

It Doesn't Take Very Long To Find God

When Your Heart Cries Out!

Edited Excerpts of Message by Bro. Bob Wilson Guthrie, OK 12-23-21

We tend to gravitate toward earthly things we can see and touch, yet there is a side of us the Lord wants us to take heed to. The physical can't satisfy the spiritual side of us. There's something down deep in us that's not satisfied with those things. It takes a spiritual connection. Sometimes it is not easy to get ourselves out of the way.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me”(Rev. 3:20). “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way”(Is. 53:6). That is our tendency. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”(II Cor. 4:17).

I believe the Lord allows things in our lives to get our attention. Why are we caught up in our own agenda? He loves us. He is concerned about us. “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Cor. 4:18). **Life has a purpose and a calling from God.** Our perspectives change. Things so important -- *all of a sudden aren't important any more.* You know, it doesn't take very long to find God when your heart cries out! I want to encourage us all today to seek after the spiritual. Jesus came to bring us hope of something beyond.

“You're not done yet, you've only scratched the surface!”

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“Talents and Potential”. . . Folks, I believe we should be putting some life in our years. Be fruitful! “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God”(Rom. 14:12). He's keeping the books. I want something on the books. Don't let life slip through your fingers! **Wherever God plants you, you can be fruitful. You've got to be willing to get the blister.** God is working *with* us. “Do it with thy might”(Eccl.9:10). Start small, and you be faithful at it! Just see where the Lord will lead you.

You think living for the Lord is hard? I'll show you some troubles. . . I work at the prison! I'm investing my time in _____? What is our motivation? What are we looking forward to? The Lord wants us to be activated and to our full potential. You have a high calling this morning(Rom. 1:7).

There is more to do. ***You're not done yet. You've only scratched the surface!***

Be Faithful - Be Connected

Edited excerpts of message by Bro. Marty Clevenger Guthrie, OK www.churchofgodpreaching.com #7372 2021-05-28

None of the things done in the Bible was man's ability! Think about Daniel and the connection that he kept with God. *There's something about being faithful that will bring fruit into your life. Prayers mean something.* Do you believe that prayers matter? Pray. It is a worthy talent!

You're not a "nothing person." There is something for everyone to do. The question is, do you have a talent? *We know you do!* It is important that we do something with that talent. The good Samaritan -- God put somebody in his path. He was faithful to God. He was faithful to his own conscience. That's what God was calling to be done -- love your neighbor as yourself. Do you think there may have been a friendship made there?

God needs you to give it all to Him! That's the only way we can do anything - Put Jesus first. Do you believe that God is still leading people in 2021? Or, is that a thing of the past? Is God calling you to do something? Is God calling for consecration? He says, "I'll open the seas; cool down the furnace; just be faithful."

"I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me"(John 6:38). When he was crossing the Irish Channel one dark starless night, says Dr. F. B. Meyer, he stood on the deck by the Captain and asked him, "How do you know Hollyhead Harbor on such a dark night as this?" He said, "You see those three lights? Those three must line up behind each other as one, and when we see them so united we know the exact position of the harbor's mouth."

When we want to know God's will there are three things which always concur: the inward impulse, the Word of God, and the trend of circumstances! God in the heart, impelling you forward; God in the Book, corroborating whatever He says in the heart; and God in circumstances, which are always indicative of His will. *Never start until these three things agree.*

Stand still at the cross-roads ready to walk or run, and you will not be kept waiting long.

-- Springs in the Valley --

"The LORD is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD"(Lamentations 3:25,26).

It is easier to work than to wait. It is often more important to wait than to work. *We can trust God to do the needed working while we are waiting;* but if we are not willing to wait, and insist upon working while He would have us be still, we may interfere with the effective and triumphant working that He would do in our behalf. *Our waiting may be the most difficult thing we can do; it may be the severest test that God can give us.*

Oswald Chambers has said truly: "One of the greatest strains in life is the strain of *waiting for God.* God takes the saint like a bow which He stretches; we get to a certain point and say *I cannot stand any more;* but God goes on stretching. He is not aiming at our mark, but at His own, and the patience of the saints is that we hold on until He lets the arrow fly straight to His goal. If we are willing to remember God's call and assurance, there need be no strain at all while we are waiting." The "stretched bow" time may be a time of unbroken rest for us as we "rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him"(Psalm 37:7).

-- Springs in the Valley --

"Christ in you, the hope of glory"(Colossians 1:27).

The greatest thing that any of us do is not to live for Christ, but to live Christ. What is holy living? It is Christ life. It is not to be Christians -- but Christ-ones. It is not to try to do or be some great thing, but simply to have Him and let Him live His own life in us; abiding in Him and He in us, and letting Him reflect His own graces, His own faith, His own consecration, His own love, His own patience, His own gentleness, His own works in us, while we "show forth the virtues of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." *This is at once the sublimest and the simplest life that it is possible to live.* It is a higher standard than human perfection, and yet it is possible for a poor, imperfect man to realize it through the perfect Christ who comes to live within us. *Springs in the Valley*

New Beginnings by Lisa Kelly

Welcome to a new day!
 Welcome to a new month!
 Welcome to a new morning!

Don't we all love new beginnings? The freshness of something brand new fills our spirit with excitement, anticipation, hope. We have just recently received some snow here in Oklahoma. It was so beautiful and white...and made everything look new and fresh. Don't you enjoy seeing a pristine blanket of snow on a field or drive, untouched by footprints or treads? We enjoy "newness"! I have always enjoyed working with paper. I loved to color and draw as a child, and getting a new coloring book or drawing tablet brought a pleasurable thrill. Getting new notebooks at back-to-school time, and crisp new packages of paper-with no creases!- was such a simple delight. Beginning a new journal or diary was a gratifying prospect.

New things are filled with promise. Every new year, we never fail to be full of hope that THIS year will be better, THIS year will be brighter, we WILL make progress in the areas of our lives that we are disappointed about. New Year's Resolutions have not been done away with yet, no matter how many other years we have made them in our past. That little thing "with feathers that perches in the soul and sings, and never stops at all" has not been abashed yet, though many storms have tried to chill it. (from Emily Dickinson's poem about hope)

This is one of the gifts God has given to man. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Romans 15:13) Our Holy Bible is full from beginning to end with encouragement and exhortations to hope for renewal. From the very foundation of the world, God prepared to renew humanity if they should fall from the perfection He created them in. He promised Eve as she left the Garden of Eden that Salvation would one day come, and that holiness could be renewed in our lives. This has been the heart's cry all through the thousands of years of time. "Lord, renew a right spirit in me! Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." (Psalm 51:10,12) Isaiah the prophet boldly declares, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles." (chapter 40:31) "Let the people renew their strength." (chapter 41:1)

Speaking in strong faith, the Apostle Paul confidently teaches in II Corinthians 4 that God will give abundant grace to us, and our inward man will be renewed day by day. (verses 13-16) He exhorts, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephesians 4:23-24) He says in Colossians 3, "Seeing you have put off the old man, ... put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." (verses 9 and 10) Paul beseeches us in the first few verses of the twelfth chapter of Romans to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. He joyfully testifies in Philippians 3:13-14 that he is hopefully "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." After all, we have been apprehended for this very reason by our Lord. (verse 12)

“Every day is a fresh beginning, Every morn is the world made new.
 You who are weary of sorrow and sinning,
 Here is a beautiful hope for you, – A hope for me and a hope for you.
 Every day is a fresh beginning; Listen, my soul, to the glad refrain,
 And, spite of old sorrow and older sinning,
 And puzzles forecasted, and possible pain,
 Take heart with the day, and begin again.” –Susan Coolidge

Perhaps you have been tempted to release your hold on the hope that THIS year you can grow in God’s grace. I know I have asked myself many times, “How can I really do differently? How do I put to use the grace that God says is at my disposal? How can I really open this gift from Him?” (Are New Year Resolutions just to be thrown out?) I have some answers to share with you from Life’s Guidebook. Another person asked the question this way, many years ago: “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” (Psalm 119:9) The answer follows: “By taking heed thereto according to Thy word.” This thread of thought goes on, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee. I will meditate in Thy precepts, and have respect unto Thy ways.” (verses 11 and 15) Familiarize yourself with the Word of God. Ask the Holy Spirit to apply the Word to you and your situation. Pray specifically, not just in generalities. This is how we renew our minds, as Paul encouraged us to do. Choose to submit yourself to the ways of holiness. That is what “putting on the new man” involves. Give God the permission, ALLOW Him, to bring about the changes you desire to see. Present yourself to Him confidently, knowing He is the Good Shepherd, and He will present you with the Present of His gracious, fresh renewal. Jesus tells us in John 15, “I am the True Vine. Abide in Me. He that abideth in Me, . . . bringeth forth much fruit. Keep my commandments, and ye shall abide in My love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

The wonderful song, Amazing Grace, expresses vibrant hope that we can sing out as we begin this new day or month or year: “Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come; ‘Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace WILL lead me home.” Plunge into the “pristine snow” of this new day or month or year full of hope!

“Do not look forward to the changes and chances of this life with fear;
 Rather look to them with full hope that, as they arise,
 God, whose you are, will deliver you out of them.
 He is your keeper. He has kept you hitherto.
 Do you but hold fast to His dear hand,
 and He will safely lead you through all things.” –St. Francis De Sales

--Lisa Kelly

Needy Children by Sis. Charlotte Huskey

Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Mark 10:14

Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico 2000

As our plane lifted from the airport of Culiacan, Mexico, Charlotte looked out over the city and wondered how many in this large metropolitan did not know God’s saving grace. “There must be thousands of children growing up without knowing that Jesus loves them,” she murmured to herself. The little church where she and her husband James were ministering had been full every night of the four-day meeting, but that was such a few in comparison to the city’s many inhabitants. She wiped tears as she thought of their

suffering through life and where they might spend eternity.

About 40 children attended daily. How eagerly they sang, and when the lecture for the adults started, they hurried out to listen to a children's Bible lesson. That was only forty of the many hundreds of spiritually hungry children in the area.

According to Child Evangelism Fellowship, 3/4 of the world's children are without knowledge of Christ. One Newsletter from World Vision said, "One-third of the world's population is younger than 15. They estimate that more than 80% of the world's young people are growing up in non-Christian settings or non-Christian homes. Approximately 1 million children are estimated to be in the Asian sex trade." Charlotte wiped another tear.

The thought that many may never hear about Jesus, brought sadness to Charlotte's heart. All innocent children belong to God; however, those without Jesus as their helper will make choices that will cause them to have unhappy lives. Moreover, what will happen when they must give account for their actions in life?

A friend in Culiacan was raised in a non-Christian home. She knows it is important for children to understand the message of salvation. Although she teaches 41 second graders everyday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., when there is worship at the church she cheerfully takes the children up on the open air second story of the chapel for a Bible lesson on their level. Also, every Friday she and others from the congregation go to a suburb and have children's meeting in a vacant lot. Several children and one young man have been saved at those gatherings. He was baptized at the small chapel in November.

One time when Charlotte was in Sinaloa, she visited the tomato ranch with Sis. Minerva. They had to park on the road beside the irrigation ditch and walk about a mile into where the workers lived. On one side of a gray-water ditch were acres of beautiful ultra-modern greenhouses, perfect for producing strong healthy tomato plants. On the other side of the ditch, were rows and rows of long low cement buildings that housed the 2,000 plus emigrant workers the months they worked at the ranch. In each 15' X 10' stall-like room lived one entire family. The stall-like home contained one room with a door and a porch in front of the room the same size as the room.

While the tomato plants had perfect growing conditions, the families who cultivated the tomatoes endured the worst of living conditions. Sun beating on the tin roofs made the heat inside the cement room unbearable, so the porch served as bedroom, kitchen and sitting room. There was a central bathhouse, a cement slab with water in which to scrub dirty clothes and a pipe to get water to carry back to their temporary homes.

Among this extreme poverty, bright faced happy children came running to meet them. Sis. Minerva had been teaching Bible lessons at this ranch for about four years. Many children had prayed for Jesus to come into their heart.

It is hard to imagine the kind of lives these children will live, but one thing is certain: their lives will

be easier with Jesus in their hearts. Each year these workers return to their homes in other states. Some never come back to Sinaloa, however those who accept the Gospel carry it back with them. Although they know very little doctrine, they know to call on Jesus when they need help.

Before Charlotte and James arrived home from Culiacan, Charlotte promised by faith to send a monthly offering to Mexico. This is being taken care of through the Spanish Publishing account. Sis. Minerva is a widow. Throughout the fifteen years we have known Sis. Minerva, she has consistently worked to bring people to Christ. We are hoping this offering will help her and others have more time to teach about Jesus.

Lionel Hunt, in *Handbook of Children's Evangelism*, said that 85% of all Christians are saved between ages 4-14. It is true that some who get saved will not remain faithful; however, remembering the blessing felt in childhood has caused many to come back to the Lord. A recent study by the Barna Research Group, showed "the probability for young people from ages 14-18 to be saved is 4% while adults (ages 19 till death) is 6%." From this information we can see the importance of introducing children to Jesus. It is less likely they will become Christians at a later age. Another report stated, "In 2018 there were over 73.4 million children in the United States, including 23.1 million preschoolers and 25 million ages 6-11, and 24.3 million ages 12-17." All these children belong to the Lord while they are innocent. What will happen to children who are not saved in their tender years?

What are we doing to help stay the hand of Satan against the children? Are we helping children in and around our homes? They are God's little people. Jesus said, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goes into the mountains, and seeks that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoices more over that sheep, more than of ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Matthew 18:10-14. What are we doing to keep one of these little ones from perishing? And are we teaching our sons and daughters their duty to the lost children?

Romans 14:7, reads, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself...As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Will some children that we could reach for Jesus not bow to Him until the Day of Judgment, when it is too late?

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned?" Do we believe what Jesus said? If so, what are we doing to help innocent children to believe in Him? Are we obeying Christ's last commandment? Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Do not wait! Begin now to help the children around you.

Sis. Vera Forbes was old and whited haired, but she evangelized children in the apartment

complexes. She would stand at intersections where many children passed on their way home from school and would give out portions of scripture and character-building stories. When the children stopped to get the paper, she offered to have Bible class in the children's yard or home. Soon she was having a Bible class once a week in each of five different neighborhoods. The Sunday school at Pacoima, California, where she attended, doubled in size, and then tripled. The church bought a large bus in which to bring the many children to Sunday school.

I believe we could each invite children into our home and show them love while telling them about Jesus and helping them to memorize scripture. Eternity alone will reveal the good from such efforts.

Daniel Webster said, "If we work upon marble, it will perish; if on brass, time will efface it; if we build temples, they will crumble into dust; but if we work upon immortal souls, and infuse them with principles, with the fear of God and with love for others, we engrave on those tablets something that will brighten eternity."

Questions for discussion:

1. What was Charlotte seeing from the airplane?
2. What was she thinking?
3. Did the tomatoes or the children have better living conditions?
4. Most Christians are saved before what age?
5. What did the shepherd do to find one sheep that was lost?
6. What must a child do to be saved?

Are you obeying Jesus last command?

– Sis. Charlotte Huskey

It Couldn't Just Happen

In all creation we can admire the wisdom and power of the Creator. Ants are tiny and very weak, yet they are hard workers, industrious in gathering proper food. God gave them such wisdom that they prepare their winter food supply in the summer when food is plentiful.

There are many different kinds of ants, and there are many amazing patterns in ant behavior. One of the strangest patterns is found among South America's "army" and Africa's "driver" ants.

These ants march in columns, attacking and eating any living thing in their path. In some parts of the world it is dangerous to tie up an animal because if a column of army ants comes by, it will bite the animal to death, and eat it.

You may remember in the story of Samuel Morris that his cruel captors planned a slow death for him by means of the dreaded driver ants. If God had not miraculously delivered him, he was to be buried up to his neck. His mouth would have been propped open and smeared with a sweet mixture to attract ants from a nearby anthill. The driver ants would have then devoured his flesh bit by bit. Then, after the ants had cleaned his bones of every bit of flesh, his white skeleton would have been hung up for everyone to see.

The army ants march in a long column, with soldier ants at the head. Worker ants follow, many carrying the larvae of the next generation. These larvae give off a certain message. As long as the message-

scent is given off, the army keeps on marching.

But when it is time for the larvae to hatch into ants, the army halts. The soldier and worker find a place between tree roots or stones and literally create a living nest from their own bodies.

The living nest of clinging ants has rooms where the birthing infants can be placed. It has passageways along which others can travel and a chamber for the queen. The queen begins to swell and within a week, she starts to lay eggs. In a few days there are some 25,000 eggs in the living nest. At the same time, the birthing ants in the other rooms begin to emerge, to become the workers who will carry the just laid eggs!

The army, with it's 25,000 new recruits, many carrying the eggs of its next generation, marches off again, ready to attack, kill, and eat. Even the largest of animals run from army ants! The individual may be small. But enlisted in an army, the marching ant is one of the most feared of jungle creatures!

Science fiction stories and movies have told of vicious giant ants or other insects that took over the world. This is not possible for an interesting reason. While there are millions of kinds of insects, all have one common trait that limits their size. Insects have no lungs. Instead they have breathing tubes that run the length of their bodies. These tubes draw oxygen from the air. While some insects have ways to pull air into the tubes, the longer the tube, the less effective they are in providing the oxygen all living animals need.

Because of the way insects breathe, they cannot grow into giant size and live! Larger insects would never be able to absorb the amount of oxygen they would need to keep them alive. It is easy to see the hand of God in this. He did not create the earth to be mastered by insects, but to be for mankind. In His wisdom, He designed insects with a built-in limitation that guarantees they will never supplant human beings as masters of His world. --Sis. Nelda Sorrell Reference: *It Couldn't Just Happen* by Lawrence O. Richards

In the Grip of an Octopus

A terrible storm was raging at the mouth of Cape Town Harbor, and anxious watches awaited the arrival of the 'S. S. Dunvegan Castle.' Would she gain the harbor in safety? Already she was at the entrance, and was almost in calm water when she collided with the pier. It was evident that great damage had been done, not only to the vessel, but also to the pier; for big blocks of masonry had been dislodged.

When the storm had subsided, the amount of damage had to be discovered. Cape Town boasted of many brave divers, but none to compare with Palmer - strong, resourceful, and successful. To him fell the work of inspection. A bulky, ungainly figure he appeared as he stood ready to make the descent, having first assured himself that all was in order. His final instructions were to the man above that he be on the look-out for any signal he might make below.

"Look alive, Jack, and whatever you do, keep the signal cord free and in order; my life may depend on that." The sea was calm, and he easily discovered the damage done as he inspected the blocks of fallen concrete.

But suddenly something darted out from a crevice in the rocks, and gripped his arm as in a vice. In a moment of appalling horror, Palmer realized that he was in the grip of an octopus! Even as the horrible certainty came upon him, another tentacle was flashed around his leg and yet another around his chest, and he was held in deadly embrace.

He was helpless, held in the vice of iron. What could he do? Absolutely unable to deliver himself, he knew that one chance alone was his, and that was to get help from above. Yes, in his despair, he knew that 'UP THERE' lay his only hope. Help from above, or destruction, that was what it meant. With all the energy of despair he pulled the signal cord. Would Jack "look alive"

as he had charged him? Would he heed his despairing signal and give him the only help remaining? If not, a ghastly death awaited him.

In the torturing suspense that followed, with the diabolical eyes of his tormentor glaring at him, the moment of awful stillness that intervened seemed to him an eternity crammed with horrors.

But, thank God, Jack's strong hand was on the lifter, and Palmer, to his infinite relief, found that he was rising. But his enemy was rising with him! There was no loosening of his grip! Oh, that awful clutch, and the leaden weight, all about him! Still there was hope, for help was coming from above. Up, up, he went, the light growing stronger, and the pressure less, till at last the worst suspense was over and the glad light of day shone on his dripping helmet. The surface of the water was reached.

"Man alive! What's up now?" was Jack's remark, as Palmer and his close clinging enemy came into sight.

Knife and axe were used to hack and hew as, bit by bit, the long clinging arms of the octopus, twelve feet long were cut away. It was no easy matter; as the tentacles were lined with hundreds of tiny suckers. But at last Palmer was a free man. Once, tied and bound, once in the depths, he now stood free and unshackled in God's sunshine.

The face of a black spider, magnified, is said to be the most vicious sight in all the realm of Nature's monstrosities; but the octopus has all the horrors of the spider magnified ten thousand times. It has a round body, and on either side are four ribbon-like tentacles. When it travels, these tentacles are closed like an umbrella; but if a victim is sighted, those great leathery arms open and grasp the object so quickly that escape is almost impossible. It secretes itself in the most beautiful rock caverns. Its presence cannot be detected even by a ripple on the surface of the sea. At such times, the tentacles feel out in every direction.

The first contact is a gentle brushing of the delicate ends; then the great leathery arm is thrown about the victim. If one is not sufficient, another tentacle encircles. On the underside of these spidery arms, there are two rows of cup-like sucking disks. There are twenty-five in each row, fifty to each tentacle, making four hundred in all. The tubes can be thrust out or withdrawn at will. They can be thrust into the flesh of the victim more than an inch. All these sucking cups can draw every drop of blood from the man or an animal. They do not eat their prey – they absorb it. The arms are so slick and fibrous that they cannot be cut with a knife. It is nearly impossible to tear away from the octopus; an attempt only ends with a firmer grasp; the monster clings with more determined force. Every effort, every struggle, produces a tightening of the ligatures.

In the octopus we have the best illustration in all nature of the processes of sin. It begins with the innocent, harmless touch; then the vise-like coils of habit, and finally the utter ruin. Once we tamper with the first taste or touch, whether it be appetites, habits, or giving way to the baser passions, the beginning seems harmless, but the blood-sucking tentacles soon enfold the victim, then the drawing out process soon takes away character, will-power, and conscience. Just as the victim is helpless within the coils of the octopus, so it is with sin. When these are gone, all that is worth while of the life's finest and best is absorbed.

When the octopus finishes with its victim, only the shadowy skeleton remains. Victims of sin have only a skeleton of manhood left; every god-like emotion absorbed and gone. The octopus first stupefies its victim, and then paralyzes it. Even so, in the paralyzing power of some deadly sin which has its grip on the soul, and from which a man is absolutely unable to free himself, there is nothing for it, but to get HELP FROM ABOVE. --Pilgrim Tract Society

Everyday Inspiration. . .

HOLY ADRENALINE

“Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;” (Colossians 1:11).

God living inside us through His Holy Spirit gives us power, a kind of holy adrenaline. You may be a single woman. You may have lost a spouse. You may be surrounded by children and their needs. You may be in a difficult marriage. Whatever the place, God has promised you the resources through His grace to live there.

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN SINGING

“Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day” (Psalms 96:2).

Music impacts us. That's why singing quickly uplifts your spirits. More than once, I've been walking down the street pondering my problems, and a song will come to my heart. The song reminds me of exactly what I need in that moment, whether it's a reminder that God is good or everything will work out. Since songs provide the background for your life, why not make sure that background will strengthen you in your faith?

DEALING WITH DEPRESSION

“And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day.” (Isaiah 58:10).

The prophet Isaiah seemed to understand that one of the best ways to deal with depression is to get active and involve yourself in someone else's life. The Hebrew word for gloom means a kind of darkness. It makes life obscure. But when we feed the hungry or help the sick, our world brightens and our energy level soars. Reaching out in service turns on the light for all of us.

SPIRITUALLY STRONG

“For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;” (Romans 1:11).

In this verse, Paul is talking about a particular kind of blessing: a spiritual gift. The Greek word is charisma, a grace-gift that empowers us to work on behalf of God's Kingdom. It's given to us freely; we don't have to do anything to earn it. We can't see this kind of blessing, but we can feel it's power. It fills our lives with love, joy, and peace. We are spiritually strong. We have abundant life.

SURRENDER

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:6).

All through the Bible, God promises peace to His people. And yet our lives and hearts are all too often shaken by conflict and fear. How can we access the peace that God promises? How can we experience it as more than a fleeting emotion? The apostle Paul gives the answer here: We need to surrender our thoughts to the Holy Spirit. This isn't easy. It takes discipline. In another verse, Paul calls it, “Taking every thought captive.” But it's well worth the effort.

“God, even our own God.” (Psalm 67:6)

“When ye pray, say . . . Father” (Luke 11:2).

It is strange how little use we have made of the spiritual blessings which God gives us, but it is stranger still *how little use we make of God Himself*. Though He is “our own God,” we apply ourselves but little to Him. How seldom do we ask counsel at the hands of the Lord! How often do we go about our business without seeking His guidance! In our troubles how constantly do we strive to bear our burdens ourselves, instead of casting them upon the Lord that He may sustain us! This is not because we *may* not, for the Lord seems to say, “I am thine, soul; come and make use of Me as thou wilt; thou mayest come freely to my store, and the oftener the more welcome.” It is our own fault if we do not make free with the riches of our own God. Then, since thou hast such a Friend, and He invites thee, draw from Him daily. *Never want when thou hast a God to go to; never fear or faint whilst thou hast God to help thee; go to thy treasure and take whatever thou needest-- there is all that thou canst want.*

Learn the divine skill of making God all things to thee. He can supply thee with all; or, better still, He can be to thee instead of all. Let me urge thee, then, to make use of thy God. Make use of Him in prayer; go to Him often, because *He is thy God*. Oh, wilt thou fail to use so great a privilege? Fly to Him; tell Him all thy wants. Use Him constantly by faith at all times. If some dark providence has beclouded thee, use thy God as a “sun”; if some strong enemy has beset thee, find in Jehovah a “shield”; *for He is a sun and a shield to His people*. If thou hast lost thy way in the mazes of life, use Him as a “guide”; *for He will direct thee*. Whatever thou art, and wherever thou art, remember God is just *what thou wantest*, and just *where thou wantest* and that He *can do all thou wantest!*

Charles H. Spurgeon.

Churchofgodmeetings.com

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|----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| May 27- June 5 | Guthrie, OK | Campmeeting |
| June 8-12 | Holly Hill, SC | Campmeeting |
| June 14-19 | Greenbank, WV | Campmeeting |
| June 28-July 3 | Loranger, LA | Campmeeting |
| June 29-July 3 | Fresno, CA | Campmeeting |
| July 15-24 | Monark Springs, MO | Campmeeting |

Fanning the Flame

(Edited excerpts of message at Neosho, MO 4-3-2022 by Sis. LaDawn Adams)

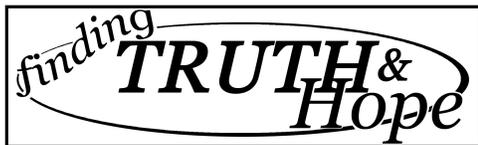
There are tools the Lord gives us to better our marriages and homes. Our marriage needs to be more than just a certificate on the wall! Our vows are “for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health.” I think there ought be vows for “in radiance and in wrinkles, thin waist lines and in thick ones, and lots of hair and thin, or none.”

Romancing the marriage -- fanning the flame; if you’ve lost that art, flirt with your companion! Things that make your eyes sparkle. . . the smile, that look, the chemistry. How did you look on that first date? Weren’t you your best? Help your companion realize, “You’re the one I love!” “You’re the object of my affections!”

Do you think this is frivolous? Well, let me tell you how much the Lord loved you! How ardently! You are the object of His affection. “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jer. 31:3). Did you know that John 3:16 is a love letter? I want you to look at Eph. 5:25 in a new light! “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” He created it as a pattern for His church.

All some men want is to be head of the wife, or a dominating factor for wife and children. Nothing is mine anymore, it is ours! I’ll do anything for you! It’s a big deal. There is a beauty in that. I’ve heard of a boss, who is a good boss, his employees will almost kill themselves for him.

(Continued next page)



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Fanning the Flame *continued:* It's not taking and taking, and not giving in return. (Eph. 5: 28). "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." Your happiness, their happiness, my happiness is all in it together. (vs. 32) "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

If you'll do that, she'll be glad to reverence you, her husband, keep a clean house, care for herself and children. **Fan the flame** – put another log on that fire, make sure it's being nurtured.

A special thanks to each one who has made this printing ministry possible over the past 7 years. Your prayers and support have been indispensable. Hitherto, the offerings are used for paper, ink, postage, copiers, and such expenses.

Over recent years, the Lord has opened several doors for literature to be taken to prisoners at various prisons and correctional institutions. Since Covid, prisoners have suffered from all ministries being shut down. In answer to prayer, some opening back up to ministries is occurring. At press time, cartons of *Finding Truth & Hope* issues, and a special duplication of *The Gospel Truth*, is once again being taken into prisons. Usually cost of postage is not involved, as literature is being carried in via cooperating individuals of existing organizations.

"I was in prison, and you visited me."

Pray that the Spirit of the Lord will accompany the printed messages in these difficult to visit places. Pray that wardens, chaplains, and other officials will allow printed papers to enter and bless the inmates.