

**THE**  
**NINE-YEAR**  
**NOTICE**

or

*(DOWNSIZED, BUT STILL GOD IS FAITHFUL)*

BY

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

There has been a strange teaching during the past several years that has infiltrated the sphere of Christianity. This teaching is the doctrine that once you become a Christian, you will have no more problems. There is nothing further from the truth. In fact, when you become a Christian you will have upset Satan himself and every one of his demons. You are now no longer a citizen of his kingdom of darkness, but you are now a child of the most High God and belong to the kingdom of light.

My purpose in writing this book is to hopefully point out that even though we as Christians will experience trials and tribulations on our everyday walk in this life, we can be victorious through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. As we grow experientially in Christ and become more set apart from the cares and snares of this world, we can trust and rely on the voice of our Comforter and Teacher, the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us.

I hope to share the experiences and challenges of our lives during the past nine years as God has stretched our comfort zones of relying on our own understanding and abilities to truly walking by faith in Him alone. God revealed to me nine years

ago in the summer of 1987 that I would not retire from a major oil company where I had been employed since graduating from college. My original intentions were to work at this company until I was fifty-five years old before I would retire. At the time that I heard this voice speak to my inner man, I knew that it was the Holy Spirit telling me of a future event in my life, but I did not know exactly what it meant or when it would occur.

At that time I had just received a major promotion and was at the height of my professional career. Over the years I have learned that God cannot and does not lie. He is in charge of our lives and wants to reveal His purpose in our lives. As I write this book, it is the fall of 1996 and as a result of corporate downsizing my last day at work was July 3, 1996, having spent more than twenty-five and one-half years there. My wife and I did not know it at the time, but it turned out to be a nine-year advance notice from God.

In the following chapters I will describe our lives prior to 1987 and the various things that have happened to us since then as God has changed us and tried to prepare us for these days. Hopefully, you will see how God's hand has been involved in every phase of our lives as we have tried to trust completely in Him and be obedient to His purpose.

My sole purpose in writing this book is to be Christ's witness and give a living testimony of all that God has done in our lives through His grace and love. To God be all the glory and honor and praise. My prayer in writing this book is that it

will edify and encourage other Christians in their walk of faith showing that God does love them and cares for every area of their life. God is no respecter of persons and He will lead them and protect them if they will only trust and obey Him.

For those people who may read this book who have not made any decision regarding God and their eternal destiny, I pray that upon completing this book, they will truly know that God does love them and has a purpose for their life. I pray that they will want to have a personal relationship with God through His only Son, Jesus Christ, who died for the forgiveness of all their sins on the cross at Calvary and then rose from the dead on the third day.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**CHRISTIANS BUT NOT COMMITTED**  
**(1972 - 1986)**

I would like to start out by introducing my wife and myself and give part of our background. Both my wife, Pamela and I graduated from college with a Bachelor's Degree in December 1970; Pam from Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, Texas, with a major in elementary education and myself from Texas A&M University with a major in accounting. In November 1976, I passed the Texas Certified Public Accountant exam. Pam and I met in 1971 and in November of 1972 we got married.

At the time we got married, both of us were born-again Christians and knew the importance of being members of a local church. After much looking we became members of a large Baptist church in 1974 where we remained members through 1986. Even though we attended church almost every Sunday, we were not faithful and obedient to bring the tithes and offerings until 1976. It was at this time that our eyes were opened to this very important aspect of God's Word regarding stewardship and we have been obedient ever since. The third chapter of the book of Malachi has proven itself over and over again as God has blessed us and rebuked the devourer off us as we will see in later

chapters.

However, even though we were faithful in bringing the tithes and offerings into God's storehouse each week, we were very carnal Christians in other areas of our lives. For most of those twelve years we would attend church only on Sunday mornings and many times could not wait for the service to end so that we could do "our own thing" such as watch the Dallas Cowboys on television or go have fun. There is absolutely nothing wrong with any of these things; however it has to do with priorities. God looks on our hearts and He knows where our first love is. We were Christians, but not committed Christians. At this time we were not growing spiritually nor did we have a desire to grow. We did not have a desire to serve God in any form or fashion. As I look back on these years, I feel like we were only tipping God and that we were definitely walking in His abundant grace and love even though we were not aware of it. We felt that serving God was for someone special "**called**" by God for His purpose. However, in 1986 God began changing our hearts and priorities little by little. I will continue this later in the next chapter.

When I graduated from Texas A&M University, I immediately received a starting position with Mobil Oil Corporation in Dallas, Texas. I began work in the Exploration and Accounting department in January 1971 making \$8,700 a year, which at that time was a very good starting salary. My goal was to work hard and climb the corporate ladder of success until I reached fifty-

five years old when I would retire with a large pension and live happily ever after. In the seventies this was a very reasonable and obtainable goal that thousands and thousands of college graduates pursued as they started their professional careers.

As I worked hard over the next several years, I received many promotions with large increases in salary. With these increases in salary my wife and I began to follow the American dream most successful couples seek after. In July 1974, we moved into our first house without having hardly any furniture.

Then three years later we began building our dream house and moved on March 1, 1978. This was a tremendous financial leap as we were just getting comfortable in our finances from buying the first house. However, after many discussions with my wife, I agreed with her that financing \$57,250 did not seem disastrous since at the time both of us were working and making good salaries. It is to her credit that we moved when we did because during the next several years double-digit mortgage interest rates would have made it almost impossible to move. We are still living in this house, and is one of the best financial investments we have made since the house has more than doubled in value over the years.

During this time we continued to think more of ourselves than others as we bought more and more "stuff and things" we thought we needed. In addition, each year one of our highlights was going on exciting vacations. We have been all over the United States and to such exotic places as Hawaii, Mexico,

Europe, and Bermuda. We don't begrudge these trips, but we thank God for blessing us at the time with the ability to go on them. It is amazing how God continues to bless His children time after time even when they are not following Him in the way that He desires. We have learned over the years that God leads His children along at His pace. Thank God for His loving mercy and grace as our heavenly Father. The problem was that for most of these years it seemed like the **things** and **trips** were what we lived for. They were what made us happy and we didn't know that God had other things in mind for us that would give us a greater joy until . . .

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **TOUCHED BY THE SPIRIT**

During 1986 my career at Mobil was at an all-time high as I was the Manager of Computer Services in the Tax Department. I was in charge of the development and implementation of a major new tax computer system that would drastically change how Mobil would prepare its federal income tax return and state/local franchise and income tax returns. This Franchise and Income Tax System, commonly referred to as FITS, was on the leading edge of computer technology in 1986; and is still being used by Mobil tax professionals today.

This assignment was the most interesting project that I ever had at Mobil, but it was also the most demanding and time-consuming. For the first nine months of 1986 I worked nearly 700 hours of overtime and made countless business trips to Clearwater, Florida, home of the programmers of the system, New York City, and Chicago. By the time the system had been successfully implemented in October 1986, I was totally physically and mentally stressed out.

It was at this time that I began to feel that God was doing something very unusual in my life. I realized that I had gotten my priorities all mixed up. I had always tried to keep God

first, my wife second and my job third in my life, but now my job had become first-place in my life and there was hardly any time left for either my wife or God.

Also during this time I began to want more of God even though I did not realize it at the time. We began to visit a large nondenominational charismatic church where we could sense the presence of God. It was not long before we felt that God wanted us to leave the Baptist church where we had been members for twelve years and to join this nondenominational church.

In January 1987 a major milestone occurred in my life. I told God that 1986 was the year of FITS in my life, but 1987 and forward were to be the years of Jesus in my life. Little did I know at the time what an impact this statement would mean.

From the moment that we changed churches God began to do a new work in us as individuals as He completely changed the desires of our hearts. We could not get enough of God and the Word of God as we began taking Christian foundational classes at church and attending various seminars. As we continued to thirst after God, He truly fed us and helped us to grow spiritually in Him. One of the most important things that we learned initially was that God has a divine purpose for each one of us and that all He requires is that we be a humble willing obedient vessel. It was at this time that we began to want to serve God and fulfill His purpose in our lives.

Palm Sunday 1987 was probably the most momentous life-changing day in my life as a Christian. It started that morning

as Dr. Chou from South Korea prayed for the sick and I was healed instantly of a condition in which I was not able to talk for more than three days. That evening in one of the classes, I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as our teacher laid hands on me and prayed for me. It was this experience alone that has totally changed my being.

From this moment on, God began to change the desires of our hearts to become more of what He wanted us to be and do; and less of what we had always wanted to be and do. This process was truly a sovereign move of God as our old desires started losing their attractiveness and our focus became more centered on what we believed God wanted us to do. The amazing thing was the joy we felt in doing things that blessed others for eternity sake versus the temporary happiness we felt in doing things that, for the most part, only blessed ourselves.

The year 1987 turned out to be what Pam and I referred to as a "**spiritual blitz**" as we continued to attend classes and seminars. The highlight of the year was in June when we felt God directing us to go to Adrian, Michigan, to witness and hopefully, pray for Pam's dying 95 year old grand-mother. It was our first real step of faith as we were not in the habit of trying to follow God to such a large degree. However, God was with us as we left our home in Plano, Texas. All the way to Michigan we felt the presence of the Holy Spirit in the car as we drove. We were also greatly encouraged by such things as billboards, signs, and even songs on a jukebox in a restaurant

the night before we got there. God uses **many** things in this world to speak to us if we will just be open to hear His voice and observe His ways, which are not normally the same as man's ways. Just prior to our arriving at the nursing home of Pam's grandmother, there was a billboard which said, "**Expect a Miracle**". Little did we know at that time that God was preparing us for what He was about to do. When we arrived at the nursing home everyone there advised us that Pam's grandmother had died approximately 40 minutes before we got there. The death certificate had already been signed. That did not stop us as Pam immediately asked if she was still in her room, which she was. We went into her room and pulled the sheet down from over her head and laid hands on her and began praying for her. Within a few minutes she opened one eye and then the other. Pam then told her to call on the Name of Jesus as her Savior. Suddenly, a blanket of peace enveloped the room--the peace of God that passes all understanding. At that moment, we knew that her grandmother was saved and we told her that she could close her eyes again. This was a wonderful witness to Pam's unsaved Dad at the time who was in the room with us. We shared this experience with the personnel at the nursing home and all of Pam's other relatives living in that area. Almost all of them claimed to be atheists and looked at us as if we were from another planet. Pam and I felt that we had done what God expected us to do. All He wants us to do is to obey Him in taking the first step. Everything else is up to Him as it is

not by our power or might but by His Spirit.

As we drove the 1,125 miles from Plano, Texas, to Adrian, Michigan, we did not know what to expect or what we were really going to do. However, the thought that kept coming to me as we drove was that **"God is not a Time-waster. He will not waste His time, and He will not waste our time"**.

If we take the first step in obeying Him, whatever that is, God is faithful to do exceedingly abundantly more than we could ever ask or imagine. We could never have imagined that God would raise Pam's grandmother in response to our obedience and prayers and snatch her from the gates of Hell. Thank God for His grace and mercy. We know that we will see her again in Heaven. As we left Michigan after the funeral, our faith was at a new level and we were very grateful to God for working through us in such a way.

On the way home we stopped in East Texas to visit with Pam's Mother and her husband. We had a wonderful time of praising the Lord and rejoicing over what He had just done with Pam's grandmother. As we left there, Pam's mother spoke to me what very shortly turned out to be prophetic words, **"You are now on the mountain top, but you will soon be in the valley"**. We did not know what she meant, but within a couple of weeks we were going through the biggest battle of our lives to that point.

After I returned to my job at Mobil, I was told that they wanted to transfer me to New York City to be involved in another

project for approximately six months and commute between Plano and there every weekend or two. My wife and I knew immediately that it was not God's will for us to be separated during this time as we were to continue to grow together in Christ. Besides that, I was not even qualified to be involved on the project. We both strongly felt that this was a ploy by the enemy to split us up and detour us from being in the will of God. Even though my manager in Dallas knew that I was not the right person for the project in New York City I had to go there for the initial phase of the project. During the second week there, I indicated that I wanted to have a meeting with the Manager of the Tax Department for Mobil to express my feelings about not wanting to be there. All my co-workers both in Dallas and New York City told me to tell him business reasons and not personal reasons for my not wanting to be there. However, deep inside of me, I knew that I was going to have to be honest and bold enough to take a stand for my relationship with God. It was as if God was reminding me of what I had told Him back in January that Jesus was first in my life now. Now God was testing me to see if I really meant it or was it just words. Our words are simply cheap words unless we really mean them and follow up with positive action to back them up.

Finally, in the middle of the second week the moment of truth came. Was I going to serve God or give in to extreme corporate pressure and serve Mobil? At this point, I should point out that I was previously told that any day I could

receive a promotion for all my efforts during the past year. In addition, the manager in New York City had the authority to not only give me this promotion, but he could also fire me on the spot if he wanted to. We know that everything is beautiful in God's timing, but Satan can also use the timing of certain events to try to accomplish his purposes. Satan's purposes in a believer's life are to do everything possible to try to keep him from fulfilling God's purposes in his life. He often uses distractions, detours, deception, and discouragement to accomplish this.

I had a three-hour meeting with the manager in New York City in which I started by trying to tell him the business reasons why I was not qualified for this particular project. However, I ended the conversation by expressing my personal reasons and giving him my priorities: **"I don't know what your priorities are, but in my life God is first, my wife and family are second, and Mobil is third; and they will not change"**. He gave me the most blank look that I had ever seen on an individual, which indicated to me that he had never heard such a thing before and he probably thought that I was a fool.

God began to intervene in this situation immediately; on the next day the same manager advised me that perhaps I was right and that I was not the right person for the project. I flew back to Dallas where I was advised the next week that I received my promotion and a nearly fifteen percent raise in salary. It turned out that it was my last promotion at Mobil

and the largest raise that I would receive for the rest of my professional career. In fact, for the years 1993 thru 1995, I received virtually no increase in salary. This is an example of how it is very difficult to serve God and mammon or the world system. Corporations do not want to know that your allegiance is to someone other than themselves. As long as they believe that your complete allegiance, whether voluntary or involuntary, is to the corporation, they can basically control your future in the form of salary, position, and job location.

I have reflected many times on this decision in 1987 and have **never** regretted the position that I took. I have thought about where I would be if I had made the opposite decision. I know that I would have most likely continued to climb the corporate ladder of success. In all likelihood, I would still be employed at Mobil and on course toward my original goal of over twenty-five years ago of retiring from Mobil at fifty-five years old. But the most important question of all is, "**Where would I be in my relationship to my God and His will and purpose in my life?**" I really feel that everything that has transpired spiritually in my walk since then would not have occurred. Our choices in life do have consequences that we must face. I know that the decision I made in 1987 was the right one for me as it helped shape my walk with Christ the following years, even to this very day. I must serve God and try to be a channel of blessing that He can hopefully use for His glory.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DOES GOD STILL SPEAK?**

Does God still speak to His people? If so, how does He communicate His will and directions to them? This has been an ongoing discussion probably since the early church; and has probably been abused in many ways from both extremes. Some people strongly believe that God never speaks to His people while other people are constantly saying that God told them such and such. I believe that there has to be a balance between the two views.

Throughout the Bible it is clear that God spoke to His people at different times. Many times God told people to go to this place or that place and the people obeyed Him many times not knowing what was going to happen next. I believe that God has not changed His ways in that He still wants to communicate His directions to us if we are really sincere in trying to do His will and fulfill His purpose in our lives. Hebrews 13:8 tells us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

In these last days I believe that God still truly wants His sheep to hear His voice and obey it. I believe that the most prevalent and important way that God speaks to His people is

through the written Word of the Bible. As believers begin to read the Bible each time, it is most important that they ask the Holy Spirit to guide them and help them to understand what God wants them to receive of the written Word, or Logos. As they do this, often a pas-sage may seem to leap off the page as if it is alive and will affect the reader in a personal way. This written Word thus becomes the living Word, or Rhema to the reader as God speaks to the individual through His Word.

I also believe that God speaks to people through the anointed preaching of His Word which may lead to repentance from sins, deliverance from addictions, victory over the enemy or encouragement and joy. God also speaks through other believers from time to time by the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as the Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, or Prophecy. Because of the sovereignty and omnipotence of God, He can still speak in His audible voice as He did to Moses in the burning bush.

Over the years I have learned that what God speaks, in whatever method, can be a "**Now**" word, a "**Confirming**" word, or a "**Future**" word. Briefly, a "**Now**" word is exactly that. It is for the particular time that you received it. A "**Confirming**" word is one that confirms or verifies a thought or idea that has already been given to your spirit-man by the Holy Spirit, but you have not gone forward with it or acted on it. A "**Future**" word is one for some time in the future and you don't know exactly how or when it will take place. Many times we may not

fully understand what God says to us at the time. A lot of times we may not even realize that it was God speaking to us at the time. It is also very important that we be careful and discerning as to whose voice it was that we heard. In addition to the voice of God, there are the voices of Satan and of our own desires or thoughts that can confuse us.

Over the years, I have learned to be very careful as to what I feel is the voice of God. I wanted to be so sure that I clearly heard God's voice that in order to not be mistaken, I often said that God had to hit me with a two by four piece of wood to get my attention. A rule of thumb that I have used during the past nine years to greatly help me discern God's voice from other voices is whether or not the same thought keeps coming back to me for several days. If it does, then I begin to think that God is trying to get my attention. It is also very important to know that if it is the voice of God that you are hearing, you will not feel pressured or forced to make a quick decision. I have learned a very important principle to follow in hearing and obeying God's voice: God leads us, but Satan pushes us. If you are being pressured or pushed into doing something or making a decision, it is almost always the devil behind it. God as our gentle heavenly Father will give us the peace that passes all understanding as we make our decisions. Remember that if you do not have peace about making a decision, do not do anything until you have God's peace. The peace of God should be our umpire in making all our decisions in life,

especially those resulting from a word that we received from God.

In receiving a word from God, the most important criteria in determining if it is truly from God is that it should line up exactly with the Word of God. Anything that contradicts the Word of God in any form or fashion is not the voice of God. God cannot lie and, therefore, does not contradict Himself or His Word.

Upon receiving a word from God, it is important to know whether you should share it with others and with whom. Many times I have heard the voice of God, but did not have the liberty in my spirit to share it with others for a long time or maybe never. Again, the peace of God should be our umpire. If we feel that tugging by the Holy Spirit giving us a feeling of hesitation as we begin to share what God told us, we should be obedient and not reveal it. At times this was a very painful lesson to learn as I thought others would be as excited and enthusiastic as I was to hear what I thought God was saying. Just because the other person is a Christian does not mean that he wants to hear what God is saying to you. I have found many times that their response is definitely not what you would expect. Sometimes they respond negatively because either they don't believe that God still speaks to people; they don't believe that God is speaking to you; they don't see your Christian walk directly related to your Christian talk; or they may be convicted because they are not living the Christian life

that they know they should.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE FIRST TIME

It was in 1987, probably late summer, that I heard for the first time the still small voice of God. I was standing in the living room in the evening when I heard the most unusual thing that my inner man had ever heard before: **"You will not retire from Mobil"**. I did not know what to think of this, but I knew that it was the voice of God telling me of a future event in my life. I immediately went into the kitchen where my wife was to tell her what I had just heard. She was just as shocked as I was to hear this word.

Neither one of us fully understood the meaning of this word since, as I have mentioned previously, everything to this point in my career at Mobil was going great. However, as we have learned since that when it comes to receiving a prophetic word from God, it may be a long time before we know the details as to when, why, how, etc. The Bible clearly points out that we may understand only part of it, but that if it is a true word from God it will come to pass according to His Sovereignty and perfect timing.

**For we know in part and we prophesy in part.**  
**1 Cor. 13:9 NKJV**

We did not worry about this word, but put it in the back of our minds, knowing that God is in charge of our lives and if it came to pass, it was according to His will for our lives. In addition, we did not feel the liberty to share this word with anybody else. However, several times over the next nine years God would bring this word back to my memory. I have learned that if I truly hear the voice of God speaking to me, even years later, I will remember the exact words that He spoke. The words that God has spoken to me over the years are so personal and many times, were exactly what I needed to hear in order to persevere and climb the next step in my walk, not only because I am a Christian, but just as a person in general.

As the events began to unfold at Mobil and in our spiritual walk over the next nine years, it became increasingly clear that back in the summer of 1987 God had definitely given me a nine-year notice regarding my future at Mobil. The omniscience of God is unquestionable. It is even now hard to comprehend the fact that before the foundations of the world, God knew that I would be at Mobil only a designated period of time according to His will and purpose. What is even more amazing is that God knows facts like these for every person on the earth today, those who lived and died in ages past, and those who have not yet been born.

For those people who belong to the family of God through their belief in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and truly want to be in the center of His perfect will for their lives,

God is ordering their steps.

**The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord,  
and He delights in his way. Psalm 37:23 NKJV**

In the following chapters I will try to show how God changed the desires of our hearts and ordered our steps for the next nine years and even today.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SOWING AND REAPING

During the year of 1987, we received tremendous teaching of the Word of God from the new church that we were now enthusiastically attending. We could not get enough of God's Word during this time. It was very exciting as we were beginning to grow from babes into more mature Christians hungry for the meat of God's Word.

One of the major areas that we were growing in was the very important principle of tithing into the Kingdom of God, even though we had been tithing since 1976. Almost every week our pastor shared with the congregation a new revelation he had found in chapter three of the book of Malachi, especially verses 8 through 12. It was exciting to open this chapter each Sunday and read along with him as he shared this revelation with us. I am convinced that almost everyone at church knew these verses by heart.

**Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, "In what way have we robbed You?" "In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me. Even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be**

**room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," says the Lord of hosts; "and all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land," says the Lord of hosts. Mal. 3:8-12 NKJV**

We learned the importance of the tithe--that it belongs to God and we are commanded to bring it into the local church (storehouse) where we are receiving our spiritual food. The tithe does not belong to other ministries as long as we are obedient to God by being a part of His local church. We learned that if we do not tithe into the local church, we are cursed by God for robbing Him. As a result of this disobedience, even our nation is cursed. God tells us to prove Him or test Him by our obedience in regard to the tithe to see if He will not bless us. Another important aspect of this that we learned is that our giving is all part of the tithe until we have given at least ten percent of our gross income. Everything given above ten percent can then be called offerings.

At this time we began to give more and more to missions minded ministries as we felt the urgency to reach lost people for Christ. We learned that there is no way to out-give God. As we continued to give more in tithes and offerings at church and to other ministries that we felt led to support, God continued to meet our needs each day. Matthew 6:33 became more and more real to us each day:

**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matt. 6:33 NKJV**

God's principle of sowing and reaping became more practical in our lives. We learned that as we obeyed God in giving the amount He prompted and to whom He prompted, He blessed us likewise in money or what money couldn't buy. Don't misunderstand this principle or our motives for giving. We were never giving to get, but it is most important to know that God's spiritual principles work just like His natural or physical principles or laws work, such as the law of gravity. However, you must first sow before you can reap. A farmer must first sow seed into the ground before he can expect and receive a harvest.

**Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Gal. 6:7-9 NKJV**

It is important to know that we cannot fool God. He looks upon our hearts and knows our motives. However, God gives us commandments regarding giving which are equally as important as the rest of His Word. God wants us to be obedient to Him and His Word. How can we expect to be blessed by God if we are disobedient when it comes to our money. He knows what or who our first love is.

**No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (riches).**

**Matt. 6:24 NKJV**

In late 1987, our local church felt convicted of the massive debt that it had incurred in its building program. Since the church was growing rapidly at the time, it began a three-year debt payoff program to relieve it of the bondage of debt. After much prayer, Pam and I felt the Lord wanted us to pledge several thousands of dollars over three years to help pay off the debt. This was in addition to our tithes and offerings.

We believed that God was telling us, **"You help get them out of debt and I will help you get out of debt"**.

**Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?  
Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways! Haggai 1:4,5**

God enabled us to fulfill our pledge to the church in less than the three years.

It was at this time that God began to reveal to me the bondage of being in debt and that we were to start getting out of debt. I believe that He began to tell those believers everywhere who had a hearing ear to get out of debt. I believe this is still a valid word from God for today as He is trying to warn His people of the dangers of being in debt.

**The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. Prov. 22:7 NKJV**

God's people and His church cannot totally fulfill their purpose on this earth to reach the lost people for Christ if they are in bondage to debt and the world system. We are not to be like the world, but to be the head and not the tail. If we are in debt,

we are as a slave to the lender. We do not have the flexibility and freedom that we need in order for us to be a "**Channel of Blessing**" in these last days that God can work in and through as a blessing to others for eternity's sake for the Kingdom of God.

In 1991 I received from Trinity Broadcasting Network a book entitled Rapid Debt Reduction Strategies by John Avanzini. As I read this book I truly believed that God used it to open my eyes to see how much money we were wasting each month in interest as we made our regular mortgage payment. God wants us to be good stewards of our time, talents and treasures. We were definitely not being good stewards of our treasures or money as we were paying thousands of dollars in needless interest each year. The book gave many ideas as to how to get out of debt quickly especially with regard to paying off your mortgage early. As I reviewed the examples, I saw how quickly we could get our mortgage paid off by making extra principal payments each month.

A friend of mine at work then created an amortization schedule for me that included all of the facts and figures for our thirty-year mortgage. Even though we had been making only regular payments since March 1978 and this was thirteen years later, I realized immediately that it was not too late to start getting out of debt by making extra principal payments. Having paid on our mortgage for more than thirteen years, we had reduced our principal balance by less than \$10,000 even though we had made more than \$70,000 in total payments. In July 1991 with our principal balance of approximately \$47,750, we began to

make two extra principal payments each month with the regular mortgage payment. It was difficult to do this the first few months as we were used to spending this money somewhere else, but over the years I have learned that if your plan is going to work, you must work your plan. You must be committed to it and be consistent. In other words, you must be disciplined and diligent and stay focused on the goal that you are trying to reach, whatever that may be. I have learned that nothing worthwhile comes easy and that it normally takes time. Almost everything is a process. One of my favorite scriptures that I feel can also apply in this case is the following:

**Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Phil. 3:12-14 NKJV**

We continued to make at least two extra principal payments each month for the next several years as we kept pursuing our goal for the prize of being debt-free. I have learned that if the promise is clear, then it is much easier to pay the necessary price to obtain that promise. In this case, the promise of being debt-free was worth paying the price of extra principal payments each month.

As in most things that we want in life, we put a priority or value on them. If they have a high priority or value to us,

in most cases we will pay the price to obtain them. For those things that don't mean that much to us, we will not make the necessary sacrifice to obtain them. Since each one of us is a unique individual, each one of us will have a unique thing personal to us that we put a high priority or value on. It helps make our individuality.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **GOD'S HIGHEST CALL**

Over the past nine years I have learned that God works through people. I have also learned to pray for divine appointments, connections and opportunities. It is through our obedience to these divinely arranged opportunities and listening to His voice through humble willing ministers of His Word that we can continue to grow spiritually into the man or woman of God that we are to become.

As I look back to 1987 I know that it was a pivotal point in my life. It was a divine appointment as God led us to change churches. As we began to grow in God in many different areas, the teachings on prayer totally changed my life. I sincerely believe that God used our pastor to teach not only our local church, but the body of Christ throughout America via television and conferences, on the utmost importance of prayer and that prayer changes things. It was a season in which God was trying to wake up Christians and teach them the fundamental basics of prayer and the importance of spending time with God each day. I am so thankful to have been able to receive this anointed teaching on prayer. It made me keenly aware that I am called to be a man of prayer and that nothing we do is important until we

have prayed about it first. I have learned that the most important thing I do each day is to spend time with God in prayer. Nothing else matters until I have spent quality time with my heavenly Father each morning.

There are many scriptures regarding prayer that have become a major part of my life. Among the most life-changing ones for me are the following:

**If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 2 Chron. 7:14 NKJV**

**I love those who love Me, and those who seek Me diligently will find Me. Prov. 8:17 NKJV**

**. . . The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16 NKJV**

Because the Word of God is alive and sharper than a two-edged sword, I believe that it is still applicable for today. Therefore, it is my sincere opinion that the future of America lies in the above scriptures. If we are going to see America turn from its downward spiral toward immorality and ungodliness, then I am convinced that we as Bible believing Christians are going to have to stand in the gap with our prayers each day for America, both its leaders and its approximately 250 million people.

**So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Ezek. 22:30 NKJV**

**Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.  
1 Tim. 2:1,2 NKJV**

It is important that we review some of these scriptures in detail to see their significance. In 2 Chronicles 7:14 above, as it applies to today, God is exhorting His people as Christians, to pray. It is completely up to us, as born-again believers, to pray. We cannot expect the heathen to pray. God is requesting us to do four specific things, the first of which is to **humble** ourselves before Him. There is much too much pride in the body of Christ as we still tend to think that we can do things in our own strength without the help of Almighty God. The second thing is to **pray** to God for His intervention. In doing so, we are to pray according to His Word and believe that He will answer our prayers. We are to know that there is power in our prayers and that prayer really does change things, people and circumstances. If we do not truly believe this, then we are wasting our time praying. We cannot be doubleminded when it comes to praying. Remember that we cannot fool God. God knows our hearts and motives. Let us not be like the scribes and pharisees, who were both legalists and hypocrites. True prayer is hard work, but it will be fruitful in God's timing. The key is for us to not give up praying even when it looks like all hope is gone.

**And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.  
Gal. 6:9 NKJV**

The third thing that God wants us to do is to truly **seek** His face diligently each day. God created man for His pleasure and wants us to spend quality time with Him. He wants us to praise and worship Him for who He is, and not for what He can do for us. How can we truly say that we love God if we do not desire to spend time with Him in prayer. God wants us to communicate with Him each day. The fourth thing in 2 Chronicles 7:14 is for us to **turn** or repent from our wicked ways. We as the body of Christ are still far from being the spotless church that Jesus Christ is coming back for. We still have too much love for the world and the things of the world. Most Christians have not truly died to self and this world, but are trying to serve both the world and God. As a result, they are not successful at either one.

**. . . How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him. But the people answered him not a word. 1 Kings 18:21 NKJV**

We should pray that we will not be tempted by the lust of the flesh (sensual), the lust of the eyes (material), or the pride of life. After God's people do these four things, then God replies by saying that He will do three things. God will hear our prayers, forgive our sins, and heal our land. What this scripture tells me is that we, as Christians, have a tremendous responsibility in America. The ultimate destiny of America and

the eternal future of millions of people rests on whether or not Christians will obey the Word of God, specifically 2 Chronicles 7:14. I believe the following scripture, which also has had a tremendous impact in my own life, applies in this situation:

**. . . For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.**  
**Luke 12:48 NKJV**

Another scripture mentioned above that I want to discuss further is 1 Timothy 2:1,2. In it we are told by God to pray for our leaders who are in authority over us so that we can live quiet and peaceful lives. Throughout the history of Israel in the Old Testament we see examples of Israel having good kings and bad kings. During reigns of good kings they had prosperity, but during reigns of bad kings they had many problems. It is important to know that God judged Israel and many nations because of failure on the part of their leaders and the people to heed the warnings of God's messengers. Throughout Proverbs it discusses the ramifications of righteousness and wickedness.

Following are a few examples with regard to what happens concerning various leaders who are in authority:

**Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. Prov. 14:34 NKJV**

**When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan. Prov. 29:2 NKJV**

**If a ruler pays attention to lies, all his servants become wicked. Prov. 29:12 NKJV**

As we can see from these scriptures, it is very significant to a nation and its people as to whether they have righteous people or wicked people in positions of leadership. It is of utmost importance that we pray for God's outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon the leaders and their families in order to draw them to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. We should then pray for God to give them His wisdom, knowledge, understanding and revelation so that they will be the leaders He wants them to be and so that they will make the right decisions.

We as Christians are to fulfill the highest call of God on each one of our lives which is to pray the effectual fervent prayer that avails much. We are to be informed people and to pray according to the Word of God that the will of God be done.

Having done everything that we know to do in prayer, we must then **rest** in the assurance that God is in charge of everything.

God is sovereign and knows the ending before the beginning. Just because the results may be different than what we desired does not mean that God has not answered our prayers. He sees the whole picture where we can only see a very small part of it.

However, as long as we are obedient in praying to God according to His Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit, we will not be account-able to Him for the sin of prayerlessness when we see Him face to face. We must obey Him and pray.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE CALL TO MINISTRY

The call to ministry is not unique or for only special persons. Throughout the Bible it is clear that God is calling each one of us to do various works of the ministry of spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Among the two most important commands of God addressed to every believer are to go into all the world preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, making disciples and doing the work of the evangelist.

**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen. Matt. 28:19,20 NKJV**

**Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 2 Tim. 4:2 NKJV**

**But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 2 Tim. 4:5 NKJV**

However, in addition to each one of us obeying these commands to the best of our ability each day, I sincerely believe that some people are uniquely called by God to be in the ministry fulltime. Their call may be as pastors, apostles,

prophets, missionaries, evangelists, teachers, musicians, or authors.

**And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and (as) teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Ephes. 4:11,12 NKJV**

At this time I want to attempt to clarify the difference between a job or profession versus a call of God. A job or even a profession many times may only be basically a means to an end.

In many cases, it is something that the person is doing in order to make money to survive each day. In other words, the person is working at something to pay the bills. Many times the person is not doing what he really would like to be doing; he has no choice but to keep on keeping on. The money and not the activity is oftentimes the sole motivator. I am convinced that the need for money along with the corresponding bondage of huge debt prohibits many people from doing what they really want to do and/or fulfilling God's ultimate purpose in their lives.

I believe that a call of God upon a person is the process by which God begins to change the desires, interests and character of a person to such a point that he becomes a willing vessel that can be used by God. At this point God calls or appoints the person for a specific purpose in the body of Christ. I believe that a person truly called by God is not motivated by money, fame, or notoriety, but only by serving God and being a "**Channel of Blessing**" through which God can work to

influence others for eternity's sake. The call of God upon a person many times will be in an area of responsibility that the person loves to do, whether it is teaching, singing, playing a musical instrument, etc. The major points to remember are that God the Father always be glorified, that Jesus Christ the Son be lifted up and man himself not be exalted. In many cases the person would do it even if he was not being paid for it.

In 1989, God called me into ministry even though at the time I did not understand how or when it would occur. I immediately felt that I was to teach and preach the Word of God, especially in the area of prayer. I have learned that when God calls a person it does not necessarily mean that it is immediate. God often gives us a "**future**" word to see if we will be obedient to it and pray it through. It is often a stepping stone or step of faith to the next phase in God's plan for our lives.

A short time later I began to stand on two separate scriptures related to this as I prayed each day. It is very important to pray the Word of God applicable to the word that you believe you receive from God regarding your own personal needs, goals, visions, etc. Equally important is to not give up on praying it through if you truly believe the word was from God. It may take several years, as in my case, before you see even the slightest indication of God's word for you coming to pass. Remember that God's timing is not our timing. I have found this to be the hardest thing to overcome. We often want

to do something now, but we may not be as ready or equipped as God wants us to be. The key is to trust in God and know that He is faithful to bring it to pass. Following are the two passages that became life to me pertaining to the call of God on my life:

**Then the Lord answered me and said: Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come. It will not tarry.**  
**Hab. 2:2,3 NKJV**

**He has made everything beautiful in its time.**  
**Eccles. 3:11 NKJV**

Another key point that I would like to make is that when you receive a word from God, whether it is in your own spirit or from someone else, it is very important to write it down and date it. This is very important for praying about it each day and for future reference so that you do not simply forget it. It is also good to review months or years later after God has performed it in order for you to praise Him for His faithfulness and to help build your own faith.

## CHAPTER NINE

### DESPISE NOT SMALL BEGINNINGS

In January 1991 I felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to conduct a home Bible study in an effort to reach our neighbors with the Gospel. The Lord impressed me strongly with the passage in Hosea 4:6, which says, "**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge**". Many Christians are familiar with this passage, but have they read the entire scripture? I sincerely believe that it is one of the most powerful scriptures in the Bible; and that it applies to where America is today.

**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.  
Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will  
reject you from being priest for Me; Because you  
have forgotten the law of your God, I also will  
forget your children. Hosea 4:6 NKJV**

In explaining this scripture, the **knowledge** refers to the knowledge of God; and the **law** refers to the Word and ways of God. As many statistics tell us, there has been a definite change in America since 1962 such as the increase in crime, drug use, immorality, homosexuality, abortions, idolatry, and sexual promiscuity while there has been a decrease in the level of education, college entrance test scores, respect for parents and people in authority, people attending church regularly, and charitable giving to churches and other non-profit agencies. I

believe that these changes, all of which are negative to the well-being of America, are no coincidence, but they are directly related to the Supreme Court decision in 1962 to ban prayer in the American public schools and later decisions to disallow the Bible and the posting of the Ten Commandments in the public schools. As if to add insult to injury, in 1973 the Supreme Court legalized the practice of abortion. As I reflect back on my days in public school prior to these decisions, I do not remember any prayers that could have been construed as being offensive or discriminatory to anyone. They were for the most part harmless "**Thank You for this day**" type prayers.

As a result of the Supreme Court decisions, it is as if America was telling God that we no longer need Him, prayer or His Word. America as a nation has been rejecting God ever since then. America still claims to be a Christian nation, but America must be judged by the deeds and actions of its people and leadership. It is just like an individual. One can talk the talk, but can he walk the walk?

Hosea 4:6 tells us that because we have rejected the Word of God, God will reject us from being a priest for Him. An even more serious judgment is that because we have for-gotten the Word and Ways of God, He will forget our children. I believe that is where America is today as it has been more than thirty years since these critical court decisions. Many of the children in the sixties grew up without any knowledge of God or exposure to His Word, even if it was only a short prayer or the

Ten Commandments posted on the wall of a classroom. As a result, many of this "lost" generation have now grown up, married and have children who are not being taught in the ways of God because their parents were not taught.

**Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. Prov. 22:6 NKJV**

I believe this helps explain the dramatic increase in the rebelliousness of this generation of children and their lack of respect for parents, leaders in authority and rules or the law.

Many of them have truly been forgotten by God as a result of previous generations who have rejected God and His Word and Ways. However, we know that there is hope for each individual child as long as there is someone praying for them to be saved.

There is power in prayer and prayer changes things and people. Remember that nothing is impossible with God and it is not His will that any person perish, but that they come to the knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Due to the lack of Bible prophecy being taught to people in church today, I began to teach on the various related subjects in a home Bible study beginning in January 1991. Our group each week ranged from ten to twelve persons consisting of Baptists, Catholics, and Charismatics. We discussed such subjects as the New Age Movement, the New World Order, the rapture or catching away of the body of Christ, the second coming of Christ and the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. At the end of approximately eighteen weeks we concluded our study in time for the summer.

During the summer months I felt the strong leading of the Holy Spirit to comprise a study series entitled **The Realities of Prayer** including all the various teachings and personal experiences that I had received over the past several years on the importance and power of prayer. Because this teaching had changed my life so drastically, I believed that it was most important to put it into writing so that God could possibly affect others in a similar way.

In the fall of the same year we began our home Bible study again with about ten to twelve persons each week. I began to share with them on **The Realities of Prayer** in an effort to help them become a person of prayer knowing how to truly pray the effectual fervent prayer that avails much. Each week as in the spring I would give them a complete handout for their personal use. We completed the Bible study just prior to Christmas with many of the people's lives truly changed by the knowledge concerning prayer they had received. Their lives were truly touched as they later gave testimony explaining how this teaching changed their own prayer lives.

Even though fewer people attended our Bible studies in 1991 than we had hoped for, we knew they were the ones that God had chosen to attend and we had obeyed God in taking this step of faith. I truly learned through this time to not despise the day of small beginnings. When I was writing the study series **The Realities of Prayer**, I felt at that time that God wanted to use it to affect a lot more people than ten or twelve in our home,

but I did not know how or when. However, I have learned that the key is that we must be obedient in taking the first step before God can move us to the next phase in His plan for our lives. I had no idea at the time what God was going to do with **The Realities of Prayer.**

## CHAPTER TEN

### WITH THE CALLING COMES THE ENABLING

From the time in 1989 when I felt God's call upon my life to fulltime ministry, God began to seriously change the desires and interests of my heart. One of the major things that He put into my heart was the desire to attend Bible school to further my education regarding the Word of God. At first I did not see how this could be possible. I found myself wishing all these things that had happened to me within the past few years had occurred before I went to Texas A&M University. In which case, I would have attended a Bible school. It was as if I was living in the past thinking about the "**what ifs**", "**might have beens**" and the "**could have beens**". There was nothing that I could do about it now, or at least that is what I thought.

However, the desire to attend Bible school never left me. In fact, it kept growing stronger and stronger even though I did not see how it could happen since I was working fulltime and could not afford to leave my job to go back to school.

I have learned over the years that it is God who changes the desires of our heart into what He wants them to be. Since God puts His desires into our heart, it is up to Him to cause them to come to pass. God is not a time-waster nor a teaser.

He does not waste our time nor His time. God does not frustrate us by giving us a desire and then have no intention of bringing it to pass. That is not the character of God. However, we do need to realize that God's timing is not our timing. We have to understand that in the absolute sovereignty of God, His plans are not always our plans. He knows the ending before the beginning and everything is beautiful in His time. We must trust God and truly believe that He will grant the desires of our heart according to His perfect will.

**Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37:4,5 NKJV**

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Prov. 3:5,6 NKJV**

**He has made everything beautiful in its time. Ecclesiastes 3:11 NKJV**

Finally in 1993 after investigating some of the Bible schools in our area as to availability of graduate programs, we heard on our favorite Christian radio station about Tyndale Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. What caught our attention most was the ability to take all the courses by extension and also the wide range of courses offered at different graduate levels including Masters and Doctorate. In May both my wife and I began our first course on evangelism in our pursuit of a Masters Degree in Theology. Each course was well-taught and

based on the literal, inspired Word of God.

As the months went by, I continued to press toward the goal of the prize of becoming more knowledgeable and equipped concerning the Word of God by taking more and more courses. My purpose for taking these courses was not just to educate myself for my benefit, but hopefully be a "**Channel of Blessing**" that God could use to help equip others for the work of the ministry.

His Word tells us that we are to not only win the lost to Jesus Christ, but we are to make disciples or disciplined followers of Christ by teaching them the Word of God. We are to tell others what we know and at the same time replicate or reproduce ourselves following Christ as our example. As we in leadership roles as teachers, pastors, etc. try to imitate Christ, those who are looking to us for guidance and equipping are to imitate us. I have come to believe that teaching the Word of God is the most important thing and that there is a severe shortage of sound biblical teaching in the body of Christ today. The apostle Paul had much to say concerning the teaching of biblical doctrine:

**These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.**

**1 Tim. 4:11-13 NKJV**

**Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. 1 Tim. 4:16**

**Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a**

**worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Tim. 2:15 NKJV**

**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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Tim. 3:16,17 NKJV**

It is most important that we as Christians receive good sound biblical teaching in order to avoid being deceived in these last days. We must feed our spirit-man the true Word of God so that we can stand against all trials and tribulations, pray the effectual fervent prayer that avails much, and be a witness of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. We may be the closest thing that resembles hope to them. Let us be God's true representative here on earth.

In January 1995 I felt impressed by the Holy Spirit that I was to graduate in 1996. At that time I had completed only six courses or the equivalent of 17 credit hours. I needed eighteen courses or 53 credit hours to graduate. A short time later I strongly felt or believed that I was to graduate in June 1996. As a result of this leading by the Holy Spirit, I began to intensify my studying by taking more courses. By the end of 1995 I had completed nine more courses giving me a total of 44 credit hours. During the first four months of 1996, I completed the remaining three courses I needed and began preparing for my oral exam. I would not have been able to complete these if God had not arranged the circumstances at work which enabled me to spend a great deal of time on my studies from October 1995 into

the next year.

Finally graduation day came. It was June 28, 1996. It was a momentous day in my life as several from my family and some of my best friends came to the graduation exercises in Fort Worth to witness me receiving the Masters of Arts Degree in Theology.

God had not only granted the desires of my heart to go to Bible school, but He enabled me to graduate with a Masters Degree in three years.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### GO YE INTO THE WORLD

It was now 1993, four years since I heard the voice of God call me to fulltime ministry to preach and teach the Word of God, but personally I did not feel that much had happened toward fulfilling that call. Everyday during that time I prayed and believed Habakkuk 2:2,3 and Ecclesiastes 3:11 concerning the ministry I felt God called me to. I would thank God that His vision for my life was coming to pass in His time and that He would help me to not get ahead of Him. Over the years I have learned the importance of standing on the Scriptures and praying them through regarding God's purpose in my life. The key is to **not give up**. Many times in the Bible we are told that in all things we are to stand, which I believe means that we are to stand on the Word of God and what God has told us and to not look at the circumstances. We are to continue to believe and trust in God, knowing that He will cause it to come to pass in His perfect time and according to His will.

In January 1993 we heard a profound message at church which bore witness to our spirit. The message was **that time is short, the harvest is now, and that Jesus Christ is coming back soon**. Concerning the harvest, God was requiring more from Christians,

**especially** those in America, than in the past. In the past God was pleased with our sending our money to reach the lost around the world, but now He was saying that our money was not enough.

It takes man and money to reach the lost and bring in the harvest. How can they be preached to unless they have a preacher? How can they be taught unless they have a teacher? God was now saying that Christians in America are to not only send money, but more are also to physically go into the harvest fields as laborers. All Christians are supposed to fulfill the Great Commission to go into the fields that are ripe, bring in the harvest, and make disciples. God was now requiring more from America whom He has blessed mightily over the past two hundred years.

**. . . to whom much is given, much is required.**  
**Luke 12:48 NKJV**

My wife and I were in complete agreement with this message, but at the time did not know what a tremendous impact it would have on our lives from that moment on.

A few weeks later in March 1993 during praise and worship at church, the Holy Spirit clearly spoke to me the following: **"I want you to go to Russia and teach My people how to pray so that they can stand against the coming pressures and persecutions when the doors are closed."** I knew more than ever that I had heard the voice of God. After church I shared it with my wife, who then told me that the Holy Spirit had revealed to her in January 1993 that we were supposed to go to Moscow.

She felt that the Lord told her to stand in Red Square and sing the song "**No Other Name But the Name of Jesus**". We did not share this with anyone, but spent the next few weeks praying for confirmation about this. We had heard God's voice other times and had obeyed Him, but this was the biggest step of faith yet that He had asked us to do.

A few weeks later God confirmed to both of us that He had called us to go to Russia. He did it by giving me an awesome spiritual dream. I dreamed that it was in the middle of the night and someone or something told me to go outside. I then went outside and looked to the eastern sky which was red like blood. Immediately above me in the sky was a cross. To the left of me was a stone wall with Jesus Christ on it running toward me. As He was running toward me, He was motioning with His left hand and saying, "**Come on, Come on**". Immediately after I awoke, I knew that Jesus was telling me that if I was ever going to do anything for the Kingdom of God that I better do it now because time is running out. Within a few days the Holy Spirit also gave my wife the following: "**Behold the Bridegroom cometh, the midnight hour, and the five wise and five foolish virgins**", all of which are in Matthew 25.

At this time we both definitely knew that we were to go to Russia and I was to teach on prayer, but we did not know how or with whom we were supposed to go. We then shared this call to go to Russia for the first time with our best friends who believed us and helped us pray it through. In about May God

divinely connected us with Revival Fires Ministries of Branson, Missouri. They had been raised up by God to help laypersons and pastors fulfill the vision God has given them with regard to fulfilling the Great Commission. Each month they take a group of persons to Russia and as of the writing of this book they have been there about sixty times. We made plans with them to make our initial trip to Russia in July 1993. Before we made our first trip to Russia, I felt in my spirit-man that we would be going there more than once.

A few weeks later, the Holy Spirit spoke to me again telling me to get my study series or book, **The Realities of Prayer**, translated into Russian. As I mentioned in a previous chapter, after I completed this teaching at the home Bible study in 1991, I felt that the Holy Spirit had given me this teaching and told me to write this book to instruct more than twelve persons, but I did not know how or when. One thing that I was definitely sure of was that I was to **never** sell the book. The Holy Spirit had impressed upon me that since I had **freely received** it, I was to **freely give** it away. He would provide the finances I needed in order to get copies of the book printed so that it could be distributed to whomever God wanted.

I contacted Revival Fires Ministries concerning the translation of **The Realities of Prayer** into Russian. They assured me that they could get the manuscript translated into Russian and, hopefully, before our scheduled July trip. I paid the publisher in Moscow to print 10,000 copies of the book.

However, about two weeks before our scheduled July trip, I was notified that the book would not be ready. My wife and I knew that we were supposed to go to Russia to teach on prayer. It would have been nice to have the book to give to the people, but I did not need it in order to teach.

Our first trip to Russia took us to Tambov, a city of about 500,000 people about 250 miles southeast of Moscow. We conducted a five-day crusade and spoke in summer youth camps and a nursing home. On the first night of the crusade God confirmed to me that we were in His perfect will there in Russia when a Russian woman came up to me and asked, "**How do we pray?**" It was quite an experience for us as our team of six Americans and two interpreters passed out thousands of Bibles and saw many hundreds of precious Russian people receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

This trip was a learning experience in many ways for us. One of the most important things I learned was that just because you are on a trip with other Christians does not necessarily mean that everything will run smoothly. The fact that you heard what God wanted you to do does not mean that other Christians on your team heard the same thing. You are dealing with other personalities and also the enemy, Satan, who is not happy with you invading his kingdom of darkness with the gospel of Jesus Christ. He will do his best to try to cause divisions, contentions, and strife on any missionary team. That is why it is most important that you pray before you go and each day while

you are on your trip. It is also very crucial to have adequate prayer coverage from your friends and your church back home.

I learned on this trip that sometimes you have to speak up and be more assertive than you may like to be. During the first three days of the crusade, I was not given the opportunity to teach on prayer, which was the primary reason I was there. On the third night I spent almost the entire night praying about this and got up early to pray. There is power in prayer and prayer changes people, but sometimes we may also have to do something else. In other words, there comes a time when we must act on our prayers. I met with the team leader early that morning to discuss the fact that I was called to teach on prayer and he had not given me the opportunity to do so. During the day the Holy Spirit must have spoken to him also for that night and the next day, he allowed me to teach the Russian people on prayer. As I was teaching on prayer God gave me a vision that I was speaking to hundreds of elephant ears in the auditorium. They were so hungry for the Word of God and wanted to hear everything. They were "**all ears**". We could not get over the appreciation and love that the Russian people showed us. After we left Tambov we took a nine-hour train trip back to Moscow where we ministered and sang at Red Square and the Kremlin and passed out Bibles. I commented to my wife that every Christian, especially in America, should go on a foreign missions trip at least once. They will never be the same. I knew that we would never again be the same as it gave us a new heart for missions

and lost people everywhere. People everywhere need to know Jesus Christ and it is our responsibility as born-again Christians to introduce Him to them. We are Christ's ambassadors here on earth.

In October 1993, I was notified by Revival Fires Ministries that the translation into Russian of my book, **The Realities of Prayer**, was completed. A short time later I received in the mail a package of about fifty of them. I had to fight back the tears as I opened the package as I could now see that part of the vision God had given me years earlier was now being fulfilled. I then made arrangements to have a book mailed from Moscow to each of about 150 persons at the Tambov crusade who had expressed a desire to have one.

At this time my wife and I knew that we needed to go back to Russia as soon as possible so that I could continue to teach them on prayer and give them copies of **The Realities of Prayer** in their own language. In December 1993 we went to Moscow where I taught on prayer and distributed over 1,000 copies of the book. We also ministered at various schools, churches, military bases, and an orphanage. On one evening the Holy Spirit spoke to me the following: **"I am not looking for specialists over here such as ministers of music, etc., but I am looking for a humble willing obedient vessel whom I can pour out My Spirit on and give My grace and ability to do what I want him to do"**. This is so true as my wife and I were just laypersons trying to hear God's voice and be in the center of His perfect will. In

going to the foreign missions field we have learned in an even greater way the meaning of Zechariah 4:6 as follows:

**. . . Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,  
says the Lord of hosts. Zech. 4:6 NKJV**

There is absolutely no way that we or any person can take credit for the powerful move of God's Spirit upon the people in Russia and countries across the world. We are just a vessel that God in His sovereignty chooses to work through when and if He wants.

In October 1994 my wife and I organized a team to go back to Russia as we went to Cheboksary, a city of 500-600 thousand people about 400 miles east of Moscow. We had been invited to come speak at Chuvash State University by a college professor/Russian women's cyclist coach that we met at the hotel on our first trip to Tambov in July 1993. At that time he received Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior and was baptized at approximately midnight in the river across from the hotel. For more than a year we had been sending him Bible material and keeping in contact with him. Our trip to Cheboksary was very eventful from the beginning as we had to fly on Aeroflot Airlines from Moscow which was quite a story in itself. It was a perfect example of God's grace and mercy that we made it safely to Cheboksary. Upon our return to the United States, we learned a few weeks later that the State Department does not recommend anyone to fly on Aeroflot Airlines. In fact, two Aeroflot airplanes had crashed within a couple of weeks of our return.

We were the first Christians allowed to speak at Chuvash State University and they even allowed us to distribute Bibles to each of the students in the auditorium. After telling the students beforehand to not pay any attention to what we had to say since they were atheists, the head of the philosophy department now wanted a copy of my book, **The Realities of Prayer**. He even wanted me to autograph it for him. The power of the Gospel is awesome as it can bring down barriers when real people share real testimonies with other real people who are hungry to know the truth.

Another blessing to me on this trip was that at the crusade I met a young pastor of a small church who already had my book. In fact, he had gotten a copy for everyone in his church.

As of the writing of this book my wife and I have not made another foreign missions trip, but I know in my spirit-man that in the future we will be taking the Gospel to other people groups in foreign lands. Whether it be Russia again or China or wherever, we know that it is in God's timing as He continues to direct us. Meanwhile, we continue to pray for God's will to be done upon the people in the nations He puts upon our hearts to pray for. We must be obedient to pray as He leads us by His Spirit. God's heart is for the lost people all over the world.

That is why He gave us His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be**

**saved. John 3:16,17 NKJV**

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### NOT BY MY MIGHT NOR POWER

As I mentioned before, in 1991 when I initially wrote The Realities of Prayer I felt that it would affect more than the twelve persons at our home Bible study. However, if you had told me then the plans that God had for it, I would have found them almost impossible to believe.

Just prior to leaving America for Cheboksary, Russia, in October 1994, I learned that the publisher in Moscow had printed another 10,000 copies of the Russian version of The Realities of Prayer in addition to the initial 10,000 copies that I had paid for. I told the publisher that they could sell any of these additional copies for only an amount necessary to recover their costs of printing. God has enabled all 20,000 of these to be distributed except for about seventy copies that I still have at home. I am giving them away as God brings people from Russia across my path here in America. To my knowledge there are Russian versions in the republics of Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Chuvash, and Belorussia. I have learned that due to the shortage of supply of Christian material in the former Soviet Union, approximately twenty persons will read each book in circulation, which means that approximately 400,000 people

may have read the Russian version of **The Realities of Prayer**. A ministry friend of mine from Michigan also gave both English and Russian versions to the Pentecostal Alliance of Churches in Minsk, Belorussia, and to the printers there so that they could print more copies. In addition, God divinely connected me with a large ministry based in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and they are using this book at their Bible School in St. Petersburg, Russia. To God be all glory and praise for what He has done. There is no way that I could have done this with my ability. I would never have dreamed it to be possible.

God has taught me **to not despise the day of small beginnings** as He has blessed my obedience in writing this book exceedingly, abundantly more than I could have ever imagined possible. In addition to the Russian versions, there are also English versions in Russia, Israel, India and Canada. God has also given me divine appointments and connections which have enabled me personally to give an English version of **The Realities of Prayer** to individuals and/or ministries in twenty-seven states of America so far. Because it was **freely received** by me, I am always to **freely give** it to others. As a result of this, I have always told the recipients of this book to feel free to make as many copies of it as they want for whomever they feel led by the Lord to give it to.

I continue to ask God in prayer to enable this book to get into the hands of those persons that He desires to have a copy.

One of my goals is to be used by God to get a copy of this book

into the hands of people in every state in America so that there will be a remnant of believers throughout America standing in the gap praying the effectual fervent prayer as Jesus taught us in Matthew 6:9-13.

I strongly believe that people need to be taught on prayer just as they do the other areas in the Word of God. However, in most of the body of Christ it seems that they are not being taught in this critical area, which can often mean life or death for a believer as he grows spiritually in Christ. Prayer is not only our means of communication with God, but it is one of our primary weapons in standing against the enemy.

I believe that prayer is the only answer if we are going to see America repent from her sins of abortion, homosexuality, idolatry, greed, materialism, etc. and turn back to God. We must pray that God will raise up believers across America who will truly humble themselves and cry out to God in prayer each day for America. **The condition and future of America directly rests on the prayers or prayerlessness of Christians throughout America.** Second Chronicles 7:14 is the only remedy for America if we who know how to pray will truly stand in the gap and intercede on behalf of this great nation:

**If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 2 Chron. 7:14 NKJV**

Let us **not** lose this great land of freedom and liberty to the

forces of darkness that are coming against America in greater numbers each day in an attempt to destroy it. We must remember the power that we have through our prayers to the all-powerful God of the universe. It is time that we obey God and pray as never before.

I thank God for the vision that He gave me in 1989 concerning teaching and preaching the Word of God, especially in the area of prayer. I know that the original vision is not totally fulfilled, but I sincerely thank God for everything that He has done so far with **The Realities of Prayer**. It has definitely not been by my might nor power. I can take no credit for any of this. I give God all the praise and glory and honor. For without God, I am nothing and I can do nothing.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### I DON'T WANT YOU TO GO TO SEATTLE

Most of the time we think that when God speaks to us, He will tell us to "**Do this or do that**". We have less tendency to believe that God will tell us **not** to do something. However, I have learned over the past several years that God will tell us both things to do and things not to do if we are really trying to hear His voice and walk in His Spirit. If we are starting to do something that is not going to accomplish God's purpose in us or through us, He may speak to us, even in an audible voice if He has to, to get us to change our direction. The key, as always, is whether we will be obedient to His voice or will we go ahead and obey our flesh.

In July 1990 my wife and I were trying to decide where to go on vacation. For several years I had been wanting to go to Seattle, Washington, and the Pacific Northwest, since I had never been to that area of the United States. Because of the deadlines of my job, we were going to have to take our vacation within a couple of weeks or wait until October. At the time I noticed that my wife was not nearly as enthusiastic about going to Seattle as I was, but I did not think it was that unusual. I received a lot of information from the Chamber of Commerce in

that area and was about ready to make airline reservations, etc.

Then one Sunday afternoon as I was in the laundry room putting clothes into the washer, I heard God clearly say, "**I don't want you to go to Seattle**". It was in as audible a voice as one can hear. I even looked around to see if some-one else was in the laundry room with me. As much as I wanted to go to Seattle, I did not really want to hear this command from God. However, if we are really trying to follow God in everything we do, we may not fully understand at the time what God is telling us to do. We do know that He is sovereign and He knows the ending before the beginning.

**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. Rom. 8:28 NKJV**

I did not immediately share this word from God with my wife Pam, but amazingly, God took away from me the desire to go to Seattle and the Pacific Northwest. For the next week I did not even look at the colorful brochures that I had received from the Chamber of Commerce because I knew in my heart that we would not be going there anytime soon. I began to know in my spirit where we were supposed to go, but it was not my first choice of locations. However, if we truly want to be in the will of God, we must follow Him and put His desires and purposes above our own. This even applies to taking vacations. We need to remember that we are not our own, but we belong to God through Christ Jesus.

On the following Sunday afternoon in discussing our

vacation options, my wife told me that she did not feel that we were supposed to go to Seattle. I then shared with her what God had told me in the laundry room on the previous Sunday. She then confirmed what was in my spirit and that we were to go to see her father, who was in the Veterans Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This was not my will, but we both knew that it was God's will for us to go.

Pam's father at that time was 72 years old and in poor health. He was not a Christian even though we had been praying for him for many years and had not given up on God to touch his heart and save him by His Spirit. We did not know how much longer her father would live and even thought that this might be the last time that we would have a chance to witness to him about the love of Jesus Christ.

Just prior to leaving for Grand Rapids, we asked our pastor and his wife to pray with us concerning Pam's father and the trip explaining our reason for going. We remember holding hands and praying with them and the pastor's wife sharing that the Lord had said to her in her spirit that we were to go and let our light shine. We will always be grateful for their encouragement and prayers.

We spent about three days in Grand Rapids with her father, but did not have a major opportunity to witness to him. There was one afternoon when we were showing Pam's father slides of our recent trip to Israel. As one slide came up, there was a picture of a black woman on our tour from Chicago, Illinois, who

also was a missionary to Africa. The slide was taken at the Garden Tomb. Pam told her dad that the lady in the picture had had a word for him and asked him if he wanted to know what it was. He acknowledged that he did and Pam told him that this woman who had never met him and really didn't know us very well either said that "**He would be saved and very soon**". Tears came to his eyes and a seed of hope in him was planted. Finally, on the last night as we were visiting with him on the grounds of the hospital I saw that the conversations were not related to eternal matters. Since it was getting late I went off by myself for a few moments and prayed to God, asking Him to direct Pam's conversation with her father since we would be leaving soon to go back home.

When I returned to Pam and her father, almost instantly God softened her father's heart and turned the conversation to eternity and spending it in heaven. Within a few minutes Pam led her father in a sinner's prayer as he prayed after her and asked Jesus Christ to forgive him of his sins and to be his Lord and Savior. It is definitely the work of the Holy Spirit that leads a person to Jesus Christ. We will never forget that immediately after her father prayed that his countenance suddenly changed. He seemed more optimistic than before and had the peace that only God can give a person.

Pam and I both knew why God did not want us to go to Seattle. God's ways are higher than our ways. What is a soul worth? We must be sensitive to the voice of God each and every

day of our lives.

During the next several months her father's health became worse. The only thing he wanted to do was to leave the Veterans Hospital and move back to Texas where he had lived for many years. I sincerely believe that he thought that if he could get back to Texas that his health would also return to normal. In December 1990, Pam and I drove back to Grand Rapids, Michigan, to move him back to Dallas, Texas. It was a very difficult and stressful trip as we made a bed for him in our van, but we made it back success-fully with him.

After a few days in the Veterans Hospital in Dallas, Pam was able to get him into a nursing home in Irving, a suburb of Dallas about 40 minutes from our house. His health did not improve, but steadily worsened. After a couple of months it was obvious that he had lost his desire or will to continue to live.

He was ready to go and be with Jesus. He died peacefully in March 1991 at 73 years old.

The thing that we will always remember is that on the last night in the hospital as we were leaving his room, he said, "**Turn the lights down, Pam**". At the time we thought this comment seemed strange as his room did not have much light in it anyway. I believe that he was already seeing the brightness of Jesus welcoming him into heaven, for it was not more than a couple of hours later when the hospital called to inform us that he had died quietly and peacefully. This story is yet another testimony of God's never-failing faithfulness.

You may be wondering if I have ever made it to Seattle. The answer is "No". Amazingly, after all those years that I wanted to go to Seattle and the Pacific Northwest, since God said "No", I still don't have any desire to go there. I don't really understand why, but I am really glad that I obeyed him in 1990 and we went to Michigan. Otherwise, there is that possibility that Pam's father would not have been saved and in heaven now. At least, Pam may not have had the opportunity to lead her own father to the Lord. What a blessing! Obedience to God truly is better than sacrifice. If we could only keep that perspective each and every day of our lives.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### PERSEVERING THROUGH PERSECUTIONS

In about 1991 at Mobil Corporation I began to go through the strongest persecution that I had ever experienced. At that time I was a manager in the tax department. I believe that as a result of my refusal to compromise my integrity and the principles of God's Word and play office politics, all of a sudden many lies and slanderous remarks were directed at me personally. Some of them even came from a new employee of mine that I had worked very hard to hire less than one year earlier.

The most shocking thing to me was that many of my co-workers, including my manager, believed them without even considering my past reputation of twenty years at Mobil.

It was not long before I realized that this battle was not one that would be fought in the natural realm. This was going to be a spiritual battle which would definitely require the supernatural intervention of God. As the persecution began to stretch over many months, I began to spend more and more quality time in prayer each day. In addition, my wife and close family members and friends were standing in the gap with their prayers for me and this situation. It is **most** important to swallow your pride and request others to pray for you, especially while you

are going through a battle. Most of the time while you are in the midst of a severe battle or persecution you are often too weak or discouraged to pray the effective fervent prayer that avails much.

In addition to spending time in prayer each day, I spent time in the Word and tried to become more sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit. There were many scriptures which I felt the Holy Spirit gave me during this time to encourage me to **stand** on the Word of God and to not give up. Among them were the following:

**No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn . . . Isa. 54:17 NKJV**

**If God is for us, who can be against us. Rom. 8:31 NKJV**

**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Rom. 8:28 NKJV**

In my prayer time each day I would stand on the Word of God by speaking aloud these scriptures believing in faith that God would intervene on my behalf.

During the first year of this battle I felt that my manager and others wanted a direct confrontation with me, but the Holy Spirit did not want me to confront them for we do not war against flesh and blood but against principalities, powers, rulers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. This was one of the hardest things I had to learn because many times I wanted to rise up and defend myself against these false accusations.

However, every time the opportunity presented itself, the Holy Spirit would firmly tell me, "**Keep your mouth shut!**"

Finally, after about a year of being persecuted without any sign of victory and becoming more discouraged as each week passed, I received a breakthrough. I knew that God was hearing the prayers that were being lifted up on my behalf. During praise and worship at church services one Sunday morning the Holy Spirit spoke clearly to me:

**"I have never failed you.  
I will never fail you.  
Stand in the victory.  
I am faithful."**

This Rhema or personal word from God comforted me more than anyone can imagine as it let me know that God was in charge of my life and to not worry. God had not left me or forsaken me. I knew then that everything was going to work out according to God's will even if they fired me, which they were also trying to do. They were even considering moving my office to an interior broom closet. It sounds funny now, but it is the truth. I found it hard to believe at the time I was going through it.

Within a few weeks the Holy Spirit impressed upon me that Satan and the people that he was working through could not fire me unless God allowed it. If God allowed it, that meant that God had something better for me since I had been praying for God's will to be done in my life. This gave me the peace of God that passes all understanding. I could not lose no matter what it looked like in man's eyes. The key to remember in every

attack that we go through is that we don't lose if we don't give up. The Bible exhorts us as follows, "**Above all else, Stand**".

If you are truly seeking God's will to be done in your life, whatever God does in your life will be for more and better, not for less. God's ways are always higher than ours. Let God open the doors of your life. Then walk through them, knowing that God loves you more than you can think or imagine.

Finally, after one and one-half years of intense persecution I was removed from my position in management. It was a blessing in disguise as I knew that I was in the center of God's will. When God supernaturally intervenes in our lives many times the results are far different than what we may think they will be. Many times other people will evaluate them differently because they are only looking at them through man's eyes and with man's understanding.

I have included this chapter for the sole purpose of showing that at one time or another believers will go through persecutions. The key is how will we handle them and what will we learn from them? Will we be a victim or a victor through Jesus Christ? Will we fall away from God or will we grow in God? Will we become bitter at God and man or will we become a better person through these experiences?

The answer to each of these questions is totally up to each one of us as we freely make our choice. However, we must remember that all our choices have corresponding consequences.

While I was going through this very painful year and a half

many times I wondered "**Why**" and "**What For**", but after-wards I realized that through this experience God was teach-ing me many things that I needed to learn in order to continue to grow in Christ. Among the major things that this experience taught me was that we are to always watch what we say, we are to pray that we be led by the Holy Spirit in all of our words and actions each day, and that people (both believers and unbelievers) are watching us to see how we are going to react to different situations. This is especially true if you proudly profess to be a born-again Christian. I learned that most of the time our daily walk (words, actions, behavior) speaks much louder than our talk. Often it is our walk that is a much stronger witness of our Christianity than our actual preaching or evangelizing. We cannot afford to be hypocrites at any time, but especially when it comes to being the Christian God intends for us to be.

After all this persecution was over I received one of the highest praises from a former employee of mine who saw everything that happened and how I reacted. He said, "**I want to be just like you**". This made me feel really good, but I explained to him that it was not me but Christ in me that enabled me to handle the situations as I did.

A major thing that I have learned through this is that we tend to have our periods of greater spiritual growth during times of persecution. It is at these times that we truly realize that we cannot solve the problem and we must trust in God alone to deliver us. We realize that without God we are

nothing. We spend more time in prayer and reading the Word of God. It is from faith to faith and glory to glory that we grow in Christ.

Another important thing to remember while being persecuted is to pray for your persecutors. It is not they themselves making them act the way they do, but it is Satan working through them. Remember that we do not war against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places. Above all, we should pray for their salvation as it is not God's will for anyone to perish. You may be the only one that knows to pray for them.

**But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.**

**Matt. 5:44 NKJV**

We are also to forgive our enemies and to forget the offenses. This means that we are to not hold grudges or try to get even with them. The battle is the Lord's, not ours. As the Word of God says, God will intervene on our behalf.

**Evil pursues sinners, but to the righteous, good shall be repaid. Prov. 13:21 NKJV**

In conclusion, we should always be thankful for what God has shown us and allowed us to learn as a result of the persecution that we have come through by His grace and glory. It is important to know that our Christian walk is truly a faith walk from one test or persecution to another as we continue to

grow in Christ each day. Everything that we experience in life has a purpose. God in His sovereignty is not a time-waster. He does not waste His time or our time. We are to continue to grow in Christ and at the same time be a blessing to others as we persevere through persecutions.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END

As the events that I discussed in the previous chapter began to take place in 1991, I felt the security of my position at Mobil begin to decrease each day. The possibility of my actually losing my job began to grow larger and larger as time passed. From time to time I was reminded of the words that the Holy Spirit spoke to me in 1987: "**You will not retire from Mobil**". I was beginning to understand them more clearly now.

For the next few years things went pretty smoothly concerning my position at Mobil, but I received virtually little or no increase in salary. There were also many informal discussions regarding downsizing due to the corporate downsizing or restructuring trend that was going on all over America, which affected hundreds of thousands of people. During this time, for the most part, Mobil was downsizing gradually in various departments by offering voluntary incentive packages to employees who wanted to retire or leave the company.

However, in August 1994, Mobil began discussing the possibility of a formal downsizing program. In February 1995 we were advised that Mobil was implementing a Strategic Reduction Program (SRP) that would affect basically all of the employees

in the United States. The purpose of the SRP was to evaluate the employees and job descriptions in each department to see which ones could be eliminated and/or be downgraded in salary. A short time later it was announced that Mobil was going to eliminate 4,700 jobs, most of which were in Dallas or Fairfax, Virginia.

As you might imagine, 1995 was a very trying and non-productive year for most people at Mobil due to the constant barrage of rumors and uncertainty about their jobs. The initial target date for completion of the SRP was December 31, 1995. However, due to the complexity of the project, many departments, including the Tax Department of which I was a member, could not complete it by then.

As fall 1995 approached, it became clear that my job and those of my immediate co-workers were some that were to be eliminated. The question at that time was, "**When will we be let go?**"

In retrospect, I would like to discuss the power of prayer as it related to my situation. After the announcement of the SRP I began to pray each day that God would enable me to continue to be employed at Mobil through the end of 1995. The reason for this was that I had two large financial obligations that would not be paid off until then. In late fall we were advised that probably nothing would transpire until 1996 due to the process taking much longer than had been anticipated. There is power in prayer and prayer can change things. It is most

important to know that God is concerned about the everyday things that go on in our lives. He will intervene on our behalf if we will just commune with Him on a daily basis.

As soon as 1996 started, the wheels of SRP began moving very swiftly. Employees throughout Mobil became aware of their fate as to their job situation. On March 26th, I was advised that the staffing and selection process had been completed and that a position was not identified for me in the new Mobil organization. The last day that I was required to be at work was July 3, 1996, which was twenty-five and a half years later from the time I started there on January 4, 1971. This date will turn out to be very important as we will see in a later chapter. During this time I prayed that God would enable me to stay employed at Mobil as long as He wanted me to be there.

The irony of the events in 1996 was that all my immediate co-workers, even my supervisor, were terminated at least two months before me. This is surprising due to the fact that it was not too many years ago that they were trying to get rid of me. I believe that it is further proof that if you are sincerely trying to follow God and be in His will for your life, that He is in complete control of your life. No man or Satan can do anything against you unless God allows it and it can only be done according to His perfect timing.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### BETTER NOT BITTER

Upon receiving the news of my termination from Mobil after more than twenty-five years, how was I going to react? I truly believe that as we grow spiritually as Christians, God gives us the grace and ability to endure whatever crosses our path of life. His Word tells us that He will not allow or give us more than we can bear.

**No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 1 Cor. 10:13 NKJV**

It is important to exhibit the proper attitude each day, but especially when we are confronted with obstacles or adversities that we have no control over. Our attitude determines our altitude. In other words, our attitude has a direct relationship to our success or failure. As born-again Christians, it is most important that we maintain the proper positive attitude regarding life and its challenges. We must always remember that we are here only temporarily and that we are victorious through Jesus Christ, Who has given us eternal life. If we are to win souls to Christ, it is very important that we exhibit the proper positive attitude so that others will

want what we have.

I truly believe that if we are trying to follow God and hear His voice, He prepares us for what we are going to face in the days ahead. In my situation with my job, God prepared me for my last days there by giving me a future word in 1987 and by the occurrence of different events at Mobil since 1991. None of these things were mere coincidences. In addition, in 1989 God began changing the desires of my heart as He called me to His ministry. My desires changed from doing tax related work to wanting to minister to people via preaching and teaching the Word of God.

As I told several people about my termination from Mobil, many of them felt that I should be or had a right to be bitter about the situation. How we react to a situation or circumstance is a choice that we must make. We can either get bitter about it or get better. The choice is ours. Because I knew that the sovereignty of God meant that He was in complete charge of my life and He was directing my steps, I made up my mind that I was not going to get **bitter**, but I was going to get **better**. I told them that we are not even guaranteed our next breath; much less a job for twenty-five or thirty years.

**Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Matt. 6:34 NKJV**

**whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. James 4:14 NKJV**

**The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord,  
and He delights in his way. Psalm 37:23 NKJV**

I would be crazy to get bitter about anything that has happened. Over the past twenty-five years plus at Mobil, I have earned a very good salary, which has enabled my wife and me to maintain a very good standard of living during all these years.

We have also been able to travel all over the United States plus Bermuda, Mexico, Europe and Israel. Even during the past several years when my income did not increase, we were blessed to go on three missionary trips to Russia, which cost us approximately \$12,000. At the same time we were also sowing into other missions-minded ministries and trying to get out of debt.

Since 1990 we have had to spend many thousands of dollars to maintain our home. Among these expenditures were a new roof, heating unit, carpet, fence, and foundation repair. Somehow God provided the finances each time as we never had to borrow or finance these major acquisitions. I truly believe the answer lies in God's Word concerning the tithes and offerings. For the past twenty years we have been faithful and obedient to bring the tithes into God's storehouse or church. In fact, we have learned to give God much more than the tithes, which is ten percent; and He has been faithful to His Word in **pouring out** His blessings upon us. God's Word is true and He means what He says.

**Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that**

there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in  
this, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you  
the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing  
that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I  
will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will  
not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the  
vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field, says the  
Lord of hosts; Malachi 3:10-11 NKJV

And my God shall supply all your need according to  
His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Phil. 4:19 NKJV

As you can see from the above, how can I realistically get  
bitter about the recent events in my life? All I can say is,  
"Thank you God for all the blessings that you have given me. I  
am so grateful and know that everything that I have and ever  
will have comes from you. I love you God."

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### TO GOD BE THE GLORY, HONOR AND PRAISE

In this chapter I find it difficult to know where to begin. Since my last day at Mobil on July 3, 1996, God has blessed us abundantly. I am going to try to point out some of the specific areas in which God has blessed us within the last few months.

Upon notification in March of my termination from Mobil, I was advised that I would receive an enhanced separation benefits package for sixteen months worth several thousand dollars. In addition, after I left Mobil on July 3rd, I received two months regular salary before the enhanced separation benefits package started.

As you may recall, in a previous chapter I mentioned the significance of July 3rd. On July 2nd I was advised that all employees, even those that were going to be terminated that were on the payroll as of **July 1**, would be eligible to receive one or both special business results bonuses of 3 and 4 percent of their annual salary. I received a fax from the manager in Fairfax that advised me that I would receive both bonuses at the end of July which amounted to more than \$3,700. It is amazing that God knows the ending before the beginning and He enabled me to stay at Mobil past July 1. God does love us and cares for us

in every area of our lives. He does provide for our needs. It is interesting to note that the amount of the bonuses is included again in the calculation for the enhanced separation benefits package.

I sincerely believe that the enhanced separation benefits package and the bonuses are partial fulfillment of the following scripture:

**. . . But the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous. Prov. 13:22 NKJV**

The sinner in this passage, in my opinion, stands for the world or world system. I believe that in these last days more of the wealth of the world will be released to God's people. The purpose of the release of this abundance will not be for the saints to accumulate more things of this world, **but** to win souls to the kingdom of God. It takes both man and money to bring in the tremendous harvest of souls that will be available as God pours out His Spirit on all flesh all over the world. We must be good stewards of the wealth that is entrusted to us by God and be "**Channels of Blessing**" that He can work in and through. It is most important that we be obedient to His call to go where He wants us to go, and to say and do what He wants us to do.

In September I received a lump-sum check for more than \$9,000 for my accrued vacation from 1995 and 1996. This check enabled us to pay off the remaining mortgage of our house which was nearly twelve years early. As a result of making extra principal payments since 1991 and the lump-sum payment in

September, we saved nearly \$30,000 in future interest payments.

There are no logical explanations for all the events that have happened this year. However, I do know that God is in charge of my life; and that no matter what happens I know that it is for my good because I love Him and am called according to His purpose. I thank God for everything He has given me and for everything that He is continuing to do in my life. I cannot take credit for any of it. To God be all glory and honor and praise for the great things that He has done.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### TRUST GOD

Now that my days at Mobil are over, the most often asked question that I hear from friends and family is, "**What are you going to do now?**" That is a very good question and deserves a good answer if I could only give them one.

The one thing that I am sure of is that God called me to His ministry in 1989. Today I am even more positive that God has a purpose for my life. He has changed my desires so much in the last several years and there is nothing I want more than to serve Him in full-time ministry. I believe that I am called to preach and teach the uncompromising Word of God and do my part in winning souls to Jesus Christ. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God has put these desires into my heart; and that it is His responsibility to cause them to come to pass.

**Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.**  
Psalm 37:4,5 NKJV

I have learned several times over the past nine years not to try to make things happen on my own. It is not good to get ahead of God as the results will not be of God, but of yourself. We must remember that everything must be in God's timing, not

our timing.

As I have trusted completely in the Lord during these past nearly ten years, I must continue to trust in Him to lead me and guide me each day. It would be foolish to stop praying and trusting in Him now. I know that God has not brought me this far to leave me or forsake me. It is most important for me to wait on God and continue to listen for His voice to direct me in His paths. The waiting is absolutely the hardest thing to do, especially if we have been busy doing something most of our lives. We as Christians tend to want to be busy for the Lord and not wait on the Lord. During these past few months I am learning to **relax** in God, knowing that He is in charge of my life and He is going to open the door that He wants me to go through.

**Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him . . .  
Do not fret--it only causes harm. Psalm 37:7,8 NKJV**

God has blessed me during this time with His peace that passes all understanding. It is having this peace that assures me that I am on the right track and God has not forgotten me and His purposes for my life.

**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phil. 4:6,7 NKJV**

In essence, these scriptures tell us to not worry about anything, but to pray about everything. God is very much interested in all our concerns.

Since I left Mobil on July 3rd, several events have occurred that indicate to me that God is continuing to direct my steps. Among the most important of these was that in July, I received my credentials as a licensed minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This has been a strong desire of my heart ever since I started attending seminary in 1993.

I have just returned from a meeting with Revival Fires Ministries in Branson, Missouri, where they advised me that the Russian version of my book on prayer, **The Realities of Prayer**, is in at least its third printing. The publisher in Moscow continues to print it and distribute it to churches and bookstores throughout Russia. To God be the glory for all that He is doing.

Just recently the Holy Spirit put upon my heart the desire to get **The Realities of Prayer** translated into the Chinese language of Mandarin and have copies made. I have had a positive meeting toward accomplishing this goal in the very near future. I sincerely believe that we will see **very soon** God bring down the barriers that are preventing the Gospel from being **freely** preached in China. His Word tells us that He will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh.

**And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions, and also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. Joel 2:28,29 NKJV**

We know that God is no respecter of persons; and there are more

than 1.2 billion Chinese people that need to hear the saving message of Jesus Christ. God has put in my heart His love for the Chinese people and I have been praying for many years for God's Spirit to be poured out upon China. I know that as soon as God opens the door to China that He will grant the desire of my heart to go there on a missionary trip to preach and teach the Word of God and help bring in the harvest of souls to the kingdom of God. In addition, I plan to teach on prayer and distribute the Chinese version of **The Realities of Prayer** as the new Christians must be taught how to pray the effectual fervent prayer that avails much and how to grow spiritually as Christians.

As of this writing I do not know what other plans that God has for me, but I do know that I must do what I know to do each day to prepare for the full-time ministry He has for me. I must seek His face each day in prayer, standing on His Word and His promises to me, knowing that they will come to pass according to His perfect will and time. In addition, I must read and study the Word of God each day in order to be ready to preach and teach His Word.

**Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Tim. 2:15 NKJV**

Above all of these, I must **trust in God** with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, knowing that what He has called me to do, He is perfectly able to cause to come to pass.

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean**

not on your own understanding; in all your ways  
acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.  
Prov. 3:5,6 NKJV

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord  
Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep,  
through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you  
complete in every good work to do His will, working in  
you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus  
Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.  
Hebrews 13:20,21 NKJV

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### CONCLUSION

As I write this concluding chapter I want to give God all the glory and honor for enabling me to write this book. I hope that you have found it to be an interesting and encouraging account of God's intervention and faithfulness in our lives as normal everyday people. As you go through similar experiences and even more serious situations in your life, I hope that some things that you gleaned from this book will help you to know that God does love you and is in charge of your life. God has not forsaken or forgotten you.

I would like to mention a few points to remember as you go through the ups and downs of life's journey. If you have been downsized or terminated from an employer, please realize that it may be a blessing in disguise. God may be trying to expand your horizons by getting you out of your comfort zone. He may have other more important plans for your life. Most people have a tendency to keep on doing the same things day in and day out because they are comfortable with the known routine. Because of obligations such as family, debt, etc., people are hesitant to step out into the unknown, even if they literally hate what they are currently doing. I am convinced that most people do not

fulfill God's best for them because of existing obligations and fear of the unknown. We are not to let the fear of rejection or failure keep us from testing new waters in our lives. Progress always involves some degree of risk. If we are going to fulfill God's purpose for our lives, we must overcome fear and step out in faith, trusting totally in God that He will not let us fail.

We must believe that God is ordering our steps and that He is our provider and not ourselves, friends, family members, employers, or the government.

It is also very important to know who you are in Christ Jesus. Just because you lost your job does not mean that you are a failure. One person's or even a large group's opinion of you does not define who you are. God loves you unconditionally for who you are, not for what you have done on your job or what you are doing now.

Remember that you cannot lose until you completely give up. At times we may feel battered, but we are not defeated. We are victorious through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the forgiveness of all our sins and then rose from the dead so that we could have everlasting life.

**And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.**

**Gal. 6:9 NKJV**

**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phil. 4:13 NKJV**

At times we may have to rest and regroup, but we can come back with renewed strength and energy and a new resolve or purpose.

We can also learn from other people and from our own experiences. As we hear and read stories of successful people, it is amazing to discover how many obstacles each of them had to overcome before achieving success. For example, Abraham Lincoln and Lee Iacocca failed many times before they succeeded. The key was that they did not let their failures keep them from trying again. Very few become successful without falling down a few times as they climb the ladder of success. I have also learned that the experiences that we go through in life are not wasted times. We learn and grow from each of these. We are not to let the failures of yesterday rob us of the successes of today or tomorrow. Our failures and experiences are to be invested into our future. The same is true for every skill or aptitude that we have learned over the years. God is not a timewaster and He does not waste our time in the experiences that we go through and the knowledge that we obtain. God has a purpose in all of this. If we are a humble, willing, obedient vessel, then He can use all of our experiences and knowledge to fulfill His purposes on earth. Each of us is a unique creation of God created to be a **"Channel of Blessing"** that God can work through to be a blessing to others. We all have something that we can give to others. The key is to find out what that is and to let God develop it in us for His glory and not our glory.

If we know that God has given us a vision or purpose, it is most important that we do not lose sight of that vision. We must continue to pray it through, stand on the Word of God,

believe in faith that it is coming to pass, speak words of faith without doubting, and prepare for its fulfillment. I have learned that we are to do everything that we can do and let God do the rest. In other words, "**We do the possible. God does the impossible**". We must be ready to go through the door when God opens it. We cannot sit still doing nothing and then expect to be prepared when God opens the door that we are supposed to go through. In doing so, we can miss many divine opportunities that God wants us to have. Be sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit as He will guide you and tell you things to do in preparation for the fulfillment of His vision for you.

**For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Habakkuk 2:3 NKJV**

**Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Phil. 3:13,14 NKJV**

**Where there is no revelation (or vision), the people cast off restraint (or perish); but happy is he who keeps the law. Prov. 29:18 NKJV**

It is also most important during this time to avoid associating with negative-minded people. They will only steal your joy and discourage you. Associate with people who believe in you and your vision, and will encourage you, not discourage you.

**Above all**, in everything it is important for us to keep our eyes on Jesus Christ and not on the circumstances or situations that we are facing. He alone is our Deliverer and the lifter of

our head.

I would like to conclude this book by offering to lead you in two different prayers. The first prayer is for those readers who may not be assured of their destiny as to where they will spend eternity--heaven or hell. They may never have had the opportunity to personally invite Jesus Christ to be their personal Savior, forgive them of their sins, and give them assurance of everlasting life. For those readers who would like to do so at this time, please repeat the following prayer with all sincerity and belief:

**Dear God,**

**I know that I am a sinner and that I can no longer try to live my life the way I am living it, trying to do everything on my own. I need You to help me become the person that I was supposed to be. Please forgive me of all my sins in actions, words and thoughts that are not of You. I thank You God for sending us your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who was born of the virgin Mary, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross at Calvary for the forgiveness of all my sins. I thank You that on the third day Jesus arose from the dead so that I could live and have everlasting life. I now ask Jesus Christ to change my heart and be my Lord and Savior forever. Please give me the peace and assurance of my salvation that only You can give. Help me to become the Christian that You want me to be. Help me to always serve You and to be a blessing to others. Thank You God for saving me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.**

The second prayer is a prayer of faith for those readers who really would like to become the Christian that God wants them to be and to truly trust in God. For those readers who truly have this desire, please repeat the following prayer,

believing in faith:

Dear God,

I know that I am not living the Christian life that You have called me to. I know that I am not seeking your face each day and praying as You want me to. I know that I am not reading your Word each day as I should. But I come before You now and repent of my past behavior and ask for your forgiveness. From this day forward, I ask You God to help me become the person that You have called me to be. Help me to read your Word each day and obey your Word, to watch my words that I speak to others and to pray effectual prayers according to your will. Help me to be a committed, consistent Christian that will make a difference in the world in which I live. Help me to be your witness everywhere I go. Help me to be a person of integrity and to never compromise the gospel of Jesus Christ. Help me to truly trust You in every area of my life, my finances, my health, my marriage, my family, my job. Help me to always know that You are in charge of my life and that my steps are truly ordered by You. Help me to grow spiritually each day and to walk each day being led by your Holy Spirit and not by my flesh. I thank You God for hearing and answering my prayer. I praise You and love You God. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

I sincerely hope that this book has been a blessing to you as well as an encouragement. I hope that you have learned some key points that will help you in your spiritual walk. It is important to remember that the life of a Christian is not a sprint, but it is a marathon race. It is not a quick work, but it is a lifelong process. We must each do our best each day to become the Christian that God intends for us to be. With God, nothing is impossible. Through our prayers and obedience to His Word, God is faithful to help us to grow spiritually each day into that man or woman of God that He always meant us to be.

In closing, I would personally like to encourage you to enjoy the journey as a Christian. It will not always be a smooth highway. There will be twists and turns, bumps and potholes along the way, but the race will be unquestionably the most challenging and exciting one that you will ever enter. The reward at the end of the race is definitely worth the trials along the way. Remember to always keep your trust in God as He is in charge of your life. Keep your eyes on Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of your faith, and set your face like a flint toward God. Be steadfast and do not give up. You will win in the end, no matter what it looks like right now. Be everything that God intends for you to be.



