul wanted to go, but something nagged his mind saying, "Don't go." Paul said, "I am going to go to Jerusalem"; but when he made this statement, he was bound in the spirit, he felt restrained. He knew he

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should not go.

Verse 23,

Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me [if I go to Jerusalem].

Verse 24,

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Doesn't that sound wonderful, sincere, devout? But what good was Paul's sincerity in going to Jerusalem when the spirit had already told him not to go there?

Acts 21:3,

Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

Verse 4,

And finding disciples [there], we tarried there

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seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

What then was the will of God? For Paul *not* to go to Jerusalem. But who was determined to go?

Verse 8,

And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him.

Verse 9,

And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

Verse nine does not say what the virgins prophesied. I would bet you, however, that they did not prophesy about the price of coffee or about who would win the next ball game. What is the context talking about? It is about a man who wanted to go to Jerusalem while the will of the Lord was for him not to go. Paul persisted, however. In context we know what the topic of the virgins' prophecy was.

After a period of time there came another message

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to Paul.

Verse 10,

And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

Look at the pains God was taking to keep the Apostle Paul out of a mess. First of all, He told Paul personally not to go to Jerusalem; Paul was bound in the spirit. Then Paul was warned by a group in Tyre who told him by the spirit not to go. Paul continued on his trip to Caesarea where four Christian believers prophesied. Finally God sent a prophet all the way from Jerusalem to Caesarea to intercept Paul on his journey and say, "Paul, don't go to Jerusalem."

Acts 21:11:

And when he [Agabus] was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle [a strip of cloth four or five inches wide which they tie around their loosely flowing garments], and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.

Agabus foretold that when Paul got to Jerusalem he, Paul, would be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles.

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Verse 12,

And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

God had done everything to keep His man out of a big dilemma, but Paul was determined to get in it. God can try to tell you; but if you will not listen, He cannot force you.

Verse 13,

Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart

Paul moaned, so-to-speak, "Don't you people know that I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus?" Doesn't that sound magnanimous and sincere! But Paul was totally wrong. The will of the Lord was for him not to go to Jerusalem.

After translators accurately gave The Word thus far, they reached verse 14. The translators tried to help Paul save face in the modern translations by simply putting in commas.

Verse 14,

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And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

If the commas are left in, there is error upon error for. the truth of the record is clearly obvious. Four times the word of the Lord to Paul was not to go to Jerusalem. If that was the Word of God, then it has to fit with verse 14 too. What did the translators do? They put in commas to substantiate their theology because they could not believe that the Apostle Paul ever made a mistake. Let me ask, did Paul go to Jerusalem? Surely, he went to Jerusalem. Did he get into trouble? He surely did; he almost lost his life there. This mighty man of God, under whose ministry all Asia Minor heard the Word of God in two years and three months, in the following two years won not one soul for the Lord Jesus Christ. The only record is in Acts 26:28 when he witnessed to Agrippa, the king who said to Paul, "... Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." If the evangelists who use this text realized what it really implies, they would never use it again. In the context the quote is about the ministry of a man who was outside the will of God. The nearest Paul came to winning anybody for the Lord in all those years was "almost."

Take the commas out of Acts 21:14.

And when he [Paul] would not be persuaded, we

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ceased [stopped] saying the will of the Lord be done.

At one time his Christian friends were saying to Paul, "Do the will of the Lord. Don't go to Jerusalem." They tried their best to persuade him, but when he would not be persuaded they "... stopped saying 'do the will of the Lord'" because Paul was determined to do his own will. Now your Bible fits like a hand in a glove; now we have the Word of God.

Commas have all been added by man. In the original Word of God there were no periods, no commas, no semi-colons, no chapters, no verses, no chapter headings and no center references.

All of these things have gone through periods of change. In this study on *Power for Abundant Living* in which we are interested in the accuracy and integrity of God's Word, we must get back to that original Word which was given when holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. We must strip off the translators' theologies which have come about with man-made devices and once more discover the perfect God-breathed Word.