

TWELVE YEARS
TWO LIVES

DWAYNE CONYERS

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Second Edition

For Gail-Lenora Staton

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INTRODUCTION

On a network television special about teenage sexuality, one young lady stated that the only problem she had with her involvement in premarital sex was the feeling that “God is watching me.”

A valid concern, no doubt. One of the qualities we have come to understand about God is His omnipresence and omniscience. No matter where you go, no matter how many lights you turn off or how tightly the shades are drawn, you can never go beyond God’s line of sight. God *is* watching you. David illustrates this fact in the 139th Psalm:

‘O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known [me]. ²Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. ³Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted [with] all my ways. ⁴For [there is] not a word in my tongue, [but], lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. ⁵Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. ⁶[Such] knowledge [is] too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot [attain] unto it. ⁷Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? ⁸If I ascend up into heaven, thou [art] there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou [art there]. ⁹[If] I take the wings of the morning, [and] dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; ¹⁰Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. ¹¹If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. ¹²Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light [are] both alike [to thee].

(Psalms 139:1-12)

God’s eyes *are* always on us. The question I would like to ask in that regard is this: Is that fact a comfort, or is it an uncomfortable imposition on your privacy?

If the latter were true in your case, I would like to inform you that your attitude is WAY OFF BASE. Why is it you find it hard to find comfort in the fact that God is watching you? If I were to take a wild guess at it, I would say that your thinking probably stems from the common conjecture that “God is out to get you.”

Let us go off on a tangent for a moment. Imagine that you are driving through a rough neighborhood, late at night. There are drug dealers on every corner and frightening figures lurking in the shadows. Suddenly, your engine quits. The headlights go dead and the starter will not respond. Your heartbeat quickly rises as you notice the shadowy figures on the streets moving closer and closer to your car. Then, suddenly, a bright blue and red light flashes behind you. It is a police car. Imagine how good you feel when that officer gets out of his cruiser and walks over to your car.

Now, imagine yourself in the same car. This time, however, you are doing about 99 mph down a deserted country road. Suddenly, you notice that same police car coming up behind you, flashing his lights and signaling you to pull over. It is the *same* police officer driving the *same* cruiser and flashing the *same* lights. So then, why are you upset? Well, in the first scenario, you were in a dangerous place and fearing imminent disaster. Your *predicament* caused you to welcome the presence of this authority figure.

In the second scenario, you were behaving in a “lawless” manner. You knew that you were breaking the law, but had no remorse **until** you got caught. And that, my friend, explains why some people get terribly uncomfortable when they contemplate the fact that God sees all, hears all, knows all.

Many “church folks” comfortably psyche themselves into believing that God only sees them or hears from them at certain times. It is as if they believe that God is asleep or is busy doing other things. Sunday morning is the day we pay God a visit. So, we dress up in our finest clothes (we even wear clean underwear, since God sees everything) and stay on our best behavior. We try to stay awake through most of the bor-r-ring sermon, then we bid God adieu (the benediction) and promise to visit Him next week (if it doesn’t rain, or if we’re not too hung over).

Is that why some interpret the Lord's gaze as an affront, an imposition? Well, maybe you are devout and live a (relatively) holy life. Still, your motivation for right living is not to please a loving Father, but to avert the wrath of an angry tyrant. Who was it that planted the negative images in your mind? You know... images of the Lord perched on edge of His throne with a lightning bolt in hand, waiting to zap some poor unsuspecting soul who stepped on a crack in the asphalt. It seems that these images crept into the church around the 13th century. Typical of this attitude was a sermon delivered by Johannes Tauler, a German mystic of the Dominican order, entitled "*2e sermon pour le saint sacrement.*" It contains the following quote:

"God does not wish to be the only one to punish us, He wishes that we may be punished by all creatures. Man is hunted like game offered to the Emperor; he is hunted, torn, and bitten by dogs, and he is thus more pleasing to the Emperor than if he had been taken gently. God is the Emperor who wants to eat the game taken by the hunt. He also has his hunting dogs; it is the Enemy who hunts man through temptations of all kinds; he slithers toward you from all corners, in all kinds of ways, and hunts you through diverse temptations; first through pride, avarice, and all sorts of vices, then through despair and excessive sorrow. Dear child, hold steady, that will not do you any harm; your needs must be hunted."

Unfortunately, this attitude survived (to some extent) the Protestant reformation of the 16th century. Even today, many Christians hold fast their belief that it is God's will and purpose to throw obstacles in their way. They fail to realize that it is satan who puts obstacles in our way.

Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died,
yea rather, that is risen again, who ^{is} even at the right
hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

(Romans 8:34)

Jesus died a horrible and gruesomely torturous death on a cross. It was the most painful and humiliating experience any human being could ever go through. The electric chair and the guillotine are merciful by comparison. Not only did Jesus suffer the physical punishment, He bore your sins and carried your

sicknesses far away (see Isaiah 53:4, Matthew 8:17 and 1st Peter 2:24-25). What act could be more loving than that?

Who being the brightness of [his] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
(Hebrews 1:3)

'Now of the things which we have spoken [this is] the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; ²A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.
(Hebrews 8:1-2)

Jesus **is** our Great High Priest. Jesus **is** the One who ministers on our behalf. We do not need any intercessor to make our way to Jesus. We can boldly approach His throne at any time with any request (Hebrews 4:16) and have confidence that, as His children and servants, we have His attention (see 1st John 5:14,15).

I can understand negative attitudes coming from that feeling of guilt over immoral lifestyles. After all, many “sinners” have “praying grandma’s” who taught them about the Lord as children. In addition, even if they never had any religious training, every living soul has a built-in knowledge of right and wrong. Whether or not they obey that inward witness is another matter.

Still, it is one thing for a “sinner” to have an image of a harsh, inflexible Deity; and quite another for “Born Again Christians” to harbor that same idea. How do images of flying lightning bolts and hail of fire and brimstone come to the minds of those who call themselves children of God? Most likely is the fact that they may be living a **less than obedient** lifestyle. An even more significant explanation could lie in the fact that these individuals, frankly, know nothing about Him. That is truly tragic, considering that the word of God reveals so much about our Heavenly Father.

Pastor Jack W. Hayford once explained that many of us have a fearful or negative image of God because of the fearsome and negative demeanor of authority figures in our lives. This could be an abusive father, a domineering mother, or an obstinate schoolteacher. Even worse, a religious leader may have exhibited such behavior. In my own experience, I have dealt with “iron fisted” pastors and church members who almost made me want to turn away from the church (and God). What turned me around and brought me back was not the fear of losing my eternal fire insurance but, rather, a glimpse of the reality of God’s nature (which transcends the “ugliness” which some Christians may exhibit).

This book is primarily for the Christian whose entire religious experience is a mechanical and/or legalistic effort at averting divine wrath. It is also for the non-Christian that may feel the pull of the Spirit to come out of darkness and into the light, but can’t reconcile their need for God with their (flawed) perception of His character. I want to blow a hole through the myth that God just doesn’t care, or that His preferred method of dealing with His children is heavy handed punishment, forcing us to “climb the rough side of the mountain.” For those of you who look at the disasters and evil in life and refer to them as “Acts of God,” fasten your seat belts and prepare to have some “old tapes” erased. If you are not careful, you will learn that God is a God of love who longs to pour that love on His children.

Like as a father pitieth [his] children, [so] the LORD
pitieth them that fear him.

(Psalms 103:13) The LORD thy God in the midst of thee
[is] mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with
joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with
singing.

(Zephaniah 3:17)

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

(1st John 4:8)

This little book that you are about to read is simply an expository on what may be a familiar passage of scripture: Mark chapter five. In this scripture, we see Jesus

interacting with two individuals. The one common denominator in these two lives is “twelve years.”

CHAPTER ONE

“Twelve” is the Key

Before we commence our examination of the “Two Lives” featured in our key scripture, it is important that we first develop our understanding of the significance of “Twelve Years.” As previously mentioned, this period is the one thing that links the two individuals we will be reading about. It may also be interpreted as the key linking them (and their circumstances) to our lives and present-day situations. In order for the account of these two lives to have an impact on your life and situation, it is imperative that you have a vehicle for personalizing their unique experiences. That vehicle just happens to be... *twelve years*.

To help you understand the importance of “twelve years,” we will pause to contemplate the significance of numbers in God’s word. Evangelist Kenneth E. Hagin once described the Bible as a gold mine. You can pan around the surface and find a few nuggets, or you can dig deep and hit the *mother lode*.

Not that we want to read things into the scripture that aren’t there, nor would we want to “spin our wheels” pondering minutiae. Still, I do not believe that anything in the Bible is wasted. Even the “begats” and “begottens” have their own significance. When it comes to numbers, it is not very difficult to find the hidden meaning or illumination.

Moreover, in this specific situation, it seems hard to believe that the “twelve year connection” is merely a coincidence.

How significant are numbers throughout the Bible? Let us look at the number “three” as an example. “Three” is often associated with God’s nature since God is triune: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When God created man in His image, He created us in three parts: spirit, soul and body. Three may also represent completeness concerning a testimony or a manifestation. Consider the following scriptures:

Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

(1st Timothy 5:19)

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

(Hebrews 10:28)

The number "seven" is the number of fullness or completeness. In the very beginning of the Bible, we can see one of the reasons that completeness is attributed to "seven" because God created this world in seven days.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ²And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the **seventh** day from all his work which he had made. ³And God blessed the **seventh** day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (Genesis 2:1-3)

Based on the precedent set by God during the creation, the Sabbath was established on the seventh day. During the Passover Seder, according to the *Haggadah of the Chassidic Masters*, the number seven is remembered by simply associating it with the number of days in the week. Were you to conduct an in depth study of the Law of Moses, you would discover that some sabbaths are sequenced in groups of seven.

⁸And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. ⁹Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth [day] of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.

(Leviticus 25:8-9)

Another example of the number seven representing completeness can be found in the book of Ruth, chapter four. Here, *seven sons* are mentioned as being representative of the ultimate in a mother's posterity.

And he shall be unto thee a restorer of [thy] life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.

(Ruth 4:15)

The Bible itself is divided into seven groups of books: Historical, Poetical, Prophetic, Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Revelation. The Book of Revelation is built around the number seven, more so than any other book in the Bible.

Among the numerous references to “seven” in this book, it is interesting to note that there are seven beatitudes (or “blessed’s”) in Revelation:

Blessed [is] he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time [is] at hand.

(Revelation 1:3)

And I heard a voice from heaven saying *unto* me, Write, *Blessed* [are] the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

(Revelation 14:13)

Behold, I come as a thief. *Blessed* [is] he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

(Revelation 16:15)

And he saith unto me, Write, *Blessed* [are] *they* which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

(Revelation 19:9)

Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

(Revelation 20:6) Behold, I come quickly: *blessed* [is] he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.
(Revelation 22:7)

Blessed [are] they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.
(Revelation 22:14)

God created man on the **sixth** day. Therefore, many theologians correlate the number six as being the number of man. Considering that the number six has a value of **one less than seven**, it represents the *incompleteness* of fallen man (in relation to the *completeness* of God and His perfect plan).

Consider that the mark of the beast in the Book of Revelation is “666.” This trio of sixes (the number of **a** man) probably represents the ultimate defiance of God by sinful, prideful human society.

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number [is] Six hundred threescore [and] six.
(Revelation 13:18)

By doubling the number six, you get the number “twelve,” which is considered to be the number representing God’s people. Twelve is also the number of divine administration in God’s dealings with mankind. The number 12 has great spiritual significance in the word of God, appearing in 165 verses of the King James Version (“twelfth” appears in 18 verses).

In the Old Testament, Jacob has 12 sons, thus establishing the 12 tribes of Israel. The fact that Jesus chose twelve apostles in the New Testament should clue you in to the significance of this number. As the children of Israel journeyed to the Promised Land, they were reminded of the meaning behind the number twelve on a number of occasions. For example, consider Moses’s actions in the following scripture:

And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the

hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

(Exodus 24:4)

When God directed Moses to create priestly garments for Aaron, we see that even this clothing contained references to the twelve tribes.

Observe, in the following verses, instances in which we can see the numbers twelve, six and two in use:

⁹And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: ¹⁰Six of their names on one stone, and [the other] six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth.

(Exodus 28:9-10)

Jump down to verse 15 and pay close attention to the design specifications for the *Breastplate of Judgement*. We see that this breastplate contains four rows of stones... each row contains three stones. Four times three equals **twelve**.

¹⁵And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; [of] gold, [of] blue, and [of] purple, and [of] scarlet, and [of] fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. ¹⁶Foursquare it shall be [being] doubled; a span [shall be] the length thereof, and a span [shall be] the breadth thereof. ¹⁷And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, [even] four rows of stones: [the first] row [shall be] a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: [this shall be] the first row. ¹⁸And the second row [shall be] an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. ¹⁹And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. ²⁰And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. ²¹And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, [like] the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.

(Exodus 28:15-21)

It is interesting that twelve precious stones represent the tribes of Israel on the breastplate of judgement. In Revelation chapter 21, we see that the foundations of the city of God are built on 12 foundations of precious stones. This is close, if not exactly the same, to the ones used in Exodus 28 (although the foundation stones represent the apostles).

When the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, twelve men were assigned to lead the procession with the Ark of the Covenant.

"Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. ¹²Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. ¹³And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, [that] the waters of Jordan shall be cut off [from] the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.

(Joshua 3:11-13)

Even Elijah's ministry commemorated the sons of Jacob:

And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:

(1st Kings 18:31)

Interestingly, Jacob was not the first to establish twelve tribes (or nations). Abraham's son Ishmael (by Hagar the Egyptian) was father of twelve princes. This fact is considered by many (particularly in the Jewish camp) to be a harbinger of what God was planning to do through Jacob. In addition, even if it isn't, it shows God's faithfulness to Abraham in His promise that his seed would be as the dust of the earth

(Genesis 13:16)

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will

multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

(Genesis 17:20)

¹³And these [are] the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, ¹⁴And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa, ¹⁵Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah: ¹⁶These [are] the sons of Ishmael, and these [are] their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.

(Genesis 25:13-16)

As we touched upon earlier in this chapter, the number “twelve” is also significant in the New Testament. Were you to read the description of the New Jerusalem (the city being built for God’s people), you would see that its features and dimensions are based on the number 12 (or multiples of 12).

¹⁶And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. ¹⁷And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred [and] forty [and] four cubits, [according to] the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. ¹⁸And the building of the wall of it was [of] jasper: and the city [was] pure gold, like unto clear glass. ¹⁹And the foundations of the wall of the city [were] garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation [was] jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; ²⁰The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. ²¹And the twelve gates [were] twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city [was] pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

(Revelation 21:16-21)

We could go on and on, but I am sure that you get the point by now. Our objective is simply to direct your attention to the number 12 as the number corresponding to, or representing, God's people. I hope that when you see the number "12" in the Bible, you will be sensitive to its meaning.

If you are a Christian, then you are "God's people." Therefore, at least in this study, you might consider taking the compassion of God (as demonstrated in the two lives in our essential scripture) as being your very own.

CHAPTER TWO

Twelve Years of Death

In Mark Chapter 5, we see an interesting day in the ministry of Jesus. We begin our study immediately after Jesus leaves the people of Gadara, a group of people who rejected Him despite the great miracle in the life of a demon possessed man. Leaving the Gadarenes behind, Jesus returns to find Himself surrounded by a great crowd of people.

²¹And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea.

(Mark 5:21)

Considering that, by this time, news of Jesus had spread throughout the region like “wildfire,” virtually everybody from this town may have come out to get a look at the Messiah. After all, the prophets had been promising His arrival for generations. The problem, unfortunately, is that many in the crowd probably came out of sheer curiosity. What is wrong with that? The main problem with that is that curiosity is easily satisfied. Just a glance at the subject of your curiosity will be enough. The point that I would like to drive home is that it takes more than “just a glance” to receive from God. The promise of signs and wonders may draw big crowds, but each member of that crowd has to do more than just show up. In order to receive from God, you must possess an explosive expectancy.

Many of the members of this crowd may have had pressing needs. They may even have come seeking to receive a blessing from the Messiah. Some may have even been desperate for a touch from the Master’s hand. Let us take a look at one such man, a man with the burden of a very desperate need on his heart, as he approached the Lord.

²²And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, ²³And besought him greatly, saying, My little

daughter lieth at the point of death: [I pray thee], come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

(Mark 5:22-23)

Of all the people in this massive crowd, Jairus was the one who captured Jesus' attention. I am sure that there had to have been other people in the crowd with problems of every kind. Why did Jesus' not notice any of them? What was it about Jairus that made him stand out in this crowd? Could it be that Jesus was impressed by Jairus' position as a leader in the synagogue? That seems unlikely since, according to the scriptures, God is no respecter of person.

Neither doth God respect [any] person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.

(2nd Samuel 14:14b)

Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do [it]: for [there is] no iniquity with the LORD our God, *nor respect of persons*, nor taking of gifts.

(2nd Chronicles 19:7)

Then Peter opened [his] mouth, and said, Of a truth *I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:*

(Acts 10:34)

For there is no respect of persons with God.

(Romans 2:11)

Considering the above scriptures, we can safely rule out any assumption that it was Jairus' rank or position. That should be good news, for it means that **anyone** can receive from God, not just the Pastor or Bible school graduates. Everybody has an equal chance with God! You do not have to have a D.D. or Th.D. to get Jesus' attention. "That's great," you may be thinking, "but how do I get Jesus' attention?" Before I answer that question, let us look a little more closely at Jairus.

When you think about it, Jairus' position in the synagogue could have been more a hindrance to his coming to Jesus than an asset. Consider that the religious officials of that day did not accept Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, and the

Anointed One of God. They refused to hear His message, and probably persecuted anyone who did. By comparison, consider Nicodemus, a high-ranking official. When he approached Jesus (cf. John 3:1-21), he came at night. He obviously wanted to avoid the public scrutiny of his peers (considering that the scribes and Pharisees were probably still angry with Jesus making a whip and chasing the money changers out of the temple). One could safely say that Nicodemus might have been ostracized should his visit with Jesus have been “out in the open.”

Many people in the church today will not admit that they have a need. Rather than confessing their weakness(es) and seeking prayer (cf. James 5:16), they will wear a mask and maintain the façade that all is well when it definitely is not. Rather than act according to faith in God’s word, these people would rather submit to their fear of what people think. If you are willing to go to the place where the power of God is, you might as well go all the way and be willing to receive what God has for you. Otherwise, why waste your time coming out? You would be better off staying home. So then, what was it that motivated Jairus to come to Jesus, despite the odds? The only answer has to be that it was his *faith*. It had to take faith for Jairus to come and **bow down** to Jesus (a very public confession/demonstration) under those circumstances. What was the result of Jairus taking this chance, jeopardizing his reputation and risking the derision of his fellow leaders?

And [Jesus] went with him; and much people followed him,
and thronged him.

(Mark 5:24)

Although God *is* no respecter of person, He does respect faith. British Evangelist Smith Wigglesworth was known to have said that faith will cause God to pass over a million people just to get to you. It isn’t how bad you hurt, how hard you pray, how often you attend Sunday School or how much money you place into the offering basket. In fact, if you really want to know the truth, it is **impossible** to please God if you do not come to Him in faith.

But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

(Hebrews 11:6)

If you diligently seek God in faith, His word guarantees that He **will** reward you. We see that principle happening in Jairus' life. Jairus approached Jesus in faith and, consequently, Jesus went with him. Does that mean Jesus did not care about the others in the crowd? After all, these people *were* following Jesus. They *were* trying desperately to get near Jesus. Some may have been grabbing at Jesus, tugging at His clothes. Why weren't they blessed?

Well... where was their faith?

If you've been seeking something for a long time, be it healing, the salvation of a loved one, a new job or some other blessing, don't allow yourself to believe that God is ignoring you. As we covered at the beginning of this book, God is always watching us. We are never out of His line of sight. We are never so far away that He cannot guide us.

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

(Psalms 32:8)

Okay, so maybe God is not ignoring you. Maybe something just went haywire. Did you ever think that your prayer request got lost in His "in-basket" or that your blessing was delivered by accident to the wrong recipient? Know this... that it is impossible for God to fail. If there is any failure, it has to be in you. That might make you mad, but the only other alternative to consider is that God made a mistake. And any first year Sunday School student would know enough to tell you that that is **impossible**.

Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he [it is] that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

(Deuteronomy 31:6)

Perhaps some people in the crowd watched Jesus turn and follow Jairus and began to think He did not care, or that He didn't realize their situations. All they needed to realize (and, for that matter, all *we* need to realize) is that appearances do not change the word of God. All it takes is just a little faith, and He will move even the largest mountain for you.

²⁵And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, ²⁶And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, ²⁷When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. ²⁸For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.
(Mark 5:25-28)

Unbeknownst to everyone (except Jesus), there was a woman hidden in this crowd. She was suffering from some sort of hemorrhage — possibly caused by a cyst or fibroid tumor — that caused uncontrollable bleeding. She had this condition for twelve long years (hey, there is the number “12” again) and had no hope for recovery. The Bible does not give her name, although ancient tradition identifies her as *Veronica of Caesarea Philippi*.

What a terrible situation this woman faced. She was suffering from a debilitating disease that medical science of that day had no method of curing. Even worse, her sickness affected her in ways that we can hardly imagine in this present day and age. Consider the fact that the Jewish people lived under strict adherence to “The Law of Moses.”

The Law stated that, when a woman experienced her monthly cycle, she was banned from society, having to observe a complex set of purification rituals.

¹⁹And if a woman have an issue, [and] her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. ²⁰And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean: every thing also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean. ²¹And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be

unclean until the even. ²²And whoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even. ²³And if it [be] on [her] bed, or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even. ²⁴And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean.

(Leviticus 15:19-24)

In his commentary on the Pentateuch, Rashi stated that a woman with this condition would be banished from contact with anyone **until** she had completed the seven-day purification ritual (which concluded with a sacrifice made on the eighth day). Aren't you women glad that we are not under the Law, but under grace? Keep in mind, however, that this only applies to *normal* menstruation. What about a woman, such as the one in Mark chapter five, who has a **continual** issue of blood? How does the Law apply under those circumstances?

²⁵And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she [shall be] unclean.

²⁶Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation: and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation. ²⁷And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even. ²⁸But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. ²⁹And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

(Leviticus 15:25-29)

For twelve long years, this woman was forced to wear the label “unclean.” She had become an outcast from society. Not only was this poor woman isolated from all human contact, but anything she touched was considered unclean. If she sat on a chair, it would be considered unclean and anyone who touched that chair would have to go through a meticulous purification ritual. Needless to say, this probably meant that she wasn’t invited to many social events. After all, what business owner would want this woman to come in and sit on his furniture? She’d run him out of business in less than an hour.

Which of her neighbors would invite her over for tea? Could you imagine a man coming home after a long day at the synagogue to find his wife burning the furniture?

“Sorry honey,” she would say to her perplexed spouse, “but Mrs. Issueofblood stopped by for a visit. I’ll fix your dinner just as soon as I burn my clothes and bathe seven times.”

Well, maybe it wouldn’t be quite that extreme, but I’m sure that you get the point.

I imagine that the greatest tragedy of this woman’s illness was that she was not able to enter the temple to worship the God of her fathers. How could she, considering that her very presence in the synagogue would have been considered blasphemous, since her unclean state would have made that holy place unclean. According to Rashi, such an act would be worthy of death.

Have you ever gone through a rough and exasperating week, only to find relief and joy on Sunday morning as the saints gathered together to worship the Living One? Now, imagine that you were sick, lonely, miserable, depressed and desperate. You see a church and want to go in and fellowship with the saints, but you are outlawed from going in under penalty of death. *That* is exactly what the woman with the issue of blood went through.

If this woman were married, her husband probably thought twice about giving her a hug or a kiss, since touching her would mean that he would become unclean.

Having marital relations with his wife would have meant seven days uncleanness. Needless to say, the intimacy probably went out of her relationship and it might have been 12 years or longer since she had been kissed or held.

And that is assuming that she still had a husband since, given the popular interpretation of scripture by the scribes and Pharisees, her disease may have been considered grounds for divorce.

If this poor woman had any children, she probably had to watch them grow up from a distance. Tucking her babies into bed or wiping away her child's tear would have meant uncleanness for the child. It was traditional for women of that day to spin and weave clothes for her family (something every woman would do personally, even if she had slaves in her home). This tradition may have been based upon Proverbs chapter 31. However, this woman couldn't do that, since any clothing she produced would be "unclean." You can see the pain that this disease caused her. Try to imagine the number of tears this woman cried for over twelve long years.

Considering all that this woman had suffered, you might imagine that her situation couldn't get any worse. Oh, but you're wrong. This woman had consulted with many doctors. These treatments not only used up every penny that she owned, but despite the trouble and expenditures, her condition didn't improve by one iota. In fact, her condition rapidly declined with each treatment (probably adding to her emotional distress and anguish).

One reason why sickness is such a dreadful enemy is that it robs you of so much. It steals your enjoyment of life. It hinders your ability to work. It limits the impact you can have in regard to reaching out and touching other lives. And, in the shadow of President Clinton's failed health reform proposal, we all know that it costs **big** money to get sick. Hospital bills, doctor visits, prescription or over-the-counter medications... etcetera. It all adds up to a mountain of debt that drains money that you could be using for other purposes (such as giving to the poor or advancing the spread of the gospel).

We can't know for sure what type of therapy this woman underwent, although the Talmud gives a list of treatments for the type of illness that bound her. Shabbath 2:110 recommends drinking onions that are mixed with other bitter substances boiled in wine (yecch!). Another part of the "remedy" involved having someone sneak up behind the woman and frighten her while she held a cup of wine in her hand. Obviously, the word "malpractice" did not exist in those days. Another ancient treatment involved having the woman to sit over "barbecue pits" in which vine cuttings were burned. Ouch! It's easy to see how, after seeing these doctors, she not only didn't recover but, rather, saw her condition worsen (and you probably complain about getting stuck with a little hypodermic needle).

After all she had suffered, for twelve long years, after all hope should have been lost, there came a light at the end of the tunnel. One day, this woman heard about Jesus. The Messiah. The Son of David. I can imagine that scriptures about the promised One were recalled to her memory. Scriptures that included promises of healing.

'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:
yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and
afflicted.

'But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was]
bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace
[was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

(Isaiah 53:4-5)

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the
prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare
[our] sicknesses.

(Matthew 8:17)

A Christian friend once tried to argue with me that the above scriptures speak only of *spiritual* healing, not healing from physical sicknesses or distresses. However, when you see the word "healed" in the scriptures, there is "no doubt of what is being talked about." The Hebrew word "Healed" in Isaiah 53:5 is *rapha'* {raw-faw'} or *raphah* {raw-faw'} and describes one of the attributes of God (first

revealed to us in Exodus 15:25-26). The literal translation of *rapha'* is to heal or to make healthful.

The Greek word in Matthew 8:17 is *nosos* {nos'-os}, which means disease or sickness (which Jesus took and carried far away from us). The Jews had no trouble accepting the fact that Jesus came to heal, so why is it that we do? Even the concept of “salvation” (or *sozo* in Greek) includes preservation of physical life (i.e., healing).

The Hebrew counterparts (for healing) include the verb *y_sha'* and the nouns *y_sha'* and *y shû'_h* (the latter of which you may recognize as being *close* to the Hebrew name of **Jesus**). Those three Hebrew words refer to “making wide,” or “giving room.” The concept is that the devil pins you into a corner with sickness and disease, but the Lord gives you a wide path of escape.

The woman with the issue of blood knew in her heart that the One sent by God to bring salvation was in town and that the time of her healing was near. Faith began to build up in her heart and she ran out to join the crowd and follow Him. How can we be sure that she had faith? Consider the following:

Her Condition

Her continual loss of blood suggests that this woman was anemic. That means that, with a lower-than-normal red blood cell count, her body could not efficiently supply oxygen to her muscles and organs. She was probably easily fatigued in her weakened condition. She also probably suffered from persistent headaches and shortness of breath. It would have taken considerable resolve to face the physical challenge of fighting her way through that crowd. Add, on top of that, having to get through the disciples encircling Jesus, then reaching those final few inches to get her hands onto Jesus' garment. Over all, it was a monumental task at best.

In case you have difficulty picturing this scene, think back to when Michael Jackson visited Japan.

Remember the screaming crowd of teenagers that converged on him? They jostled the police, they shoved his bodyguards, and they layered their bodies over

his limousine. Get the picture? Imagine a sickly, weak and emaciated woman fighting her way through a crowd like that. Compare this woman's tenacity with the attitudes of today's body of Christ.

"You going to that healing service tonight," one might ask a convalescing saint.

"No..." would come the reply, "I would, but I just don't feel up to going all the way out to that church tonight. Besides, it might rain... you know what that would do to my sinuses. No... I think I'll just stay home and get some rest. But you all be sure to pray for me that the Lord will help me through..."

If the woman with the issue of blood could walk the distance to where Jesus was and fight her way through a crowd in her condition, how can we (with our automobiles and convenient public transportation) dare stay away from the church? If I were feeling under the weather, the church is the *first* place I would want to go. And when time came for the elders to lay hands on the sick and offer the prayer of faith, I wouldn't sit back and wait for an engraved invitation. Certainly, this woman did not.

THE LAW

The law is another evidence that this woman had faith. Keep in mind that she was, according to the law, unclean. By fighting her way through the crowd, making contact with the unwitting multitude, she was making people unclean. And, the greatest indignity, she reached out and touched **Jesus**. How dare someone reach out and make a Man of God unclean? That would be considered a terrible crime. What this woman realized, I believe, is that it is *impossible* to make Jesus unclean. Rather, His holiness can erase any spot or stain.

So many people buy the devil's lie that they can't come to God for healing because of some terrible act they've done in the past. One fact that is as certain as death and taxes is that satan will try to make you remember sins that the Lord has forgotten long ago. The truth, however, is that when God forgives, He also forgets.

Who [is] a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity,
and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his

heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth [in] mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

(Micah 7:18-19)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(1st John 1:9)

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cast our sins into the “sea of forgetfulness.” We should never hesitate to come to God because of some sin or an act we’ve committed. Rather, bring it to Him and be made whole.

JAIRUS

The fact that Jairus was walking beside Jesus was another evidence that this woman had faith. As an official in the synagogue (a lay leader... probably in a similar position as our present-day deacons or elders), Jairus was in the position to punish this woman for breaking the law. He could have called for a stoning.

The members of the crowd would have been obligated to pick up large stones and to literally bury the poor woman alive under a pile of heavy rocks. Yet, despite these and other obstacles:

²⁷When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. ²⁸For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

(Mark 5:27-28)

The imperfect tense of the words in the original Greek text of this scripture suggests that she *continually* said “If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole...” This wasn’t some “magic formula” or “incantation” that she was using, such as “abracadabra” or “hocus pocus.” Many Christians seem to have the misconception that “speaking the word” is simply an act of quoting some scripture(s). That would be tantamount to saying that bodybuilding is simply an act of walking through a

gymnasium and looking at a barbell. The fact is, when you are truly “speaking the word,” it is more a lifestyle than an action. God’s word gets planted in your heart like a mustard seed and continues to germinate until it blossoms into a great tree (cf. Matthew 17:20 and Luke 17:6).

The woman with the issue of blood continued to encourage herself, to psyche herself up, by speaking the words of faith in what the power of God could do in her life. David did the same thing when he set his heart to attack the giant Goliath. Despite the protestations of his brother Eliab and the doubts of King Saul, David never stopped making confessions of victory. His confessions continued up to the point where David was standing on the slain giant’s chest, holding his severed head in one hand.

Should we not have the same faith that continues to roll off our tongues, no matter what the circumstances of life dictate? And, if that kind of faith is in our hearts, then should we not step out on God’s word and move forward? Remember the battle cry, “Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead” of days gone by? That’s the wining attitude we all should have (scripturally based, of course).

This woman risked everything for an opportunity to receive salvation from her physical condition. When you think about it, the only thing she had to lose was her life of misery. There are many people who brag of what they gave up for Jesus. They gave up drugs and alcohol... which were destroying their bodies. They gave up tobacco... which was polluting their lungs. They gave up fornication and adultery... which put them at risk of contracting diseases. When you think about it, nothing in this world is worth losing your soul over, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36).

And so, she reached out and touched the hem of Jesus’ garment. Actually, what she probably touched was the tassel on the end of the square garment that was thrown over the shoulder and allowed to hang down Jesus’ back. And when the woman reached out and touched, the Greek text suggests that she did more than a light fingertip touch. The scripture suggests that she adhered or fastened to the garment. She held on with absolute tenacity until she felt in herself that her healing was manifest.

²⁹And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in [her] body that she was healed of that plague. ³⁰And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

(Mark 5:29-30)

Immediately, after touching Jesus, she received her healing from “that plague.” The word translated “plague” in the King James Version is the Greek word *mastix*, a word with an interesting etymology. This word refers to someone who is stripped naked, tied up either in a bending posture or stretched over a frame, and beaten. Thoughts of Singapore and “rattan caning” may come to mind about now. The colloquial use of this word, however, denotes suffering. One might imagine satan stripping a person of their covering (cf. Ephesians 6:11ff.), binding them physically (cf. Daniel 3:21), and inflicting suffering with the whip of sickness and disease.

When this woman touched Jesus and accessed the healing power that resides within Him, she became covered with His righteousness and loosed from her bondage. Satan’s whip was no longer effective, he was forced to take up his weapons and flee.

Notice that this woman didn’t *think* that she was healed. She didn’t *hope* she was healed. She didn’t *imagine* that she was healed. She *knew* she was healed. How did she know? She knew because she felt/experienced the sensations of healing in her body (just as Jesus *knew* that power had left him by His having felt/experienced it).

So, if Jesus knew that power had left Him, why did He ask, “who touched Me?” Peter probably wondered the same thing when he opened his mouth and tried to advise the Lord. Yes, it is true that the entire multitude was touching Jesus, but were they really *trying* to touch Jesus? We’ve already established that God is no respecter of person, which means that anyone in the crowd could have received exactly what the woman with the issue did (and maybe even more). The bottom line is, if you don’t expect anything, you won’t get anything. Unlike the crowd

around Jesus, the woman with the issue knew exactly what she wanted, and she took the steps to get it (and more).

The woman's faith (not the act of touching Jesus' clothing, but the faith that motivated and empowered the act) caused virtue to come out of Jesus and go into her body. What is virtue? In the original Greek scriptures, "dunamin," or "miracle working power" came forth from Jesus.

There are two types of power available for spiritual warfare. Dunamis {doo'-nam-is} can be considered "miracle working power." Exousia {ex-oo-see'-ah} is the power of authority (influence) and of right (privilege). It is the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed.

Evangelist Marilyn Hickey gave a great illustration of the two types of power. Marilyn and her husband went to a dinner party and left their children with a baby-sitter. The sitter had authority (exousia) to tell the children when to go to bed. However, the children thought they didn't have to obey the sitter, so they rebelled. Fortunately, Marilyn had also given the sitter miracle working power... a belt to spank the children with if they misbehaved.

Some people criticize those who believe in healing, saying "You can't **make** God heal you if He doesn't want to." Still others look at this scripture passage and assume that healing is a matter of sneaking up behind Jesus and snatching it before He notices you. The truth is between those two incorrect extremes. God **wants** to heal His people, and the power to heal is available for those who would reach out and grab it. When the woman with the issue of blood reached out, the miracle-working power of God went into her. And when the power flowed, the woman was instantly healed. And now, her faith was about to be tested.

³⁰And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? ³¹And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? ³²And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. ³³But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came

and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

(Mark 5:30-33)

Of course, Jesus knew who had touched Him and why. It was important, however, for the woman to continue her confession of faith. She had believed in her heart but still needed to confess with her mouth what God had done for her.

⁸But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, [even] in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; ⁹That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

(Romans 10:8-11)

The woman was terrified, yet she was careful to give the glory to God. Jesus reinforced her faith by calling her “Daughter,” welcoming this outcast back into the family of Israel.

³⁴And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

(Mark 5:34)

Jesus’ command to “go in peace” is the traditional Hebrew blessing, “shalom.” This word, which is often translated “peace,” actually includes our personal wholeness and well-being, as well as our salvation. This woman could go in peace, her condition had been totally healed and, for the first time in twelve years, she could begin to enjoy what God had created.

Her healing was a resurrection of sorts. Once forbidden from coming into the house of God to worship, now she could freely walk into the synagogue and dance and sing before her Maker. This was a joyful moment in this woman’s life. Twelve long years of misery, pain and grief had ended. Twelve long years of loneliness and isolation were over. Most important, a new life had begun.

CHAPTER THREE

Twelve Years of Life

Having witnessed Jesus' power in the life of the woman with the issue of blood, one would imagine that Jairus' faith would have begun to grow stronger. However, Jairus would soon find (as we all do when we are seeking God's deliverance) that his faith was about to be put to an even greater test. Let us continue to observe Jesus in action (and finally learn the significance of the number "12" in this context).

³⁵While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's [house certain] which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

(Mark 5:35)

Look at this from Jairus' perspective. Here he was, desperate to see his beloved daughter healed.

He had managed to capture Jesus' attention and had the Master en route to his home. Just when he thought the answer to his prayers had come, some "unclean" woman grabs Jesus and distracts Him. Now, after Jairus has been impatiently waiting for Jesus to hurry up and come along with him, the news arrives that his little girl is dead. I imagine that most men would be ready to start swinging their fists at about that time. However, before Jairus could lash out in anger, sorrow, frustration, or UNBELIEF, Jesus stepped in.

³⁶As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

(Mark 5:36)

It is important for us to note how Jesus circumvented what could have been the catalyst for Jairus' fall into doubt and unbelief. In our human frailty and the weakness of our flesh, we are not always consistent in our walk with the Lord. We may set our mind to a certain thing, only to be distracted by our flesh, our

circumstances, or some “carrot” that the devil dangles before us. However, if we seek His favor in earnest faith, he *will* indeed bless us (often, in spite of ourselves). This should remind us that God is faithful to finish what He has started.

Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ:

(Philippians 1:6)

Notice Jesus’ reaction in Mark 5:36 when He “heard” the word. The two variations in the original Greek text reveal **what** and **how** Jesus heard. One of the Greek manuscripts uses the word “*akousas*” which, in classical usage, ranges from a mere reference to physically hearing a sound to actually hearing, understanding, and acting. The other text uses the word “*parakousas*” which, in this scripture, suggests that Jesus merely overheard those words (as one would hear the noise of an automobile passing on a nearby street). In other words, Jesus disregarded the message; He took no heed of it.

Personally, I think “*parakousas*” is more accurate, considering Jesus’ commandment to “fear not.” Take note that Jesus did not merely **ignore** what he said. Rather, He put the news of the little girl’s death into perspective and spoke faith-building words to Jairus. The word of God is a faith-building book. If you need more faith, get more word:

“So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

(Romans 10:17)

One consistent characteristic about Jesus is that He **always** spoke the word before performing any miracle. Those who received the word received great blessings. Those who were reluctant to hear the word received nothing. Consider the following account from the book of Matthew:

⁵³And it came to pass, [that] when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. ⁵⁴And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath

this [man] this wisdom, and [these] mighty works? ⁵⁵Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this [man] all these things? ⁵⁷And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. ⁵⁸And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

(Matthew 13:53-58)

Jesus was acting in response to Jairus' faith and was not about to allow any unbelief to creep into this situation. His will is evident, even in His selection of His most trusted disciples to accompany Him.

³⁷And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

(Mark 5:37)

Peter, James and John were the closest of Jesus' disciples. They were the ones who saw Jesus transfigured. They were also the only ones who were with Jesus during his hour of suffering in the garden of Gethsemane. After Jesus' resurrection, they played a prominent leadership role in the early church.

When we see how Jesus had close trusted friends who accompanied Him during crucial moments, we should also have a few close friends nearby who can stand with us in agreement. Naturally, we can come to God and believe for healing or some other blessing without anyone else even knowing what you are going through. However, considering that there is great power in numbers, touching and agreeing with others makes things go a lot easier. Nevertheless, do not take my word for it, you have the witness of the scriptures.

One of my professors, while expounding on John 14:12, noted that the "greatest work" was for a man and a woman to be successfully married. My classmates and I laughed at what we thought was a joke. What I later realized, however, was that a man and wife operating in total agreement under the Lordship of Jesus Christ can accomplish *anything* their hearts may conceive.

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

(Matthew 18:19-20)

Likewise, when a church body gathers on one accord, powerful things start to happen. Unfortunately, most Sunday morning services are little more than a liturgical ceremony or a charismatic “hoop-de-doop.” For those congregations who can rise above the program, their services will become more than fashion show. When the body of Christ gathers in Jesus’ name and prays on one accord, no power on earth can stand against it. That is exactly why the writer of Hebrews wrote:

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

(Hebrews 10:25)

Of course, when you are going through a trial or temptation, you want **only** those who will give 100% of their spiritual effort standing with you. They must be solid, Spirit-filled, Bible-based believers who (walking in love) can help you stand on the authority of God’s word for your miracle.

Friends like that are hard to come by and are more valuable than their weight in gold. There is a danger in “sharing” with those who are not inwardly what they profess to be outwardly. When seeking a prayer partner, ask the Holy Spirit for discernment about the particular individual you seek to confide in. You must choose someone who is honest, caring and trustworthy. You want someone who is full of the word of God, whose life bears the fruit of the Spirit.

If you would like an example of the type of person that you **do not** want to confide in, consider the crowd that Jesus encountered once He reached Jairus’ house.

³⁸And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

(Mark 5:38)

An interesting cultural phenomenon of those days was that, when a loved one died, the family would hire professional mourners to come and weep. This is still practiced in some parts of the world. The minimum requirements for mourners (for a poor family) would be (at least) two flute players and one wailing woman. For someone in Jairus' position, one might imagine that a larger crowd was present. Undoubtedly, there was a great cacophony of wailing voices and melancholy music in that house.

This interesting cultural event is difficult to imagine from our 20th century Western viewpoints. Some people maids to clean their homes and entertainers to arrange parties and events. But do you know anyone who ever hired people to come and cry at a funeral? Even more strange... can you imagine having a career as a professional mourner? Certainly this was not a career that required much of an education.

These “professional mourners” may have been good at wailing and shedding crocodile tears, but they were hardly filled with any amount of compassion for this family. It is the same thing with practitioners of “churchianity.” They can say “Amen” good and loud, but they have no spiritual substance to share with anyone. They may cry and fall out and try to climb into the casket during a funeral, but they cannot offer any support or encouragement to the bereaved.

A good friend of mine lost his mother back in the early 1990's. While his relatives went hysterical, requiring wheelchairs and smelling salts, Bobby stood and preached a mighty sermon about the love of his mother, and his expectation of seeing her at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

It was encouraging to see the strength and consistency of his faith during such a time. As the other ministers and I were leaving the funeral parlor, one fellow started making jokes about embalmers needles. This “reverend” individual showed

the same lack of depth of concern as the professional mourners did when Jesus entered Jairus' home:

³⁹And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.
(Mark 5:39)

Notice that Jesus did not report on the apparent situation. Rather, He spoke the **truth** concerning the situation. These were not merely words of “wishful thinking,” since Jesus is the way, truth and **life**. He **is** the resurrection and the life.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

(John 11:25)

We need to learn what the truth is (according to the word of God) and apply it to the realities of life, and not look at things the other way around. For example, the law of gravity is a fact. Getting several tons of metal to fly seems impossible considering the law of gravity. Yet, aircraft fly from America to countries around the world. Does that mean that the law of gravity is not a fact? Of course not. It simply demonstrates that the **fact** of gravity may be superseded by the **truth** of the law of lift and aerodynamics.

You may have a runny nose, cough and fever. That is a fact. The truth is that 2,000 years ago, Jesus bore your sickness and disease and carried them far away. When Jesus died on the cross, you *became* healed.

‘Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

‘But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

(Isaiah 53:4-5) That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our

infirmities, and bare [our] sicknesses.
(Matthew 8:17)

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.
(1st Peter 2:24)

For I [am] the LORD that healeth thee.
(Exodus 15:26b)

Incidentally, in case you've been experiencing symptoms of illness... even while reading this book... pause to meditate on the above scriptures. There is enough power in those few verses to heal any disease on the face of this planet. However, like any medicine, it will not do a thing for you if you do not take it. According to Hebrews 4:1-3, it will not benefit you unless you believe it. You can memorize it, quote it, preach it and teach it. Nevertheless, if you fail to believe it, you will fail to receive it.

¹Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left [us] of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. ²For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard [it]. ³For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.
(Hebrews 4:1-3)

Mixing faith with the word is like mixing fire with dynamite. If you need a mountain moved, fire alone cannot do it. Dynamite will not work unless ignited. However, when you mix, the results are explosive. It is the same when you mix the two chemicals, such as the propellants used to launch the Space Shuttle into the sky. Once you have hidden the word of God in your heart, believe it with all your heart and confess it with your mouth (cf. Romans 10:9-10). As Pastor Yonggi Cho

of South Korea says, become pregnant with it and, in time, you will give birth to the answer.

The “professional mourners” in Jairus’ house did not believe the word that Jesus spoke. In fact, they thought it was funny. Probably the best laugh they had all week.

⁴⁰And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

(Mark 5:40)

Jesus came on the scene speaking words of faith, and these “crybabies” immediately stopped crying and started laughing. It reminds me of the old television series “*I Love Lucy*” where Lucy will cry out “waaaaaaaaah” until Ricky gives in to her demands. Then, immediately, she will stop crying and start laughing.

Sometimes, when you are standing on God’s word for something that may appear impossible, people will laugh at you. After all, they laughed at Noah for building that big old boat in the middle of dry land. Being mocked was not such a problem for Noah. Just remember who got the last laugh. Noah was in touch with the Weatherman. What is the forecast for your situation? Find it in the B.I.B.L.E., your **B**asic **I**nstructions **B**efore **L**eaving **E**arth. Besides, people are probably laughing at you anyway, so you might as well stand anchored on the word of God while they laugh.

Go back to verse 40 and consider Jesus’ reaction to the laughter of the “crybabies.”

⁴⁰And they laughed him to scorn. *But when he had put them all out*, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

(Mark 5:40)

Jesus PUT THEM ALL OUT. The text does not say that Jesus was angry or that He used force.

However, the Greek word *ekbalon* (having put out) suggests that Jesus did more than just open the door and ask, “Would you people please excuse Me? Pretty please?” You may have mistakenly assumed that the wrath of God was exclusively for the Old Testament. Here, you can see that wrath carried out as Jesus dealt with the hypocrisy of these professional mourners (under what should have been a pious situation). It may be hard to imagine that this scene was as action-packed as a John Wayne western or a Steven Segall martial arts film. However, let us keep in mind that this is the **same** Jesus Who, in John 2:15, made a whip and chased a group of moneychangers away from their booths. I am fairly convinced that this was, at the very least, a similar situation. You can rest assured that when Jesus said “run,” their only response had to be “how fast?”

When you believe God for a miracle, satan will come on the scene and laugh at you, telling you that God will never come through. You need to cast him out (*ekbalon*) in the Name of Jesus, pleading the authority of Christ’s Blood and the power of His Name (see our discussion on “authority” and “miracle working power” in the previous chapter). You cannot play around with the devil. He is not some playground bully... he is out to kill, steal and destroy. When it is a matter of life over death, health over sickness, prosperity over poverty, salvation over condemnation, you have to get violent with the devil and cast him out.

“And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

(Mark 5:41)

Most motion pictures produced about the life of Christ depict our Lord as straight faced; never smiling or frowning or anything. The actors walk at pallbearer’s cadence and deliver their lines in a droll monotone voice. I imagine that they are trying to be “reverent,” but it doesn’t seem to do justice to Who Jesus really is. Of course, we need to see His holiness, righteousness and justice, but we also need to come to terms with the compassion and lovingkindness of God.

Why did Mark find it necessary to include the Aramaic words “Talitha cumi,” rather than go ahead and translate the term? I have heard many explanations. Some have said that Jesus spoke in tongues. One teacher tried to explain that the girl’s name was Tabitha, only Jesus “pronounced it funny.” Such ideas are completely ridiculous and totally off base. As for those who would use this as an excuse to debate whether Jesus actually spoke Greek rather than Hebrew or Aramaic... I can only graciously decline to participate (see Titus 3:9).

In any language, terms have a meaning far from their *literal* translation. Consider, for example, the group of British scholars who, in 1978, were compiling a lexicon of the language of the Sumerian people (circa. 3500 b.c.). One difficult phrase, which popped up frequently, seemed to be a reference to a man cooking a fish and giving it to a woman. The initial impression was that fish was a major part of the diet of this society. Eventually, the scholars concluded that this was, in fact, a colloquialism referring to the sexual act.

Even in modern language, terms are somewhat difficult to translate literally. For example, imagine an American in a taxi. If the driver goes **way** over the speed limit, the passenger might say, “Hey lead-foot, pull your pedal off the metal, or Smokey Bear will throw the book at you.” A literal translation of the above statement might take several pages. A basic translation is: “If you do not slow down, the police will fine you.”

When Jesus said “Talitha cumi” to the girl, the literal translation is, in fact, “Damsel (or little girl), arise from the sleep of death.” However, you can find something interesting in the etymology of those words.

In Aramaic, “tawleh” is the word for “Lamb.” You might translate “talitha” as “little lamb.” Now, does that mean this girl was a tiny four-legged woolly-haired creature that went “baah?” No, but this was an expression of the warm and tender feeling that the Lord has for His creation.

Other cultures may say “You little Darling,” or “You precious flower.” You get the idea. Jesus switched over to the “family language” (as, for instance, Asians or Hispanics will switch from English to their mother tongue) so that He could

convey tender and intimate emotions to this little girl. Talitha cumi: “You precious little lamb, I have set you free from the bondage to sin and death; Rise from your bed.”

What is the result of the love and compassion of God, as expressed through Jesus towards this little girl? Look at verse 42:

⁴²And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was [of the age] of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

(Mark 5:42)

The girl was 12 years of age (the age of marriage in that culture). It seems that, had Jesus not miraculously intervened, Jairus stood to lose not only his daughter, but also the prospect of gaining a son-in-law (with the requisite political and/or financial affiliations with the in-laws) and grandchildren.

By the way, you probably noticed that the girl’s age brings the number 12 to light again. It seems that this girl had been alive the same number of years that the woman had the issue of blood. While the woman was dying for 12 years, this girl was living for 12 years. While the woman was losing her family, friends and fortune for 12 years, this little girl was growing up, making friends, and preparing for betrothal. The one common denominator in this equation is... 12 years!

In this passage, God allows us to see two opposite ends of the spectrum. We see:

1. Young and old.
2. Death and life.
3. A lonely outcast and a well beloved.
4. One who had nothing and one who had everything.

I believe this range of contrasts shows us that, no matter where you are in life, whether on either end... or right in the middle, Jesus has the answer that you need. If you are one of God’s people, you can receive from His vast storehouse of mercy and lovingkindness.

Yes, we know that Jesus can heal the sick and raise the dead. You may be wondering, “does He even care about what I’m going through?” Could my problem be too insignificant for His attention? Look at the final verse in our study of this text.

⁴³And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

(Mark 5:43)

Why did Jesus command that they give her something to eat? Well, if you are a parent of teenagers, what is the first thing that they do when they come home? They head for the refrigerator! Teens are constantly growing and, therefore, voraciously hungry. Whether it is McDonalds, Seven-Eleven, or the “Greasy Spoon,” they’re pockets will be bulging with candy and their pancreases soaking in sugar. Jesus not only cared that this 12-year-old received her life, but that her empty stomach was filled.

Yes friend, Jesus cares about even the most “insignificant” detail in your life. Nothing is so small or insignificant that it escapes the Lord’s attention. You are His precious little lamb. He loves you. It is not an imposition to ask Him for a blessing, for He **longs** to bless you.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Conclusion of the Matter

Many subscribe to a “dispensationalist” opinion that there are two manifestations of God in the Bible. In other words, they accuse the Lord of being schizophrenic. These “intelligent imbeciles” feel that in the Old Testament, God only operates in wrath and judgement, while in the New Testament, He shows Himself “for the first time” as our Heavenly Father. I am not trying to be mean or insulting, considering that for quite a few years, I was one of those intelligent imbeciles.

Any such view is ridiculous, considering that we can clearly see the love of God in operation in both the Old and New Testaments. Likewise, we get glimpses of His wrath and judgement under both covenants. So, why is it they feel comfortable with “lopsided” thinking? They do not know their Bible.

Is the only thing you remember about God in the Old Covenant the account in Numbers 12:1-10, where God smote Miriam with leprosy after she shot her mouth off about Moses’ African wife?

Maybe you remember the account in Numbers 16:1-50 where the ground opened and swallowed Korah and his band of rebels. Yes, God’s holiness does have that affect upon sin and rebellion. Does that mean that His wrath became non-existent in the New Testament? Consider the following passage:

¹³But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in [yourselves], neither allow ye them that are entering to go in. ¹⁴Woe to you, scribes and

Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. ¹⁵Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye travel sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. ¹⁶Woe to you, [ye] blind guides, who say, Whoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

(Matthew 23:13-16)

While Jesus had great compassion for sinners, He had little tolerance for religious phonies that made a pretense of serving God while harboring wickedness in their hearts. To give you another example, consider the following episode in Jesus' ministry:

And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

(John 2:15)

Yep, looks like wrath and judgement to me. And, if you are still not convinced... consider the following:

²¹Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out demons? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess to them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

(Matthew 7:21-23)

And whoever was not found written ⁱⁿ the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

(Revelation 20:15)

I hope that by now you're convinced that the wrath of God isn't strictly an Old Testament matter. Likewise, the love of God is not strictly a New Testament concern. You may be surprised to learn that the Old Testament is **full** of references to God's lovingkindness and tender mercies. One of my favorite passages that illustrate this point is Psalm 103:13, which says:

Like as a father pitieth [his] children, [so] the LORD
pitieth them that fear him.
(Psalms 103:13)

The Old English word "pitieth" in the King James Version is a translation of the Hebrew word "racham." That word, which literally means love and compassion, has an interesting etymology. You might say that it comprises the protective love of a father, combined with the nurturing love of a mother. That word is used not just once in the Bible, but 47 times. Thus, you can see that love and mercy are not unique to the New Testament. Another scripture about God's lovingkindness and tender mercies is Zephaniah 3:17:

The LORD thy God in the midst of thee [is] mighty; he
will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will
rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.
(Zephaniah 3:17)

This verse is truly amazing! It paints a picture reminiscent of a mother who holds her baby and sings a sweet lullaby while rocking it to sleep. Can you picture yourself cradled in the Everlasting Arms, all of God's love poured over you as He sings a song of joy? Meditate on that scripture (and others like it) until you can form that image in your mind. This will help you to see that God is consistent, even when we are inconsistent. His mercy is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for
ever.
(Hebrews 13:8)

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

variableness, neither shadow of turning.

(James 1:17)

You are God's precious little lamb. Just like the woman with the issue of blood... and just like Jairus' daughter, Jesus cares for you. All it takes is a leap of faith, and you can receive the answer to **any** situation.

Having read this short book, what will your response be? As for me and my house, we will rest in God's love and receive the goodness of His mercy and His lovingkindness. Are you willing to do the same?

EPILOGUE

An article in a Philadelphia newspaper lambasted believers in Jesus as being an “elite social club” that excludes those that do not meet our standard of righteousness. That was not the first time I had heard such a view, unfortunately. It seems that too many people have difficulty understanding just how non-exclusive this gift of eternal life is. Hopefully, having read this book, you have a better understanding of just how much God longs to heal you of those things that have devastated your life so that He may have fellowship with you.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is simple:

God wants man to live in love and peace among themselves and in relation to Him (read John 13:35, Romans 12:18, and 1st Corinthians 2:9).

Despite our political slogans and rhetoric (including Rodney King’s plea), we cannot all “just get along.” Call it human nature, or call it sin — the bottom line is, we have a problem (read Jeremiah 17:9 John 8:44, and Romans 3:23).

The reason the world is so completely messed up is that we have an evil spirit (satan) whose sole purpose in life seems to be to wreck people’s lives. Yes, satan is the one who bound that poor woman for twelve years, and is also the one who killed that 12-year-old girl in the prime of her life. He is also the one who provokes/inspires child abuse, rape, murder, racism, lying, theft, etc. (Read Luke 13:16, Malachi 4:1-3, Matthew 13:37-43 and John 10:10).

God’s plan, executed through and completed by Jesus Christ, is to:

Save mankind (whosoever will)

Put the devil out of business (permanently)

Replace this sin-scarred earth with a new and better one (read John 3:16-17, and Revelation 21:2-5).

Whosoever (e.g., anybody and everybody) believes on Jesus Christ shall be saved (read John 3:16, Acts 2:21, and Romans 10:13). Does this exclude Moslems, Buddhists and Hindus? Well, if they do not accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, then they are excluded. It is tight, but it's right.

No one may have access to the Heavenly Father except through Jesus (read John 14:6).

Is such a view narrow-minded? Well, is it narrow minded for a pilot be to only land his Boeing 767 on a runway (when landing on your street would save an expensive cab ride from the airport)? Truth, by definition, is narrow. The way to eternal life is narrow (read Matthew 7:14).

Imagine your house is on fire. Someone screams, rings the doorbell, even throws rocks through your bedroom window. You have two choices, heed their warning and step outside, or remain inside and burn.

This world is on fire. The horrors we see on CNN and in the papers are merely smoking trails... harbingers of the disaster yet to come. Eventually, the clock will stop ticking and God's wrath will fall to purge this earth. The devil will be gone. Death will be gone. Fear will be gone. AIDS will be gone. Cancer will be gone. Child abuse will be gone. Rape will be gone. Tax increases will be gone. And... if you are unrighteous, **you** will be gone.

The righteousness you need is not *self*-righteousness, but God's righteousness. Becoming righteous is simple. You do not have to walk barefoot over hot coals, shave your head and join a monastery, or say eleventy-jillion "Hail Mary's" to become righteous. All you gotta do is accept Jesus. Could God have made it any easier?

Jesus was beaten, spit upon and nailed to a wooden cross where the collective sins of mankind were poured upon Him. Why? Was it that we could have a piece of jewelry to wear around our necks? No! Jesus suffered in our place, so that you and I would not have to suffer eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire. Anybody (**whosoever**) can be made righteous through Jesus Christ (read 2nd

Corinthians 5:21, Romans 3:24-26, and 1st Peter 2:25). It does not matter what kind of life you've lived or what you've done... Jesus will save you if you just call on Him, repent of your sins, and ask Him to come into your heart and make you a new creation in Him (read 2nd Corinthians 5:17).

Of course, God will honor your right to choose (Pro Choice). A person may choose, for whatever reason, to throw this great act of love and unselfish sacrifice back into God's face and choose his/her own way. It's like the Chinese proverb of the two brothers. The younger brother murdered a man, the older put on his bloody garment and went to the gallows to protect his sibling. The younger brother was free to go. All of mankind has sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God and, therefore, is destined for hell. Jesus went to the cross to protect His children. We are free to go.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

(2nd Peter 3:9)

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard [him]"

(Hebrews 2:3)

If you have never accepted God's gift of salvation by asking Jesus into your life, you can say a simple prayer (in your own words):

Acknowledge that you have sinned against God. Let Him know that you are truly sorry.

Thank Him for sending His Son Jesus Christ to die for you and to take your sins and shame away.

Thank Him for raising Jesus from the dead, victorious over death and hell.

Ask Him to cleans your sins, to wash you in the blood of Jesus, to fill you with His Holy Spirit.

Resolve to serve God for the rest of your life, seeking Him daily in prayer and in studying His word (the Bible).

Ask Him to give you direction in your life (each and every day).

Thank Him for what He has done.

If you've followed those simple steps, then congratulations! You are now a member of God's family... a son/daughter brought into a privileged relationship with Him through the working of the Holy Spirit (read Romans 8:15-17).

If you don't have a Bible, get one. Begin by reading the Gospel according to John. Ask God to lead you to a church where you will be able to grow spiritually and fellowship (socialize) with those who are on the same path.

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