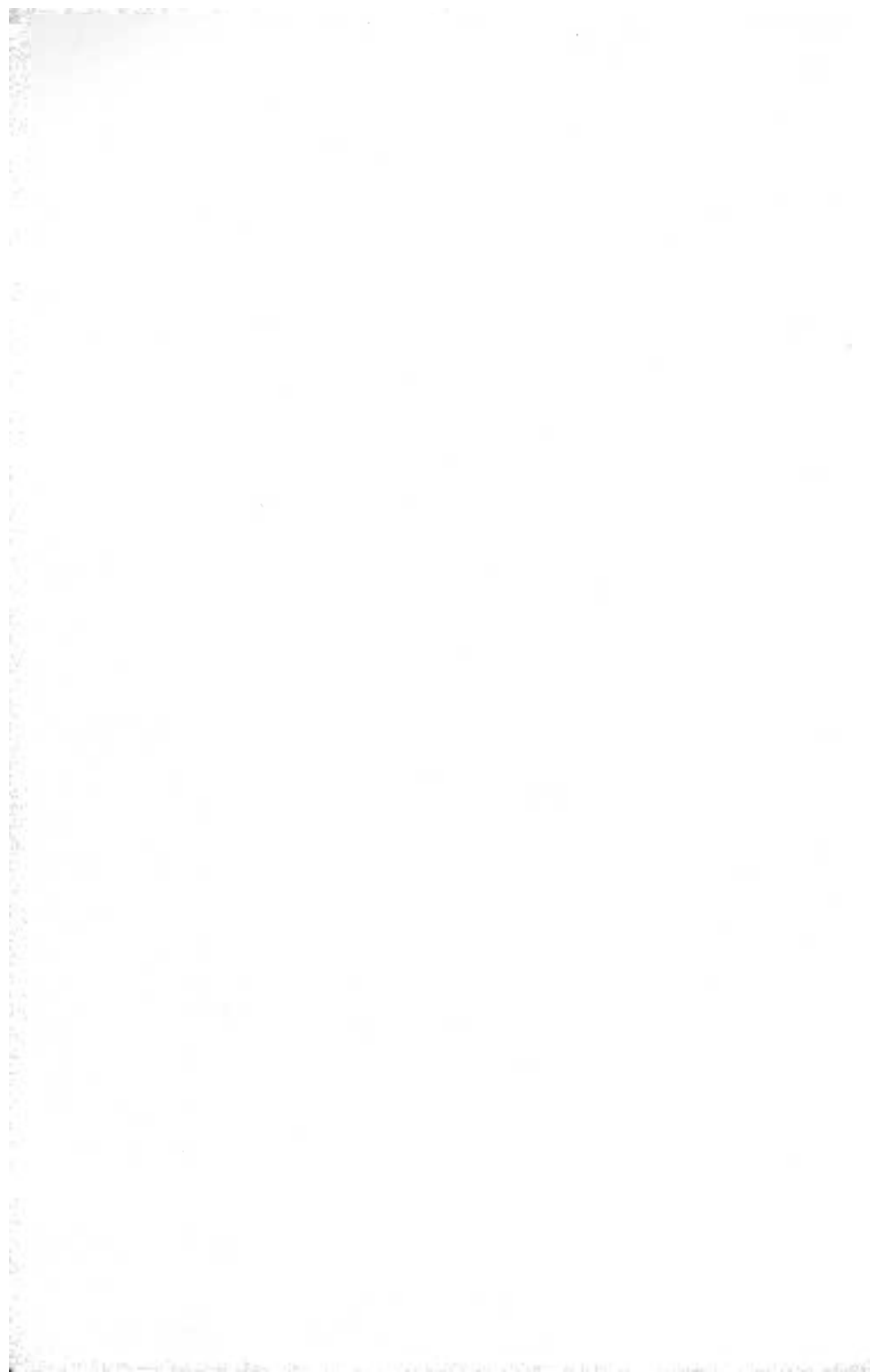


LIVING IN THE EYE



OF THE STORM

JOHN A. LYNN



**LIVING
IN THE EYE
OF THE STORM**

Other books by John A. Lynn

Will the Real You Please Stand Up!

Will the Real You Please Remain Standing!

LIVING IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

JOHN A. LYNN

American Christian Press
The Way International
New Knoxville, Ohio 45871

International Standard Book Number 0-910068-50-X

American Christian Press

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New Knoxville, Ohio 45871

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Printed in the United States of America

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille, founding president of The Way International, the world's foremost Biblical research, teaching and fellowship ministry.

It is also dedicated to Dorothea Kipp Wierwille, who as the first lady of The Way International has stood faithfully by the side of her husband.

It is Dr. Wierwille who taught me God's wonderful, matchless Word, and showed me how to be a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Dr. Wierwille and Mrs. Wierwille I have seen God's fathomless heart of love and how I, too, can share this with His people.

I am eternally grateful to both of these splendid spiritual athletes; and I look forward to standing with them at the *bēma* when we shall see our Master face to face.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Specific pieces of research by the following individuals contributed significantly to certain chapters of this book:

Bob Anderson	Chapter One
Larry Cochran	Chapter Five
Jon Nettle	Chapters Five and Six
Erik Jensen	Chapter Nine
Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille	Chapter Twelve

I thank God for their diligence in working His Word and for their love in sharing their knowledge with me. God bless each one of them richly.

I also thank Rev. Stanley Reahard for her superb labor of love in editing this work.

INTRODUCTION

My deepest appreciation goes to the Board of Trustees of The Way International for the privilege of presenting this collection of Biblical studies.

It is my fervent prayer that as you read each chapter in this book, God will work mightily in your heart to will and to do of His good pleasure. The Word of God has life within itself, and I see it taking deep root and bearing much fruit in your life.

Thank you for reading this book. It is written just for you. I love you with all my heart.

Running the race with you,
John A. Lynn

CHAPTER

1

LIVING IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

There must be some point to this chapter. In other words, why should it be written? Is there a practical problem believers are encountering which the truths herein will help them solve? There is. So let us continue.

Here's the scoop: the devil is a creep. That might not be so bad if he were locked in a phone booth, but the real problem is that he assumes the authority to inflict the atrocities of his loathsome nature upon people, some of whom are unsuspecting and defenseless. If you're wondering how he got this authority, or whether *you* are one of the defenseless ones, ask the person who gave you this book for an explanation. Better yet, take a Biblical research class called Power for Abundant Living.

As II Corinthians 4:4 states, the devil is the "god of this world." *That* is the problem. Until Jesus Christ returns to calm the storm, you and I as Christians are living in a spiritual tempest. In other words, there will be no clear skies until the Son comes. As athletes of the spirit, we are

constantly "on the road." And our opponent has had a long time to doctor the "playing surface" to his advantage.

The devil is on his own turf, and he's cocky about his ability to annihilate anybody who wants to rumble with him. He knows no rules and will stoop to any foul deed to gain an advantage. He scoffs at the Marquis of Queensbury rules, and he thinks the Geneva Convention was a watchmakers' meeting. He's an alley fighter from the word "Go," and if you give him a millimeter, he'll take six trillion light years. Give him one thought and he'll try to take your whole head. Every Christian should have a burning hatred for the devil (Romans 12:9).

Satan is all darkness, and in him is no light at all (1 JAL 1:5). Not one good thing can be said about him, but he does have one quality of which most Christians need a lot more. DESIRE. The devil never lets up. He is constantly aggressive, though he varies the tactics of his onslaught to try to lull believers into complacency.

As the false god of this world, he manipulates people not standing on the truth of God's Word to set up circumstances of pleasure or pressure designed primarily to ruin those who do worship the true God. Often his first approach is to *sweet-talk* the believer. Perhaps he will offer you an explanation of why his way is good. Forget it; God's way is always BEST. Still in the pleasure category, he may try to *buy you off*. He will show you how compromising God's Word will bring you great material gain or recognition. Since the love of money is the root of ALL evil, this is a common ploy.

If pleasures do not distract you, Satan will try pressures. He will try to intimidate you, and often this will include an attempt to *destroy your credibility*. His whole "cult" rap is a typical example. Though far from what it should be, the justice system in America does, to a

degree, hinder the adversary from unrestrained physical violence against believers. If verbal pressure doesn't dissuade you, however, he may try to physically harm you, but what he'd really like to do is *kill* you. (I told you he is a creep!)

So what can you do about this situation? Plenty! But that's just it—**YOU** will have to *do* something. You definitely have the ability.

I John 3:8b:

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

I John 4:4:

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

The Real You is Christ in you. You have what it takes to ride roughshod over the devil and all his hosts, but to do so you must *exercise* your power. When two opposing forces meet, the greater will prevail and keep going in the direction it is moving. I think of you with a football tucked under your arm running right over a tackler (number 666) and leaving cleat marks on his face.

God's Word shows you how you can so run the race in the arena of your mind that you are not blown about by the circumstantial tempest of life. The Word shows how you can utilize the power you have to push through to the eye of the storm, where you can be anchored, and from whence you can reach out to rescue others. I trust you have your Bible at hand so you can work it as we go.

Luke 8:22-25:

Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was [became] a calm.

And he said unto them, Where is your faith [believing]? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

I like the first three words Jesus spoke in verse 22: "Let us go." He was continually on the move for God, making things happen. Of course Satan doesn't care for such action, so he tried to kill Jesus and his disciples by drowning them. Does the Word say Jesus arose and *reasoned* with the storm? No. He stuck it back down the devil's throat. That is the *only* way to deal with the adversary. [NOTE: The word for "arose" in verse 24 is *diegeirō*, which means to thoroughly arouse. Bible fanatics will love its first use—Matthew 1:24! Jesus was ready for action!]

Before we look at the record of another storm, let us expand upon the idea of mental aggressiveness, which is the theme of this chapter. In verse 24 above, the word for "raging" [*kludōn*] appears only one other place in the Word. Look at it and note its context.

James 1:2-8:

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave [*kludōn*] of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

Look at these verses! When the storm of life threatens to engulf you, relish the spiritual challenge and attack it head on. You have the ability to prevail. How? By looking unwaveringly to God, aggressively riveting your mind upon the promises of His Word.

We can take this one step further by looking at the only other use of the word for "double minded" in verse eight above. Let's see if its immediate context sheds more light on the subject.

James 4:7 and 8:

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist [stand against] the devil, and he will flee from you.

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.

Not bad, huh? *How* do you resist the devil? Draw near to God. Why? Because the devil is a parasite, like a tick (or, as in the above verses, a *flee*). To get a tick off, you put a hot match on his rear end. He then decides he'd best pull out and hit the road. If the devil jumps on your back, so to speak, don't waste time trying to pull him off. Just run for the heat of God's heart. The adversary won't be able to stand it, and he'll get off your back.

Of course, the more you *stay* near the flame of God's love, the less often the devil will approach you. *You* are the one who determines the "distance" between you and God. He is fixed (that means "stationary," not "repaired"). Your single-minded effort to draw near to Him by hiding His Word in your heart puts Him right beside you.

Because you have the Master within you, you can call upon God's power to calm any storm raging within your heart. You have the faith of Jesus Christ, and you can

answer affirmatively the question he put to his disciples, "Where is your believing?" Watch what the Apostle Paul did in a similar situation.

Acts 27:20-25:

And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.

For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

In the face of an apparently hopeless situation, Paul stood firmly on the Rock of God's Word. He had made it a habit to draw nearer to God daily. That's why in this crisis, God sent him an angel to stand beside him and comfort his heart. Paul's words in verse 25 should be etched in gold, "I BELIEVE GOD." Even in that situation, he knew that the future was as bright as the promises of God.

What is believing? Positive believing is aggressive, specific mental effort to think right doctrine. It is to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5). Some thoughts don't seem to submit very easily, but don't give up and ignore them. Keep flooding your heart with the light of the Word and the darkness *will* disappear.

You do not work to believe. You work to *build* believing, moment by moment. Think about what you are thinking about, so you recognize thoughts which are off the Word. Then replace those negatives with specific scriptural positives. You will act in any situation according to what thought patterns you have built into your mind.

How wonderful that you determine your own thoughts! You will only live each day once. Refuse to allow the devil to dictate how you will live it. Take the initiative to do God's will with renewed-mind recklessness. Now that doesn't always mean running into the middle of a speeding motorcycle gang to witness to them, though it could. You can definitely be "hell bent for leather," but the leather should be your *Bible*, and *when* you should be "hell bent" for it is early in the morning.

Hebrews 10:35-39:

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith [believing]: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

What tremendous verses to lead into the great eleventh chapter of Hebrews on believing. Believing is not tentative. It is not half-hearted. It is wholehearted (Romans 10:9), and it absolutely brings results because God is faithful. Think about this: circumstances do not dictate believing. The Word does. *Giving*, for example, involves an act of believing. You determine what and when you will give to whom. But when you *receive*, you are dependent upon circumstances.

Think about the discus of believing from the athletic allegory in Ephesians 6. With what degree of effort does one hurl a discus? Does he give it all he's got? *Nothing in reserve*—that's genuine believing.

Life is a contest. Often when you're watching a sports contest on TV, someone will come in and ask, "Who's winning?" The question should be, "Who's *ahead*?" Why? Because often the winner is not determined until the final seconds of the game. Sometimes in our spiritual contest, circumstances seem to indicate that the devil is winning. You know that's a lie because you speak in tongues, which proves he is an eternal loser. In reality, he is not even ahead—I John 4:4, remember?

Basketball is life on a 94 foot by 50 foot rectangle. Unlike football, in which the teams stop the action about every eight seconds to have a thirty second meeting, a basketball game continues up and down, back and forth, unless a time-out is called. A team's transition game, its ability to shift from offense to defense and vice versa, determines its success. The team that most quickly forgets those things which are behind, good or bad, and reaches forth unto those things which are before, pressing toward the mark, will win the prize.

Basketball rules require that when you score, you must then give the ball to the other team so they can try to score. A great player's attitude, however, will always be offensive. When his team has the ball, but he doesn't, he will aggressively move according to the set pattern, always expecting to receive the ball. Do you see any spiritual parallel?

When the other team has the ball, he always knows where it is, but is also aware of his personal adversary, the opponent he guards. He is not totally adversary-conscious, because it is the ball he wants so he can score.

Technically, because the other team has the ball, he is "on defense," but in his mind he is always on offense. He does not allow his opponent to receive a pass near the basket. Rather, he plays between the ball and his man so as to deny him the ball, not allowing his opponent to have the ball and thereby make the first move.

You've heard the expression, "to quench all the fiery darts"? There are two ways to do this. One, wear a huge, soaked sponge into which the fiery darts will fizzle. Two, yank the quiver of darts off the devil's back and stick it wherever you choose. That's denying the ball! You need *never* have a defensive attitude, or react to circumstances, no matter how bad they seem. You *always* have the ball (holy spirit). You can always go hard to the basket (the Word) and score. I bet you can't wait to see your next basketball game. You'll think you're reading the Bible.

Hebrews 4:2,9-11:

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith [believing] in them that heard *it*.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

Let us labour [*spoudazō*] therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Believing is the catalyst that brings into reality the promises of God set forth in His Word. Believing is simple, because God wants to make it easy for us to receive His goodness. Believing the Word puts one at rest. Remember Paul in the storm? He knew God had everything under control. Yet the Word says to labor, and *spoudazō* means "to exert a diligent effort with regard to the brevity of time." You have to *act*. That's believing.

Understanding a hurricane will help us to understand the principle of laboring to enter into rest, or working to build believing. In a hurricane, winds blow circularly and are stronger toward the center, where the "eye of the storm," an area of perfect calm, is located. The "wall" surrounds the eye and is made up of the highest velocity winds in the storm. If one had enough power, he could push all the way through the winds to the eye of the storm, where he would be safe.

The devil is the god of this world. We live in a spiritual hurricane. Satan doesn't want anyone to even know there is an eye of the storm. He wants to discourage those who do know it exists from pushing through to find it. He wants to keep people dizzy and going in circles, trapped in his maelstrom of evil until he releases them to spin off into oblivion (kill them). You, however, have the power to blast through the strongest winds to the eye of the storm, where you can drop anchor and thus anchored, go back into the storm to rescue others.

It is the Greek word for "unmovable" that takes us to the conclusion of this chapter. The root is *saleuō*, which means to agitate or to shake, as by stormy winds and waves. As we look at some of its fifteen uses, we shall see more keys about how to live in the eye of the storm.

Matthew 11:7-12:

And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken [*saleuō*] with the wind?

But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Always think context. Verse 5, for example, definitely talks about the works of the devil being destroyed (I John 3:8). Think about John the Baptist, to whom the first use of *saleuō* is contrasted. (Talk about a heavy-duty believer!) When he came along, there had been 400 years of spiritual darkness. That's a tough act to follow. He wondered why everyone squinted at him!

John the Baptist had to be aggressive. He had to take the spiritual initiative. He had to stand boldly for the truth and *against* evil. He *did*, and in verse 11 Jesus Christ expressed *God's* opinion of John. Here is a literal translation according to usage of verse 12 which Dr. Wierwille worked out:

Since the time of John the Baptist, when he started his ministry, until now when Jesus Christ's ministry started, the Kingdom of Heaven, the Messiah's personal presence on earth, was looked for, anticipated with the most intense and ardent zeal by the multitudes, the common people, but was violently opposed by religious and political leaders.

We are still in the same fight. We, however, have more power than John the Baptist had.

Acts 17:10-14:

And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews.

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up [*saleuō*] the people.

And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

In verses 2 and 3 we see that Paul's habit was to go, stand and speak. He was mentally aggressive to do God's will. If, however, the will of God is to hit the road, you do that with a like degree of commitment. A specific note on the use of *saleuō* is that Satan can only "shake" those who are not rooted in the Word.

Luke 6:38-48:

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken [*saleuō*] together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil

treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake [*saleuō*] it: for it was founded upon a rock.

Look at the imperatives in this section! An imperative means YOU act. They certainly require mental aggressiveness, or you will succumb to circumstance-orientation. For example, it's not always easy to love the unlovable.

One big key to doing so is to diligently hide the Word in your heart. You can only bring forth what is *in* it (verse 45). When I read verses 41 and 42, I think of Romans 6: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin"; "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body"; "Yield yourselves unto God." These are imperatives in the category of believing written to you and me.

When you hear the Word and do it, God gives the increase in your life. As grain shaken together, you overflow with the Word. No storm can shake you, for the foundation of your life is as solid as the Rock, Christ Jesus.

Acts 2:22-28:

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:

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of

death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved [*saleuō*]:

Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

The hope of Christ's return is the bottom line of believing. It is the "anchor of the soul" (Hebrews 6:19). The first thing you believed was Romans 10:9 and that *gave* you hope. You not only have the proof in the senses realm of eternal life, but you also know that you have supernatural power, and the ability to believe to use this power. You are definitely a *great believer*. How do I know? Hey, you believed that a corpse got up from the dead, and that he ascended to heaven! If you could believe *that*, you can certainly believe to overcome the negative circumstances of this world

Luke 21:26 and 27:

Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers [*dunamis*] of heaven shall be shaken [*saleuō*].

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Here again the context is Christ's return and contains one of three similar uses of *saleuō* in the Gospels. It does not refer to the gathering together, but to Christ's subsequent return *with us to earth* to "knock some earballs together." To do so he will use the powers of heaven. Now watch these three uses of *saleuō*.

Hebrews 12:25-28:

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped

not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not we escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven:

Whose voice then shook [*saleuō*] the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken [*saleuō*], as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken [*saleuō*] may remain.

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved [*asaleutos*], let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

The context? Service in light of hope. We serve people by sharing God's Word with them. In other words, we, the Body of Christ, are God's voice today. We believe, and therefore we speak (II Corinthians 4:13). As we do, we unleash the power of God against the forces of the world. God's voice shakes the earth today as you and I go, stand and speak.

II Thessalonians 2:1 and 2:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together [*episunagōgē*] unto him,

That ye be not soon [quickly] shaken [*saleuō*] in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

You *know* we will be gathered together at Christ's return for his Church. Until then, do not allow the adversary's tactics to sway you. Go hard to the Word, hide it in your heart, and from that treasure confront every spirit, whether sweet-talking or violent, with the sword of the spirit.

Look in Hebrews 10:25 at the only other use of the word for gathering together and you will see that Twig fellowship is the "gathering together" available now. You

and I *need* one another for comfort, inspiration, wisdom and love. On a horizontal plane, nothing refreshes more than the camaraderie of the committed. As fine grain shaken together, we can stand tightly with one another. Here is an example of two believers doing just that.

Acts 16:25 and 26:

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken [*saleuō*]: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

For delivering a woman from the clutches of the devil, Paul and Silas had been beaten and thrown into prison. They had every right to complain. They could have even questioned God's concern for them and His ability to protect them. But they did not! In the face of a spiritual onslaught akin to the storm with which Satan tried to kill Jesus Christ, Paul and Silas controlled their minds and reached for God's heart.

Can you picture them singing at *midnight* in prison? I'm sure at least one of the other prisoners yelled at them. "Hey, shaddap, it's my last night, I'm trying to sleep!" A religious person might think they were singing a Christian hymn, but we know better. They opened up with a hot rendition of "Jailhouse Rock," and as the ground began to move, they went into "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On!"

Verse 26 records the most well-aimed earthquake in history. Yes, you'll notice it didn't destroy the jail and kill everyone inside, like earthquakes often do. The power of God is always right on the money, accomplishing that for which it is sent. God shook the devil's stronghold and opened the prison doors, including the heart of the jailer who heard the Word and got saved.

Acts 4 records an exciting head-to-head confrontation

of light versus darkness, good versus evil, truth versus tradition. In it you can see how bold and how persistent the devil is. He never quits. He always tries to get the last word.

If you don't fold, you can't lose. The believers came together and with one accord went boldly in prayer to their heavenly Father.

Acts 4:31-33:

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken [*saleuō*] where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

Those believers knew the power they had was greater than their enemy, and they looked to its source. As they looked to God, His power was loosed. *Dunamis* went off inside them as they went into *action*. They spoke the Word with boldness, and God backed them up all the way. I want to live that way. Do you? How badly?

As you exert a continual, diligent effort to run the spiritual race in the arena of your mind, to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, you will be stirred to action by the power of God within you. As you act according to the will of God, His power will open the prison doors of many hearts, and loose the bands of wickedness for those who believe the Word you speak. You will not be blown about by the circumstantial tempest around you, nor intimidated by the devil, but you will by God's power push through the winds of this world into the eye of the storm, the harbor of God's

heart, where you are safely anchored by the hope of the return of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalms 107:29 and 30:

He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

CHAPTER

2

TRUTH VERSUS TRADITION

Hold on to your hat! Why? Gravity.

Acts 17:6b:

These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.

Today, that's you and me if we are believers in the one true God, and in the accuracy and integrity of His Word.

Acts 19:23:

And the same time there arose no small stir about that [the] way.

The same is still true today. Why? Because Jesus Christ is The Way. His life was an explosion of light in the midst of darkness. For about 400 years before Christ, Satan had things going pretty much the way he wanted them. Jesus Christ came to upset the devil's apple cart (I John 3:8b), to change the status quo of bondage, deceit and death foisted upon people in the form of religious tradition. He did so by being the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6).

Has anyone ever asked you, "What is The Way?" Now

you can tell them *who* is The Way: Jesus Christ. The word for "way" means a path or road. Jesus Christ is the way to God. (For more details, see the entire Bible.) What people probably mean is, "What is The Way Ministry?" Do you know the answer? If not, look in the mirror. *You is da Way.*

"The Way is a fellowship of the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ for the manifestation of the more abundant life." Are *you* such a person? Then you are The Way. Do you think our being the *Body of Christ* could have anything to do with this? You and I represent Jesus Christ here on earth today. To the degree that you *follow* Jesus Christ and manifest his power within you, you, too, can say, "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father" (John 14:9).

But Jesus Christ is long gone. How can you *follow* him? You'd need a rocket ship! In the Biblical research class, Power for Abundant Living (not available through any of the major denominations), we learn that God's Word takes the place of the absent Christ. Thus, to follow Jesus Christ, we must follow someone who is teaching the Word of God.

Take your pick. They're all over the place. There are *thousands* of people teaching God's Word; at least that's what they say. You can find them on street corners, in airports and for sure on television. You can join the Blanche L. Ferguson Evangelistic Association and Storm Door Company, hook up with Brother Bob's Makeup Removal Mission, or hang your hat at the First Full Free Will Gospel Lighthouse Tabernacle Foursquare Assembly Temple.

How can you differentiate between the one teaching the truth and the one following the traditions of men? We find the answer to this question in the Word of God itself. The truths this chapter sets forth are some of the greatest

in God's wonderful, matchless Word.

In October of 1942, God told Victor Paul Wierwille, the founding president of The Way International, that He would teach him His Word like it had not been known since the first century, if he would teach others. Each has kept his end of the bargain. Now, this is either true or it's a lie. There is only one standard by which to determine this, and it is not how many people believe it. The Word of God is the only unfailing yardstick of truth. What does it say?

I Corinthians 4:14-17:

I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn *you*.

For though [if] ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

Wherefore I beseech you, be [become] ye followers [imitators] of me.

For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

What an ego trip Paul was on, huh? Baloney! Look at the truths here. By revelation (that's how God's Word was written) Paul said, "Hey, remember when I came to town and silently stood next to you, emitting spiritual radiation which seeped into your brain and caused you to know God?" That's not what he said!

How does one learn anything? By seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or touching, he logs information in his brain! In what form is this information? Pictures, identified by WORDS. From what source does one hear words? Plants? Animals? With all due respect to Mister Ed, learning comes from people teaching people. Therefore it is not a question of *who* says something, but rather *what*

he says, and there must be a fixed standard of truth higher than man's vacillating opinion. Jesus Christ identified this standard: "Thy [God's] Word is truth" (John 17:17).

In *Power for Abundant Living*, this principle is stated in another way: "Truth is truth no matter who believes it." You cannot, however, separate people from truth. As the hymn says, *men* must "bear the truth to every land." This puts truth in a very precarious position, not regarding its inherent perfection, but regarding its accurate communication.

II Corinthians 13:5-8:

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove [*dokimazō*] your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates [*adokimos*]?

But I trust [hope] that ye shall know [*ginōskō*] that we are not reprobates [*adokimos*].

Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved [*dokimos*], but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates [*adokimos*].

For we can do nothing against the truth, but for [on behalf of] the truth.

There were people in Corinth, some of them former leaders in the ministry, who were saying that Paul was a counterfeit, that he was too hard on people and that he was out to take their money. Sound familiar? The truths set forth in these verses are absolutely magnificent.

In verse 5, the word for "prove" means to examine according to a standard. Paul told the people if they would go to the rightly divided Word he had taught them, they would see whether or not they lined up with it. "Reprobate" means *without* a standard. When those believers forsook the Word, they lost sight of what they had in Christ. Their perspective became distorted, and

thus they turned away from the man who had taught them the truth. That's why in verse 6 Paul says that if they get "on the ball," they'll see that *he*, also, is there.

Verse 7 beautifully expresses the heart of a true spiritual leader, which the world has hardly ever seen. Paul wanted God's best for those believers, no matter what they thought of him. He pointed them to the standard of the Word rather than to the behavior of people, even leaders. Anyone who will DO the Word will see that it works.

Verse 8 is solid gold. Truth is truth no matter who believes it. No one can change the truth, he can only accept or reject it. No one can stop the truth from reaching those who want to know it, but one can learn it and teach it to such people.

Bullinger's *Critical Greek Lexicon* defines the Greek word for truth as the revealed reality of a matter; its manifested essence. My definition: "What you see is what you get!" How about the Power for Abundant Living definition: "The Word means what it says and says what it means." Truth interprets itself to those who desire to know it.

Religion, as defined by Jesus Christ, is the opposite of truth: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, . . . but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8). Thus, it is not surprising that "religious" people fight the hardest to stop the truth of the rightly divided Word. How devilishly ironic: those who say we in The Way worship Dr. Wierwille are themselves blindly following a man-made road to traditional oblivion. "That's just your interpretation," say those who promote the adversary's counterfeit. The practical application of doctrine is another way to determine its validity. Religious tradition does not work. Truth does.

John 7:14-17:

Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

If any man will do his will, he shall know [*ginōskō*] of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

The religious leaders of that day said the same things to Jesus Christ they say to *followers* of Jesus Christ today. Why? The same *devil spirits* are at work within them. In essence Jesus Christ said, "The proof's in the pudding." Maybe he had read Psalms 111:10. Have you? Believing is *doing*. Doing is understanding. (Question: In light of the above verses, does it appear that Jesus thought he was God?)

Those who say we in The Way are "false prophets," because we do not believe the Babylonian/paganistic polytheistic poppycock that Jesus Christ is God, ought to read Deuteronomy 18:9-22. So should you. The philosophical gobbledygook and pious platitudes of religious tradition are impossible to apply in daily living. All of its "promises" are empty. But what about session twelve of Power for Abundant Living? What happened when you followed the instructions of the teacher? Could that mean the first eleven sessions are also right on with the Word? *Truth* works! I dare you. Dig into the Power for Abundant Living material and see what benefits its application will bring to you.

II Timothy 3:14-17:

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of [from] whom thou hast learned *them*;

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures,

which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

When I first took Power for Abundant Living, I had no idea who the man was behind the voice on the tape. I only knew he put God's Word together for me as I had never seen it before. After I finished the class, I tried out the principles of God's Word taught therein. I have *never* seen one fail. I now understand who Dr. Wierwille is and why The Way Ministry today holds an absolutely unique place in the world.

Verses 16 and 17 above again illustrate that it is a *man* who must teach God's Word. That's the pattern from Genesis to Revelation. Hardly anyone today has ever seen a genuine leader in any field, especially politics and religion. Great men are few and far between. Most will sell their souls for money or worldly recognition. Too many "great" men are really plastic when seen up close. Most of our heroes have galloped off into the sunset.

The devil knows that basically no one trusts anyone. He also knows that people are not perfect. Logically, he attempts to get people to turn away from a man of God, knowing that those who do will also turn from the Word of God he represents. Now you can understand why Satan has so vehemently attacked Dr. Wierwille's life.

In the Book of Second Timothy, which shows how the early church fell apart from within, we find four steps to apostasy. Note in each the correlation between *truth* and *men*.

II Timothy 1:15:

This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

Here we see the names of two former leaders in the church who had turned from Paul, and thus from the Word he represented. There is no direct reference to truth in the verse, but watch this, truth fans.

I Timothy 2:7:

Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and* lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity [truth].

When one turns from the man teaching the truth, he turns his back on the truth itself.

II Timothy 2:15-18:

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

But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

And their word will eat as doth a canker [gangrene]: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

Again we see names of men who had gradually lost sight of the hope of Christ's return. The analogy to gangrene is most appropriate. The adversary steals the truth from people one word at a time.

II Timothy 3:7 and 8:

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate [*adokimos*] concerning the faith.

Jannes and Jambres stood against Moses. Truth and men. They cannot be separated.

II Timothy 4:4:

And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Without truth, there is only one alternative: fables, otherwise known as *tradition*. Let's see if the Word has anything to say about it.

Matthew 15:1-9:

Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,

Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is a gift*, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

The Greek word for "tradition" in verses 2, 3 and 6 is *paradosis*, which literally means "a giving beside," the act of delivering from one to another. *Webster's* gives a similar definition for the English word "tradition": a belief or custom handed down orally from one generation to another.

Do you see that the *content* of the message is the key? *Paradosis* appears thirteen times, ten of which refer to traditions of men, and three of which refer to the truth of the Word. The context makes each definition plain. Both truth and tradition take the form of words and can only be passed on by people. Verses 4-6 refer to God's commandment and the oriental custom of the time that adult

children were to provide materially for their aged parents. The religious leaders, however, told the people that they were absolved of this duty if they gave money to God instead. (Of course, the religious leaders were the ones who took care of it for God!) Truth always has heart, while tradition enslaves people to the letter of a man-made law.

God's Word says the love of money is the root of ALL evil (I Timothy 6:10). The above verses clearly illustrate this, and things have not changed today. How blatantly dishonest it is that many of those who accuse The Way Ministry of financial impropriety, are themselves bleeding people dry and giving them nothing in return but hot air.

Galatians 1:13-14:

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions [*paradosis*] of my fathers.

Today we hear some negative generalizations about "big business." *Religion* is the most devilish corporate power structure there is. Verse 14 shows that it is shaped just like a pyramid, with one person on top and those beneath trying to climb over one another and get to the top.

The Way Ministry as a whole, and every part of it (Twig, Branch, etc.), is shaped like an upside-down pyramid. A true leader does not sit over his people, but rather he supports them from beneath by putting them before himself and ministering the Word to them. A genuine leader serves his people.

II Thessalonians 3:6-9:

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition [*paradosis*] which he received of us.

For yourselves know how ye ought to follow [imitate] us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow [imitate] us.

Here the word for tradition refers to the Word of God. The word "disorderly" in verses 6 and 7 means "out of step." No military unit marches in step without a leader calling out the cadence. Likewise for a spiritual fellowship. You must follow someone. Counterfeit religious leaders use people, but there *are* men and women who know God's Word and whose hearts are pure in dealing with God's people, the Trustees of The Way International, for example.

I Corinthians 11:1-3:

Be [become] ye followers [imitators] of me, even as *I* also *am* of Christ.

Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances [*paradosis*], as I delivered [*paradidōmi*] *them* to you.

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God.

So be it. An absolute prerequisite for a true spiritual leader, without which he is unmistakably a counterfeit, is the belief that the head of Christ is God. A true spiritual leader will believe what God's Word obviously says regarding Jesus Christ, that he is the *Son of God* and not God.

By sheer logic Jesus Christ cannot be the Son of God *and* God Himself. Good thinking, huh? Therefore,

anyone who believes that Jesus Christ is God is promoting tradition rather than truth, and tradition always includes all the devilish aspects we have seen, and more. Belief in ONE GOD is the crux of truth versus tradition.

The doctrine that Jesus Christ is God is promoted by those with spiritual elitist mentality. These self-appointed drones have no genuine concern whatsoever for the "common" people suffering under the cruel hand of their religious rule. The man-made tradition that Jesus Christ is God reduces men to confused, helpless, sin-conscious lackeys groveling in fear and guilt at the feet of those who hold over their heads as a basis for salvation a doctrine they cannot possibly understand.

II Peter 2:1-3:

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

The word for feigned is *plastos*, which means "made up" or "fabricated." Tradition comes in the form of fabricated, plastic words, which shatter under pressure in people's lives because they are not true. Jesus Christ is "the way of truth." Saying that he is God is "speaking evil" of him, because such a doctrine is idolatry. On the contrary, understanding that Jesus Christ the man is man's redeemer, and knowing what he did for us, enables us to identify with him. It also inspires us to walk in his steps and become great spiritual men and women.

Colossians 2:8-10:

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain

deceit, after the tradition [*paradosis*] of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

God was in Christ, and Christ is in you (if you have made him lord according to Romans 10:9 and 10). The devil wants you to think Jesus Christ is God so it is impossible for you to identify with him and do the works Christ did (I John 3:8b). Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. He blazed a trail of believing to God's heart so that anyone who wants to follow him can do so.

Since Genesis 3:15, the devil's main assault has been against Jesus Christ: to stop his first coming, to kill him once he got here and now to obliterate all truth regarding what he accomplished. As per his pattern, Satan is trying to get people to turn away from THE Man of God, Jesus Christ. Those who do turn their backs on truth are faced with tradition.

As the redeemer of man, Jesus Christ had to die. God, however, raised him from the dead. Now the devil is trying to "kill" Jesus Christ doctrinally by obscuring his true identity and leaving in his place a mysterious, half-God, half-man being with whom no one can identify. Many such wonderers still pose Pontius Pilate's question, "What is truth?" (John 18:39).

In the Gospel of John, the word for "truth," and its derivatives, appears 56 times compared to a total of 18 times in the other Gospels. This Gospel emphasizes Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Perhaps that is the *truth* that is emphasized. How sickening that it is lauded as the proof that Jesus Christ is God. Robin the Wonder Boy met a Trinitarian and exclaimed, "Holy Trinity, Battyman!" Even the Valley Girls are upset: "How totally gross! I mean, like gag me with a steeple."

With what we have covered so far in mind, zero in on these magnificent verses and let the Word speak to your heart. Watch for truth versus tradition.

John 8:12,13,31-47:

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

Then said Jesus to those Jews [Judeans] which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.

Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God.

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.

Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

Verse 40 should be etched in gold: "a MAN (emphasis mine) who has told you the truth, which I have heard of God!" Would that those words ring true of you and me each day of our lives. God through Christ has given us the ministry of reconciling other men to Him. We must with all diligence hide the Word in our hearts, go among the people and in word and deed deliver it to those whose hearts hunger for truth.

II Corinthians 4:1 and 2:

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

We are genuine. We do love the one true God. We do know His Word, and we are honest in our desire to help people. I am very proud to be part of this ministry, and to stand shoulder to shoulder with you for God and His Word. Let us continue to knit our hearts together with God's and with one another, and walk in great unity.

II Thessalonians 2:13-17:

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the

beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions [paradosis] which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

You and I *are* The Way Ministry. We are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of those whose ways are in him. Our common standard is the Word of God. We are the true Reformers, dismantling the towers of idolatry which have been erected by religious traditionalists. Together, with God, we are rebuilding the wall of truth.

CHAPTER

3

GOD'S PERSONAL CURRICULUM FOR YOU

Christianity is not religion. Thank God. The creator, God, sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to teach mankind He wants to be a FATHER to each individual. No one has a father except by getting fathered, i.e., being born by way of seed. Spiritually the same is true. God is only the Father of those who have been *born* into His family. Through Jesus Christ, God made available a new spiritual birth. He places His seed in every body-and-soul man who confesses Jesus Christ as lord and believes that God raised him from the dead (Romans 10:9 and 10). Take God's Word for it: **YOU ARE THE ONLY YOU GOD HAS.** And He has a personal curriculum of learning designed just for you.

In an earthly family, the father knows each child by name and loves each one with his whole heart. He sets forth the same basic principles for the entire family, but he teaches, instructs and guides each child according to that child's respective level of maturity and understanding.

Each child is a vital member of the family, and it is *birth* that begins his relationship of learning from his father.

God is the Master Teacher. Even in the Old Testament, before people could be born again of His Spirit, God lovingly taught those who looked to Him for guidance. Some were slow learners at first. Note the Scripture's first use of the Hebrew word most often translated "teach."

Exodus 4:12:

Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach [*yarad*] thee what thou shalt say.

If you don't go to school, you can't learn anything there. But God can't teach you everything in the first grade. Look at Proverbs 4:18 and see if it has any remote connection to whatever we're talking about. (If you do not have Proverbs 4:18 decoupage on the wall in front of you, you might want to get your Bible!)

"But," you say, "this isn't the Old Testament! Who needs Moses, anyway? Heck, the Pharaoh isn't giving *us* any trouble. We need an example for *this* Administration of Grace." Okay, one example coming right up!

I Timothy 1:11-16:

According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

Who was before a blasphemers, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.

And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first

Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

What a great section of scripture! The word "pattern" means "a primary sketch to be filled in afterward." In other words, there are certain truths relative to Paul's life which will also apply to you and me. But each of us is an individual, and God will work with us as such to help each of us paint the intricate and beautiful details on the canvases of our lives lying before us.

Since Paul set the pattern for this administration, perhaps we'd best consider his life to see how it parallels ours. Read the above verses again before we start. Okay, let me ask you something. Does your past ever haunt you? I hope not. But if it does, allow me another question. How many Christians have *you* killed?

How often has a believer come up to *you* and snarled, "So you're the dirty creep who had my sister executed two years ago!" If there's ever been anyone with a reason to condemn himself, it was Paul. But he put on God's Word to the degree that he knew his spiritual righteousness and perfect access to God, his Father and teacher. His thankfulness and love for God inspired him to forget his earthly academic credentials as well as his past sins and become a star pupil in God's personal curriculum for him.

Acts 22:3-10:

I am verily a man *which am* a Jew [Judean], born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the

estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

It doesn't matter where you were when you enrolled in God's University. The question is, are you willing to *arise*, to *go* and to *do* what God lays out for you? In this record, Paul asked two key questions. Before we consider each, read the following verses which add more details to the same event. After receiving an overview of the course in verses 16-18, Paul immediately began doing the "homework" God gave him.

Acts 26:15-23:

And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

For these causes the Jews [Judeans] caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me*.

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

The same God who made Paul "a minister and a witness" has given you the ministry of reconciliation. Look at the rest of verse 16! In essence God told Paul, "Look, I've got a secret, but I can't tell you here on the road because you'll flip out. Just go tell the people in Damascus what I've shown you, and I guarantee you, you ain't seen nothin' yet!" (Bible translators, eat your hearts out!)

The first question Paul asked was, "Who art thou, Lord?" He obviously wanted to know the credentials of the faculty before enrolling in the curriculum. In the foundational class on Power for Abundant Living, Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille says, "You tell me what you think of Jesus Christ, and I'll tell you how far you're going to go spiritually!"

Paul's question must be every man's question, for without the right answer, true learning in God's curriculum is impossible. Many Christians today are flunking in Life because they think Jesus Christ is *God*. Thus they have no identification with the man Jesus Christ and

do not triumph in life by applying his principles. No one who believes the theological gobbledygook that Jesus Christ is God will ever pass the course of study taken by the first graduate of God's University. Jesus Christ was, and still is, a man. You, with Christ in you, can walk in his steps on the trail of believing he blazed to God's heart.

Hebrews 2:16-18:

For verily he took not on *him the nature* of angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham.

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be [become] a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

In Luke 2:40 and 52, God's Word says that Jesus *grew* in spiritual wisdom and maturity. From his youth, he learned from his heavenly Father. God knew the "final exam" that lay before His only begotten Son, so He conducted for him a personal curriculum which more than prepared him for the challenge of the cross. Day by day Jesus Christ was faithful to "do his homework," that is, to act upon God's guidance to him. Thus he was able to do the will of God in the most difficult situation any man has ever faced. (See Hebrews 5:8 and 9.)

You, too, can always *do* the will of God, which brings us to Paul's second question on the road to Damascus, "What shall I do, Lord?" God told him the first step to take and unfolded to him each one thereafter. Paul was faithful to do his homework, and at the return of Christ he is certain to be rewarded *summa cum laude*.

Each morning (and in every situation) you, too, can ask the above question. The answers are in the Word of God. How badly do you want to do the will of God? Your daily faithfulness in going to the Word of God is in-

dicative of your desire to do God's will, because the Word of God is the will of God.

Psalms 119:9-16:

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way [path]? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.

With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Blessed *art* thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.

With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as *much as* in all riches.

I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

When you drive to the Rock of Ages, how do you know you're going the right way? Correct, you read the *road signs*. Wouldn't it take the joy out of traveling never to know if you were on the right road? Well, don't you think God wants you to know you're on course with Him? Sure He does! That's why He gave you His Word. It is your *only* textbook in God's personal curriculum for you.

We must master this text, and we do so, not by merely mentally assenting to its truths, but by *living* them. It's not like some boring college textbook whose facts we put into our minds until the next exam. God's Word is our LIFE! Because Jesus Christ was tempted in all things, there is no path in life which is uncharted. There will be paths which are *unfamiliar* to you, but as you continue to fine tune the standard of God's Word in your life, you will spot the spiritual road signs and speed down the road of righteousness.

Although you have a personal curriculum in God's University, you are not the only student. Each of your brothers and sisters in Christ is also being educated spiritually, and God, our Father, gives us the privilege of helping one another learn. Elena Whiteside, writer for *The Way Magazine*, once said that there are two ways to get rid of the rough edges in someone's life. They can either be smoothed out or filled in. As you and I follow our own personal courses of study, we cross paths with other believers. Each of us is bigger as a result of the Word-based interaction which takes place. Acts chapter 10 is such a record. Read along as I point out some of the salient truths. First, God spoke to both Cornelius and Peter in ways they could understand. The ultimate profit in Cornelius' life is obvious, but it is Peter upon whom we will focus.

In Acts 10, verses 9-15, via the reindeer, etc., on the rooftop, God began to broaden the scope of Peter's spiritual understanding. He will do likewise for you, BUT the added insight cannot contradict the Word of God. You'll get tricked spiritually if you loose your moorings from God's Word to float upward into ethereal realms of elitist spiritual thinking which is "beyond the Word." (This usually happens when one wants to gratify his own ego by doing things the Word of God does not condone.) On the contrary, the deeper you sink your roots in God's Word, the more variety you will manifest as you blossom and bear fruit in your life.

Acts 10:28 is a winner. Look what Peter said, "...God hath shewed me..." And in verse 29, "Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying..." That literally means he didn't argue with God. He acted on what God had shown him, and watch what happened! There are fireworks going off in verse 34. Peter was wired! The eyes

of his understanding were lit up. He said, "I GET IT!" The lesson he learned was one of the biggest of his life and enabled him to move on to higher education. He, too, will graduate with honors at the *bēma*.

Jeremiah 17:5-8:

Thus saith the Lord; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.

For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land and not inhabited.

Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope [trust] the Lord is.

For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

To succeed in God's personal curriculum for you, you absolutely must believe that He has your best interests at heart. If you do, you will trust Him. That means you will DO what He asks you to do. And you will do it with the expectation of receiving the benefits of obedience, including greater spiritual understanding.

Remember Proverbs 4:18? *Light* enables you to see. Remaining in darkness means you "shall not see when good cometh." God is trying to load you daily with benefits (Psalms 68:19), but if you are distracted by worldly circumstances and are not looking to Him, you'll never see them coming. Sink your roots into the Word each day, rivet the eyes of your heart upon your Father, and no matter how long a circumstantial drought may last, you shall not "cease from yielding fruit."

James 1:17-25:

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no

variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted [implanted] word, which is able to save your souls [make you whole].

But be [become] ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being [becoming] not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Can you *believe* how fabulous the Word of God is? God brought you into His family with specific purposes for your life here on earth, not to mention all He has planned for you after the gathering together, when *some* churches will need new ministers. If you listen to Him, His Word will take root in your life, bringing you mental and physical wholeness and enabling you to bear much fruit.

Think about looking into a mirror. One usually does so to see what he needs to achieve the proper standard of appearance. At six o'clock in the morning this may take some doing. But let's say it's two p.m., just prior to a business appointment, and you notice your tie is slightly crooked. Do you become hysterical, rip off your tie and vow never to wear one again? Do you mentally assent to the need in your life, and leave the mirror with a crooked tie? Or do you straighten your tie and keep living?

To receive God's Word with meekness means to do what it says. Mentally assenting to the Word of God, thinking or saying you believe it without doing it, is self-deception. Hey, give yourself a break! There are enough other people trying to deceive you. Living God's Word is not something you perfect overnight, but if you continue looking into the perfect law of liberty, you will *become* what you look at.

Hebrews 5:12-14:

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Faithfulness to fundamentals is the key to spiritual growth. The word for "senses" in verse 14 can be translated "perception." The word "use" means "habit as a result of longtime use." You can grow up to become an expert in the word of righteousness, nourished by the strong meat of the Word of God so you can continue to train your spiritual senses to greater and greater perception and awareness. Then on graduation day you will be rewarded.

Hebrews 6:10-12:

For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

That ye be [become] not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

It is our Father's heart's desire that *every one* of His children realizes the fullness of his spiritual potential. As you keep your eyes on the hope of your "graduation," and the honors you will then receive because you faithfully pursued God's personal curriculum for you, you will diligently walk with your heavenly Father and do His will.

The potential you have is as limitless as the Christ in you. It is by way of the Real You that uninterrupted fellowship with God is available. He is doing everything He can to help you maximize your spiritual potential.

I Corinthians 1:9:

God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

You can have fellowship with God like Jesus Christ had. The Son of God came to bring many sons unto glory. He is not ashamed to call you brethren. You can live in the center of your Father's will, with the heartbeat of your life synchronized with His and excel in God's personal curriculum for you.

LIVING IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

Can a book that makes you laugh also help you gain insight into the heart of God? Anyone who has read *Will the Real You Please Stand Up!* and *Will the Real You Please Remain Standing!* will answer this question with an enthusiastic YES! Once again, in his humorous and perceptive style, John A. Lynn presents truths from God's Word in a way that will bring a smile to your face, warm your heart and inspire you to a greater commitment to God and His Word.

"To keep the Word means much more than doggedly clutching a Bible twenty-four hours a day. It means to hide it in your heart and apply it in life's situations," says John A. Lynn in *Living in the Eye of the Storm*.

This book is a superbly funny and practical manual on how to walk with God and enjoy the pleasure of His company. It covers such thought-provoking topics as:

How can you become wired, not tired?

Who is The Way Ministry?

What is the key to spiritual growth?

Who is man's best friend?

How can you live in the eye of the storm?

If the "philosophical gobbledygook and pious platitudes of religious tradition" leave you as cold as an empty church pew, then *Living in the Eye of the Storm* is for you.