

*Live in the NOW*

*Recognizing God's Visitation*

Jason F. Moore

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Live in the Now*

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## **Meditations**

*When we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we are, in a measure, shutting tomorrow out of our prayer. We do not live in tomorrow but in today. We do not seek tomorrow's grace or tomorrow's bread. They thrive best, and get most out of life, who live in the living present. They pray best who pray for today's needs, not for tomorrows, which may render our prayers unnecessary and redundant by not existing at all!" —E.M. Bounds (Necessity of Prayer).*

*"Teach us to keep account of our moments so we may develop inner wisdom." Psalms 90:12 (ESV).*

*"To everything there is an appointed season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NLT).*

*"I, the LORD, am its Keeper; I water it every moment. So that no one will harm it, I guard it night and day. Isaiah 27:3 (AMP).*

*"In a moment we will be changed." 1 Corinthians 15:52 (NLT).*



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## Introduction

We are in such an age of knowledge that it feels like time is flying, and we are doing the proverbial “catch up.” As we try to hold everything together the significance of people, places and things becomes blurred. Demands compete for our attention, due to the seeming benefit of multitasking, which easily disconnects us from the present.

Details of our life can have us simultaneously thinking backwards, as we look so far forward that we miss the present visitation from God. Being event-driven can cause us to be in a place physically, but not mentally. Here is where we forfeit our strength and hope in the present. What is the way out of this endless cycle? It is to get off the merry-go-round of life and LIVE in the NOW. The purpose of this book is to help us develop respect for the value of time making us aware of life- changing moments.

Take your life back. Learn to enjoy the moment by entering it with expectation and newness. Be inspired by a personal God who fills ALL things. Tap into the potential of one moment; Life is limitless because God is just waiting to release His goodness.

## The Present

Now, is a moment in time; it is here and gone.... Minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years are made up of moments. Time is not a renewable resource; it is a precious gift. God wants to teach us to live "IN the NOW." We can live such fragmented lives by not living in the present. Our minds take our attention to things in our past or we look ahead with anticipation for our future.

Often fear and guilt are our companions because we are "ahead" of God and His promise or distracted from the intent of the moment. Fear robs us from the eternal purpose of moments. We often project thoughts as though they are truth, but they are assumptions that may only suggest worst case scenarios. Fear loses its hold when we are equipped with a divine promise. This "promissory" word for the moment is our shelter and provision to live in peace. Fear can be an indicator that we are exposed and "ahead of the promise" and living outside the moment with God. The same happens when guilt creeps in, and lays shackles of regret; we must seek God for the moment, and define those moments that have passed, and let them go emotionally and mentally.

Being 100% present where we are enables us to



enter and be a contributor to NOW. Living in the NOW means that yesterday is gone, it is a “fragrance of memory.” We often think of these things that left an impression, the good and the bad. Often looking back we can be selective, simply because we can’t remember all the details of the happening. We can easily enter into subjective reasoning. This happens when we begin to fill the landscape of our memory by that which we remember, but often times we miss important facts and critical context of why we did what we did. Feelings, pressures, prevailing moods from thoughts that we were entertaining, all of this is relevant and nearly impossible to regain again. This is why looking back is subjective and often inaccurate.

Today is a gift. Living in the present seems obvious, but so few experience it! Living in the NOW is being attentive to the personal move of God now, not in what might be. Tomorrow is not guaranteed. Our attitude about tomorrow must be that today will equip us with wisdom for tomorrow. We are fellowshiping with the Jesus who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. His very name “I AM” shows HE dwells in the present.

## Time

Dave is a single dad of two beautiful children. He juggles a full time job along with sending his kids to daycare. When he comes home, he prays for strength to connect with his kids and have quality family time. Every moment is packed and he wishes there was more time to do what he loves.

Do you feel like you are in a constant state of catch-up? The rat race is exhausting! Do we understand the value of each moment? Each moment is like a diamond. The strength and beauty of each one are exquisite. As the diamonds accumulate they are a beautiful brilliant treasure. How we spend our moments will determine how we discover buried treasure, and learn to enjoy the journey. We guard the sacred treasure of each quality moment, for by it we enter into great wealth.

Often we can be “event driven” or live in the expectation of future plans. This fits into our culture of being prepared, but ultimately we can miss the moment. To rest and BE with God and delight in worship NOW, unlocks what God is doing in the moment. It is what happens NOW that will equip us for the NEXT.

The concept of time can often be so hard to grasp. The intelligence of the Greeks can help us un-

pack the meaning of time. In the Greek language we see two specific words that help us understand time better. The first word is Chronos, which refers to the concept of literal time as we know it today. We could use the term 'tick-tock' as a clock. The second hand travels over the face of the clock at a constant rate.

Often we complain that there is not enough time to do all that we desire to do or see. Time seems to fly as we get older; life is packed with so many potential opportunities. Priority management helps us manage our desires and goals so that we can know what the ultimate end of our journey is. As we learn to see opportunity we enjoy the balance of also being able to "smell the roses" along the way. We all have the same amount of moments but we all don't spend them the same.

The second word is Kairos, meaning a significant time, a fulfilled time, time bursting forth with meaning. It is a moment pregnant with possibilities. In the spiritual realm, it is when the natural manifests the divine—a God moment.

The supernatural is often a mystery, but just because we don't understand it in its entirety does not mean that it is not real. We are constantly in a place of learning of this timeless reality. A God-given moment of destiny cannot be shied away. Rather it must be seized with decisiveness! It's the alignment

of natural and supernatural forces creating an environment for an open door.

Often when this occurs we are conscious that is beyond our ability; but that is when God gives the increase. It is a time when heaven touches earth in a way that will never be forgotten. Some call it an “Aha” moment, a personal breakthrough. A particular moment, out of all the ordinary moments in time, has the capability to forever change the outcome of time itself. A moment of decision, a moment of action, a moment of change! It can be a moment, or it can be an entire season of moments. Can we see it when it comes? Often we are divided in our mind and fractured in our heart, and we miss these Kairos moments. Living in the NOW helps focus concentration to make these moments more obvious.

This poem I wrote attempts to describe the thought:

*“I was so captured by what could be, that I missed what was now. I was looking far ahead and I missed your visitation. I brushed away what I thought was an insignificant and seeming interruption, and it was You, Lord. This privileged visit was disguised, and in my presumptuous multitasking I missed your still small voice. You beckon me to a quiet place, where my shoes come off and nothing is in my hands. Stillness trumps my soul. You have my attention and my heart; teach me to delight in*

*the moment.”<sup>1</sup>*

## **Spirit Filled**

John has been a faithful Christian most of his life. He grew up in a Christian home where his parents instilled in him Godly traditions. As he is making his faith his own, reality challenges what he has been taught. He has a choice, to disregard what he has been taught as irrelevant or to go deeper and seek the Author of his faith. In relationship is where the power of God is realized in a personal way.

Are you used to running on empty? Are you living on half truths that you remember from conversations or bible verses that you have half memorized? What are we *filled with*? *Fear, greed, natural thinking?* ***God wants to empty us and fill us with His life sourced in grace.***

Living in the NOW starts with being Spirit-filled. The influences that lead and dominate decisions, thoughts and actions are governed by what we are filled with. If we are filled with ourselves then all that we do is consumed with ourselves. Moments become all about our desires and preferences, leaving us empty. As we are filled with the “Timeless One,” the Holy Spirit, we begin to be influenced by Him, showing us such greater things than what we

could ask or think. He shows us a Timeless reality.

The Holy Spirit reveals the characteristics of Christ and they fill our heart and become our new ability. His unconditional, perpetual and perfect character strengthens us and guides us into all truth. This filling comes as we ask for it, and yield ourselves to His power and nature. It is a decision of our will to whom we are yielding and are consumed with. In a moment we can recognize and transition from darkness to the kingdom of light; this can happen NOW.

As we are governed by the Holy Spirit, Christ then has preeminence, and our experience in the moment can be drastically different. A moment has an eternal weight of glory attached to it and we are changed into the image of God.

*Often this thought can be made complicated by the struggle of the will. Emotions can be allowed to supersede our will and fill us with false realities.*

Our perceptions can guide us and even lie to us. Our flawed nature must submit to the Spirit's flawless nature. He is given the rights to every part of us, even the secret parts where none are welcomed. He begins to consume us and the Spirit of comfort permeates and heals the fabric of our soul, mind and heart. When we possess the mind of Christ, every-

thing is different.

It is the Holy Spirit of promise that gives wisdom for the moment. He gives strength for the difficulty and forbearance for the chronic need. The Almighty God dwells within you! So allow Christ to have operational power, in you and through you, by agreeing with the promise regardless of evidence.

### **Moments of Worship**

Felicia is a career woman. She is diligently pursuing her dreams by working long hours and going above and beyond her call and duty. She loves God but is consumed with being successful. Even as she sits in church she dreams of position and fame. She is missing something in her soul—rest.

We tend not to think in moments, we tend to skip over details and think in long stretches, or general concepts. But if we can “process the moments,” small but important things happen; we breathe, take a step, say a word, and “actually” enter a thought. *A thought or a moment can be like hinges on a door, they are small but great weight hangs on them and moves on them.* God wants to slow us down and bring us back to these treasured increments.

God has intent for every moment. We experience peace when we enter into God’s intent. But of-

ten our minds race ahead and we begin to live in “what could be” or “what should have been” and we lose our peace and joy—we lose the intent of NOW. God’s purpose is that we get to know Him in the moment, not in a theological or religious way, but in a personal revelation.

A personal revelation comes when God opens the eyes of our heart. Something deep from God’s heart personally touches the depth of us. A new understanding is realized and new thoughts are connected and old thoughts are assimilated into something brand new. There is a glimpse into the heavenly realm; the beauty of His Holiness, a glimpse has the potential to change our outlook forever.

There is a depth to our knowledge that God adds, going beyond a concept into living reality. It could be compared to a prisoner who hasn’t seen the sky for many years. His memory grasps at what it once knew and was familiar with. The prisoner draws a picture and writes a description trying to harness and magnify the memory, but it eludes him. Not until he is freed and he is able to look into the heavens again can he capture what he is seeing. Overwhelmed by the beauty of the sky, it is as though he has never seen it ever before—and he hasn’t, not the way he is seeing it now. This is understanding, where we experience and grow in excellence.



*Meditation is the catalyst to entering into God's reality.* Often it is a challenge to sit quietly and focus in on something specific, but it is crucial! As we allow a truth to grasp our undivided attention, it becomes a reservoir to many more life-giving thoughts that rule and protect our mind. It is not how much time we spend on a thought but it is our concentration with the Spirit that unpacks the reality to a personal revelation. As we allow truth to revolve in the mind, the Lord begins to spiritually teach and open new thoughts to our heart. Then it begins to saturate and penetrate so that we tap into the power of what we are meditating on. Speak out loud, write it down, and search it out in Scripture. Is this easy? No. Is it worth it? Yes! I believe this is the dividing line of maturity that leads to personal victory and power in our Moments.

Imagine if we could see into another reality and that reality profoundly changed our present. Catch a glimpse of these heavenly realities; you won't be the same. Look at these excerpts below and read them, think on them, and they will ultimately happen! Write down what the Spirit ministers to you on any level. Refer and rehearse it back to yourself throughout your day. God will add personal encouragement, passion and unction. Here is an example of what the Spirit gave to me in a personal meditation.

Imagine this ...

*“There was a hushed silence that came over the whole multitude, “What are they looking at?” whispered an on-looker. With a celebratory countenance the heavenly Host pointed and said “come and see.” Peering over the shoulder of God’s cherub, it was clear what had caught Heaven’s attention – a redemptive moment where Jesus’ glory was expressed to a sinner who gladly accepted it.*

*The spectrums of colors are awe inspiring, the music unlike anything earthly, perfect peace on every side as a strong habitation. YAHWEH standing in the midst, His countenance as the sun in all of its strength. His eyes are a flame of fire with a golden diadem on His head. A purple sash covering Him and on it the written: “The Word of God.” His brilliance hides the sinner’s depravity and showcases Jesus’ perfect righteousness. What a display to the most undeserving candidate!” This is a glimpse of the Glory of Grace.*

Another glimpse ...

*“Choking on the sulfuric stench, spewing ash and molten lava ignited spontaneously and burned every surface. Piercing screams and cries of the imprisoned unbeliever chained to demons who enjoy the relentless torture.*

*Apollyon barks and his servants obey his ruthless commands in perfect submissive unity.*

*Then suddenly all was completely black, as though all*

*equilibrium is lost. The sense of falling comes as though entering a black hole. The overwhelming presence of guilt, shame, and fear seems to be suffocating. A slide show of faces and words play back life, as though it was on a home video. Each incident seems to mock and infuse regret. Emotional and physical pain is felt and it is impossible to articulate this Christ-less eternity. Time stands still."*

This is a glimpse of Hell.

Imagine this ...

*"Quietly entering the building under the cover of night, the concrete building has a familiar musty smell. Entering the apartment and glancing around the room there are many faces, brothers and sisters with fervent hearts with one purpose — to hear the Word. Packed into this small apartment the air is warm and stifling, most sit on the floor. The fellowship is full of joy and thanksgiving. Many worked all day and are physically tired, but the heavenly anointing quickened us all. The music begins with a hush, eyes closed and hands raised. God is moving heart to heart and strength is administered by the Great Physician. The sound is angelic as hearts reach for God in worship. Now silence and prayer begins thankfulness and faith drip from their lips with tears of joy — God is here. The Bible opens, focus is heightened and pens scribble down eternal words that touch their hearts. Time stands still as heaven comes down. Four hours seem as a moment.*

*This is an illegal meeting, as far as their government is concerned, but to these believers, missing it is not an option. These are vessels fit for the Master's use."*

This is a glimpse of the underground church.

These are unseen realities in our natural routine. But as we meet God and we are still before Him, He shows us true reality. What we have been saved from, makes us eternally grateful and to see a glimpse of why God has you where you are, brings in humility. Nothing is wasted and all has an eternal consequence.

## **Meet God in the Moment**

As an artist visualizes their work of art, in a moment where imagination is expressed, we see the dynamics of color. These shapes and colors are art that expresses life, love, comfort or a personal message to the beholder. Potentially with each long look the message could change. In the same way, as we are captured in the presence of God, time seems to stand still; we discover God's life moment by moment. As we practice this awareness and develop this sensitivity, more and more opportunities will present themselves, and we will meet God in a new and refreshing way.

We can be plagued with the thought, "What is

God's plan and intent for the situation I am in?" Often we can be clouded by our own way and our own noise in our heads. Often our plan is to be delivered, or that our provision would come, or that we would have all that we want—but God's purpose is in the NOW, to know Him—right now. We miss the limitless potential of what God is doing NOW. Delighting in the moment is what releases worship and brings in concentration on WHO God is. When we worship God for who HE is and "practice" His presence, HE will lead us to HIS Will. There will be no more guessing or squeezing God into our plan, HE will make HIS plan obvious, see (Colossians 1:9). As we obey Him NOW, He will lead us into His Intent (see *Micah 6:8*).

ALL of who He is, is available to you right NOW. Step into your potential and meet God in your moments. Unlock these limitless moments.

## **Intelligence**

As I get older, sometimes I feel the less I really know. It's easy to spout information but how much do we really understand and grow in? Intelligence is not the ability only to retain knowledge but to live in it with experience. How do we cross the great divide? I believe it is getting to know the heart of the Author. Let me explain....

Content in our heart feeds the mind. Education and experience in application can lend itself to growing in knowledge. Wisdom comes as we apply and live out what we have received. Someone could have “book smarts” but not “street smarts.” They can quote you the scenarios but have never stepped into the reality of what they have received. They have intelligence of the facts of the matter, but they are lacking the full understanding.

*Our faith has tremendous intelligence. As our wandering mind learns to focus and undivided attention is learned and exercised, then the Holy Spirit teaches and fills us with intelligence and understanding. The book of Proverbs is filled with verses that lead the reader beyond knowledge and into reality. Moments are gateways into a real walk of understanding.* Let’s take this opportunity to not just be information gatherers but step into the reality where you hear your Heavenly Father’s voice call your name.

## **True Balance**

In the busyness of our lives we are multitasking; Home life, work life, church life and the social life etc. It can be exhausting. Finding the right amount of time to give to each of these meaningful relationships can be like a juggling act.

The *Webster's New World Dictionary* adds these definitions to the concept of balance: *"a state of equilibrium or equi-purpose; equality in amount, weight, value or importance, as between two things or the parts of a thing." It is a mental or emotional stability, a harmonious proportion and a pleasing harmony of various elements in any given situation."*

Balance cannot be determined only in moments of time spent for each, but learning how to redeem the time in each of these critical areas. The cross of Christ teaches us how to live in God's balance; we draw near and discover what God has done for us, we agree with it, and lift it up and share it with others. In doing this we minister God's thoughts which in turn releases a healthy balance. As we know what to say yes to, we can say no to everything else. In the natural way of thinking the equity of a situation is not so conspicuous. God's nature expressed brings balance; He is the great equalizer.

God's priorities and people's expectations often go in opposite directions. Need often trumps the direction, but in Christ faith works by love. A guiding question to ask before action is "does the action redeem the time?" "Does the action reflect what Jesus occupied himself with while on earth?" There are countless good things to dominate our time, but does this make us redeeming the time for eternity?

There are seasons for all things in Ecclesiastes 3:1 – *“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing ...”*

Here are 3 things that can help create spiritual equilibrium. Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus was the one thing that would never be taken away from her in Luke 10:39-42. Her input was greater than her output. She was receiving and eventually moved in the Spirit rather than need. We can also enter this place as we sit at the feet of Jesus, looking to Him, before we move in the expectation and demands of others. This results in doing the right things in the right spirit.

Secondly, we find harmony when we come into God’s order. Seeking first the kingdom of God and His Righteousness, this is our map and mission statement for our plans and decisions. So much self imposed misery is inflicted because of a “me” based on, knee-jerk reactions and decisions. God’s way has God’s provisions and peace.

Thirdly, perspective is born as we put on the



new man. Subjectivity can rob us of living in objective truth. As we agree with the promises the promises become active and are an armor to or soul. Our thoughts are taught how to come into subjection to truth and we begin to think with God. We learn to look at the big picture rather than tunnel vision. For instance the average “atomic family” has an incredible load on their plates. Juggling school, work and family life can be overwhelming. What is important in all seasons of life is to receive grace for yourself and to step back and see yourself the way Christ does. This takes intentional effort to stop, and take a breath; the “pressure cooker” in these situations is how we are thinking about ourselves and our situations, from a defeatist perspective.

Celebrate what God has made us to be, regardless of what is going on or not going on, God is interested in what is going on in our hearts. Let him lead you to green pastures and still waters.

## **He is Leading**

Carl is in his early fifties and he is seeking a job change. He is not being paid what he is worth and the micromanaging is torture. He is dreaming of what he wants but doesn't know how to go about it. He prays with his wife for patience and wisdom for the journey. How will God do this he wonders...

We have heard the principal that “the greatest leader is first a follower.” Who are you following today? What principals shape your life? This is important to define; otherwise we are our own guiding fiction. In a moment anything can change, fear can turn to peace, animosity to love, discouragement to hope. Why? Because our heart attitude before God changes.

All of us want to know where God wants us, and what to do for Him in our eternal purpose. But who is leading who? Am I allowing God to lead me or am I asking Him to follow me? To understand guidance more accurately, consider the difference between the Will of God and the Call of God.

First, let us consider the will of God. The will of God is to know God in the moment, to fellowship with His Spirit NOW, and the fruit is growth and maturity in obedience. This relationship fuels the ministry that God allows us to participate in. In asking my spiritual father one day, “how do you minister to so many people?” I was just amazed at his capacity and the content in his answers. He answered, “*My ministry is to Christ first and the overflow is to others.*” This is a good example of the Will of God, to minister to Him first. This relationship transforms us. The ultimate mission is to conform us to the image of Christ. To make us more like Christ,

in attitude and action. This happens as we magnify the Lord and do what pleases him.

A good qualifying question that reveals what ministers to Him is: What was His focus and what did He spend His time doing while He walked on this earth?" As we read the Bible and see what His commandments are, these should be our priorities and value systems. This ministers to Him and brings Him joy. We see the scarlet thread of redemption in the Bible that when Jesus is lifted up, He is the One who draws all men. Giving that which a person could never deserve, but desperately needs, this is the perfect ministry of Christ.

An important thing to note is that we cannot give that which we have not first given to ourselves. We hear this often, that it is easy to give grace and mercy to others but to give it to ourselves is difficult! This reflects a relationship problem. Let me explain: as we fellowship and receive Christ's ministry to us it becomes His personal ministry to others. If we don't receive this for ourselves first then we will do it out of duty and we will look for a return. Our expectation will be misguided and our motivation will not be unconditional. Comparatively, as we are getting to know God and His nature, with an attitude of worship, He will give us so much more of Himself and the overflow will touch so many and will fuel

our mission.

Now let's look at the call of God. The call of God is the overflow of this ministry to and relationship with God. This overflow forms into a call to action by faith. Therefore the call of God is so much more than an event, or something we "do," it is a journey moment by moment by faith. This action is motivated by love from God and an identity based on His heart.

Our relationship in the Will of God fuels the Call of God. How do we know the Will of God and enter the Call of God? Walk with Christ in the moments and He will lead you where you need to be. Our passions are often an indicator that we have abilities, and when we act on them and we sense God's peace, power and provision, then this is the fruit of the call.

In divine peace we sense God's presence. This tranquil assurance strengthens us, knowing that our all powerful, all knowing, and all acting God is present. His heavenly fingerprints are seen, His supernatural handiwork is a mystery and we are relaxed seeing God's hand, knowing His heart. Ultimately the mission is God doing a work in us, THEN through us.

Divine power is God's ability that supersedes

our ability, and the impossible is done. As we yield, Christ's life energizes us and His work is completed.

Divine Provision is when God opens His hand and gives what is needed. Logistical or spiritual needs are supplied abundantly. One thing to keep in mind is God's timing may be different than our own, but confidence in His promise gives us the ability to wait for the promise fulfilled.

## **Positional Truth**

Hannah is a teenager that loves life. She secretly struggles with her self image but she hides it well. Inside she drives herself to be the best and to win — in everything. She struggles with fatigue and it is becoming harder and harder to hide it. She has so much hidden value as a lady of faith but she derives her identity from what she does and who she is, and what people say about her. She feels lost.

The experiential difference between our disposition (how we feel) and our position (our true identity in Christ) can be polar opposites. Often our disposition trumps the reality of our position because this is what we can relate to. The truth of the matter is that our position, what Christ has made us to be based on His action, is the true reality. Often we miss this transition and we become victims that are intox-

icated by sight and feelings and those things we can understand. This is inferior living! The apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:12, *“Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.”* God knows us fully and loves us completely, who else can say this?

What God has secured and declared is truth, and the moment we agree with this truth, we enter into a divine reality. In a moment of truth, our disconnection from Christ that depression brings in our disposition and our genetic flaws can be overcome! The flaws and deceptions that seem so real can be disarmed and rendered powerless. Thinking in our position in a moment can change our reality forever!

Seeing and living from this place of strength can be revolutionary. Often we are led by our feelings, or by what we understand. This false reality can be easily overwhelmed and can capsize in a moment. As we learn to relate to ourselves in Christ, we will see that Christ declares we are perfect and made righteous in Him. Christ took all the vileness of sin so that we could be holy, righteous and clean. As we agree with what was done, we can enter the power of Christ’s finished work; we see reversals in

our thinking and our perspective that will change our reality.

How to interpret your world? With what lens do we look through? There are many factors that can help keep our focus or totally skew it. If the filter of our world is our self and personal preferences, then the impact of our work can be very small. As we include others on our mission we begin to see many diverse dimensions.

Your filter is important. How you translate the words that you speak to yourself and the words of your critics. I hear this phrase a lot: that person “pushed my buttons.” This is an untrue statement. Why? We are the only ones that make us mad. Our past, performance, pain or successes are to name a few of these potential filters. Depending on the context of what is initiated, we have the ability to turn it around and speak to ourselves in truth, absolute truth, not experiential perception. What we have gone through is important but it can’t be the only interpretation. We are not infallible. Unconditional love would be a greatest filter, it thinks no evil. It is based in Christ and can be only received and given, we can’t manufacture this love. As we receive this love by agreeing with God in what He declares about us, we see things objectively. The critic will offend us, if we take the constructive criticism person-

ally. Egotism will always make it about us, it will develop entitlement. Objectivity keeps us in a position of strength, where we figuratively look down from above. As we look from above, things look small, and manageable.

Forgiveness is a healing filter; no offense could be greater than God's Grace. Knowing the nature and character of Jesus will persuade our hearts and minds to trust and let go of the poison. Subjectivity often comes in and skews our filter so that feelings reign. Often I hear this in counseling, what people have done against them. Their complaint and hurt is real, but when it rules and begins to interpret present and future events, we then miss opportunities for growth. Often misery loves company; don't fall into that trap. Grace releases wisdom and what an excellent filter these two make! Giving people what they don't deserve because mercy took care of our consequences. Looking beyond the faults and seeing the true need. Wisdom offers insight about that person to help you see their value.

### **Pivotal Stance**

How easy it is to be knocked off balance! Do you feel like it would take a feather to knock you over? This happens to all of us in different seasons of our life.



As a boxer trains to strike, he must first train to stand. His agility to block and defend are directly related to his stance. His feet are pivotal, shifting body weight to strike or to re-adjust his balance so he is not easily knocked over. The ability to be a moving target and deflect incoming blows depends greatly on the stance, posture and agility. In time the boxer can anticipate the moves of his opponent. He sees the weaknesses as well as the strengths. He doesn't underestimate the power of his opponent but he masters the basics so that he can "out-endure" him. So it is with us. We must stand strong in the power of God's might. Knowing who HE is, and who we are IN Him! What a life changing moment to enter into – thinking with God, thinking in our training, and experiencing God's ability within us. Our spiritual agility keeps us flexible as things change. In a moment we could be experiencing joy, heart ache or fear, anything can happen at any time. One thing that never changes is, WHOM we stand IN. Christ is stable, and He is unchanging. Learning and abiding in Him keeps us standing securely. We may feel at times we are teetering, but He has us fully in His grip. He supports and carries us when we are weak. He brings us through it all.

Our focus is what enables us to stand securely or fall utterly. 1 Corinthians 10:12 states, "So if you

think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" As we look to the Lord, and put our hope in Him, Christ will be our shield and defender." Just as a baseball player plants his feet for the big hit, we must do the same, expecting God to move. We are the object of God's love and grace, and we can't change that!

### **Now or Never**

Matt has the opportunity to spend his hard earned savings to go to the Caribbean with some friends. In Sunday service he hears the preacher talk about a mission's trip to Nicaragua. He heart is touched by the openness and simplicity of the people he hears about. He senses a feeling he has not felt before, he is being drawn and his heart is burning.

The now or never ultimatum can be very motivating, because opportunities don't present themselves the same each time. Opportunities can be seen as mystery doors, behind them are treasures or pitfalls. To seize the moment means we recognize the opportunity and our part in it, we see the value of acting on it.

The unfolding of the opportunity is progressive as we discover it as time unlocks the unknown. Not that we would jump at every idea, but we can fil-

ter them by asking ourselves a few qualifying questions: Does this add to the ultimate direction of my life? Does this complement my values? Is this a similar pattern of past decisions? What do people think that you love and trust?

Is this a reactive decision based on loss or desperation? Faith can be irrational but God gives an inner assurance that He is there. His plan takes us to His provision and He gives His power and ability to us to fulfill that which he has ordained. Many people believe in their “gut instinct,” but it is wise to prayerfully choose proven truth that is greater than yourself. Hesitation because of caution can be looked at as wisdom, but it also can be missed opportunity.

*Carpe Diem.* Seize the day. Take hold of what is in front of you, not just the day, the needs, the people, the responsibilities but the moments in between! To seize is too decisively to take ahold of, to examine and compare, and ask, does this add to my life? Is this an opportunity to learn Christ? As we are still before God, and hear His voice, our pace will be sensitive to the eternal value placed on people, places and things.

We miss moments often because we don't see our valuable participation, or we are distracted by lesser things. Think with the Lord in the “big pic-

ture” and take negative thoughts hostage, and only release those which add color to your life and to the cause.

## **Planning**

Chip is an “alpha male,” he doesn’t like to be surprised so he micromanages people to control every outcome. He reacts to change and is threatened by new ideas. He meets his goals, but everyone working with him is miserable.

Life is not random; there is a designer and planner. Expectations for goals and visions inspire us, and our personal expansion impacts our now. Preparation and training help us in effectiveness and production. As we dream, our imagination shows a potential reality that is not yet experienced a creativity that is God given.

What is the balance between living in the moment and reaching forward to plan for the future? If future plans steal our energy and capacity from today, then we miss heart preparation for God’s visitation. It is easy to deflect the present reality by wanting to be in a different time and place, but how we respond to things NOW will be the measure to which we are equipped for the things to come.

When we are driving our cars we have to look

further down the road to anticipate what is next. To self adjust to terrains, other drivers and signals. Our GPS tells us if we are headed in the right direction but our heart attitude, and how we are thinking NOW, reveals if we are living in the moment or not.

Asking questions to ourselves that challenge us to think, help us focus. Just as we would engage a person in conversation to learn their heart attitude, so we should do the same to ourselves. Questions like: how is what I am doing adding to my life? Why is this important to me? Does what I am doing glorify God? What is God's burden and mission now? These questions may seem ideal or unrealistic but they engage our heart as we are journeying. It is easy to go on "cruise control" and stop engaging in the moment and just have a thought of what will be. It is easy to miss the NOW and be event driven, or future minded, as this ultimately blinds us to the NOW.

As you journey, keep assessing the ultimate goal. It is NOW that matters, not yesterday or tomorrow or even 10 minutes from now. As we dream big, we live in the now by seeking God's heart for each moment. We are meditating and engaging the Lord and reminding Him of who He is and we are always learning who we are IN Him.

Sam is a linear thinker. He has trouble sitting

still because he is a doer—a man of action. He is in a crossroads in his life where his computer career is taking him in one direction and his “spiritual passion” is leading in another. In speaking with his family they encouraged him to make a good living and let “someone else” do they charitable work. Sam prayed and the passion became a burning that led him to the next step.

We are always in a state of training and preparation. Even as we rest, we are resting in assurance and peace. Patience will be birthed as you walk with Christ, not ahead of Him. It is His work and ultimately His consequence. You are His mission field, be conformed to His image. As we follow Christ today, moment by moment, He will be faithful to lead us to His perfect will. In obedience NOW, we discover His abundant life – for our future.

## **Moments of Weakness**

Janet is a single woman in her early thirties. She has battled with alcohol since her teen years which is a coping mechanism for her depression. She puts on a “happy face” to others, but is crying out on the inside for someone to know her and love her. The cycle of temptation comes with crippling guilt—she is in a vicious cycle.

The devil is always bidding for our attention. In our human disposition we are very vulnerable. But in a moment, he is experientially defeated as we live in the authority of God's presence. This is a place of immunity; we are hidden away in a holy refuge. This can happen in a moment! As we surrender our rights and clothe ourselves in humility, we experience His power. Godly wisdom shows us where the temptation will take us and makes clear to us the wages of sin.

Our battle is often with ourselves; who can possibly have the willpower to overcome every time? In a moment of surrender, we can go from battling the flesh to a fixed concentration and peace. This transition happens as we allow God to do the warring. We face Him and hide in the secret place of His presence and He fights our battles. Christ empowers us through worship and hearing from the Spirit.

The devil wins every time when we fight with carnal weapons. Willpower is no match for supernatural temptation. Through submission and looking away and unto Jesus, we receive His power. The Holy Spirit changes our appetites and we desire eternal things. There may be setbacks but as we put on the New Man our animal nature is no longer fed, and the New Man is strengthened and gains dominance. The healing process begins at the moment of

forgiveness, mercy takes away what we deserve and we turn from ourselves unto Christ.

In a moment we are made clean. Often thoughts can come that are contrary and harass us with the sin just committed. Each time that happens, we can reinforce verbally and with our actions that what Jesus said and did will last forever. Sin is paid for and whatever we feed will grow, whatever we focus on will have the authority over us. Focus on Mercy and make no provision for the flesh.

## **Overwhelmed**

In technology, hackers will sometimes “email bomb” a server to inundate and jam up its ability to receive or distribute info. The server can crash due to an overload of information. This seizes up the network forcing everything to stop until it is fixed.

One insurance company jingle is, “Life comes at you fast,” and they go on to say in so many words, “You can relax because you are in good hands.” This promise can only be fulfilled to the measure of the company’s resources. The best intentions are not enough when the unexpected happens.

The fear of the unknown can be overwhelming. The “what if” or worst case scenario can be daunting. God is never surprised, His omniscience and



omnipresence gives an absolute assurance that His faithfulness will see us through to the end. The Holy Spirit is like an umpire for our soul. Just like in baseball the pitches are defined for what they are, this is what the truth of the Holy Spirit does. As the projection of fear comes introducing danger, the fiery dart can be compared with the reality according to absolute truth and defined by that truth. So many “darts” are made harmless by the Holy Spirit’s guiding truth!

We have the ability to engage the thought and act based on circumstantial evidence or we can choose to wait. These moments seem longer than they really are. The flood of anxiety and stress can cause pressure. As we wait on the Lord and compare truth with the reality of what we are seeing and feeling, the way will become more obvious.

Let’s explore this idea of pressure. There is good pressure and toxic pressure. Hydraulics functions on air pressure and can withstand so many pounds per square inch. This pressure is good and is what moves the component with ease. Similarly, an athlete must withstand the resistance and fatigue pressing against him in order to get stronger. An example of damaging pressure can be seen by looking at tires capacity. A tire may take 32 pounds of pressure, but if it exceeds that, the tire can bulge or even burst.

The tire functions well when it is given what it is designed for.

In the same way, pressure can be an everyday occurrence for us. But pressure can become toxic and people or disappointment can cause us to “bulge” or even “burst.” When the Holy Spirit nourishes our souls we are able to withstand great pressure and find peace in tough moments. The filling of the Spirit strengthens our soul and keeps focus on the right things. When our heart is overwhelmed and we want to quit, react or blame, we can take that moment and fellowship with absolute truth. It is a decision of the will, to look away from the toxic dump and look unto Jesus. He is able to slow us down and take each thought captive and compare it with the reality of absolute truth.

An overactive mind can create restlessness. Small things can take us hostage—this doesn’t have to happen! The Psalmist said in Psalms 62, *“This is the simple secret, when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.”* The Holy Spirit leads us away from our self and unto Himself. We become small and He takes His rightful place as the Ruler of our soul. The Holy Spirit will show the snare that is designed to wound us; He will give wisdom in the moment as we seek Him. We are in His capable hands and His resources are limitless!

## All is New

“Are you new here?” a friend jokingly said to me in church today. I have grown up in my church so the answer was obvious. As I thought about it later, a profound thought came to my mind, “You have history here but you have never lived this date and time in this moment before, therefore all is new.” Every person, place and thing is dynamically new in this very moment.

We can miss the value by looking and applying the past to the present. We certainly apply wisdoms that have been learned, but people, places and things in God’s economy are brand new, life-giving potentials. This way of thinking dispels the mundane of the routine. As our expectation grows and we look for what God will do, then we start to see His visitation. We usually have our own plans and ideas, but God could be moving in the most unusual places.

As we submit to His righteousness in Romans 10:3 we are no longer ignorant of how God’s perfection defines us. He has declared us in right standing with Him. Our sin and our imperfections are not the basis of our relationship and they don’t disrupt our position in Him. As we relate to ourselves in the new man that is created in true righteousness, we no longer are plagued by feelings and emotions of past

experiences. We are everything that Christ has made us to be! We can't understand this incredible transformation in its entirety, but it is our positional truth that turns around our moments—they are grace reversals!

God does not change; with time there is always change, but He does not live in time and is not limited by it. It is amazing to consider that from one "now" to the next "now" the entire universe and everything and everyone in it are completely changed. Time has changed the foretelling of tomorrow to the reality of today and once it becomes yesterday it is changed again into the memories of yesterday.

Just as time makes room for the next "now," change makes room for the new. If we hold on to the old then there is no room for the new in our hearts. As we place what we "know" into God's hands, He makes all things new! His love passes all knowledge and His peace passes all understanding and His grace overcomes all things!

"All things have become new" this is the declaration of a time that has transitioned from temporal life to a constant, timeless life—eternal life. Take hold and speak to yourself in the promises of God, they are our inheritance now and forever.

God has made "newness" possible through His

Son, Jesus. As Jesus is in the center of our lives and focus, then we have a brand new perspective. We can gravitate to the old life and old things because this is what we know, but God knows all things and He has something to add to our soul that will not bring sorrow. What will God show you today in this moment?

Dr. William E. Biederwolf once said, *“Every creature born into this world has a nature after its kind. You can’t train a bird to crawl, for the same reason you can’t train a snake to fly. True to his nature, a caterpillar crawls, and when we see him fly we don’t say, ‘What an accomplished caterpillar!’ But we say the creature has been changed, it has a new nature, it has been born again; it is now a butterfly. The same thing is true of the natural and spiritual man.”*<sup>2</sup>

Newness means more than just “never been used.” It is experiencing the “eternal intent” of a soul’s timeless design, to bring worship to the King of all Kings. Regeneration makes all things new. Justification declares all things new and progressive Sanctification causes us to experience that newness each day!

*Newness is when life leaves the muted colors of mere routine and explodes into magnificent colorful dimensions.* It is going beyond the one dimensional understanding of sight and information into

the depth and indescribable volume of wisdom. It is living life with a 3D perspective. This perspective can be defined as three dimensional like the Trinity. Each dimension reveals God the Father as the Creator and Designer, God the Son as the substitute for sin and the ultimate scapegoat; the Holy Spirit as the fulfiller of the master plan. The Father has a redemptive plan; Jesus has demonstrated that redemption and the Spirit purposes and motivates God's will and redemption in our lives. This happens as we are conquered by Calvary and filled with the Holy Spirit of promise.

*Newness happens when we are in an attitude of redemption.* All can be redeemed, restored back to its eternal intent—to glorify God. It may look and even be totally different, but one thing is certain, Christ has preeminence.

In our natural state, we are designed to look forward and face many unknowns. But God operates backwards to front—from eternity past to our present. He sees all things complete and finished, all is known to Him. So as time plays out, each instance has eternal consequences. Often sovereignty is misunderstood because we are trying to understand God's intentions based on insufficient information. We look forward "through a glass darkly" in 1 Corinthians 13:12. We are facing unknowns based on

our finiteness. God in His perfect wisdom sees the end from the beginning and see us completely perfect in His Son Jesus. He is functioning in absolute truth with a totally “known” premise.

God cannot be figured out, and His ways, as we see them, are not a total interpretation of Who He is. Man is full of controversy over trying to understand God. God must not be shrunk into our own image, through our interpretation. He is known by His glory. Lord show us your Glory!

## **Going Beyond**

Looking into the night sky the stars look close enough to touch sometimes. It always fascinated me to look beyond into the heavens. The telescope helps bring the beauty of the heavens close. There is a reality behind everything we see, look closely not to miss it. It is easy to look at things at face value. To access things based on facts and relevant information. But the obvious only tells part of the story. There is always a story behind the story, the root cause, the real reason behind the multiple layers of symptoms. This is where the Lord wants to lead us, for us to discover the real mystery.

Often as we listen to what the Spirit is saying He will give a word that will touch the very depth

of the soul. Precise wisdom unlocks the puzzle. God is always giving us what we truly need, not what is deserved. This is when we enter the potential of the moment. As we seek the Spirit, and look and listen to people, we can discover the root of the matter and not address the symptoms alone. So much is handled based on symptoms or superficiality.

We listen to learn the cry of the heart, and not just reply with a problem solving technique. The Spirit teaches how to listen to what is not being said or to see beyond the obvious. As mentioned before, one dimensional living is only sight-based. The tangibles are recognized and processed naturally and intelligently. Two dimensional living is when we consider the person's cultural, educational and personal history that could impact what is being said and seen. This helps with context and empathy in understanding. The term, "putting yourself in their shoes" comes to mind. We may seek to understand and to identify but still this approach is limited, because we are limited.

True identification comes through the three-dimensional approach. This is a work of the Spirit. God being all knowing, all powerful, all present and always acting is the Spirit of wisdom. Through prayer and listening to what the Spirit has to say we are given this supernatural information. The poten-



tial of healing, restoration and divine understanding are just of the few miracles that can happen in a moment.

This type of viewpoint is far more effective in problem solving. Often it is easy to analyze the details of the problem until the problem is so big that it is overwhelming. Facts are crucial, but they are not all that we have to work from. Often times the “raw materials” are hidden and the answer “through” the problem is found there. The “raw materials” could be defined as the hidden ability of a person. Confidence for instance could be a catalyst to strength. Often the insecurities of a man, because he has believed the lies of his past, can cripple him from victory.

Being able to look “through” the problem comes through prayer and agreeing with God and what He says about you. This new identity increases our faith so that we can experience our God-given potential regardless of what the circumstances dictates. Challenges often uncover gifts that need to be cultivated. Hidden strength and reserves are often discovered when our back is against the wall. Work ethics, loyalty, diligence, and concern are a few of the “raw materials” in which God will use that which we possess and multiply it. Natural talents when they are broken, become a gift that serves others. We are

anointed to serve, motivated by love.

*To look “through” a situation means to remember ultimate purpose for why we are doing what we are doing.* Fellowship with the “why” of what we do, strengthens us. Information and advice from friends can help you navigate through the details of problem solving, but it is this multi-dimensional approach with the Spirit’s guiding that causes us to look “through” and fellowship with the end of the matter. It is not always about “fixing” and “solving.” It is about discovering the eternal reason for why it happened in the first place.

I have a dear friend who has two beautiful children. His wife was pregnant with their third child. Late into the pregnancy there were complications and the child was stillborn. This was unimaginably painful to observe, let alone bear. As I was with my dear friend as he buried his child, I could see that only God could comfort and sustain him and his wife. They let that precious child go into the arms of Jesus. They were not bitter and their confession and attitude was reflected as in Job 1:21, *“the Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”*

Through this pain, the Lord brought them through a personal journey that changed their lives forever...it was not always joyful but they shine today. God granted them another son and they cherish

all their kids in an incredible way.

God is not random. He has a personal, His plan is perfect. Some things will never be known till Heaven when we stand before Him, why they happened. Often His ways are past finding out, but God will teach us to be ok with that.

## **Maximize the Moment**

Is it possible to capture laughter in its spontaneous state, or to describe fully the dynamics of a smile? We would only be scratching the surface of their depth of meaning! In the same way, how can we possibly articulate, even with a sea of words, the eternal value of godly decisions made under pressure? And though we strive to measure everything in our life so that we can appreciate and define it, God wants to lead us to His "Immeasurable Self." Time cannot be measured in its entirety. With each passing moment, it is connected to limitless potentials so far beyond us.

As Aristotle writes, "not only do we measure change by time, but time by change, because they are defined by one another."<sup>3</sup>

This moment is 100% different from the moment that just passed by. Time is not a renewable resource; every decision counts. Change is inevitable because

we never live the same moment twice. Each moment is a unique opportunity. We can never relive the past, or change it for that matter. We can create a new destiny by thinking in newness and having renewed focus. This keeps us from boredom and being familiar, which are both perspectives that blind us to our potential and the potential in others.

Discovering our potential is a journey of faith, and it is a marathon, not a sprint. Our potential is Christ ability in us sourced through Him. Each step, each moment can build momentum. As we walk in faith persuaded of his promise we begin to see impossible things become possible. We can't fathom our full potential; Christ's ability in us can be limitless and uninhibited.

Our perspective and how our viewpoint interprets issues and events will either break us or build us. As we learn to be persuaded in faith, our viewpoint will shift from self centered to Christ centered. Our end game won't be natural gain, but loss to inherit those things that can never be taken away. God adds with no sorrow, he brings in a depth through trials and obedience that strengthens a person's anointing and ultimate impact. There is nothing random; all has a purpose to conform us to the image of Christ. We will reach new heights as we learn god's purpose for the moment, it is in that dis-

covery the moment is maximized and momentum builds. God's purpose always has eternity in mind; His main objective is reconciling people back to Him through a plan of redemption.

God's unconditional love, unfeigned faith, matchless grace and unfailing mercy are just a few of the "limitless highways" God can use in our journey. This is where God wants us to journey with Him. On these highways, the standard of life is not based on our goodness but God's perfection. We receive it as a free gift and it clothes our nakedness and covers our imperfections.

God's character and nature bring in healing in a moment. God's limitlessness takes over our limitedness. He has a specific provision for everything in our lives. As we grow, Christ's life dominates our natural life and each moment is lived to its maximum potential.

## **His Visitation**

We so enjoy when loved ones visit. The anticipation and memory give such an exciting expectation, figuratively we are almost jumping out of our skin! When they arrive, everything else is on hold and we celebrate their presence. I remember when my dad would take business trips around the country he

would always come home with a gift for us. When he would walk in the door, everything stopped in my world and there was so much anticipation! Something new from dad! This should be our anticipation for God's visitation as well.

The transition between the tangible and the intangible is found in a simple step of faith. Often people say, "where is God?" or "If He was here this would not have happened!" The eternal fact of the matter is, God is everywhere present, not just a piece of Him is with you and another piece is with another person, but ALL of Him is with you and ALL of Him is everywhere else as well. He is the All in All! We are often blinded because of the need, but He is here, closer than the air that we breathe. But we must be expecting and looking for His visitation!

When thinking about His visitation, we could also think mystically about it. Lights, music, angels; our mind can take us to a nebulous place. As we compare examples in the Bible when Christ manifested himself, there are some similarities, but not one instance is the same. In each case, we can see when His "excellent glory" is revealed and catches the person's attention. The nearness of God is often personalized by hearing His voice or the showing of a mystery. He challenges man by revealing a perspective that illustrates His greatness and man's fi-

nitiness. His love and encouragement flows into the hearer, empowering him with hope. This is a transforming encounter, not an everyday experience. Nevertheless, the kingdom of God is within us and the King is all around us.

Discerning His visitation is the beginning of walking in Him. I believe the roadmap to discovering His visitation is found in Psalms 23. *“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”* The term “the Lord” is a title for a personal savior. Its use signifies that David had a personal encounter with God and he surrendered his rights to himself and came under the submission of God. No longer was David in control but God was “shepherding” him, caring and leading him. There was no longer any “want” in his life. There was only satisfaction and contentment. David had learned not to chase after things for himself, but to be led and have the great Shepherd give him what he needs.

The psalmist has a new awareness and value system. He was humbled and worshipful. He was repentant because he had a confrontation with God’s goodness. His perspective was a divine one and God’s truth and correction “comforted him.” Fear was cast out and his awareness and concentration was on the character of Christ.

In the Lord’s visitation, we let go and God takes

control. It is a time of rest and discovery. He gently comes and ministers life and assurance. Like a best friend, He strengthens us by His very presence. He carries our burdens, if we let Him, and we are refreshed with hope. His wisdom, love and grace carry us to Himself and we collapse in His arms.

Think on the Apostle John's account in Revelations 1:12- 17, *"I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades."* This description of the ascended Christ always touches my heart.

The reality today is this same Christ is in you, and present with you—He is always there. Don't miss His manifestation! Ask for it, look for it and



abide there. Jesus is waiting for you.

## **Cultivate Wonder**

The “Seven Wonders” of the world are God’s handiwork. Their intrigue and complexity stretch our imagination. I remember seeing the Grand Canyon for the first time and I was silenced by its grandeur and beauty. It was as though it drew me in and pointed to something greater—a Designer.

The potential of each moment can be realized through wonder. In this spirit of amazement there is such beauty; simple pleasures, fragrances and a cultivating the ability to have a “unique recognition” can trigger a fresh illumination.

One thing I appreciate about children is their capacity and expression of wonder. They can have complete enjoyment of an object or experience through a unique recognition of something they have never seen before.

I can remember my son in the garden looking at flowers with me. We were looking at the different colors and he wanted to touch everything. Then we saw a colorful butterfly land on one of the flowers. He watched it intently; it was as if he held his breath so he could concentrate on every detail not wanting to miss a second. His eyes were the size of saucers.

The butterfly flew away and the moment of amazement ended and he was off to the next thing. We had captured a moment together and something inside me said, "Don't lose your amazement!" Life can get very busy and we can lose sight of the simple beauties of everyday life.

### **Inner Fascination**

As a new bride looks at her diamond, she is captured by the beauty. The light brings out the different colorful hues that make the stone magical. One of the strongest stones on the planet is placed in the most delicate of settings. It's value is based on size, clarity and cut. It is stunning and never gives the same view twice. The gaze, instead of a glance, opens our mind and heart to a "unique recognition." A childlike "inner fascination" can be cultivated by appreciating everything as a gift. An inner fascination is seeing a new depth to something that we are familiar with. A newness to something that is old or the value has been forgotten. A veil is taken from our eyes and there is a new appreciation and captivation of its beauty. We can start by handling and looking at situations and people as though we have never seen them before. We can glance at something familiar and think we have seen it all, but as we gaze and give attention to detail, the beauty is unlocked. Be

ready to be amazed!

This is essential to the future of our relationships. If we know people and ourselves after the past success or failures we will put things in “boxes” and stunt their growth and beauty in our hearts. We must be constantly asking God to teach us and to learn again the things we think we know. As we do this we will be good caretakers of God gifts for the short time that we have them.

God’s grace is designed to amaze us. It is a glimpse into His glory. Our earthly bodies would be consumed if we saw the Lord in all of His glory. It is so far beyond what we can comprehend. It is a mystery. We see it only in a glimpse. Even in this age of grace, we see through a glass darkly.

In Heaven, we will be awe-struck with a full revelation of God’s goodness; we will be speechless with wonder. We will no longer need faith, for all will be visible. As we seek His face, we are in humble amazement, with eternal gratefulness that is revealed in a heart attitude of worship. His magnificence subdues our imaginations within, and all is in a holy silence before Him. No flesh can glory in His presence. We bow in adoration and we pray in His name, the name above all others. Our prayer is this: “Lord, may all see the display of your magnificence!”

In his book, *Discover the Wonder*, Ravi Zacharias writes about wonder:

*“Wonder is that possession of the mind that enchants the emotions while never surrendering reason. It is a grasp on reality that does not need constant high points in order to be maintained, nor is it made vulnerable by the low points of life’s struggle. It sees in the ordinary the extraordinary, and it finds in the extraordinary the reaffirmation for what it already knows. Wonder clasps the soul (the spiritual) and is felt in the body (the material). Wonder interprets life through the eyes of eternity while enjoying the moment, but never lets the momentary vision exhaust the eternal. Wonder makes life’s enchantment real and knows when and where enchantment must lie. Wonder knows how to read the shadows because it knows the nature of light. Wonder knows that while you cannot look at the light you cannot look at anything else without it. It is not exhausted by childhood but finds its key there. It is a journey like a walk through the woods, over the usual obstacles and around the common distractions while the voice of direction leads, saying, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it’ (Isaiah 30:21).”<sup>4</sup>*

We can live life in the innocence of a child, leaving behind all the complications of trying to figure it all out, or trying to control each component. Take the time and enjoy the beauty of God with an “inner fascination” and a reverential worship. In the mo-

ment, let things penetrate you rather than skip over you. Discover your life through wonder.

## **His Presence**

As reasonable adults, we can be at great risk of missing God's presence completely. Human reason seems so rational and pragmatic at times, but when we use it as a lens to understand God, we miss everything! Since when is God explainable for us to totally understand Him? Often we are left to trust Him for the unexplained. Human reason shrinks God into our own image; our unbelief and fear dwarf Him in our experience. But the true reality is that His fullness and power of God is realized by His presence, and not by evidence alone.

It is profound to think that God is infinite and yet knowable. Our God is so personal because He has walked where we have walked, and He Himself is our provision. In our crises we see Christ, and often in our messes we discover a message from our Savior. He fully knows us, and completely loves us.

The prophet Isaiah says, *"Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us,"* in Isaiah 26:12. His perfect peace that passes all understanding is promised to guard our hearts and minds in Philippians 4:6. Be aware and dwell

on God's greatness, and you will discover that He is mighty in your midst!

When Moses saw the burning bush in Exodus, he recognized that this was not a usual sight. When fire consumes something, it usually burns away to nothing, but this bush didn't. Rather than walking by and dismissing it as an anomaly, Moses stopped and "turned aside" to get a closer look. What Moses saw changed his direction and caught his attention. When God spoke from inside the bush, it changed Moses' life forever. The presence of God has unimaginable power. We enter into His awesome presence and we are changed into His likeness.

His presence can be manifested in a word, a place, or a song, He can overtake you when you are alone and thinking on Him. As we are inclining our ears we become more spiritually sensitive to what the Spirit is saying and doing. God wants to teach each believer how to develop an awareness and expectation of God and living as though He is real and present every moment. In this divine discipline we live a life of worship.

I love to walk on the beach. My feet hit the sand and the slimy plant life, and I can feel all kinds of sensations. The heat from the sun radiates from the sand to my feet and at first it is painful. The sensation is more than I can bear, because my feet have

been safely protected and covered for a long time. But as time goes on and calluses grow, the sensitivity diminishes and we lose the acute awareness of the elements.

Does this describe your Christian life? In time, we can have numbness and lose sense of feeling and enjoyment. Insensitivity can creep in because we have forgotten the value of connecting in the moment. The beauty and the newness become familiar and predictable and the innocent connection is seemingly lost.

*God can bring back the newness to our tired souls. He can refresh us by showing how He thinks and feels about the things we are struggling with, or thinking about.* Some ways to this newness are: What does the Bible say about what we are thinking about? Will we submit to what the Bible is saying? We can purpose to examine things in your life as though we have never seen them before. Listen, as though we have never heard them before. We can purpose to be thankful and appreciate people and things as though it was your last day with them. We can learn to enjoy what we have in your life, rather than trying to change it.

Prayerfully, God will bring us back to the way that He thinks and values things. As we grow as a receiver, we give to the measure that we have freely

received. Christ makes all things new and cultivates a renewal that brings back our sensitivity. In His presence there is a healing that takes place that refreshes body, soul and spirit.

## **God's Dwelling Place**

Through an unfortunate set of circumstances we were standing with a family who unexpectedly lost their dad. The pain was unbearable to observe. The widow and her three children cried till they could cry no more.

It is safe to say that no one prays for difficulty. Naturally, we enjoy when things go well. But God dwells in darkness. This may seem like an unusual way to envision the "Father of lights." In 2 Chronicles 6:1, Psalms 18:11 and Psalms 97:2, "*He dwells in thick darkness.*" In Job 12:22, He is the light that pierces through the darkness. In the obscurity of the unknown, where blindness surrounds us—God is there. He is near, as close as the mention of His name. In a moment, as we call on His name, His light can shine and be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

This same God that dwells in darkness dwells in our heart. There is not a piece of Him in every place, but the fullness of Him in every place. Even in



loneliness, chronic sickness or in sudden loss, God is a present help in time of need. No matter how daunting the darkness may be, God is in your midst and He is mighty! He has given you the authority to defeat principalities and powers and rulers of darkness. Even if the situation doesn't change, God will change you and transform you to His image. Come as you are, believe and agree in faith and walk in the authority that Christ has permanently declared, regardless of the evidence. He is our ultimate hiding place, our habitation and dwelling place. Abide and enter into His rest.

## **Perspective**

Caleb of the Old Testament had a “can do” attitude. His excellent spirit was vibrant and bold regardless of his age. He walked in faith persuaded of the promise more than any evidence by sight. Even in his old age he said “give me this mountain.” His strength, health, and ability didn't dictate his perspective—the promise of God did. God said it, he believed it and that settled it.

Faith knows God and nothing else outside of Him. It sees the impossibility as a stepping stone of opportunity. Do you interpret your life this way? Trouble can divide our heart and disrupt our emotions so easily. Faith teaches us to look beyond the

challenge and see the lesson to be learned. Each thing that we face is designed to add and equip our lives. That is God's heart and that should be our perspective in faith.

Perspective is the key to growth. How we process what happens determines the nature that we are developing. The journey must be taken moment by moment, step by step, prayer by prayer. These valuable increments keep us from getting "ahead" of God and His promises. This is a learned discipline, to process moments and respond to God and not be driven by anxiety and fear.

It is possible and very common for a Christian to be an age chronologically but emotionally act and think much younger. Maturity and a godly perspective are fruits of walking moment by moment with Christ. Navigating through other people's unrealistic expectations, demands and negativity can be a daily minefield, but Jesus must keep our focus. We are not fighting against people but lifting up Christ. We are here to lift up Christ, and to make an invisible God visible so He will draw people unto Himself.

The naysayers always have a lot to say, they verbalize sight and often challenge faith. Their confession is pragmatic and challenges the foundations of the plan. Although naysayers can be frustrating, their presence can be helpful because it keeps the

leaders on their knees seeking the Lord rather than trying to defend Him.

The critics' view is important as long as we process the information objectively. It causes us to look at all sides prayerfully and balanced. Don't let the devil put a spin on information that you receive; don't take it personally in tunnel vision, but rise above it by looking at Jesus first and remembering His promise.

Often words are sourced in jealousy and insecurity, but don't be drawn into that arena. Abide in spiritual objectivity! We are not here to defend Christ, He is well able to do that. Rather, we are here to glorify Him and be an example of a tangible manifestation of eternal grace.

In our natural ability it can be easy to work hard to engineer something until it works. It can be like climbing a ladder rung by rung until the obstacle is overcome. The key is making sure that the ladder is on the right building with a destination that glorifies God. Are you working so hard at something that will not ultimately glorify God? Our moments with Jesus keep us living and serving for purposes so far greater than ourselves.

Our viewpoint can change in a moment. We either live going TO the cross or moving away FROM

the cross. The difference is made as we surrender. We take up our cross by agreeing with what Jesus has done, but as we submit to Him we begin to live in the power and the perspective of the cross. Jesus, as He spoke the seven sayings of the cross, was in great weakness dying for our sins. Those sayings clearly demonstrate that He had others on His mind. His viewpoint was sourced in the authority and knowledge that the cross would conquer everything that opposed Him. Calvary's perspective is always redemptive and it sees the real needs and communicates a perfect provision. Surrender in the moment, and watch your perspective change.

### **Thinking in the Moment**

In 2 Peter 3:1, the apostle Peter tells us to “*stir up our pure minds to remembrance.*” A pure mind is a clean place where the light of the truth reigns. Innocence and imagination grow and produce healthy mindsets and dreams. Peter is communicating an important command because he knew that the natural mind cleaves to the earthly. A man's character is the sum of all his thoughts. So much of the earthly can clutter our mind, so we are not free to think divinely with God. Our minds can race with such fearful and trivial things. Peter is challenging us to think with God in the moment!

The renewal of the spirit of the mind is a daily discipline. Philippians 4:8 gives the boundaries of a pure mind; “*think on these things*” that are godly. Colossians 3:1-3 says to “set” or to focus on things above. We begin to move from fleeting thoughts to an established mindset.

The fruit of a healthy mindset are faith dreams, heart visions and fruitful imaginations. *Faith dreams use our expectation and anticipation of God to imagine big dreams in our thoughts, to imagine the impossible for His glory.* It is easy to dwarf God in our mind when we think in our own limitations. A heart vision is a personal promise that God has given; it has touched us very deeply and we wait on Him to fulfill it. Our expectation is of Him and He has our heart and our faith. Fruitful imaginations are a seedbed for new growth and creativity. We are like a spiritual artist painting a canvas with a variety of colors. These mindsets anchor our mind on things above so we don't drift into double mindedness.

Double mindedness causes a spiritual “attention deficit disorder” and we can find ourselves standing in two places in our heart. The flesh wars against the spirit and the one that we feed and pay attention to has the influence. To cultivate thinking with God helps keep a single eye and brings in undivided concentration. Consider each of these steps and try

to apply them to your life:

1. Take time and delight in what you're doing.
2. Thank God on purpose by concentrating on the good.
3. Embrace what adds to your life and take time to develop it more.
4. Think big and don't make excuses for why it can't be done.
5. Pray and don't walk by sight.
6. Meditate on and confess the promise that God has given you.
7. Let go of the bad and don't live in guilt over it.
8. Stir yourself up in a heavenly mindset; God has so much to add to your life!

## **Mystery**

Logic often fails in the practical interpretation of life. "A plus B doesn't always equal C" in life. Intrigue often causes us to stop and wonder. In taking the time to look closer, to consider in detail the whole picture often unveils the mystery step by step.

A sound business plan or corporate strategy doesn't define or help us apply the things of God. Our approach to mysteries can't only be in a natural way of deductive and inductive reasoning based on past history and experience. We certainly learn from our failures and success, but if we see the work of God as a fancy formula, we miss the Lord. God wants to bring us beyond our own pragmatic under-

standing into His mysteries.

When Moses approached the Lord, God had him remove his shoes, for it was holy ground. Nothing of the natural flesh could touch the sacred things of God, it was holy and perfect. David, in handling the ark of God, learned this the hard way, and his shortcut cost someone their life. God's objective was not that man would "conqueror" his objective only, but that the man would be "conquered" by God's holiness. As we simply behold the Lord, without trying to figure Him out, He begins to unveil a mystery.

I have a dear friend that is dying of cancer. Looking at their life with God, it is powerful. I scratch my head wondering the reasoning behind why godly people suffer. It certainly doesn't make natural sense. God's eternal reason is cloaked in a mystery and is revealed to us in the testimony of others. As we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil because of their testimony of God's presence in the mystery of pain.

The natural man is always looking to fix things, but in God's economy man is often left with more questions than when he started. God is looking for simple faith in Him rather than determined pragmatism. Work ethic and perseverance have their valuable place, but not in interpreting and handling God's ways. They are "past finding out" in Romans

11:33.

The mystery of godliness is what keeps our faith alive. If we were able to figure it all out, we would not need faith and life would be understandable. Being able to rest when things are not able to be explained is a fruit of simple faith. This simple faith knows in the core of its belief system WHO God is, regardless of what we think we know or understand. Seek to ponder His mysteries rather than stuffing God into your own image or plan.

Without faith, it is just an elaborate plan of man; but with faith it is an adventure beyond human comprehension. When life doesn't make sense – rest in knowing God's ways are perfect. His reasoning will be known in due season, and we will praise Him for it. His perfect Will, will be done.

## **Action**

We have all heard that there are two kinds of people, “there are people of action and everyone else.” Often times the lack of action communicates a condition of our heart. There is a healthy balance of doing the right things in the right spirit. Godly action comes from the overflow of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. As we respond to the objective initiations of the Spirit, He heals and recalibrates our



heart in the New Man. So now, more than just talking about the answer, we are actively living out the answer to all men. That which we have lacked in ourselves we have received from God, and we live from His resources.

Have you ever had thoughts that are way “outside the box” ? God-sized dreams that are inspiring? We were made to think big and have a faith dream and pray it into reality! Many of our dreams lay stagnant with no action because we dismiss them as impossible or impractical. We can live as a spectator in simple appreciation, but it is faith action that separates the men from the boys. Knowledge can touch our hearts and even give a burden of concern; but it is through the Spirit that our burdens turn to burning. We become consumed with God’s minds and heart, not just with concern or serious talk, but with action. It is one thing to talk about Jesus and it is a whole other to burn for Him in a personal revelation. Let’s live and talk and ACT as though Christ is real today and that nothing is impossible with Him! We burn brightly with the truth, so that others who sit in darkness may see.

Many of us can be like over-laden camels with burdens that are breaking our backs, but Jesus is our burden bearer and a consuming fire! Jesus felt our same pain and troubles but it didn’t steal His joy or

His faith. Let's do more than just talk about issues and problems and people, but live and pray and act from a supernatural reality. Let's cast our burdens on the Lord so we are free to run with the glorious gospel.

## **True Potential**

Consider a mountain climber. He prepares his heart to reach the summit, he envisions the view he will see, and each step is calculated and planned. Each cable and foothold must be secure for him to reach the summit safely. He loves the adventure, it stretches the comfort zone so that he will reach a new threshold and break through the old plateaus. With each forward motion or setback, he is conquering what is in front of him. In the easy places or in stumbling the climber is learning his limits. The rugged climb invigorates because the obstacles pale in comparison to what he will experience at the top. He knows what waits for him at the summit! In the same way, we must strive to reach our full potential.

Reaching our growth potential is something we want in all areas of our lives. Because time is not a renewable resource, every decision counts. As we have said before, discovering our potential in this journey of faith is a process. We want to see Christ increase as we decrease. It's important to under-

stand and rehearse in our minds that each step matters. Each step prepares us for the next one and often times this is a slow process. God is working something in us first, so that we can have His ministry come out of us.

Our potential is His ability in us, Christ in action through these jars of clay. When we focus on mercy, moments become life transforming. Mercy takes away what I deserve and exalts love. Calvary has crucified the judgment against the guilty and made love the issue. Mercy takes our concentration off of ourselves and self improvement and we enter into a place of worship and thanksgiving. Mercy produces humility before others and meekness before God. Mercy softens and makes us teachable because we have caught a glimpse of how depraved we really are!

If we were to consider the ocean as a whole, we could say that it seems to have no potential, it is actual. One drop of water contains the same molecular structure as the whole. The ocean cannot evolve into anything greater than what it is. The sheer immensity of the ocean is powerful and defines its greatness. To everything that lives in it, to the unexplored depths—make it a mystery. The prophet Isaiah stretches our minds even further in another confounding thought about potential versus actuality.

God holds the ocean in “the hollow of His hand” in Isaiah 40:12. Even the vast oceans are small to Him! In nature, we feel small and insignificant but in actuality, God has crowned man as the highest of His masterpieces.

God has no potential, He is actual. He can be no greater or lesser than He is right now. This means who He is cannot be made greater or diminished by who we are and what we do, or don't do. He is constant. This is why no one has ever seen God. If they did, they would disintegrate—His greatness would overwhelm their finiteness. His perfection covers our imperfection, and through our imperfections we get to know perfect grace. His greatness overwhelms our mortality. His constant completeness is what gives us the potential for greatness.

In a defining moment, we discover that our potential is His ability in us! Potential is realized to the measure we connect and meet God in our moments. Potential is what “could be” if all things were at optimum...it is unknown to us until we seek and agree with who God is in us. Our potential is Christ's ability in us. ALL of HIM is available to you right NOW.

## **Multitasking**

This poem, by Ann Voskamp, speaks volumes:

*“Being in a hurry. Getting to the next thing without fully entering the thing in front of me. I cannot think of a single advantage I’ve ever gained from being in a hurry. But a thousand broken and missed things, tens of thousands, lie in the wake of all the rushing.... Through all that haste I thought I was making up time. It turns out I was throwing it away.”*<sup>5</sup>

I was watching my son the other day eat Oreo cookies. His huge bites and stuffed mouth made it difficult for him to chew. He clenched the other cookie and was eyeing it even before he could chew what he had in his mouth. I watched him carefully so he would not choke and reassured him that he would have his second cookie.

We can be just like this in our rushed multitasking. It can cause us to stuff too much into a moment, so much so that we can’t enjoy the spontaneity of change or even to enjoy what we are doing now. The fear of something can cause a panic and set us into over-drive. Loosen your grip, step back from trying to manage everything and everyone. Let God surprise you with His goodness. He is with you in your midst. Do you see Him? God’s plan is to work in us, we are His mission field. As we become more God-conscious and less task-oriented, we begin to fulfill God’s will rather than our own. Let’s flourish where we are planted and relax and enjoy our Oreos!

We are living in a day where multi-tasking is normal everyday life. If we were to step back and ask ourselves, is this productive? Does it really move me forward? Consider what the answer would be.

A recent Harvard Business Review article analyzes this by saying that, *"...multitasking leads to as much as a 40% drop in productivity and increased stress. When we shift between tasks we take 50% longer to accomplish a task, and make up to 50% more errors. We take on average, 15 minutes to return to serious mental tasks after responding to incoming e-mail or instant messages.*

*"When workers multi-task, their IQ drop 10 points. Study after study has shown that people don't really multitask, they just hop sequentially from task to task and perform each one less effectively than if they did the tasks one at a time. The more we multitask the more we experience difficulty in making decisions. We crave options, and instead of choosing one task, we choose them all. We open another screen or click on another link and then the brain struggles to figure out what to keep and what to disregard. Numerous studies have shown that focusing on multiple activities stifles our creativity. Creative thinking is higher when people focus on one activity for a significant part of the day. The data deluge is leading to poor sleeping habits. A US sleep survey (March, 2011) released found a link between late-night computer and mobile phone use and poor sleep."*

Scientists say juggling e-mail, phone calls and other incoming information can change how people think and behave. Our ability to focus becomes undermined by the constant bursts of information and continual distractions. We become so busy processing information that we are losing the tendency to think and feel.<sup>6</sup>

The Bible illustrates multi-tasking by showing us two birds. The partridge bird, in Jeremiah 17:11, leaves her own eggs and steals another's eggs. In doing so she neglects her own and prevents the other bird in hatching her own. The outcome is death to potential new life.

In Job 39:14-17, the ostrich puts her eggs in the sand. She is so busy she forgets that her most precious gift is under her feet, now crushed because of busyness. So easily we can enter this whirlwind with all that we have to "do." Instead, let's meet God where we are now, let HIM prioritize our stuff. Care and ENJOY what is in front of you, leave the circus and the juggling act for the clowns.

## **All In**

Can you remember the last time you walked on a beach on a hot summer day? The water looked so inviting. Wading in at first was uncomfortable due

to the cold water on the body. The stark difference was almost enough to want to turn back. Going deeper into the water, the body temperature started to acclimate. Not until the head was under the water did you feel total refreshment. Are you ALL in? God doesn't want just pieces of us, He wants it all.

Offering only pieces of ourselves to God is a contributing factor to our problems. We make boundaries and lines in the sand and we tell God how much is enough. Our boundaries give a sense of control, but they can show us that we ultimately don't trust God. In relationships, the measure we share and become vulnerable is the depth we are able to enjoy each other. Holding back causes suspicion and doubt. Our fears and mistrust can melt away as we understand God has His best prepared for us. Until there is full surrender and we give God our heart completely, we will not experience refreshment, renewal and revival. Let go!

Janet was a new believer, and Jim was very interested in getting to know her. Janet was apprehensive due to the last relationship she came out of. Even though Jim was nothing like her last boyfriend, she just didn't have any peace to start anything serious. Months went by and Jim pursued her gently yet intentionally. Janet prayed and realized why she was apprehensive. She was living in a wound that was



sabotaging a potentially good thing. Janet gave her fears to God and purposed to develop a friendship with Jim. She had never been in a godly relationship before, all was very new. It was marked with giving rather than taking, forgiveness rather than grudges and patient love rather than demanding lust. Janet and Jim friendship grew into love, they gave themselves to the LORD and eventually gave all of themselves to each other.

## **Teachable Moments**

We all have had times that have shaped our future; events that have changed our minds the hard way—for the better. One of my most teachable moments happened at work. I was a Water-proofer, restoring damp basements back into a liveable space. Our training was specific and the work was physically difficult. Perseverance and working smart was the name of the game. My job had taken me out of town for 2 weeks and we were on our last of 3 grueling jobs. Tiredness and the desire to be home started to impair my judgment. As we were removing the perimeter of the outside edge of the floor to install a water drainage system for the hydrostatic pressure, I noticed dry sand coming out from underneath the wall. There was no footer and the floor was paper thin. These three issues were clear indi-

cators to stop the job due to a potential shift of the foundation. Unfortunately, I disregarded my training and I didn't stop, trudging forward to get the job done. The inevitable happened. The wall buckled and the house dropped 2 inches, so much so that the front door wouldn't open. Making a long story short, a construction company had to be called in to jack up the house and pour a new foundation to set the house right again. This was a \$15,000 mistake. I was mortified. My once perfect track record was now tarnished. The real teachable moment came as I was envisioning being fired, but my boss took a different approach. He gave me mercy. I was so hard on myself that, quite literally, he had to shake me back to reality. My pride turned to humiliation and my boss's mercy showed the real lesson: to forgive myself and always follow the definition given; and when in doubt, stop and ask for help. This lesson has helped me over the years when I have seen people fail miserably. I was able to reciprocate what was given to me—mercy.

Learning to apply what we know shows that we learned what we have received. This is when there are personal breakthroughs because our experience was altered so that it could be a tool to help others. Kindness and understanding is often learned in failures. Don't miss these teachable arenas by try-

ing to rush through them. Pain and challenge are uncomfortable but this is where growth happens. Relevance and relatability is how people learn from your life.

## **Mentorship**

What has our eye, what leads us, and who we listen to has power over us. Discerning God's voice in the moment is pivotal and must be learned. Three important voices to help shape your life are: your pastor, the Holy Spirit through the Bible and a mentor. So many have so much to say, but some of the best intentions can be filled with guilt trips and inaccuracy. The right mentor can lead and train you not to fall in the same pitfalls as they did. This will save you from unnecessary suffering. We must take great care in which voices we heed to.

A pastor, whom the Bible often refers to as a shepherd, is a spiritual life coach and a guide. Their purpose is to help point out Christ and speak wisdom into your life. Their faithfulness to God is a "roadmap" for our learning. They are "People Builders" who on purpose pour their life into another with accountability and discipleship. They don't control you or breach your privacy; they lead through challenge and example. As pastors, if we are just giving out tasks then all we will have is workers. But if we

are empowering and equipping them, leaders are being born and trained.

The Holy Spirit through the Bible is the voice of Jesus. The voice of the Holy Spirit will not contradict the Bible. If what is said complements the heart of God then the listener will be empowered and encouraged. Our lifelong desire is to concentrate and learn God's voice, to magnify it above all others discerning the still small voice that has all power and wisdom. As we learn the heart of God, His voice will become more and more obvious.

Having a mentor in your life is invaluable. They can be parents or leaders in your life that have integrity. Their life and wisdom help shape our life and future decisions.

Here are a few examples from Scripture of life being poured into others:

- *"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ"* in 1 Corinthians 11:1.
- *"Therefore I urge you to imitate me"* in 1 Corinthians 4:16.
- Galatians 4:19 *"...until Christ is formed in you."*
- Moses mentoring Joshua in Exodus 24:13, Exodus 33:11, Numbers 11:28 and Deuteronomy 31.

- Elijah with Elisha in I Kings 19:16-21.
- David mentoring his mighty men in I Samuel 22:1, 2.
- Jesus mentoring His disciples, in all four Gospels.
- Barnabas mentoring Paul in Acts 9-11.

Mentoring then is an outgrowth of the New Testament pattern for developing churches spirituality. *The mentor stands not under but beside the mentee continually pointing him toward God in each area, believing that holistic health is necessary for true spiritual formation.* The “theoretical” becomes practical, the “abstract” becomes actual, and the “talked about” becomes worked through in a mentoring relationship.

To be a spiritual mentor may be the next step in your spiritual growth. There are certain things you can purpose to do as you mentor. Spend time—take them with you. You are mentoring when ministering, teaching, or even just eating together. Pour your life into them: heart, vision, experience & wisdom. Love them and establish relationship that cares. Listen, challenge and direct them in their gifts. Counsel them in life decisions, as the occasion arises. Pray together often, caring for their soul, hearing the personal cry of the heart. If your desire is to mentor then

humble yourself and be a learner, seek out those that are in a more advanced place than you are, for someone cannot lead you where they have not yet walked already. Peers may seem a comfortable place to start, but they won't help you reach your potential. Fall in love with your mentors life and faith and journey together.

Encouragement is the glue in the relationship. You cannot encourage "too much" as this creates capacity for correction and learning. Infusing the vision helps build perspective and faith. Infusion signifies an intentional act which is very invasive, like an injection of vitamin B or an iron shot to an anemic person, it gives them life giving nourishment that strengthens the body. Vision stretches and introduces possibility where none was thought of before. This helps with personal expansion and thinking big. *The mentoring relationship is a people builder relationship.* More important than what we are doing are the people we are doing it with.

The acronym M.E.N.T.O.R.I.N.G has a lot of meaning. Here is a great excerpt from Abe Brown that provide a great outline for how a mentor can foster an environment of teachable moments:

*M—“Modeling Christ-like behavior, ministry skill, faithfulness and fruitfulness.”*

- E—“Encouraging those he mentors in times of difficulty, hardship, stress, and apathy.”
- N—“Nurturing the person as a special individual with a focus on their character, gifts and calling.”
- T—“Training and equipping those he mentors to fullness of life and ministry preparedness.”
- O—“Organizing, as in helping students to organize time, money, relationships, and ministry.”
- R—“Relationship building based on a genuine, selfless relationship that gradually deepens and opens.”
- I—“Interceding is primary because you cannot lead people unless you intercede for those people.”
- N—“Navigating by helping students to navigate major life decisions, relationships, and opportunities.”
- G—“Growing. This is the ultimate test of a mentor: did he really help the person grow?” 7

## **Authority**

Jesus gives us authority over everything in our lives. As we choose to exercise it, we no longer live as slaves, but overcomers. Taking authority over the atmosphere is so important. Having “offensive” and “defensive” promises in our hearts gives

us the victory NOW. Defensive promises are truths that strengthen us in the new man and edify us in our position as a son or daughter of the Most High. These promises secure the mind and soul as doubt comes in. In knowing who we are, this fortifies our heart and the devil's lie is less likely to have authority over us. Here are a few defensive promises:

- Galatians 4:6-9, *"We are heirs of an eternal inheritance."*
- Ephesians 1:6-7, *"We are accepted in the beloved."*
- Revelation 1:5-7, *"We are kings and priests."*
- John 1:12, *"We are sons of the Most High."*
- Jeremiah 1:3-6, *"We are children of promise."*
- Colossians 1:13, *"We are in the kingdom of His dear Son in love."*

Offensive promises are truths that address and define the atmosphere. These promises tear down strongholds. Let's equip ourselves with Truths that pierces the darkness! Here are a few of them:

- Ephesians 6:10-14, *"Standing in the power of His might..."* waging war in Christ.
- Exodus 14:14, *"The battle is the Lord's."*
- 1 John 4:4, *"Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world."*



- Ephesians 1:19-20, *“Mighty is the power to us-ward who believe.”*

*As we live in our positional authority, we are no longer victims but have the identity and life of a Victor. As we discover Christ’s purpose for the moment, we see that the devil is defeated NOW.*

## **Defining Moments**

Defining moments are what establishes a life transforming change. This change, points to the legacy that we leave for others to follow. A defining moment could come from a tragedy, or success; either way, it is how we respond to them that shape our future. Hardship is a great teacher. In the school of “hard knocks” we are broken and re-made, or we become hard and bitter. In these defining moments, say “yes” to God and our perspective changes. In weakness and He adds to our faith and matures us. Our outlook is no more dominated by our “in-look” and how we view ourselves but we lookup and our perspective comes from above. We take a “long look” and have Christ define us and tell us who we really are. His viewpoint is the true reality.

In these critical moments we can either fight God, or choose to surrender to Him, learn from Him, and know Him in His sufferings. These agonizing

moments of NOW, when there is a loss, or when fear grips your heart, or humiliation reduces you, these are defining moments that prepare you for the blessing. Disappointments become God's appointments.

When my son was born 16 years into our marriage, my life took on a whole new meaning. Things that were not important to me became important. My biblical worldview and the "lens" that brought all things into focus broadened in responsibility. Everything in my life became deeper and more meaningful, because I have a little one now to raise. He is watching, listening and being molded into a follower of Christ.

The weight of responsibility and thought of raising up my son brought fear of the unknown and it began to strangle me. But in that moment, I began to worship and thank God for His gift. This wasn't my gift, but it originated with Him, therefore He was responsible to give the provision and wisdom to care for him. This was one of my defining moments.

The devil often overwhelms our hearts in the moment by having us think we are alone with just ourselves and our own ability as the only source. This isn't true! God is faithful to go above and beyond for His blessings.

## Emotional Mutiny

Chad works with his dad on their family horse farm. Recently Chad's dad bought a new stallion. He was a powerful animal full of life, but he was unbroken. Chad's dad warned Chad not to walk behind the horse or come up suddenly on him lest he spook him. Chad heard his dad speaking but the horse fascinated him and he couldn't wait to get near him. The first chance Chad got, when no one was looking, he raced to the stable. Disregarding his dad's words he went into the stable to pet the horse and feed him. The horse eyed Chad as he moved close, and as soon as Chad touched the stallion, the horse began to violently buck and the hooves hit Chad in the chest sending him flying into the stables wall. It knocked the wind out of him, and later he would learn that four of his ribs were broken. Chad's dad showed up out of nowhere and rescued his son. Chad was embarrassed; he knew he had ignored his father's counsel. It was real to him now, this was a painful lesson of obedience Chad has never forgotten.

Our heart can be damaged by life. Strong emotions of fear and regret can paralyze our present; just like looking into a mirror that has been shattered would skew our view of ourselves. Not seeing things clearly, we can be subjective and narrow.

Emotions, if not controlled in truth, can take us hostage, blinding us to hope. Walking with God in the moment means that we give God our fears and regrets. Our uncertainty is surrendered to God's certainty. As we fellowship with objective truth in the moment, it becomes the norm and standard that eventually hold our fears and anxiety hostage rather than our fickle heart. We can give the seemingly real and tangible feelings so much authority! But instead, agree and live in truth in the moment and abide there. Set your face like a flint towards Christ and you will pass through.

Fear often projects the worst case scenario. It is the emotion of self consciousness without God. When fear starts to creep in, we can confess and abide in truth in a moment and perfect love can cast out fear. All fear is a lie. The assurance of God's presence can strengthen us in a moment and renew our perspective.

Looking backwards skews our present. Some parts of our past can be a sweet fragrance of memories that are precious to capture and remember. But so much of our past is not positive. However, we must be aware that the probability for being subjective increases with memories, because we can't remember in entirety the context of each incident. We remember pieces only. Regret can be so prevalent.

Wishing we said or did something else. This relentless struggle can be exhausting. We can't change the past, we must let go and move on.

As we consider our future, our heart attitude is a key director. Our heart attitude reveals how we are responding to God. People hear our words and see our actions but God sees our heart. Our thinking reveals who we truly are and ultimately will reveal our motivations. As we worship the Lord our heart attitude stays with Christ at the center.

Grace declares that our best days are in front of us. A moment of grace can abound to cover years of regret and pain. We are given an eternal perspective and there is new expectation to believe God for good. No matter what is in store for our future, we know God holds our future and that is grace!

## **Pain**

Life can be unbearable at times especially in seasons of loss. Our pain can create knots that bind us up emotionally and mentally. The more we try to fix ourselves or self-soothe, the tighter the knots can become. I believe people are very aware of their pain and shortcomings, too aware. As we allow the love of God to take authority in our lives, we recognize that God is not trying to fix us, but to give healing.

He gives a new rope free from all the knots.

I remember when my mother passed away suddenly. The shock and devastation turned me upside down. The pain numbed my heart and I felt as though I would not gain traction. As time went on and as the everlasting arms of God carried me to a new place, a new normal; the depth of pain revealed a new destiny and understanding.

Emotional pain has a way of stretching us beyond measure. The margins of normal living are “blitzed” in a worse case scenario. We often know our limitations but trouble stretches us to new depths. It shows reserves that we never knew we had; adrenaline kicks in or recall gives power and wisdom in the moment. Often times we see what we have and what we need. These are teachable moments, we see in honesty what is reality.

Pain is important in our life; it shows that we are alive. As in our physical bodies, the nerve endings communicate with the brain when something is wrong. If there was no life, there would be no response. Our coping method may numb the pain for a season, but we are comforted as we let Christ love and nourish healing. There are no magic formulas, or charted averages, for how to grieve the “right” way. When we collapse in the arms of God, we will experience His divine comfort. He made us, so He

knows us better than we know ourselves. He restores the soul.

## **Wasting Time**

Wasting time can be so prevalent, especially when we are not meeting God in the moment. Aimlessness can creep in and we miss God's intent. One prominent waster is procrastination; it is not a stranger to any of us. Ignoring something, no matter how we dread or fear the consequence, will not make it go away. Delaying the inevitable often compounds the problem, it's better to "face off" and see God's faithfulness. The fear of loss can be intimidating, but not all that is feared comes to past. Instead of being paralyzed we can "see and think through" the dilemma. We do this by fellowshiping with God each step of the way, reaching out to Him, consulting Him, waiting on Him and fellowshiping with what will be added in the journey not just on what might be taken away.

Distraction is another waster. The lack of focus and heart preparation has us juggling many things that catch our attention but not necessarily help us complete the task at hand. Cultivate undivided attention by setting realistic goals and fellowship with the ultimate reason of why you're doing it. Step back and access often to make sure you're hitting the "tar-

get.” don’t lose sight of the ultimate reason. In our journeying we often don’t have all the answers but we are in constant discovery mode. God will give what we need when we need it. Inspiration is the greatest motivation, guard from being side tracked!

We often think on how the moment can serve us, but the real question is, what is the way I can serve the purpose of the moment? God has an eternal intent for every moment—His plan, His desire. We experience peace when we enter into God’s intent. But often our minds race ahead and we begin to live in “what could be” or “what should be” and we lose our peace and joy – we lose the intent of NOW. Stop. Look. Listen. Learn to unpack and decompress, to breathe, and delight in the moments. It is not all about us and what we want or what we think “should” happen. We are learning Christ on this personal journey of discovery. Let God share His heart with you.

## **Dull Spirit**

Imagine this scenario: it is your wedding day and you’re preparing for the ceremony—a defining moment that will alter your life forever – and you fall asleep and sleep through the whole wedding ceremony! This would be absurd and maybe hard to imagine but in the spiritual realm, this is possible.



We are the bride of Christ adorned and waiting for our groom, Jesus Christ. We are adorned and ready for His appearing so that we will not miss Him or be ashamed at His appearing. But many are intoxicated with troubles and absorbed with their own lives, spiritually snoozing at the wheel of their own faith journey.

We are in a day where many are slumbering and have a dull spirit. As dullness enters a person's life it is because they have believed a lie and the result is delusion. A false reality dictates and removes urgency and wisdom. Importance that was once placed on things is removed and other temporal things take front view. Webster's dictionary defines a delusion as *"a false belief that is firmly maintained in spite of incontrovertible and obvious proof to the contrary and in spite of the fact that other members of the culture do not share the belief."* Dullness is revealed through relativism and reigns in the human heart that is void of doctrine.

Satanic intelligence is the root of a dull spirit. Satan, being the father of lies, persuades the individual in his perverted mindset and the individual's conversation and actions change to reflect it. There is no spiritual sense to it, it is rooted in a lie and doctrines of demons. Mark 9:17-18 reveals that a Dull spirit is oppressing those who are dull of heart in order to

blind them spiritually. This dullness robs the mind of the ability to recognize the eternal consequences of present decisions made. The outcome is the blind leading the blind into a pit!

Let's look at some of the characteristics of a dull and dumb spirit. First, there is compromise because of intimidation. This happens as we submit to fear, guilt or shame. We become people who are image-oriented rather than being secure in our grace identity. This has damaging effects because what needs to be said and done is not because we are intimidated and forfeit our true authority and privilege to function in power. It may be unpopular to stand and exercise our God-given authority in love, but it may save our life and the ones who hear and see us.

Secondly a dumb spirit allows tolerance because of fear. In the pressure and herd mentality we "go with the flow." But the true danger is that we don't know where this flow will take us! We let go of a sacred thing and we pick up something else. Every fear is a lie; it can neutralize and paralyze us so that we have no voice or impact. Dispel fear with faith words and actions!

Thirdly, with a dumb spirit there are no clear convictions of truth but rather we become focused on being a pleaser of men. If we don't know what we stand for, we may fall for anything. Convictions

are a light in the darkness. They produce premeditated decisions based on truth before pressures or expectations or spiritual warfare can skew our viewpoint. Precise convictions keep us grounded when everything goes haywire.

Fourthly, the direction and way of the “herd” becomes our guiding agent so that we can preserve our reputation. Our emphasis becomes more behavioral rather than value based. Having a behavioral emphasis is often based on conforming; doing what everyone else is doing. Our values are what we believe and even if they are unpopular they are what feeds our morals. If we are conformists then there will not be a divine transformation. God wants our heart, more than anything else.

As we allow the Great Shepherd to lead us, we are drawn out of our comfort zones into the faith zone. Our preferences yield to God’s Will because we have His thoughts. He wants us to need Him, to move us beyond ourselves so He can do the impossible work, in us, and through us. This is the faith zone a place of faith action and supernatural growth and victory.

Fifthly, we can become desensitized to the pain of others because of self absorption. Tragically we can be isolated and distracted with all of our troubles and fears and miss the refreshing of the Spirit as

we serve others. The compassion of Christ keeps us sensitive to the needs and challenges of others and equips us with a life giving message.

Sixth, a dumb spirit reflects the lack of the fear of the Lord. Indifference and familiarity begin to usurp the authority of God in your life. Love has waxed cold because life is crowded with self-interests. In worship and divine concentration the “dross” from our hearts is burned away and the scales from our eyes fall off. Just as metal is purified from all foreign matter under great heat, so the holiness of God removes those things that don’t glorify Him.

Seventh, a dumb spirit does not guard that which is sacred. It produces apathy and carelessness to the things of God and the principals of the scriptures. Not seeing the value of those things imparted to us can yield indifference. This “take it or leave it” attitude insults the Spirit and the devil can rob, kill and destroy our capacity. Guarding the “wonder” keeps us in an attitude of worship. What God has done for us is so perfect and so complete—with no strings attached! He fully knows us and completely loves us—this is amazing!

Lastly, a critical spirit emerges because we ourselves are inactive. Crystallization and stagnation repels life. Moving by faith in simplicity moment by moment creates a powerful momentum.

Here is a quote by Pat Gastineau *“a dumb spirit’s distinct purpose is to immobilize the Church spiritually by clouding our perception, blunting our alertness and keeping us slightly off target.*

*“There are spiritual effects, mental and emotional effects, and physical effects. The main target of this spirit is toward the mind, dulling the mental and emotional realm in order to curb spiritual movement and growth. The usual damage that we all observe is dullness and spiritual slumber.”*

Gastineau goes on to say that, *“We are in a state of insensibility. When a man is asleep, he does not know what is going on around him. Prayer isn’t important anymore, we can’t seem to find the time to read the Bible or come to church...”*

*“The thought of a sinner perishing in hell no longer moves us. We are subject to all sorts of illusions. When we sleep, our sense of judgment is gone. we fashion strange things in our head. The dream world seems so real, but it is not. Sometimes we wake up troubled because of what we have dreamed, only to be comforted when we assure ourselves that it was just a dream.*

*“Spiritual sleep does not allow us to see things as they really are. We fail to see the need of the world around us. We are in a state of inaction. Many believers are inactive; they are on the sidelines doing nothing of eternal*

*value. Once they were faithfully involved in the work of the church, but now they are just benchwarmers.”*<sup>8</sup>

How do we stay awake and remain effective in these last days? In 1 Thessalonians 5:6 the apostle Paul says, “Be watchful, and don’t slumber.”

Paul writes in Romans 13:11-13, “*It is high time to come out of your sleep – Jesus is near, cast off the works of darkness and PUT ON the Lord Jesus.*” We must continually, on purpose, feed the New Man and allow Him to have authority over our Will and to starve the old life. Continue to draw near Spirit-filled people that challenge you and keep you accountable. Guard and cultivate the spiritual wonder, the person of Christ personally ministering to your soul in the beauty of holiness; this in turn will keep you. Be radical in sharing your faith, and above all pray and submit to God and Jesus will resist Apollyon, the destroyer of men’s souls.

## **Delight in the Moment**

At one point, Sam was in a place where he hated his life and where he was. He felt like he had missed opportunities and “his train had left the station” for good. On the outside he looked like he had it all together but he was dissatisfied—he wanted more. Comparing his life to his friends, he became resent-

ful and angry. Sam was blinded by what “should be” based on ideal circumstances, rather than “what is.” He could not see the good—even if it collided with him. Sam was seeking something he did not yet possess and was dismissing what he did possess. Delighting with thankfulness shows the value of what we possess and where we are. Until this happens we will not be prepared and equipped for the next step. Regret and resentment “stall us” from potential and discovering the amazing place we are in NOW.

We have so many options that call for our attention and proposition for our moment; it is very easy to lose sight of what matters.

*We strive to measure everything in our life so that we can control it, but God wants to lead us to the immeasurable – Himself. Time can't be measured in its entirety, with each passing moment it is connected to limitless potentials so far beyond us. To “seize the moment” and piggy back on all it potential – this is our desire.*

God can “re-wire” us and create new desires and new ways of thinking. We can delight as a little child tasting ice cream for the very first time. The joy and thrill of enjoyment, God wants to lead us to this place.

## Contentment

*“Many hours and many miles was their way. Hot humid air didn’t deter their hungry hearts. Beautiful dark faces with bright smiles fill the room as worship began. They greet each other with a holy kiss and find their place. Clapping and joyous singing radiates from each person and every part of the room comes alive. Their deep brown faces shine as they worship their King! Each chair filled with many sitting on the floor, the room then gets quiet for the preaching. Like sponges they drink every word and are filled. Time seems to stand still as we commune around our Savior. These diamonds reflect the beauty of our King—King Jesus! They are poor in the world’s eyes but extremely rich in Heavens coffers. Thank You Lord, for this glimpse of your glory in Ecuador.”<sup>9</sup>*

Thankfulness connects us to the NOW life; worshipping God brings heaven to earth. If we were to measure the moments of time to see if there were fluctuations or inconsistencies we would discover that time is constant. Time doesn’t move faster or slower, but it is relative to the perception of the individual. Time could appear to be accelerated based on schedule or an overactive mind.

All of us have been given the gift of time, but the applications are so different. To slow down and “smell the roses” is often where we find content-



ment and satisfaction. Less is more, because we are allowing what we are doing to penetrate and enter its potential. Often we may be surprised, many things are not as we assumed—they are better. Risk management may keep us generalizing and keeping people at arm's length, but God beckons us to rest and discover that the messes are OK, and imperfections cause us to know Jesus. We may strive to have a “tidy” life tiptoeing in safety to the grave, but this is not living. Living comes through a faith adventure where we obey truth and follow in simplicity as a child. Embrace every moment, as if it is your last. With this attitude everyday can be our best day because God gave it!

## **Attitude**

Watching my one year old son today, I realized the difference between these two words: forbearance and tolerance. They may seem similar but they are worlds apart. As my son was playing on the kitchen floor, he seemed to have such a blast playing with our Tupperware. As I listened to his joyful screams and his repetitious “bang, bang” on the floor, it warmed my heart to see him enjoying this simple game. Did we have places to go and people to see? Yes. But this moment was timeless. My patient love was the perspective and context to this picture.

Grace and energy was plenteous because my son is the object of my love and to see him smile – well let's just say the world stopped for a few minutes. This is forbearance in love.

Tolerance is different. I think we have all been in situations where we have been tolerated by others, and have had a short rope for people and ourselves. Usually ultimatums and contingency plans are attached to this word. Counting minutes and wanting to “move on” to something that we want to do is our end-game. Full of frustration and a “short fuse,” we are ticking time—bombs.

In a similar way, the world has become very tolerant; they respect evil and are cynical at the divine. To pacify someone is better than to teach someone. This defensive way of thinking will lead us to a place where we become followers led by the nose to a pit.

Forbearance is proactive and it leads. It is offensive and moves forward building a relationship beyond the need or circumstance. Jesus made love the issue. He forbears looking beyond our faults to see our needs and our ultimate potential. Jesus wasn't one that would tap his foot in anxious frustration thinking, “If they do one more thing wrong I will...” Jesus' heart of compassion didn't just tolerate us. *He loved extravagantly, even at the total price of Himself.* Jesus handles us like fine china, because He sees

our value so much clearer than we do.

We live in a world where everything seems tolerated. People often don't want to be where they are, and they are only there because they have to be. Let's enjoy the moment and accept that everything may not happen the way we have planned, but the Will of God will be completed. Only then can we look back at the end of the day and see that we haven't totally rushed through our day, with collateral wreckage strewn everywhere; but we can see the hand of God loving us beyond what we can control.

Live 100% were you are, the person in front of you is the most important person in your life at that moment. Celebrate them, don't just tolerate them. In celebrating them, their layers will peel back and you will see a glimpse of the priceless treasure. God, help us to love like you do!

## **Excellence**

*An excellent spirit is an attitude and mindset that excels above the norm and status quo—it is a thriving spirit!* This spirit approaches, and processes information from a different point of view. It is a “can do” spirit.

Joshua and Caleb had an excellent spirit in Num-

bers 14:24. They refused to let the obstacles sway them from the conviction of God's promise. They confessed and lived in the promise as if it were already fulfilled. The seeming lack of evidence doesn't mean there is no evidence, we may just not see it all yet. God's plan is a continuing unfolding plan of redemption. Joshua and Caleb knew that they were "well able to take the land" simply because the Almighty, All-knowing, everywhere Present God said so!

David the Psalmist said in Psalms 37:37 "*Mark the perfect man...his way is peace.*" This is wisdom about our mentors. Observe their ways and imitate them. In Daniel 6:3, he was preferred above all because of his excellent spirit.

An excellent spirit reveals humility. This is a mystery—it is not thinking highly of yourself or lowly yourself—it is not thinking of yourself at all. An excellent spirit is God-conscious, and considers the heart of God in decisions.

It is easy to have external things determine happiness, but an excellent spirit shows that having true riches or poverty is not determined by what we have, or lack, it is revealed in the quality of our selfless spirit. Our possessions either possess us, or we are good stewards of our possessions, God's blessings. God's mind declares that we have what we

have to empower others and serve them in Christ. To give what is needed and not what is deserved—this is a life-giving excellent spirit.

## **Breaking Point**

My prayer is that the thoughts in this book would create a paradigm shift in the way that we live our lives. Simple application can have great impact. Application comes as we become vulnerable, available and agree with God and what He has said. He breaks us and inspires us again. God's breath strengthens our trust to believe again.

Consider this quote by Roy H. Williams on inspiration, enthusiasm and instruction:

*"You cannot instruct a person to have enthusiasm any more than you can instruct them to give birth to a redheaded child.*

*"The person must first be inspired. Inspiration is what you give them. Enthusiasm is what they give you. People inhale inspiration and exhale enthusiasm. They cannot give you enthusiasm until you give them inspiration. Neither is a product of instruction. There is a time to instruct and a time to inspire. We often think we're doing one when we're actually doing the other. Is your enthusiasm contagious or is it contained? Are you inspiring those around you?"<sup>10</sup>*

Take your life back. Enjoy the moment by entering it with expectation and newness. Be inspired by a personal God who fills ALL things. He completely knows us and totally loves us. Tap into the potential of one moment, and allow enthusiasm to flow from you to inspire others. Life is limitless because God is just waiting to release His goodness.

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\*All Bible verses in the Body of the Book are from the NKJV.\*

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