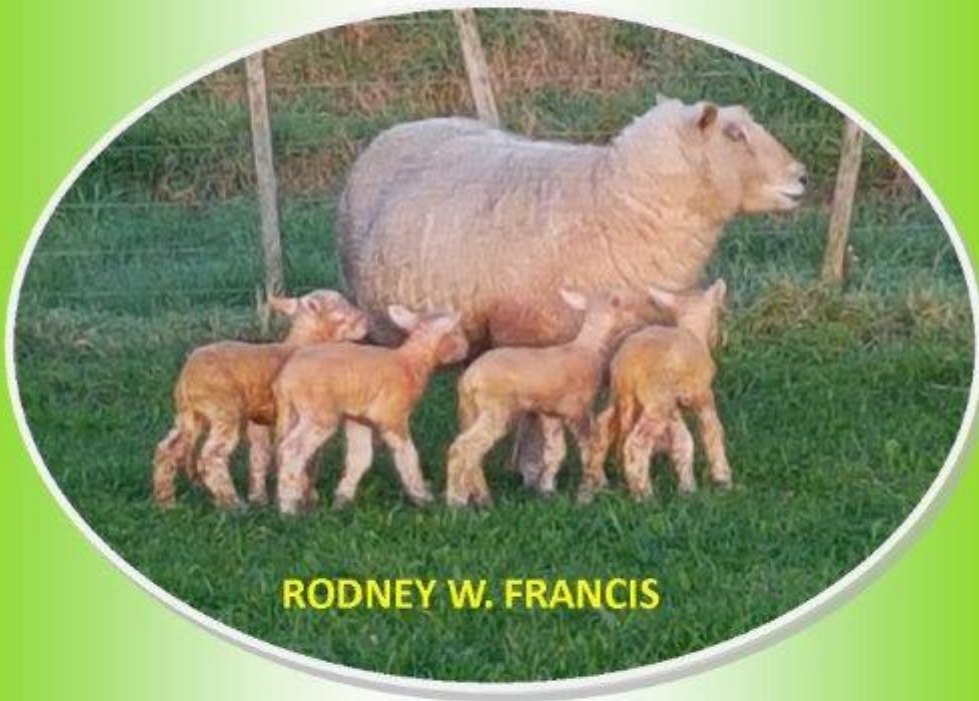


GOD CARES FOR US !



RODNEY W. FRANCIS

**Casting all your care upon Him,
for He cares for you.**

1 Peter 5:7

Acknowledgements:

Scriptures used are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible.

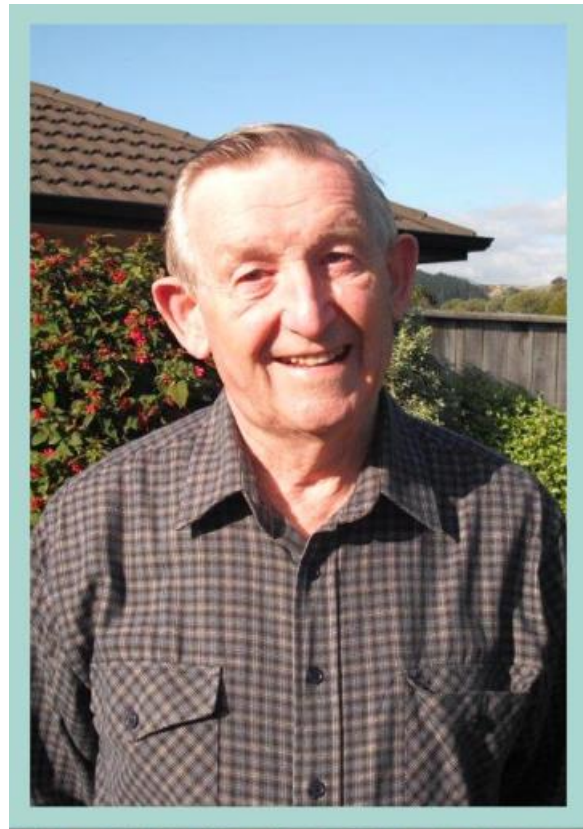
Scriptures marked (KJV) are taken from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible.

Word meanings marked (Bullinger's) are taken from "A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament" by E.W. Bullinger. Published by Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506, USA.

Word meanings marked (Wilson's) are taken from "Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies" by William Wilson. Published by MacDonald Publishing Co. McLean, Va. 22102, USA.

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Rodney Walter Francis

17th January 1942 -17th November 2021

GOD CARES FOR US

Have you ever considered just how much God cares for you? Life can throw all kinds of challenges before us, and it is good to know that we have a loving God Who cares very much for us. He knows everything about us; nothing is hid from Him with whom we have to do: **“And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need”** (Hebrews 4:13-16).

God knows everything about us and He desires that we also know Him personally so we can experience more and more of His love and goodness towards us. He so loves us that He gave His all on Calvary's Cross so that we could know the joy and power of sins forgiven ~ washed away in His precious blood ~ and have a new life free from the curses of the world, the flesh and the devil.

- **Do you know His love and forgiveness in your life?**

God so knows us that even the very hairs of our head are numbered (do you know the number of hairs you have on your head?): **“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven”** (Matthew 10:28-33 & Luke 12:4-9).

These verses show us how much God values us. We are very important to Him ~ even to our very last hair! **How caring is that?** Make very sure that you confess and also know Him as your personal Lord and Saviour. He is the best Friend we can ever have! The Bible declares: **“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you”** (1 Peter 5:7).

- **When we have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, then life takes on a whole new meaning and our values change to put Jesus as Lord of our life.**

If there is nobody else who cares for you, remember that God cares for you. He gave His all for you so that **“you may have life and life more abundantly”** (John 10:10). He longs to reveal Himself more and more to you, but first you have to be willing to let Him. He does not violate your will, so be encouraged to yield your will to Him and watch what He will do for you. The word “care” means “an earnest, serious purpose; to think earnestly upon” (Bullinger's); “be affected emotionally; to have regard, affection, or consideration for; to provide physical needs, help or comfort for” (Collins English Dictionary). I have been amazed at what God has done for me over the 60-plus years I have been loving and serving Him. And He continues to bless and provide my needs. God wants us to have such a relationship with Him that we have no doubts whatever

that He is the Provider of our every need. Consider this Scripture: **“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus”** (Philippians 4:19). His riches in glory are far over and above anything we can think or imagine!

God wants us to know His heart for us: **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, what whoever believes** (“be persuaded, to rely upon, to trust” – Bullinger’s) **in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”** (John 3:16). God’s love for us is demonstrated through His reaching out for us, even in spite of our sinful living: **“. . . the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength** (“without strength, infirm, weak, feeble, impotent, sick” – Bullinger’s), **in due time Christ died for the ungodly** (“one who has no reverence for sacred things, godless, without fear and reverence before God; not merely irreligious, but he who actually practises the opposite of what God demands” – Bullinger’s). **For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates** (“commends, to represent as worthy” – Bullinger’s) **His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation** (“change on the part of one party only, induced by some action on the part of another; the reconciliation of men by the love of God in the gift of His Son” – Bullinger’s)” (Romans 5:5-11).

God has provided a way for us so that we can know Him in a very real and personal way through our accepting what Jesus has done for us through His sacrifice and shedding of blood for us on the Cross of Calvary.

- **He knows our needs far better than we ever will.**
- **Therefore it is important that we develop a friendship relationship with Him, get to know His voice and ways, so we can gain the benefits of what it means to be a recipient of His love and care in our lives.**

Job said this of the Lord: **“You have granted me life and favour, and Your care has preserved** (“to keep safe from harm or danger; protect from decay”) **my spirit”** (Job 10:12). Hallelujah! In the light of all this let us make sure that we **“cast all our care upon Him, for He cares for you/us”** (1 Peter 5:7).

- **Know that Jesus really does care for you!**

HYMN ~ written by: Civilla D. Martin

Be not dismayed whate’er betide, God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you.
Through days of toil when heart doth fail, God will take care of you;
When dangers fierce your path assail, God will take care of you.
All you may need He will provide, God will take care of you;
Nothing you ask will be denied, God will take care of you.
No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you;
Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you.

GOD IS OUR PROTECTOR

As we journey through life we have to face many different challenges that try and bring anxiety and despair into our life. In the Bible we have examples of those who went through trials and testing times, yet because of their trust in God He delivered them to the amazement of others. In the Book of Daniel we read of three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego who refused to bow to the king's command that everyone should bow to a golden image he had made. Once it became known to the king (Nebuchadnezzar) that they would not bow down to it, the king had them thrown into a burning fiery furnace that was heated seven times more hotter than normal. The three men were bound up and thrown into the fiery furnace. The fire burned up those who threw them into the furnace! Suddenly inside that burning fiery furnace there were four men, not three. And the king exclaimed: **"Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? . . . Look! I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God!"** (see Daniel Chapter 3). King Nebuchadnezzar was so amazed at what he was seeing that he called the men out of the fire, and they came out. **"They saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them"**.

Here we see amazing evidence of how God can protect His own from whatever evil men may try and bring against them. God allowed them to go into the fire, but it had no effect on them. Not even one hair was singed; their clothes were protected. God wants us to know that He is still the Miracle Worker in our lives when we keep our trust in Him. That miracle of God caused King Nebuchadnezzar to change his mind and honour God. Hallelujah!

"Many are the afflictions ("to break, to break into pieces, to do ill, to afflict" – Wilson's), **but the Lord delivers** ("to pluck out of the hands of an oppressor or enemy; to preserve, recover, rescue; to deliver from danger, evil, trouble, to be delivered, to escape with power and courage" – Wilson's) **him out of them all"** (Psalm 34:19).

- **God shows Himself strong on behalf of those who put their trust in Him.**

Hallelujah! Afflictions come our way, but God rescues us in such a way that we have a testimony for His praise, honour and glory!

In Malachi 3:6 we read: **"For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed** ("brought to an end" – Wilson's), **O sons of Jacob"**. **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever"** (Hebrews 13:8). What He did for Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego He can do for you and me even today. He can rescue us out of every snare of the enemy that would seek to rob, hurt and destroy us. I have experienced God's miracles in surviving three death contracts from Satanists over a five year period (here in New Zealand); God protecting me and a young team I had with me from a death-destroying hurricane in the Fiji Islands. Where we were was the only place in the region where nobody was hurt or killed. The people had faith to believe that God would protect them because we were there with them! God honoured their faith. Praise the Lord!

Chapter 3

PROVING GOD FOR OURSELF

All through my more than 60 years of knowing and serving God, it has always been my desire that I prove God for myself. It is easy for us to listen to others and what they advise, **but to really know God it is important that we can prove His love, presence and power in our own life.** When we can prove God personally we get to see and experience the hand of God in ways that we do not see or experience in any other way. It has been amazing to see how God provides for us when we are committed to doing His will. And we have to know Him personally to be able to do His will. Faith is obedience ~ an action ~ to knowing and responding to that which God asks of us.

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him (God), for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently (“seek out, search out”) seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

- **True faith can only operate when we know that it is God speaking to us and we know what He is asking of us to do.**
- **Through hearing and actively obeying the voice of God is how we prove God in our own personal life.**

Here is what the Bible says:

“I beseech (“urge”) you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed (“fashioned in the same way”) to this world, but be transformed (“to alter or to be altered radically in form, function, etc.” – Collins Dictionary) by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove (“discern, examine”) what is that good and acceptable (“well-pleasing”) and perfect (“complete”) will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

Here we are given clear instruction and told how we can not only know the will of God, but to **“prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”**.

- **The Bible holds all the answers to how we can live a victorious life to the glory of God through doing what He has saved us for. Hallelujah!**
- **Make sure that you know God’s will for your life and can prove that it is indeed His will.**

To know and prove God’s will for our life means we have to know His voice when He is speaking to us, and believe His voice enough to act upon what He says to us. Often what He says to us contradicts our natural thinking and it takes faith to believe God and act upon what He says, rather than to stay within our own silent mind-set, etc. God’s ways are higher than our ways and when we do what He asks of us, things always work out right, in spite of any opposition and persecution and negative comments people make to us (because the natural man/mind does not understand the things that be of the Spirit of God).

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained (“predetermined”) before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed (“made manifest”) them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received,

not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned ("to examine carefully") (see 1 Corinthians Chapter 2).

Notice here that there is a definite division between the natural and the spiritual. The natural cannot comprehend the things that be of the Spirit of God. This is why it is essential that we are born-again by the Holy Spirit and then filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues; for that is the spiritual language of God so that we can communicate with Him spirit to Spirit. It is a whole different realm to that which we knew before we met Jesus. Jesus told His disciples that they were not to leave town until they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:1-8) (which happened for them on the Day of Pentecost – Acts 2:1-4).

For me, knowing and proving the will of God for my life has helped me to make the many decisions we have to make as we go through life. It helps me to know what to say "Yes" to and it helps me what to say "No" to people when they try and get me to do things outside of what I know is God's will for my life. Sadly, but true, there have been numbers of Christian Leaders over the years that have tried to take me out of the will of God! I am so glad that I did not take heed to their advice, as today, through knowing and proving God's will personally, we are touching multiplied thousands of lives around the world (in over 220 nations). And we are so blessed in seeing God provide our needs for our own personal lives and The Gospel Faith Messenger Ministry. He promised us that He would show us what He could do for us if we did what He asked of us. At the end of 1999 He asked us to resign all our church positions and to live totally by faith, not asking people to support us financially. We felt quite vulnerable for a little while as the natural mind was trying to reason out what would happen if we had no salary, etc. But we had known and proved the will of God often enough to know that when **we obey what He asks of us, it is going to turn out right**. So we obeyed and have been living totally by faith since 1st January 2000. We are continually amazed at how God provides for us and the Ministry, which keeps growing continually. Every month every bill is paid. We have no debts or mortgages. **We have proven over and over that God is true to His promise. Glory to Jesus!**

Chapter 4

GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS

Some people, when they see the blessings of God being poured out on someone else think that God has favourites. But He is no respecter of persons and desires to bless all who will yield to His will and allow Him to lead and guide our life. The Bible declares: **"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him'"** (Acts 10:34-35, KJV). The NKJV says: **"God shows no partiality"**.

The big difference is how we respond to the truth of God and His word. That is why it is so important that we get to know the voice of God, so we can know how and when He is speaking to us personally. It is hearing from God that generates faith within us, and **"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"** (Romans 10:17). Faith is essential to our being in true relationship with God through Jesus Christ: **"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently** ("seek out, search out") **seek Him"** (Hebrews 11:6).

Faith is an action. It is acting upon what God says to us. It is a demonstration to God that we believe what He says to us more than what our mind tries to tell us, and what others might try to tell us. We cannot expect to walk and live in the blessings of God if we are not living a life that pleases Him. The more we learn to obey God the more we experience His amazing love, ways, guidance, provision, protection, etc., where we are able to prove for ourselves the will and purpose of God for our lives. Living God's ways is totally different to the ideas of the world's religious ways, forms, ceremonies, etc. Those ways do not generate faith because the voice of God is not heard in those things.

God is looking for men and women (in all age groups) who are prepared to put Him first, to trust that whatever He says to us is exactly right, so we can exercise faith in what He says to us by putting into action what He asks of us. Living according to those principles is what releases the hand and blessings of God into our lives, and where we experience amazing things that He does for us. Praise His Name! Make very sure that you do know the voice of God sufficiently to act upon whatever He asks of you. Jesus said: **"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me"** (John 10:27). Jesus said His sheep **"know His voice"** (John 10:4) and: **"I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own"** (John 10:14).

Chapter 5

CONQUERING FEAR

A big battle that many Christians have today is that of fear. There are many different fears that can attack us, and different fears affect us in different ways. As Christians we need to know that Jesus came into this world to save us from sin and the power of fear. Fear is a tormentor and takes the place of Jesus in our heart. Why do I say this? Because fear dictates to us what we can and cannot do ~ it sets our boundaries for us, and wants to keep us from rising up above it. We need to know what Jesus came to give us. He came: **to lead and guide us into all truth, to enable us to conquer all our fears. God's answer to fear is HIS LOVE ALIVE IN OUR HEARTS!** The Bible declares: **"There is no fear in love; but perfect ("complete, full") love casts out fear ("terror, fright, dismay"), because fear involves torment ("punishment"). But he who fears has not been made perfect in love"** (see 1 John Chapter 4).

Fear is one of Satan's key strategies against Christians to prevent us from rising up and accomplishing great things in God. When fear paralyzes our trust in Jesus it becomes a sin and, as such, brings condemnation. Then we do nothing.

- **So many opportunities for Jesus are lost because we allow fear to hold us back from obeying the Holy Spirit.**

HOW I LEARNED TO LOVE

Notice very clearly what God's answer to fear is: **His love being made perfect in our hearts!** I had been a Gospel preacher for 16 years when God spoke to me and told me that He was going to teach me how to love people. I was shocked to hear that; for I honestly believed that I did love people. When I told God that I did love people, the next minute through my mind went the faces of about six Christians that I did not like! Following that I heard these words: **"How can a man say that he loves God whom he has not seen if he does not love his own brother whom he has seen. I want you to know that your love for Me is only as great as your love for these, the least of My brethren!"** I was absolutely shocked and humbled as suddenly I realized that even though I had spent 16 years of my life seeking God, reading the Bible, not missing Christian Meetings, etc., that after all that time I only loved Jesus as much as those six faces He showed me. Those people had persecuted me, told me what I should and should not be doing, etc. That experience left me feeling very empty and as though I had to start my Christian walk with Jesus all over again. I did not know how I could change to love God more. I soon learned though. He started sending people to me that were connected to the criminal underworld. They came knocking on my Pastor's Office door and asking for help. They confessed to me things they had done that I thought were not possible for human beings to do and/or get involved with (I had been brought up with a very 'sheltered' life and did not know how much evil people in the world could get caught up into). As these people confessed so many wicked things, my reaction was that I cried out to God for His help. His answer was: **"Son, I am teaching you how to love people"**. My response was, "Gee, Lord, thanks" in shock and unbelief. Over time, as the confessions from these underworld people grew more and more serious, I discovered that I was indeed learning to love people more and more. I also got to know a lot of how the underworld worked, etc. It was not too long before I was threatened from the underworld bosses "to keep my nose out of their business." **By that time I had grown to a point where I needed to prove that the power of God was greater than the power of the enemy; and so I did not stop.** That was followed by being told they were going to kidnap our son (then 12 years old), and that three death contracts had been put on my life. I was told that I would soon be dead. All the time God was teaching me to love people and to overcome the fears that the underworld were

trying to put on me. After five years of those death contracts, **the enemy confessed that Jesus Christ had to be stronger than Satan because everything they had done to try and kill me had failed.** And they had never failed before. Sad, but true, over those five years, it was the Christians who could not accept or believe what we were going through and I was falsely accused of different sinful things. During those five years the church grew from 30 to 400! I learned a big principle:

- **The more God can change me the more He can use me to accomplish supernatural things.**
- **I am very grateful to God that those five years enabled me to prove the power of His love, for He kept us fearless during that time when everything coming against us would naturally cause terrible fears to affect us.**

Today we are touching multiplied thousands of people in over 220 nations around the world through our E-Mail Ministry, Bible Correspondence Courses, Prophetic Equipping Stations, Website and books ministry alone. All praise to Jesus! **I learned that we function very differently when that perfect love of Jesus within us conquers all the fears of the enemy!** Hallelujah!

I share this experience with you, so that you will know that what I am sharing here is not merely a theological message, but something which has been very real in my life ever since. It has enabled me to minister to some of the "big bosses" of the underworld as well as helping people to know that the answer to their circumstances is **the LOVE OF GOD ALIVE IN THEIR HEARTS!** Even one of the 'hit-men' who was paid thousands of dollars to kill me came and testified how he found Jesus and asked for my forgiveness for his trying to kill me. I was able to forgive Him. Oh, the power of LOVE!

Christian, we live in an evil and unbelieving world.

- **We need to have the power and love of Jesus alive in our hearts so we can fulfil the purpose for which He has saved us.**
- **Sincerely ask Jesus to teach you how to love people more, for that is the key that will set you free from the subtleties of fear and all its negative influences.**

I know it works, for it has worked in me!

I encourage you to face your fears; know what effects they are having on you, and yield your all to Jesus so He can fill your heart and life with His love, thus enabling you to walk and live in that freedom He came to give you ~ **free from all the enemy's fear!** Hallelujah!

DAVID AND GOLIATH

The account of David and Goliath in the Scripture (1 Samuel 17), shows us how one young man, David, had to overcome fears that came against him when he stood up for God. Goliath was a huge man who used fear to bring people under his dominion. When he came out and challenged the people to send one man to fight against him, the whole army of Israel ran away and hid themselves in the rocks, etc. Even though they were the trained army of Israel, they had not conquered their fears. And when David stood up without fear, the Israelites turned on him and accused him of negative things and tried to dissuade David from standing up to Goliath. He had to rise above the fearful threats of Goliath, as well as the unbelieving fearful voices of the very army ~ including his three older brothers ~ he was about to deliver from the hands of the enemy. David did not let fear hold him back and he went out and faced Goliath, defeated him and brought deliverance to all Israel.

- **Will you be God's David in today's world?**
- **That is what He has saved you to be.**
- **Rise up in His Name, His Love and conquer all your fears ~ and be the very person and purpose He has chosen you to be. Hallelujah!**

FAITH MOTIVATED BY LOVE

To please God we have to have faith (Hebrews 11:6). **That faith has to work by and through love** (Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 6:23; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; 2 Thessalonians 1: 3; 1 Timothy 1:5, 14). **When God's love is motivating our life and actions, then we are fearless in the purposes of God. We then get God's results which will last in time throughout all eternity.** Praise the Lord! God has all the answers to our negative fears! We can trust Him totally! Nothing eternal gets accomplished while we are dictated to by the fear of man, things, etc. **In Jesus' Name you can conquer all your fears!** Hallelujah! God bless you!

Chapter 6

JESUS CONQUERED EVERY NEGATIVE THING WE FACE IN LIFE

Jesus came into this world to conquer every negative thing that would hold us back from fulfilling His purpose in our lives. He did that through His obeying the will of His Father (God) through submitting Himself to the cruel nailing of Him to the Cross; His death, burial and resurrection. Through the shedding of His precious blood He dealt a "death-knoll" to the devil who had us held captive in sin, rebellion and unrighteous living. The moment we submit our life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and repent of our sinful living, then He comes and washes us spotlessly clean; makes us a new creation in Himself, so that we can live a life that is pure, Godly and pleasing to the Lord; where He is able to then use us in amazing ways for His own praise, honour and glory. **"Therefore if the Son (Jesus) makes you free, you shall be free indeed"** (John 8:36).

When we yield our all to Jesus Christ He comes and breaks the power of every negative thing that seeks to hold us back from being used by the Lord in wonderful ways. We have to learn to believe what He now says about us more than what we ~ or the devil ~ tries to tell us otherwise. The devil will always try and make us doubt the positive things that God has done in our lives through the finished work of Calvary that Jesus has accomplished. **He (Jesus) did it all for us.** Hallelujah!

Here are Four Keys to Personal Revival:

Let me share with you four keys to personal revival. I believe with all my heart that these keys work. What are these keys?

1. **Facing up to and dealing with THE FEAR OF MAN.**
2. **Having a genuine Bible-kind-of-LOVE for people.**
3. **Knowing THE VOICE OF GOD.**
4. **OBEDIENCE TO GOD.**

The majority of all Christian problems are connected somewhere to the above keys (or the lack of them working in our lives). We are stunted in our Christian growth and effectiveness for God because we are afraid of what others might say or think. We struggle in the area of relating well to other Christians ~ and people in general ~ because often we do not know how to love ~ in either the giving, or receiving, of it. We spend our lives doubting the voice of God because we will not put the voice to the test, to prove that it really is God speaking to us.

If we do not have the first three keys worked out in our Christian experience, then the fourth key is just a dream.

- **It is impossible to really obey God if the fear of man rules us, or we are unable to reach out in love to others, or we do not recognize when God speaks to us.**
- **These are four vital keys for our lives. And it is time we faced the issues they challenge us with!**

Key 1: Facing Up To And Dealing With THE FEAR OF MAN:

If there is anything that holds Christians back from fulfilling their destiny in God, it is the fear of man (or woman! ~ remember Elijah: 1 Kings 19). It is **a trap** that restricts us, builds walls around our lives and prevents us from walking in the freedom of what God wants us to be and to do.

"The fear of man brings a snare..." (Proverbs 29:25, NKJV).

The fear spoken of here is an "agitating" fear. A snare is that which is used to trap animals, fish or birds to bring them into subjection **contrary to their own will**. Take, for example, a bird in a cage. It eats, chirps and flaps about ... all signs of life. **But what quality of life is it?** It is a very restricted life-style, always limited to the boundaries of the cage. The cage represents the fear of man.

- **Fear puts an invisible cage around us and stops us from expressing ourselves in Christ like we should.**

King Saul:

Saul, the first king of Israel, had this problem (1 Samuel 15). It led to his disobeying God, which cost him his anointing, then his authority, then being rejected by God as a leader ... finally his being killed by his enemy the Philistines. What was worse, Saul's fear had a traumatic effect upon the "crack" army of Israel (who, in their "heyday" were invincible), reducing them to being fearful, defeated men when confronted by Goliath and the Philistines (1 Samuel 17).

The one-talent man in Matthew 25:14-30 was like he was because of fear in his life. Fear robs us of ministering effectively in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit! **"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind"** (2 Timothy 1:6-8).

Key 2: LOVE:

The second key is really God's answer to the first key. **It is love ~ God's kind of love.** God's very character is love (1 John 4:6-12); therefore as His children we should be displaying His character in and through our lives too. That love of God ~ God's love in us ~ can be so complete that it actually deals with, and overcomes all fear in our lives:

"And we know (understand, recognize, are conscious of, by observation and by experience), and believe (adhere to and put faith in and rely on) the love God cherishes for us. God is love, and he who dwells and continues in love dwells and continues in God, and God dwells and continues in him. In this [union and communion with Him] love is brought to completion and attains perfection with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment ~ with assurance and boldness to face Him ~ because as He is, so are we in this world.

There is no fear in love ~ dread does not exist; but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love ~ is not yet grown into love's complete perfection" (1 John 4:16-18, Amplified Bible).

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18, NKJV).

The whole of the Bible is based upon the loving of our neighbour as we love ourself (Galatians 5:13-14). The only way we can do that is by loving God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind (Mark 12:28-34).

- **Love is a choice!**

We choose to love people, or we choose not to love them. Jesus declared that **"it is by our love for one another that everyone would know we are His disciples"** (John 13:34-35)! Not our Bible knowledge, church attendance, good works, giving, tithing, etc., **but by our LOVE! Love must be the greatest motivator in all Christian ministry!** If we do anything in the Kingdom of God that is not motivated by love, then we need to question why we are doing what we are doing. **Let's be known for our love!**

Key 3: KNOWING THE VOICE OF GOD:

This is a crucial area for us Christians, especially Christian leaders. Many struggle. Doubts creep in. We question it being God's voice and, as long as we doubt it is God, we will not be inspired to rise to do what His voice says. Fear will win the day!

- **We must know when God is speaking to us!**

Jesus said: **"My sheep hear My voice ..."** (John 10).

The success of the men and women of the Bible can be directly attributed to the fact they recognized when God spoke to them ... and learned the different ways by which God spoke to them. Let us not be too narrow in our understanding of how God speaks.

Saul's Conversion and Call to Ministry:

In Acts 9, 22 and 26 we have recorded the amazing conversion of Saul of Tarsus to Jesus Christ. It all came down to the issue of knowing it was Jesus Who was speaking to him! **Once he knew the voice of Jesus his will was totally yielded to Him and His cause** (Acts 9:4-6).

The prophets were people who knew how God spoke to them. When the Bible records: **"And the Word of the Lord came ..."** (unto Elijah, Elisha, etc.) we need to ask ourselves: "In what way did the Word of the Lord come?"

- **Know how God speaks to you ~ this is so important!**

Key 4: OBEDIENCE:

The whole purpose of God personally calling us in the first place is to the end that we are obedient to God. **Obedience comes about as a result of dealing with the issues of the first three keys.**

When we think of obedience we immediately think of Jesus, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Esther, Isaiah, etc., the great characters of the Bible. **They had learned to obey God.**

Even Jesus: **"Though He were the Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered"** (Hebrews 5:8-9).

If you want to know more about the power of obedience, turn to Genesis 22:1-18 and see what impact Abraham's obedience had on the nations of the earth. Here is the climaxing statement of that passage: **"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice"** (v. 18).

- **Obedience to God must surely be the thing that will release God's revival power and blessings into our lives.**

But more than that ... **through our obedience we can have the joy of seeing the nations of the earth impacted by the Holy Spirit in a tremendous way!** (Galatians 3:16-18; Psalm 2:8).

I trust these four keys will give you your personal revival, out of which you will be able to pass it on to others, so that they, too, will desire these keys to work in their lives. Use these keys to share Jesus with the world! God bless you!

Chapter 7

WHAT AN INHERITANCE!

Recently I was blessed and challenged by the following Scripture: **"I thank my God always concerning you for the grace ("kindness, favour") of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched ("to make rich") in everything by Him in all utterance ("speech") and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in (or "among") you, so that you come short ("to fall short of; to be in want of, to lack, miss" – Bullinger's) in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called ("chosen") into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord"** (1 Corinthians 1:4-9, NKJV).

I encourage you to take some time to consider and meditate on these verses. **They tell us what Jesus Christ has already provided for us through His grace.** He has so worked in our lives that we are left in no doubt that Jesus is real and has worked a wonderful work of redemption in us. He has poured into our lives everything we need so that we can abound in the gifts He has given us, which when they are functioning, enable us to share the revelation of Jesus Christ to others. When we are functioning as we ought, then not only do others benefit, but we ourselves are blessed with further revelation from the heart of God. It reminds me of the time when God spoke to me and encouraged me to keep functioning in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. He told me that every time I stepped out and exercised them, I was actually "untying His hands to set my future up for me"! I had never seen it like that before. When I considered what He said I could see that God had blessed me abundantly as a result of my obedience to the Holy Spirit. Exercising the Spiritual Gifts opened up the world for me to minister in more than 40 nations (some numbers of times). Praise to the Lord!

STIR UP THE GIFT OF GOD WITHIN YOU!

God so believes in you and me that He has entrusted us with His gifts and enabled us to operate in them in His name and to His glory. We have to be very careful not to **"Neglect ("be careless with") the gift that is in us"** (1 Timothy 4:14). In the light of what Jesus has already accomplished for us ~ and given to us ~ how can we sit idle or passive and not use the gifts He has given to us? It is no wonder that Paul exhorted Timothy: **"Therefore I remind you to stir up ("rekindle") the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power ("dunamis" – "power capable of anything; ability to perform anything; power in action" – Bullinger's) and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the Gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel . . ."** (2 Timothy 1:6-10).

God has given to every Christian believer gifts. They are the gifts of the Holy Spirit and He and those gifts live inside us ~ right now! Whatever God gives to us is very important. Therefore we have the responsibility to stir up those gifts and to let them function in the purpose for which they were given. We are not waiting for God to bless us. He has already **"blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ . . . in Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to**

the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise . . .” (see Ephesians Chapter 1). What an inheritance!

- **When we consider what Jesus Christ has accomplished for us, there is no room whatever for doubt and negativity for a Holy Spirit-filled Christian!**
- **The key is to “see” more of Jesus and less of ourselves.**
- **Christianity is not about our ability, but it is God’s supernatural ability in and through us being outlived.** Hallelujah!

What a privilege is ours! Just think: **The God of all heaven and earth so believes in you and me that He has poured into us whatever we need to represent Him here on this earth as true ambassadors** (“one who has been invested with power and authority to speak and act on behalf of the kingdom they represent” – in our case the Kingdom of God/Heaven!) **of Jesus Christ** (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

- **We are special people!**
- **God believes in us!**
- **Do you know who you are?**
- **Do you believe what the Bible says about you more than what you think about you?**
- **Confess the truth of the word of God!**
- **It is the knowing of the truth that sets us free!** (John 8:31-32).
- **And whom the Son (Jesus) sets free, he is free indeed!** (John 8:36).
- **What an inheritance!**

When we believe and accept the truth of what Jesus Christ has accomplished for us, then we become a much more positive person; for we know that we are people of divine destiny that God has invested Himself in us to enable us to make a huge difference in this world of darkness. We are no longer part of the problem, but part of the answer, for we carry the risen Jesus Christ, God the father and the Mighty Holy Spirit with us wherever we go. Think of that! What an inheritance is ours right now!

- **We cannot lose for winning when we believe and accept what Jesus Christ has already accomplished for us!**

THE BIG CHALLENGE

The big challenge we all have is to make sure we use the inheritance which Jesus has purchased for us through His finished work at Calvary, His rising from the dead, and the sending of the Mighty Holy Spirit to empower us to do His will. An inheritance is not much use until it is put into practice. When we are actively involved in doing the works of God, then not only do we benefit in many different ways, but God is glorified in and through our lives. The inheritance we have received has been bestowed upon us by the King of kings, the Lord of lords ~ The God of the whole earth!

- **He personally chose you and me to give us this inheritance so we can be His true ambassadors on the earth today.**
- **Is there any greater honour?**

Let us all rise more and more to the challenge of fulfilling the purposes of God for us in the here and now. We are always the winner when we are obeying the very purposes for which God created us. Do not let doubt, negativity, or criticism from others rob you of your calling in God. It is more important than anything mankind can bestow upon us.

“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God ~ and righteousness and sanctification and redemption ~ that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord’” (1 Corinthians 1:26-31). Now you know why He chose you and me! God bless you.

Chapter 8

THE JOY OF THE LORD . . .

Let us look at a subject that is often not considered as to how essential it is for Christians to be full of the joy of the Lord. Even in these difficult times we can be full of God's joy:

- **"The joy of the Lord is your strength"** (Nehemiah 8:10).
- **"In Your (God's) presence is fullness of joy"** (Psalm 16:11).
- **"Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation"** (Isaiah 12:3).

Joy is an essential part of being in the Kingdom of God: **"For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"** (Romans 14:17).

Joy is a **"fruit of the Holy Spirit"** (Galatians 5:22-23). It is a product of our walking with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in our day-to-day living.

EVEN IN TESTING TIMES

Even in times of opposition and persecution we can be joyful: **"Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy"** (Psalm 126:5). **"But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit"** (Acts 13:50-52; see also John 16:22).

When things in life are seemingly going against us, we can still have joy and rejoice in the Lord: **"Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labour of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there is no herd in the stalls ~ yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation"** (Habakkuk 3:17-18; see also 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7).

The joy of the Lord enables us to be overcomers of those things that come against us in life. In spite of what the devil throws at us **we can be victorious in the Lord through joy and rejoicing in what He has done for us.** The word "joy" is mentioned 158 times in the New King James Version of the Bible and means: "to rejoice, joy, gladness, shout for joy – the primary idea seems to be that of a smiling, cheerful, merry countenance" (Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies); and "delight, be pleased with, to rejoice exceedingly, especially with song and dance" (Bullinger's New Testament Concordance). The word "rejoice" is written 199 times. Joy and rejoicing go together. A joyful heart is a rejoicing heart!

THE WORDS OF JESUS GIVE JOY

When we receive the words of Jesus into our heart they create a joy within us. Jesus said/says: **"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you: abide ("remain, dwell") in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full ("to make full, perform fully, complete, accomplish" – Bullinger's)"** (John 15:9-11; see also 1 Peter 1:3-9).

How important it is for us to heed the words of Jesus. We must believe what He says to us more than what our own mind ~ or others ~ tell us. They cannot give us joy like Jesus does!

EVERLASTING JOY

God's joy is an everlasting joy: **"And the ransomed** ("redeemed and set free" – Wilson's) **of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away"** (Isaiah 35:10; Isaiah 51:11). This promise applies to us today: **"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant . . ."** (Hebrews 12:22-24). How privileged we are to be in such company! That should fill us with joy continually. To really know that our sins are all forgiven is the cause for great joy. Even the angels in heaven rejoice when a sinner repents: **"Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents"** (Luke 15:10). Salvation in and through Jesus Christ causes joy in heaven, and in the life of the one who repents. Hallelujah!

It is obvious from just a few of the many Scriptures about joy that joy is a vital part of being a true born-again believer. **No one can give us joy and victory like Jesus Christ!**

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound ("to be over and above, more than enough" – Bullinger's) **in hope by the power** ("dunamis" ~ ability to do anything") **of the Holy Spirit"** (Romans 15:13).

God wants the very best for us. He knows that we need to have His joy in our lives if we are going to succeed and conquer every obstacle that comes against us as we live for and serve God in a godless generation.

- **His joy causes us to abound, to overcome, to live above the circumstances, and to be able to live a God-glorifying life filled with the joy of the Lord.**
- **That joy makes us very different to the people of the world.**
- **True Christianity is not a sad, joyless experience.**
- **No, it is one filled with the joy of the Lord which is our strength!**
- **As we spend time in His presence we are filled with a fullness of joy.**
- **Nothing can compare to that which God gives us. Praise Him!**
- **True joy is found only in a personal relationship with God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Blessed Holy Spirit.**

"And these things we write to you that your joy may be full" (1 John 1:4). Reading, meditating and believing the Scriptures is also a great way to increase our joy. **God's desire is that our joy may be full!** Make sure you have a daily devotional time with Jesus, listening to His voice so you can be more and more obedient to Him. That will be evidenced by a greater and fuller joy in your life that will cause others to ask what makes you so different. Hallelujah!

In today's world, it is very important that we Christians know and experience God's joy in our hearts and lives, so we can rise up above every obstacle that comes against us to discourage and knock us down. Know that **"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world"** (1 John 4:4). When we know the truth of God and His word to us, then we are filled with a joy that no one can take away from us. We know we are safe in His loving arms, have been redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb (Jesus), and have a place in

heaven prepared for us so we can live eternally in the presence of the Mighty Triune God. Hallelujah! How privileged we are to know, love and serve Jesus. Surely there is nothing more joyful than that.

Be encouraged to seek to get closer to the Lord in this day, so that His joy can fill your heart and life more and more, even to overflowing with His abundant blessings. Put the past behind you and know that right now you and God are united in His love and joy. Truly, the joy of the Lord is your strength. God bless you. I finish with the chorus of a well-known song:

“Jesus is the Joy of Living, He’s the King of Life to me; Unto Him my all I’m giving, His forevermore to be. I will do what He commands me, Anywhere He leads I’ll go; Jesus is the Joy of Living, He’s the dearest Friend I know”.

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