

# The Scales

*Holding to God's Standard*



*"The LORD abhors dishonest scales,  
but accurate weights are his delight."*

Proverbs 11:1



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*Holding to God's Standards*



As always, if we can help you in any way, please contact the church here at  
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# The Scales

## Holding to God's Standards

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*Below is the list of titles in a 10-part series of books about Foundational Issues of the Kingdom of God and the Bride of Christ.*  
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**THE HAMMER**—*Breaking Down Misconceptions*  
“Is not my word like fire,” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?” Jeremiah 23:29

**THE PLOW**—*Planting Hope & Vision*  
“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills.” Amos 9:13

**THE SCALES**—*Holding to God’s Standards*  
“The LORD abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight.” Proverbs 11:1

**THE CRUCIBLE**—*Refining and Melding Relationships*  
“The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.” Proverbs 17:3

**THE SICKLE**—*Clearing the Land and Harvesting Change*  
“As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.” Mark 4:29

**THE TROWEL**—*It Matters How We Build!*  
“This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: ‘See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.’” Hebrews 8:5

**THE SWORD**—*Cutting Through the Fog*  
“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.” Matthew 10:34

**THE CHISEL**—*“I Will Build My Church...”*  
“In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built.” 1 Kings 6:7

**THE ANVIL**—*Forging Out a Life*  
“See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work.” Isaiah 54:16

**THE PLUMB LINE**—*True Foundations*  
“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty... Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of ‘God Bless it!’... Who despises the day of small things? Men will rejoice when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.” Zechariah 4

# Part 1: Defining Terms

What is a Christian?  
What is a Church?  
What is a Leader?



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# True Hope for a New Millennium

*God's Heart's Desire for His People!*

*Friday Morning, December 17, 1999*

*In December 1999, a well-known para-church organization produced and distributed to over 300,000 congregations, a video intended to warn and awaken followers of Jesus and call them to a more committed walk with God. While distributing the video was done with good intentions, it inadvertently revealed a much larger and more fatal issue. The writing that follows was distributed at the same time the video was released in order to help all who wear the name of Jesus to go far past being motivated, into being equipped and transformed.*

**E**very honest person in christendom who is permitted to see behind the curtain of modern christianity and go backstage, can see it. We can see the problems. But will we be willing to go to the Highest Places for REAL solutions? Or will we, like the little Dutch boy, just put our finger in the dike like we have for so many generations? Let's go all the way Home for our Solution! It's in the Heart and Ways of the Messiah—the way HE lived and the Truths HE taught and deposited with His Apprentices. Right? ☺

On the following pages are some quotations from modern United States national leaders in the denominational world. These quotations were recorded on a video distributed recently to 300,000 religious organizations in the United States. The hope was that this video would be played on New Year's Eve, this year, all over America. If it is listened to correctly, it will be quite an eye-opener for many. If one can avoid being dazzled by the faulty solutions at the end of the video—solutions that have been tried in every generation to no avail—then perhaps there will be many more hearts opened nationwide and worldwide to the radical need to start over God's Way. Perhaps then we'll be ready

together, without fear of man, or addiction to “how we’ve always done it,” to look for REAL solutions. The paradigm has been faulty for a long, long time. We know it—by its admitted fruit.

The amazing thing about these quotes below is what the leaders of the religious world admit about *their own congregations*. From Jack Hayford to Tony Evans to Crawford Loritts to Henry Blackaby to Anne Graham Lotz to Kay Arthur to Bill McCartney... person after person on this video ADMITS that the religious world is NOT affecting the world positively for Christ, but rather it is all failing terribly to represent Jesus well and change lives. The majority of millions “attending” modern congregations, with the Sunday morning service, program, clergy way of building... are falling apart. The “congregations” so often look good on the outside, but this way of building IS NOT WORKING, according to its leaders. The truth is, it has not and cannot “work” because it is not God’s Way to build. There is no such animal in the Scriptures as the modern-day way almost all “have church.” And clearly, by the testimony of its own nationally-known leaders, the gates of hell have prevailed against the religious world. Clearly, therefore, this cannot be the kind of church that Jesus said HE would build—though there are certainly many good Christians within.

It is *because* of these fine people, and their children, that we *must* reconsider how we are building in the local churches. It is for the sake of souls—the unsaved who wrongfully consider themselves church members, and the unsaved who do not—it is for them that we must rethink this thing we call “church.” We must reconsider HOW we have defined leadership, HOW we have defined church, and WHO we consider to be “church members” and “christians.” There are answers, brothers and sisters, if we have the courage to embrace them! And it won’t be in more programs, “ministries,” better speeches, home groups, mass meetings for preaching or prayer or worship, and ecumenicalism. SO many things sound good and feel good, and in the right context could be Useful to God, but have instead borne the terrible fruit listed below. Good things are only 5% effective because they are done in the context of man-made church structures.

Check history and you’ll find that we’ve been up and down those roads of exciting religious “fixes” for so many years that the ditch is deeper than the Grand Canyon. And we are now WORSE off, not better off, according to the builders of the faulty building. We wait in vain, beating the rock again and again, as Moses did. For some reason, we

still expect God to eventually change His mind and make everything okay, in spite of disobedience to His Commands and Ways.

In any other endeavor of life would we expect things to change by utilizing the same “solutions” that had never produced lasting results in the past? If you were in high school and admitted you were 150 pounds overweight, and were also failing all of your schoolwork, what would you do? Would you keep on doing the same things you have always done, and expect anything to change? How foolish this would be! Could you change anything by talking about it more, or getting inspired by speeches about it? You know the truth. You would have to pay a price to DO something about it. David didn’t conquer Goliath by holding a conference on the subject of Giant Killing.

Below you’ll find some of these quotes from this video. Read them carefully and prayerfully. Understand how terrible the problem really is. Also understand that the “150 pounds of obesity and the failing grades” don’t go away by doing the same things we’ve always done. A few exciting programs and sermons and even good things won’t make these facts go away. How we build matters! After so many years of all of the hype and mass meetings and programs and para-church bonding organizations and prayer things and conferences and seminars, things are worse, not better. The programs and systems and gimmicks and big things are NOT serving God very well, according to their very leaders. And our marriages and children worldwide are paying the price for man-made and faulty building techniques! When we build with bricks instead of stones, when we substitute externals and speeches and hierarchies and meetings for *true daily life and a Kingdom of priests*, the devil will take certain advantage of our poor building, and ravage the House.

Here is what the national leaders have said recently, about their own churches:

*“America is a reflection of the condition of the people of God, the churches.”*

*“In a recent research study, out of 66 lifestyle categories, Christians are not demonstrably different than non-Christians in ANY of the 66 categories.”*

*“Christians have no credible moral voice in this nation.”*

*“For the first time in history, here in the western world, the divorce rate in the church is higher...HIGHER...than those that are not churchied.”*

*“God looks into our churches and sees as much divorce in the people of God as He does in the world. God looks into our churches and sees as much abortion in the people of God as He does in the world. God looks into our churches and sees as much gambling in the people of God as He does in the world. And the surveys taken say the difference between the churches and the people of the world is not hardly recognizable.”*

*“When it comes to marriage and family, we have not done well.”*

*“80% of all young people raised in the church, faithfully attending church...80% of all of them, have left the church when they leave home.”*

*“We have substituted programs for prayer, and scheduled activities for the Spirit’s leading, and orthodoxy for obedience, and CEO’s for pastors and shepherds.”*

*“We are at a decisive moment. God must do a new thing in His Church.”*

*“We are at a crossroads, and have got to make serious changes in the churches. We stand on the critical moment of judgment or revival. We must decide if we’ll obey.”*

*“From a historical perspective, it seems certain that if the nation will see a revival, the church must first see a revival.”*

*“We have so entangled our lives with the affairs of this world, and we have made Christianity a show.”*

As with the selection of “a king” to replace the organic Leadership of God, the cost of building man’s way is very, very high (1Sam. 8:4-20). Our version, though far from and even disobedient to the Scriptures, is to substitute for Jesus’ Headship our “ministries” and “missionaries” and “para-church” organizations and “services” and human systems and organizational charts. Even christendom’s modern leaders see that it has been a serious and obvious failure. The Lord has declared, “You know the tree by its fruit.”

And yet, by the end of the video, it seems apparent that most still don’t recognize that we’ve continued to try to find our solutions in the same old used-clothing barrel, generation after generation.

Why don’t we, instead, regardless of the cost, go all the way back to the Principles that Jesus and the Apostles laid down about what a Church really is? Acts 2:42-47 was NOT a cultural phenomenon, but rather 3,000 brand new Christians, led in God’s Way to have “Church,” in

keeping with the simple Teachings of the Master. What were their priorities for living? Adding Christianity to their busy schedules, or “living, moving, and having their being in Christ,” each one “seeking first the Kingdom” every single day? You know the answer, right? ☺ “All the Believers were together, and had everything in common.” “Confess your sins one to another and pray for one another, so you may be healed.” “See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart.” This is not about communal living, but about SELFLESS living, each one passionately “wrestling to present every man perfect in Christ.” How did they function with one another? As an audience on Sundays, with some program involvement thrown in during the week? OR, Daily, as a priesthood of believers? Were their “meetings” similar to today—preprogrammed and controlled by a man? OR was it, “When revelation comes to the second, LET THE FIRST ONE SIT DOWN!”? Why? Because the Master said, “You are ALL just brothers.”

Oh, Family, there is SO much more to talk about regarding how Jesus and His hand-trained Apostles built the Church that the Master desires. As the Apostle Paul said, we need to know both “the unsearchable riches of Christ” *and* “the administration,” or “practical working out,” of the unsearchable riches, in order that, “Now, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the Principalities and Powers!” (Eph. 3). We can quench the Spirit and grieve Him with HOW we function, or we can participate with Him in His “ever-increasing Government”!

Know that the tragic state of affairs conveyed in the quotes from that video CAN BE DESTROYED, to the Praise of His Glory! Broken hearts and broken lives can be healed if we’ll build on His Foundation—if we’ll participate in “uprooting, tearing down, destroying, and overthrowing [all that is man-made] in order that He may build and plant”(Jer. 1:10).

I’ll conclude with an excerpt of some thoughts from some years ago, which speak a little more of finding our “Solution” in Jesus...

## Freedom is Available

I saw a news documentary this evening, about a college professor and research scientist. He put an advertisement in a local newspaper asking for students. He offered to pay them \$15 per day if they would play a little game. Half would be prisoners in jail and the other half would be prison guards. There would be no physical abuse—only play-acting.

The results were incredible. In just five days, all of the “guards” had become hostile tyrants, endlessly inventing deviant mind games to torture their “prisoners” with. And all of the prisoners (formerly strong, stable, intelligent, college students) were experiencing depression, hallucinations, and other manias. One by one, they literally crumbled emotionally and intellectually. They had *forgotten* that they were all (both guards and inmates) just college students playing a game. In FIVE DAYS! They were so mesmerized and intoxicated by their expected roles, and the “white collar expert/authority figure” that gave “credibility” to the happenings, that they lost touch with what was real and became people they never wanted to become. In five days.

The Kingdom message may be obvious, but I’ll say it anyway. There are a TON of good people out there, earnestly desiring to be devoted to Jesus and to grow in intimacy and maturity and self-sacrifice with Him—that fail again and again and again. **They become people that they never intended to become.** They fail throughout their lives, either becoming comfortable with compromise, worldliness, religious rituals, and a seared conscience, or living in misery. WHY??!! It need not be this way.

God has Designed an environment that will help the frail human mind, and weak will, to Know Him and overcome sin. *“I will build my Church that the gates of hell cannot prevail against!”* Jesus, knowing our frail frame, birthed His Church to allow “common” Christian men and women to be Overcomers. And, of course, when I say the word “Church,” I certainly do NOT mean anything that can be “attended.” I mean what the Scriptures mean when that word is used. I mean what Jesus meant when He used that word. I mean deep relationships (which can NOT be “attended”!) where the Word of God is lived and applied in every man, woman, and child, DAILY! (Heb. 3:12-14; Acts 2:42-47). I refer to the “Church” that Jesus said HE would build where every man, woman, and child has “a HUNDRED mothers, brothers, and sisters, lands, possessions, persecutions, and after that, Life Eternal.” Nothing else is truly a Church. IF it is truly a Church, it **must** be characterized by *every* true member loving Jesus and knowing Him, while “bearing one another’s burdens, and so fulfilling the Law of Christ,” “confessing sins one to another,” “serving one another,” “loving one another,” and so many other powerful “vital signs” of a real Church. Anything else has lost, or will lose, its “Lampstand” and will not be considered a “Church” by Jesus, the Christ and Head.

IF it is a Church by God's definition, the gates of hell cannot prevail any longer. We'll not lose our teens to the world and the spirit of the age. We'll not lose our men's minds and energies to mammon and prestige. The list of victories is endless, WHEN the Church is really the Church rather than a pep rally to attend on Sunday. It will never be, when we desire to bring pleasure to Jesus, playing games with "perception management" by orchestrating the "perfect" show on Sunday to excite and entertain, and perfect programs to get everyone's egos stroked so they won't leave. That's not a church, you know. Even if the songs are great and the "preaching" is "scriptural" and helpful, it cannot be considered a true Church simply because of these things. "Church" *must* be defined as GOD defines it (Mat. 16:18). Every member with a true supernatural experience "that flesh and blood did not reveal," but God the Father personally touched and revealed. And, (1Jn. 1:7) the way to have "fellowship" is not related to "attending" or "eating"—but it is all about "walking in the Light, together, as He is in the Light." If we're not letting others *inside* of us, and vice versa, we'll never know the Kingdom and its Benefits. It is, after all, "neither here nor there, but *within*."

If we are really functioning in God's Ways rather than the traditions of men that nullify the Word of God—if we're really, *really* the Body of Christ in a functional, daily way as He intends, then the "guard/prisoner" problem is solved! At last, normal people that honestly *want* to live for Jesus rather than for themselves can see their deepest problems rooted out and their greatest potentials realized. God *knows* how frail we are, and how *easily* we fall into the "guard/prisoner" insanity referred to above. The "expert/authority figures" in the workplace, and in government (or religious) schools frequently have the same hypnotic effect on us toward evil. "Bad company corrupts (even) *good* character!" OUR ENVIRONMENT MATTERS!! The average man (or woman) in the workplace, the average child in a government or religious school, or the average woman at home—all have far too little relationship, direction, and help in growing in depth of reality with Jesus and others. They are left to the world of peer pressure, greed, fear, lust, ambition, laziness, depression, and spiritual psychosis of every kind. They are in the false world of "guard/prisoner" that the world system has set up, and there is no defense—without Jesus in His Church, that the gates of hell cannot withstand. About five days is all the average person can be "big" enough to stay clear of "leaven" and the deceptive problems that follow. THAT'S why GOD said, "Admonish one another **DAILY**, as long as it's called 'Today,' so that **NONE** will become hardened and deceived."

It doesn't take long for any of us to get in a confused state (like the students above) concerning where we really are and who we really are. Jesus knew we would desperately need God's Ways in DAILY *heart-rending* and *exposing* and *teaching* in the Church. That corrupting influence of bad company has happened unchecked to a HUGE percentage of christendom at this very hour.

Sure, there can and will be weaknesses and mistakes no matter what our situation, or how wonderful a real Church may be. But there is only one Place designed by God to give us the Resources to grow into the "full measure of the stature of Christ," "no longer infants tossed to and fro." And that is in DAILY, revealing relationships in a true Church—one that is defined by a revelation of Christ in every "member" (Mat. 16) and a connectedness in reality (1Cor. 12) to the Body of Christ in daily Life. Only there will we recover all of the ground that the enemy has meant to take from us when we DO make mistakes out of our ignorance or our flesh. *There*, in His Church, the gates of hell will NOT prevail.

## So, What Do We Do When it Isn't That Way Where We Happen to Be?

What is our part when our environment is *not* a DAILY expression of the life of Christ, but rather attending some cool meetings and then going back and living in the world, disconnected from DAILY bonding and light-walking and self-sacrificing, burden-bearing in the Church? I can't make it any more complicated than this:

- 1) Pray fervently and fast to the Lord of the Harvest, both for laborers and for harvest. The more it matters to us, the clearer and more persistent we'll be. Be a worshipper in the secret place, and a worker on your knees.
- 2) Leave no stone unturned in laying down your life for others NOW, daily, nightly, "serving," "confessing your sins to one another," and doing all the "walking in the Light as He is in the Light" that can possibly be squeezed into your days and evenings. Then Leave the rest to Him.

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So! We're all totally convinced now of how far out of hand things have gotten. Everyone in the know, including the leaders, is convinced of the serious need for change in the religious world. Even the good, exciting

mega-places are filled with leaven, defying the Commands of our God. Now, let's consider that "a radical problem demands a radical solution"! And let's assume that this is not God's fault for not miraculously making "a silk purse out of a sow's ear." Rather, let's assume the bad fruit is *our responsibility*, because of our disobedience to His most basic Truths about what a Church really is. Now, for the sake of the Lamb of God and His little ones, and a world that deserves to see "how they love one another," let's go forward in obedience, by His Grace. "You are not your own; you were bought for a Price," is a *wonderful* privilege, and opportunity, today and everyday for the rest of your life. Expect nothing less, from yourself, your family, your church, and everyone you know who claim to be His! It'll be fun.

May we end together, as we began?

Every honest person in christendom who is permitted to see behind the curtain of modern christianity and go backstage, can see it. We can see the problems. But will we be willing go to the Highest Places for *real* solutions? Or will we, like the little Dutch boy, just put our finger in the dike like we have for so many generations? Let's go all the way Home for our Solution! It's in the Heart and Ways of the Messiah—the way HE lived and the Truths HE taught and deposited with His Apprentices. Right? ☺



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# Get the Real Thing!

*Saturday Night, April 14, 2001*

It is all pretty obvious that there are some major difficulties in modern Christendom. To understand our world and our place in it, we should ponder a few things. Where are the pitfalls? How did all the trouble and division come in? Here is a huge part of the answer to that question: Our definitions need to be defined by God rather than culture, convenience, or sympathy. Having drifted in our definitions, we have then drifted far, far from His Quality of Life. Let's consider together a very simple thought that it seems may be needed to guide understanding of what is, and is not "Christianity." And all of this is NOT about being critical or skeptical! Shame on anyone who drinks of the bitter cup of judgment rather than the cup of discernment. His redemptive heart calls us not to hate, despise, or ridicule, but rather to *use discernment of problems as a way to participate with the Master in His Work*. He "longs to gather as a hen gathers her chicks."

If we do desire to be *helpful*, we must have Understanding...

To some, "Christianity" is a belief system. They consider a "Christian"—themselves, and then anyone who embraces a philosophy of one God, Jesus dying for their sins, and a few other basic beliefs. And then, of course, they should "attend" something, too.

Jesus Himself shot a hole in that thought process. "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord!...'but I will say to them, 'Depart from Me; I never knew you.'" Obviously, these active, religious people *are not saved*, according to Jesus. Though He says they will clearly be a part of the "Christian culture," and know the teachings and do good deeds, He does not have a relationship with them, nor will they be Saved. "But we ate and drank with You, and You taught in our streets!" (Mat. 7; Lk. 13).

Some are sure that "leading the good Christian life" (being a nice person, not breaking any big commands, doing good deeds, feeding the poor, "attending church" and the like) means that they are Christians. Clearly, by the Teachings of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, there is a "broad road to destruction" filled with such people. Believing the correct things,

“attending” something, and being “a good person” is NOT what GOD says makes one a Christian.

So, what is a Christian? What is Christianity? What is a “Church member”? Consider an analogy.

Picture an aquatic world where every single living creature breathes under water. That is their habitat. They only “breathe” what is dissolved in water, as do the fish. Their food source and life basis is only related to what is under water. Now picture a tadpole or polliwog, a creature who has lived totally under water his entire life, up to that point. Then, a miracle takes place—a metamorphosis, where he is no longer a water breather. Of course, this is known in biology as “metamorphosis.” It is a radical, permanent change from one order of life to another, from one habitat and source of existence to one radically other.

True Christianity is where “from the least to the greatest,” a METAMORPHOSIS has taken place. “Upon *this* Rock, I will build My Church!” God even chose the Greek word for metamorphosis to describe the Miracle that must happen to ALL whom He Receives as His Own. As surely as the tadpole no longer is a water breather, but crawls up into a new world and begins to breathe air, and as surely as a caterpillar sheds the slimy life of a ground crawler and spreads his beautiful wings to catch the wind and fly away... THIS is a picture, fashioned by God of the *radical* transformation from the kingdom of darkness, to the Kingdom of the Beloved Son.

This is, and must be, true of *every single person* who is truly Saved! It is “upon THIS Rock” alone that Jesus builds a Life and a Church. There *must* be a confrontation and a supernatural, discernible transaction between the Father and a human that “flesh and blood did not reveal,” “not of human decisiveness, or inheritance from humans, or of peer pressure and supply, but of GOD.” These Miracles of change from “mere men” to “more than Conquerors” are not simply “theoretical”! It is not simply a new philosophical belief system, a new set of buddies to hang out with for “meetings,” and a different lifestyle and vocabulary. *True Christianity is a miracle of Life, empowered by the resurrection Life and Power of Jesus Christ coming now to live INSIDE of each person TRULY born a second time.* Anything less is a counterfeit, a non-Christian, and NOT a member of His Church! At least they are not so, YET!!

Cultural christianity embraces “belief system,” or “good lifestyle” and “attendance,” and accepts anyone and everyone at face value. “If you

SAY you're a Christian, you are." Wrongola! That's not Helpful! *True Christianity* is only for those who have had a discernible *miraculous change* happen inside of them. They now no longer breathe water. They now breathe Air, the Wind of Heaven as their LIFE! They no longer crawl, but now FLY! And so it is, according to the Messiah Himself, "FOR ALL WHO (TRULY) BELIEVE!" Now, "seated with Christ in Heavenly Realms," "tasting the Powers of the Coming Age," with "Rivers of Living Water streaming from within." "Now THIS is Eternal Life—that they may have intimate inner knowledge of You, the only True God, and Jesus Christ whom You've sent!"

A person is *not* a walking miracle of metamorphosis because they say they are. A person is not saved because they "grew up in the church," or believe the right things, or live a certain lifestyle. It is the other way around! IF they are truly Saved, and therefore a member of His Church, the *miracle* speaks for itself! If there is no evident miracle, then it doesn't matter what one may think he or she believes, or how good their lifestyle may be. The proof is in the "DEPOSIT" (Eph. 1:14; Col. 1:27), not in wishful thinking or even in sincerity. What *God* sees and responds to is all that matters. "What *counts* is a New Creation." IF the miracle of the Godhead *dwelling within* is there, then (and only then!) there has been true conversion. If the evidence of a Life that breathes Heaven's Air (instead of this world's way of breathing) is evident—and the Gift of flying is infused—we have *true conversion*.

Human emotion, human sentiment, human relationships, human effort, human intellect, religious superstition, fairy tales and drama are common counterfeits. True Conversion and Realm Translation and Metamorphosis are the very nature of the New Agreement, the New Covenant. Hold out for yourself, and for others, for the REAL! Only the supernaturally, authentically re-created are Christians, and true "members" of His Church. Who are we to contradict Jesus? If we welcome those without true conversion, allowing them to think they ARE saved and "members" just because they say they are, and show up at a "service," we're not serving God well. That's just naïve and not helpful to them or to God! We can do better than that, as His Ambassadors, if we approach others with Mercy, Truth, Understanding, and Discernment in daily love and relationship.

So, if a person is truly converted by Encounter and abandonment—now with the Creator Himself living inside of them—they'll instantly be perfect and mature, right? NO, never. Re-Birth into another Realm

doesn't mean that the tadpole will get everything right the moment he turns into a frog. ☺ Childhood takes its toll, sometimes! The one who is now miraculously breathing Air instead of water will have some challenges. He or she won't automatically and instantly know how to live like a Prince or Princess kissed by the King! (1Jn. 5:20-21).

We'll still find ourselves feeling a bit like a frog at times. Am I right??!! ☺ But, we'll *know* the difference because we are, as Peter said, "conscious of God." And that should bring great encouragement to us when we are struggling—we *know He's calling!* (1Jn. 5:13-21). HE is able to keep you from falling and present you spotless before the Glorious Throne! We *know* we're going to be okay even in our struggles; if He's committed—and we Know He is in our inner man (not just as an external theory based on Scripture memory) (1Jn. 5:1-12). The metamorphosis has clearly changed everything about what a Saved one desires to "breathe" and "eat." "Like newborn babes, they CRAVE pure Spiritual milk."

Transformation of kingdoms (Col. 1:13) changes even how he or she interprets events, failures, pain, and success. Their life-giving habitat has been *totally* transformed to something "new every morning" in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the new and revolutionary love of their Life! Now, anything that is not "from Him, and through Him, and to Him" has no more appeal (1Jn. 3:9; 1Pet. 4:1-6; Rom. 8:5-11). And recovery from even the worst difficulties is a matter of the powerful, unbending Hope of that empty grave, and the great comfort and promises of the One who fills everything in every way!

When we build around cultural definitions of "christian" and "church" rather than around the Evidence of Supernatural LIFE, we will soon reap a harvest of half-bred and incestuous, mutant and diseased circumstances. This leaven will create whirlwinds and energy leaks and heartache and confusion galore. With all of that will come temptations to compromise and ignore Principles and Commands of God's Word in order to "hold things together." Hierarchy, program, choreography and other man-made intrusions and defiance of Command will enter in, to keep peace and "order" in the meetings and method. "A little leaven leavens the WHOLE batch," according to the Master.

Everyone is harmed by false "definitions" of God's Stuff, and by unBiblical building practices—based on human traditions, human reason, and human organizational structure. When we build men's way, souls are lost, teens' lives are trashed (75%+), marriages are destroyed

(60%+), and relationships are frequently left devastated. Beyond all of that, Spiritual babyhood is perpetuated forever in the majority of folks within man-made ways to “have church.” Chaos, heartache, clergy hierarchy, and more...all of these flow from having *mis-defined* what a Christian is, what a Church is, and what a “leader” is. And all of this occurs, whether in a “house church” or an “institutional church” when we define things improperly.

The Call is then to function as Priests, “admonishing one another daily” in life and love and liberty, with creativity and joy and peace.

Let’s look for the *MIRACULOUS LIFE of GOD*, “the working of this same power that rose Jesus Christ from the dead!” as the definition of what *GOD* has Touched and Saved. It is far more than belief system (though this will need to grow to be Right as well) or lifestyle (though this also will be dramatically altered by the hand of God, if HE is involved).

With True “*Zoe*” Life in Christ, rightly defined and non-negotiable, we can then help others by serving our God well. We will live, as our big Brother does, to extend His Love and Truth, looking to HIM as Source, and Life, and Way.

*Zoe* Life? It is the “New Deal” (“New Testament”—“New Covenant”) Father has made with His People in His Son. The gates of hell will continue to prevail against the impotence of all else. He has for us something better! The current, the tangible, the supernatural...the very Life of Jesus within: ***Accept No Substitutes!***



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# “Community”?? “House Church”??

*OR, is there still HIGHER GROUND?*

*Saturday Night, October 31, 1998*

*It's about ZOE LIFE!!!*

“This is your time, this is your Dance,  
Live every moment—leave nothing to chance.  
Swim in the Sea, Drink of the Deep,  
Embrace the Mystery of all you can Be.  
This is your time.” -ms

## The Tree of Life...Isaac...Zoe!

This must seem obvious! Life in Christ Together is *not* about “how to have meetings.” What Jesus brought to Earth with the Herald of the Angels could never be so shallow and external as all of that. “Meetings”—where more people get to “participate”—is THAT what Jesus died for? NO WAY! Now here’s a question: “*How do we approach and befriend God?!*” How do we experience a Relationship and Encounter tangible change into His Image? Where do we find this God who is not approachable through the five senses, good deeds, proper doctrines or techniques or wording, hard work, or any such thing?

Most try doing things “for Jesus” and that certainly salves the conscience on some humanistic level. But, let’s face it: that really misses the *root* issue by ten thousand miles. Another way to put it, for you who are willing to spend more time on your knees: What is the *Real* difference between those two Trees in the Garden?? That is the Issue of issues.

The difference between simply reforming denominational religion, versus living in the reality of the risen, living Jesus...is staggering. Creatively modifying “meetings” and “structure” (in a religious facility, or

in a “house”) isn’t really all that important, compared to the Opportunity He places before us today. He’s not calling us to a “new and improved” structure. He is calling us into daily relationship eating together from the Tree of Life, with the Anointed One! Oh, YES, that *will* change our “meetings”—but that is the Fruit, not the goal. Just switching to new and improved doctrines, techniques, meeting dynamics, how close people live together, the unBiblical “common purse,” or any number of new folkways and mores is meaningless, in reality. What we are really after (if we desire what He Desires!) is a Habitat where JESUS can dwell and “circulate” (Rev. 1-2) unhindered, as Living, Reigning KING. This alone is the ZOE LIFE (as Jesus called it). SUPERNatural, Heavenly Life, of Indestructible and Eternal nature, all-encompassing Reality of an unseen Realm of Power and Truth and Love and Life. Jesus brought this “Life to the full,” “Rivers of Alive Water” Life to His People from another dimension, a Universe that cannot be seen with human eyes and in earthly light frequencies.

In the Bible, this Holy Place (this Place that surrounds and invades and encompasses all in all) is referred to as “heavenly realms”—the Life of Jesus. And, as our Messiah demonstrated, in Him time and space and mass and gravity and Newtonian laws don’t exist as we have known them. They are merely “after the flesh”—and only “mere humans” allow their vision to be clouded by such limited things. Jesus lived in that place of ZOE, in our present age, mastering all the “laws” of nature and of man. And more, He mastered even sin and death itself. Now here’s the amazing part: He has *Gloriously* bequeathed that ZOE LIFE to us!

Jesus didn’t come to this earth to bring us a new way to have meetings or “have church” or some “movement.” That is so lame compared to “*His Intentions, now through the Church!*” (Eph. 3:10). He wants to publicly annihilate, decimate, and humiliate the enemy—and transform life after life after life, into the character and Life and Wisdom and Strength of the Son. He is “bringing many sons to Glory”—not simply to Salvation. He is building His CHURCH, which the gates of Hell CANNOT prevail against. By the Grace of Jesus Christ and on His Authority, we’re taking back our sons and our daughters and families and neighbors from the seduction and slavery of satan. Lives are changing. He brought us an entirely new Realm to inhabit by His side—new air to breathe, new eyes to see, new ears to hear, and a new heart to feel and love. This difference affects everything in life, including “meetings”!

It is not about being a little more relaxed and flexible in having our planned or unplanned meetings, and labeling that as “led by the Spirit.”

Just because we don't know in advance what we're going to do does not mean that things will then be "Spirit-led." Hardly. It is NOTHING like that. Although "like Jannes and Jambres," the counterfeits, viewed from earthly perspective, seem similar to Real things.

## Ishmael Despises Isaac (Gal. 4:29-30)

Again, I refer you to 1 Corinthians 2 and following to make the distinction between "mere men" and living out of the very Mind and Spirit of the Godhead. True men and women, "Born of the Spirit," live (daily with one another, and yes, when they're all together, too) using a different means of understanding than the five senses. We live "not by the seeing of the eye or by the hearing of the ear" if we are filled with HIS Spirit. The "rulers of this age" must use the five senses, and are fairly adept at doing so. And still, *Zoe* is "foolishness to them, they are *incapable* of understanding."

So, I say again. This is not about "house" or not-house, or "meeting" style preference, called or uncalled, rehearsed or unrehearsed. (Although, perhaps a Hearse should be parked outside of every meeting place where the "band" or the "pastor" has to "re-Hearse!" If they must re-hearse their Sunday morning music or "sermon" product in order for the show to work, something is seriously amiss. Surely no one believes Paul practiced sermons, or pre-planned "services"!) Often, when men have something to lose (esteem, ego, money, worldly convenience, or people and money they are "using" to advance themselves and their so-called "ministries") these truths are met with *great* resistance and heated name-calling. What a loss of true Life for those who prefer the "traditions of men." The Together-Life of God (1Cor.12), manifested in the daily Glory of a Risen Lord, dwelling amongst a daily, "joined and knit together" People—is a scandal to those who love themselves and this present age. This whole matter is infuriating to those who are filled with pride and who are fiercely and sinfully independent—a law and life unto themselves. What a shame it is when "leaders" and the worldly who claim to be Christians easily dismiss that which can radically change their lives, and those around them, into the image of Jesus. "The stone the BUILDERS rejected...has become the Cornerstone." Those with something to lose are generally those who will name-call against Truths that will REALLY lead His People into the Eternal Realm—to sit with Christ and be enveloped by Him.

## The Substance of the New Covenant!

This *Zoe* Life together is nothing less and nothing more than the ESSENCE of the New Covenant! “A *hundred mothers, brothers, sisters!*” But, *of course*, the Reality of Christ’s Realm, the place where angels see the Face of God, cannot be defined by earthly wisdom. *Zoe* Life cannot co-exist with, or be “incorporated” into, borrowed worldly paradigms. “What’s so wrong with \_\_\_\_!!!!????? How could *that* be bad!!!!????? That’s a *good* thing!!!!” “The old is better, the old is better.” Unfortunately, many will need to go on in “their way” until they see it’s *still* not going anywhere, after all these years. Some will have to watch another thousand teens be seduced by the world and another thousand marriages fail—“doing” church “their way.”

This issue of daily *ZOE*, Together-Life is the very *definition* of the heart and soul of what Jesus brought to earth, the New Covenant. THIS is “the Mystery revealed.” Is this something we can just smile at, and put aside? Not any more than the virgin birth. It is that big. “Community” versus “House Church” versus “Cell-Based” versus “Program-Based” versus whatever fad comes next? No way. Build a new building, start a new program, do more good deeds, hire a new “staff member” or “sermon-speaker,” or start a new “contemporary music band”?? Yucko! True Life goes WAY past that irrelevant, man-created stuff!

If you don’t quite See it right now? Perhaps on down the road you’ll be able to see WHY, but for now, just know it’s True. Watch and pray. If someone without a real experience of *Zoe* is commanding you that Life beyond “attendance” and “my personal life and biological family” doesn’t exist, what will you say? “Okay, then. Sure, ‘Rev.’ Smith, your way is as good as *Zoe*.” We can’t do that! The Experience of Daily Together-*Zoe* is just too fundamental to the purpose of New Covenant Testimony of Christ. “Tasting the Powers of the Coming Age” and participating in “the power of an indestructible Life” and “making known the manifold Wisdom of God to the Principalities and Powers, NOW, through the CHURCH,” and the experience of “a *hundred* mothers, brothers, sisters, lands, and possessions, and in the life to come, Eternal Life”.... are *not* optional extras.

## No “How To” Manuals!

CHRISTIANITY is *not* a technique, something to attend in a home or building, a philosophy of lifestyle, a belief system, or a social and

do-good club. “CHURCH” is not something we can attain with knowledge and effort and sincerity. It is a Sovereign issue of God’s Intent, Timing, and Gifts. “I praise You, Father” for that! ☺

*Zoe* Life is supernatural. We can’t go back. *ZOE* together-communion with God must never be fettered by the Ishmael of systems, programs, planned and canned speeches and religion, and hierarchy (Saul, rather than Samuel). Counterfeits of “home church services” (True Life certainly is squashed by the medieval concept of “church buildings”—but that certainly doesn’t mean there will be *Zoe* Life by moving the “service” to a living room), “innovative” techniques, and cutesy stuff are not helpful.

True *ZOE* Life with God and one another is as essential to the future as the virgin birth. It is, in fact, the *Inheritance* of the virgin birth, the Atonement, and the Resurrection. It is the hope and the promise of the LIFE of the New Covenant. It is the *only* hope for changing us into men and women “of GOD”—rather than mice on the wheel of religious life. “I will build My CHURCH, against which the gates of Hell can no longer prevail.” Some “mere men” with ambitions to use you for their “ministry,” with their truckload of borrowed ideas and teachings, have built “churches” that Hell prevails against every day. But our Destiny and Calling together is true “Church”—to live in the womb of the GodHead.

This is *Zoe* Life—to live as the Son with the Father, for all of Eternity. This is *Zoe* Life—to *Know* Him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. *Zoe* life is our Inheritance for both our personal lives in the secret places with Jesus, and also together with one another in the Church, without inconsistency and contradiction. “From the least to the greatest, they ALL know Him” and “ALL the Believers were together, with every aspect of their lives intimately intertwined.” “Get the leaven out of the batch.” These are not only commands, but also God’s *description* of reality—not some “idealistic pipedream.” The radiant and spotless Bride “has made herself ready” for the Return of her Beloved and Betrothed, Jesus of Nazareth! THIS is the Father’s Will and Heartbeat.

## Different Life-Forms, Different Species

In “religion” it is easy to mistakenly confuse true *ZOE* Life with “*psuche*” life. *Psuche* life is life in the natural realm, including one’s

personality, emotional makeup, intellect, and the like. This word is used in Luke 9:24-25, Mark 10:45, Acts 20:10, Matthew 2:20, Revelation 8:9, etc. *Zoe* Life must also not be confused with “*bios*” life. *Bios* is the organic nature of physical life, the duration of physical life, or similar external things. *Bios* is the root of the word “biology,” of course. Understand that just as you have *psuche* life (a unique personality, intellect, and consciousness), and you will have a *bios* life (your physical existence as a carbon and water biological life form) for perhaps a few more years, there is still another kind of life. *Zoe* Life is a God-infused Life of another dimension, that is a free gift to all who will abandon themselves into Yesu, the Son of God. *ZOE* is the SUPERnatural Life that the Father has within Himself, that always was and always will be (Jn. 17:3) and is indestructible (Heb. 7:16). It is the very essence of *God’s Life* (Jn. 5:26, 1Jn. 1:2).

Even though we forfeited this Life in the Garden, and of our own doing we DIED to *ZOE* Life (Rom. 6:23, Eph.2:1-5, 4:18, Col. 2:13, 1Tim. 5:6), He again shares His very inner *Life* with those who lay everything down before His Son Jesus!! (1Cor. 2, Jn. 3:15, Acts 3:15, Col. 3:4, 1Jn. 3:14) It is truly the exploration of light-years of beauty and power and glory. The forgiveness of sins, and “someday we’ll go to heaven,” is barely the BEGINNING! The Messiah shared in our much-deserved death—that we may share in His Life that is truly Life, LIFE to the FULL! *ZOE!* God’s Intent is that we can now *share His very intimate inner Life, together with His Son and one another!* That is GOOD NEWS, to the millionth degree! God’s Intent is now, through the Church clothed in daily together-*Zoe* Life, that we humiliate the principalities and powers (Eph. 3:10, 1Cor.2).

## Church—A Lampstand

The Church can ONLY be understood in this way. Anything less may be well-meaning and do-gooding and religious (with some Saved people involved), but it is NOT the Church of Jesus Christ, a local Lampstand, if it is just people “attending” something scheduled on the calendar with no daily intertwined Life-together (1 Cor. 12).

Must the Church, or its individuals, then, be perfect? Of course that is not possible (1 John 1). But according to the Word of God, what IS required is this: One hundred percent of the members...“love the Light” and “love the Truth” and have genuinely experienced God

Himself in a way that “flesh and blood has not revealed.” YES, *this is required* (Matt. 16:16-18, John 3:19-21, 1 John 1-3, Eze. 11:19, Eze. 36:26, Jer. 31:34). That’s what Jesus said He would build HIS Church upon, if it was to be HIS Church.

I need to say that again. *The Church, as defined by Jesus and His Ambassadors, is comprised of ALL who have had a revelation of the Son “that flesh and blood did NOT reveal, but the Father in Heaven Himself revealed to them” individually.* They now, as a result of a death and a second Birth, share SUPERNatural Life in the inner man, and “love the light,” “love the Truth and so are saved.” A True Lampstand, an authentic Church, is LIMITED TO (as in 100% of the “members”!) those who have had a revelation of the Son “that flesh and blood did not reveal, but the Father in Heaven Himself revealed to them.” One hundred percent of its “members” have both a death experience to their previous self-lives, and a Resurrection Life experience in the Blood of the Son. One hundred percent “from the least to the greatest,” not a “10% committed nucleus,” now share SUPERNatural Life in the inner man, in the GodHead and with one another, and “like new-born babes, crave the pure Spiritual milk of the Word.” Anyone else is just a “visitor” (1Cor. 14) and they, and everyone else in the Church, know they are visiting the Life, *not* participating in it. A person hanging around in the neighborhood for a decade, but still living for themselves, their jobs, their “us four and no more”—cannot be received and will still be known as a “visitor.” Meanwhile, someone from another continent may be around but for a short time, and it is clear they are part of the Christ of God, and thus the Church. “Whoever claims to live in Him, must walk as Jesus walked.” It’s *not* about proximity or knowledge or “commitment” or upbringing. *It’s about a personal Encounter with Father God, in the Person of His Son, where death produces God kind of Life, Zoe Life, out of nothing* (Jn. 3:5-8; Jn. 12:24; Rom. 6:1-14; Gal. 6:14-17). Of course there are a few who need “special modesty” and others who are deciding in their “one more year” (John 13:8-9, John 15, 1 John 2:19, Jude 11-25).

We either have SUPERNatural Life with Him and with one another, or it’s *NOT* Biblical Christianity and *NOT* a legitimate Church. Surely there are some Saved people “attending” organizations that are not truly Churches, though they call themselves churches. We’re simply saying, the monthly potluck doesn’t cut it! Whether we “meet” in a “home” or in a “religious facility” is not the issue. Whether our meetings are

“spontaneous” or the dry heaves of “Simon Says” (pre-programmed by the “pastor” or “music director”) is not the deal. We won’t touch His Throne (we’ll only touch our *“psuche”* warm fuzzy emotions) if we do not live together in daily Together-ZOE Life—*moment by moment connected to the Head and one another!* A “service” ceremony that is “done in His honor,” or to learn facts about Him, or to call down emotion from Heaven with our music—historically, these have changed very few lives into the Image of the Son.

Again, 1 Corinthians 2 is vital to our understanding, as it describes the *difference* between *psuche* life and Zoe Life. God speaks of the oh-so-bright and innovative—the “mere men” pagans and rulers of our age on the one hand. And on the other hand, He speaks of those who are *currently* connected to the very Mind of Christ—enveloped and saturated and permeated by the very Spirit that is currently alive within God Himself.

**Forget** this: “I believe the right things, am basically a good person, come from a ‘christian family,’ said a little prayer, or put my hand on the television set and bowed my head, or attend ‘services’ and ‘tithe’ regularly and want to ‘live in community’ or in ‘a house church.” *We are either sharing in the Substance of the GodHead together daily, or it is not Eternal Life, nor a Lampstand and Church, as God means it to be.* “A little leaven leavens the WHOLE batch.”

Jesus died to bring ZOE back to this planet, in His Resurrection Power!

## Defining Terms

What is a “Christian”? ONLY a person who has abandoned their self and life to Jesus, and have thus been Touched by Heaven and Indwelt by the Creator of the Galaxies is truly saved, and a “member” of His local Church (Rom. 8:9-11; Lk. 9:57-62; Jn. 1:12-13, 3:16-21; 1Jn. 3:8-10, 5:18-20).

This thing called “CHURCH”? It is made up ONLY of those who share this ZOE—and *splash around together in the “rivers of alive water” on a daily basis* (Acts 2:42-47; 1Cor. 12; Heb. 3:12-14; Gal. 6:2, etc).

THIS is ZOE! To the Full.

This is Christianity. This is Church.

THIS IS OUR INHERITANCE.

“A HUNDRED MOTHERS, BROTHERS, SISTERS, LANDS, and POSSESSIONS, and in the life to come, Eternal Life!”

Remember this from “Get the Real Thing”?

“When we build around cultural definitions of ‘christian’ and ‘church’ rather than around the Evidence of Supernatural LIFE, we will soon reap a harvest of half-bred and incestuous, mutant and diseased circumstances. This leaven will create whirlwinds and energy leaks and heartache and confusion galore. With all of that will come temptations to compromise and ignore Principles and Commands of God’s Word in order to ‘hold things together.’ Hierarchy, program, choreography and other man-made intrusions and defiance of Command will enter in, to keep peace and ‘order’ in the meetings and method. ‘A little leaven leavens the WHOLE batch,’ according to the Master.

“Everyone is harmed by false ‘definitions’ of God’s Stuff, and by unBiblical building practices—based on human traditions, human reason, and human organizational structure. When we build men’s way, souls are lost, teens’ lives are trashed (75%+), marriages are destroyed (60%+), and relationships are frequently left devastated. Beyond all of that, Spiritual babyhood is perpetuated forever in the majority of folks within man-made ways to ‘have church.’ Chaos, heartache, clergy hierarchy, and more...all of these flow from having *mis-defined* what a Christian is, what a Church is, and what a ‘leader’ is. And all of this occurs, whether in a ‘house church’ or an ‘institutional church’ when we define things improperly.

“The Call is then to function as Priests, ‘admonishing one another daily’ in life and love and liberty, with creativity and joy and peace.

“Let’s look for the *MIRACULOUS LIFE of GOD*, ‘the working of this same power that rose Jesus Christ from the dead!’ as the definition of what *GOD* has Touched and Saved. It is far more than belief system (though this will need to grow to be Right as well) or lifestyle (though this also will be dramatically altered by the hand of God, if HE is involved).

“With True ‘Zoe’ Life in Christ, rightly defined and non-negotiable, we can then help others by serving our God well. We will live, as our big Brother does, to extend His Love and Truth, looking to HIM as Source, and Life, and Way.

“Zoe Life? It is the ‘New Deal’ (‘New Testament’—‘New Covenant’) Father has made with His People in His Son. The gates of hell will

continue to prevail against the impotence of all else. He has for us something better! The current, the tangible, the supernatural...the very Life of Jesus within: ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES!”

## Zoe in YOU, Personally?

**DEEP RICH LIFE**—Life in Jesus that is REAL—is available to all of us who have, in a moment of time, given away our lives to Jesus, abandoning ourselves into Him in love and obedience. Having been swallowed in the Covenant that the Son made in the Father, *Zoe* Life is ours for the living—the Wonder of which far surpasses anything our imaginations can conceive. It is where all real discoveries, true excitement, and genuine fun begin. It is the gateway to an amazing new world. It is the shelter and abode of *ZOE* Life, and it can be entered into right now.

Every moment of every day we make a choice to live and experience life from within one of two different worlds. We can choose to dwell in the safety of the present moment of *ZOE* Life; OR we can remain in the weariness of the common life.

.....In the common life, people constantly think about themselves and how every event relates to them. Thus, a person’s life becomes a continuous, small, enclosed circle of self-thought.

In *ZOE* Life, a person uses everything that happens as an opportunity to learn something about Jesus and him or herself, and the surrounding world. These individuals gladly yield themselves to living fully in the present, and do not waste energy dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Because they are not always busy thinking about themselves, they are acutely aware of everything around them, and are able to delight in the small pleasures of the moment: the dancing of dust particles on the sun’s rays, or the fluffy white trail left by a passing airplane across a clear blue sky, or the sparkle of dew drops on pine needles.

.....In the common life, we always actively pursue our next want—what we think we need to make ourselves happy. “More!” is our motto, as we knock down whatever (or whomever!) gets in our way. Self-indulgence is our privilege, what we can control (our biological families and other “possessions”) is where our kingship will not be denied.

When we live in *ZOE* Life, however, we quietly wait for the treasures life brings, having no expectations or plans except where they are practical for our everyday needs. The motto of that Higher Life is “Thy will be done.”

.....In the common life, our reference point always revolves around what we expect from life. We are constantly searching for ways to avoid pain or make ourselves happy. We search our memory banks or our imaginations for a new position or action that makes the most sense to us and enables us to have what WE want. Once we’ve found a way that we think protects us, we close our ears to any further information that is contrary to this new balance we’ve managed to establish (albeit temporarily).

In the *ZOE* Life—the Eternal Life—a person knows he or she is not God, and is willing to admit they haven’t *any* clue as to what is *really* best. They relax and leave it to God’s Choice, and live today in joy and self-abandonment.

.....In the common life, we always resist what is happening to us. Whenever we find ourselves in a new situation, or are asked to do something that isn’t in the immediate realm of our understanding, up shoots a giant wall of resistance. This describes how we keep ourselves imprisoned by resisting change.

In *ZOE* Life—the “Open Heaven” Life—a person knows there is always something that God has for us which does NOT fit into our agenda or logic—which means there are infinite possibilities. Because we KNOW this is true, since GOD is God, no one need ever be limited to his or her small scope of understanding. To experience *ZOE* Life, we must stay postured as humble *LISTENERS*, not “decision-makers.” *Zoe* Life and Doulos Life (the Life that *acts* and *thinks* like a life-contract slave/bondservant to Jesus Christ)—are inseparable!!

.....*Those trapped in the tight prison of the common life don’t understand that a Heaven-born Life exists.* That is why they think it is necessary to defend themselves, resist life with its changes, accumulate for security, hide their shortcomings from themselves, seek approval, hide in cliques rather than break them down, and resist and restrain themselves from little to nothing.

## Zoe Life is the DEFINITION of Church, of a True Lampstand

Where there is *Zoe* Life as the Substance of daily intertwined Life together, from the least to the greatest (Acts 2:42-47), there will be *quality and wholeness beyond belief*. Splits and schisms are non-existent. Power plays and ambitions are unheard of, decade after decade. While problems can and will come up, there is always the Ground to resolve and redeem these things, without fear or oppression or compromise. The Alpha and Omega “circulates amongst the Lampstands!”

### Where There is *Zoe* Together-Life, a Lampstand...

The Word of God flourishes, and without a single “Bible Study” or “service” or “youth group” or assigned “teacher”—even the children surpass “scholars” elsewhere in their understanding of Scriptures. Jesus at age 12 was no accident or anomaly! He lived in *ZOE!*

Christ circulates and enlivens by His presence, in fresh new ways, year after year. Never conjured by drama, or man-made emotional exploitation in music or word—but simply by the Reality of His Life, ever-changing us.

Christ has free reign in the midst of His people, in all decisions, in how we build every moment, every day.

The truths of God are made fresh and alive, season by season, by HIS Choosing, and propagated among the current generation and the nations, without effort.

Those who had never known Christ enter into the King, AND into the expression of His Reign, His Kingdom.

The worst of sinners are transformed into Saints of the highest order, transformed more and more into the image of Jesus, day by day, unto the Full Day. The gates of Hell do NOT prevail.

Each life, in *Zoe* and in *Together-Zoe* in a Lampstand, is marked by a passion for Jesus. And most importantly—*all*, 100%, will demonstrate a *Love* for the Light. You will *never* hear, “Mind your own business,” or “Get the log out of your own eye,” or “That’s just your opinion,” or “You’re just legalistic.” Always and forever, “THIS is the Verdict,” saith the Lord: My People are known, not by their perfect execution, but for their love of the Light of vulnerability, exposure, and clarity. “THIS is the Message.”

The world is changed because of its Light.

The Holy Flame of a Lampstand inspires many across the nations whose light had grown dim...for lack of Oil, for lack of Vision, for lack of Fellowship, for lack of Direction.

The Flame of Together-*Zoe* is used to light new Lampstands, and give more Light to the world.

Though the individuals who share in the Light of this Lampstand may die, the light remains and burns brighter still. Father's lambs may die in obscurity, yet in peace. Their Savior pleased, His purposes well-served in their generation.

Where a Lampstand is, God makes His home. His Habitat, His Life-Blood, His Hope, His Treasure, the Bride of His beautiful Son.

In a Lampstand, living in *Zoe-Life*, His Authority is indisputable. No man or woman claims an option of doing "what is right in his own eyes." Rebellion and independent spirits are aliens and easily recognized here. The stench of pride, independence, self-life, ambition, and the like are recognized and not embraced, even by the youngest in a true Lampstand.

Because He "circulates amongst the Lampstands," His special presence in a Lampstand fosters a turning towards Him in crisis, and in joy, in far more than an intellectual way as may be the case elsewhere. Praise and Trust are birthed out of the Reality of His Life, rather than theology or external commitment.

In *Zoe Together-Life*, "normal" men and women with hungry hearts grow in the character and power of Christ Jesus. Twenty years of anything else (other than a singularly miraculous intervention of God, as with Paul) could not equal two years of growth (though by fire!) in a Lampstand.

Unbelievably, in a Lampstand, there is never a fear of someone smiling and nodding at you now, and later speaking some other opinion of you to their spouse or someone else. Honesty and Truth prevail—it is the air we breathe in a Lampstand. Gifts lay at the Altar until all things are resolved. *Zoe-Life* cannot abide with unanswered questions, dormant opinions and judgments, hidden accusations, separation between those who are "members of one another" due to prejudices, opinions, preferences, or cliques. Hypocrisy and lukewarmness are appalling to

the Messiah, and cannot stand in His Presence, in a true Lampstand. But, those things abound in that which is *not* a true Lampstand, or in that which is about to lose its Lampstand. Every knee shall bow at the mention of His Name, in a Lampstand. But, in an unBiblical religious environment, some yawn or appear not to listen, or clench their fists.

WELL! There is much to think about, eh?! Focus. Demand “on earth as it is in Heaven”—HIS Kingdom come, HIS Life come down amongst men: *ZOE*. For you, for His Church, where you live. Dig in. **You.**

For as the song says,

“This is your time, this is your Dance,  
Live every moment—leave nothing to chance.  
Swim in the Sea, Drink of the Deep,  
Embrace the Mystery of all you can Be.  
This is your time.” -*ms*

*“The Good Shepherd lays down His life (psuche) for the sheep...” that we  
“may have TRUE LIFE.” ZOE!!!!!! (John 10:10-11)*

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# Organic Leadership... JESUS' HEADSHIP!

*Thursday Morning, March 16, 2000*

*Questions from California today: Would you talk some about church structure and leadership models? The world system makes us punch the time clock. We have to deal with their structures in the work place, and everywhere else. Are you saying that we should reject ALL "structure" in the world—or is there just a difference in how we should function with external "structure" in the church, in order to please Jesus? And how should we view the Old Testament?*

## The World System's Methodology

The Gentile system (that Jesus said we must NOT use in the Church) is filled with authority pyramid structures, programs, gimmicks, marketing, psychology, advertising, titles, schedules, meetings, etc. Jesus didn't do any of that. HE is the Church and our "model"!! That stuff is *clearly* not Him! 😊

"As many as are led by the Spirit are walking in Sonship." "And everyone born of the Spirit is...like the Wind!" 😊

Specifically, regarding "leadership," He was very, very clear about it: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. **NOT SO WITH YOU!**"

Yes, the fallen "work" world can use those third dimensional tools (being "on time," meetings, committees, motivational tools, fund-raising tools, leadership pyramid structures, budgets, and the like) to exist, live long and prosper. Oh, if *they* want to do that, that's fine! They wouldn't survive any other way. Any "organization" that must maintain its existence and cohesiveness by such externals is only proving its lack of involvement

by God. Those “tools” are fine for the heathen and their systems. (There is an allegorical e-mail about “dimensions” that you may want to refer to, also.) God acknowledged in Genesis 11 that certain external, worldly principles are, in fact, useful if you want to build a Babylonian tower, and make a name for yourself. But those are not the tools for a Kingdom that is “not of this world.” Wrong tools. And it doesn’t take a genius to read Genesis 11 and see how God feels about building that way. Bricks instead of stones is just man’s way, isn’t it?

## The Bad Translations

Frequently, we get confused about “leadership” and other topics when we think of the English translations of the Bible as being “THE BIBLE.” I’m sure you know that the Bible was written in Koine Greek, not English. And, you may find this hard to believe, but folks who live in the “system” cannot translate words that they don’t understand. The pillar and foundation of Truth is the Ekklesia, the Church. And if a person has never experienced the Life of the Church described in the Bible, of daily, sacrificial, devoted living as “One Body”—“bearing one another’s burdens,” “confessing sins one to another,” “from the least to the greatest”—how can they describe true Life in a Bible translation? When men translate into their native language, they *very* frequently translate it in a way that reflects their *experience*, not the truest translation of the Greek that the Bible was written in.

For example, the word “deacon” means “servant.” That’s it! To those to whom the word was written, it was not a title of a congregation’s third-tier religious leader on the organizational chart! It wasn’t a committee that had regular meetings to decide about lawn maintenance and parking lot stripes and fund raising banquets. To the ear of the Greek, it was simply a servant with specific chores to do. It was NOT a religious word or a title for a religious office. (The word “office” referred to could be defined as being the “official” automatic *anything* amongst God’s People, whether in a house or an institution.) If we’ve made it a religious word, we have abused the Scriptures and mis-represented and mis-applied the idea to Christianity. By contrast, in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 the word “deacon” in English translations does not even exist in our world *EXCEPT as a religious role and office*. The word meant nothing of the kind to those ears that heard it when it was written! It was a common word. No religious title or connotation whatsoever! What a difference! To understand it properly, we’d have to be the FAMILY that they were,

with “a hundred mothers, brothers, sisters, lands, possessions, and persecutions!” *then* we’d know what it meant.

There are *many* words like this that are mis-translated, and therefore *seem* to encourage the system to continue as it is. The word “pastor” is very poorly translated, and could never have been translated as “pastor” if there were not an ulterior motive for doing so. It is not an honest translation of the Greek word, and is entirely misleading. You can’t build an organization around a word and an idea that does not exist in the Scriptures. “I know! Let’s just add the word to the English Bible and then everyone will think it’s okay to have one of those as a local boss!” Not good!

*Of course*, there are Gifts and roles in the Body of Christ (Eph. 4; Rom. 12; 1Cor. 12; 1Tim. 3; Tit. 1). That’s *very* different, though, from what happens in the normal church-world thang. An “official this or that” is NOT God’s Way. And YES, it *matters!*

Here is the REAL issue:

## The Difference Between Samuel and Saul!!!

That is really what we are discussing, when you get right down to it.

We’ve discussed this before, but it is essential to understand—if we’re ever going to see the Church live in her full Glory, and for “the Bride to make herself ready” for the Return of the Groom.

Samuel was an *organic* “king.” He had no title; he had no official role. People needed him, but he was not the official anything!

Saul, on the other hand, was an assigned or elected “king”—which GOD said was an abomination! Saul was the official, titled guy-in-charge. Bad News!

Samuel was a man of God who people desired to be involved with—based *solely* on his current walk with God. It wasn’t an office that Samuel “held.” Others could be raised up and used by God similarly, and Samuel could easily have been “sat down.” It was a day-to-day walk-with-God issue, not some official anything! GOD WILL ONLY HAVE IT THAT WAY.

When God’s people built the world’s way, “as the other nations,” God’s response was “It is ME they are rejecting.” That is a REALLY big deal! So,

Gifts, tasks, whatever...sure! But *bosses* who call the shots? Wrong-ola. With a title and an office and an official paycheck, such a person could easily be walking far from God, but their role and title continue. NO WAY! Roles and gifts are only to be ORGANIC, not hierarchical.

When the thought of setting up an organizational chart system of assigned leaders was under discussion, Jesus said, “Not so with you!”

And titles? Jesus *commanded* us to “Call no man...Pastor \_\_\_\_\_, Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_, Father \_\_\_\_\_, Brother \_\_\_\_\_, Elder \_\_\_\_\_, etc.” Titles are WRONG. Period. Why? First of all, because Jesus forbids them. Is He *really* Head? Is He Lord? “If you *really* love Me, you’ll obey what I say.” He said, “Don’t do it!” Second of all, Jesus knew that titles and offices would solidify a Saul kingdom, rather than the Samuel kingdom that He had authored. The Samuel kingdom is organic leadership—brothers amongst brothers—(Mat. 23:8-14), as in a family, rather than an organization! Samuel “leadership” is the only Kingdom, the only kind of Church where JESUS truly can remain King, rather than sharing His Glory and His Headship with mere men! Asking one of several Samuels for help with something they see more clearly than you can currently see (whether maturity limitations on your part, or Gift limitations on your part)—that’s healthy. Having someone that is “in charge” in some official sense—is deadly. That is Jesus’ Role, alone.

Did you know that NEVER in the New Testament and the sixty years of Scripture contained therein... is anyone called “Pastor \_\_\_” or Reverend or Father or any such title? WOW did Paul miss his chances to do so! There is no chance whatsoever that, by today’s standard, Col.4:7-14 wouldn’t be filled to the brim with titles! And yet GOD doesn’t permit it, so Paul and the Bible don’t do it. Consider Romans 16:3-16 honestly. Religious humans today would have written this with twenty-seven titles, in this one section alone! And yet God’s heart is that there be no titles on mere humans. None. Luke, the scientist, writing a faithful Spirit-inspired thorough history of the first thirty years of the Church of Jesus Christ, reported ZERO titles. Oh, except for twice that a Jew was referred to as a Jewish “brother”. Twice in the entire Bible! But only to a Jew. Never once was a Christian referred to by any title! Wow. Is that weird, or what?! Maybe Jesus meant it - when He forbid titles.

Add to this obvious Biblical point, that never once in the Bible is there a “pastor” running any church or the main speaker or boss of any congregation. Paul, Peter, James, John -- none of their letters to

churches ever addressed or mentioned any “pastor bob” or “father o’conner” or “reverend jones”. There was NO SUCH SYSTEM in the days when men knew Jesus and walked in His Spirit, or the letters to Churches in Galatia or Ephesus or Philippi or Bithynia or Pontus would have been addressed to “pastor jones” -- or at least refer to such a thing as “your pastor”. But shock of shocks -- IT IS NOT IN THE BIBLE! Men made it up. Martin Luther wanted catholic priests to be able to get married and become protestant priests or preachers or ministers or pastors. But in the Bible THERE WAS NO SUCH THING as a man “running a congregation” with a “title” and the “official decision maker and official teacher” or “automatic bible teacher” or “automatic meeting leader” or “meeting planner” or worship leader”. It is totally a manufactured idea that is nowhere in the Scriptures. The men who defend such practices have to resort to insulting and scare tactics and “warnings” and very illogical arguments to defend positions that clearly did not exist in the churches of the Bible. Gifts, apostolic co-workers such as Timothy, Epaphras, Titus, Aristarchus, and others, certainly are present and essential in the Body of Christ. Shepherds and “Olders” are surely a Biblical possibility, in plural, in a local assembly. But a “pastor” with a “title” as boss and choreographer and automatic religious talker and centerpiece of the Body of Christ in a local church -- no way. The Bible never shows any such thing to be possible or ever true. “When you come together EVERYONE brings a word of instruction, a song, a prophetic thought... and when Revelation come to the second, let the first one SIT DOWN.” Glory to God in the Kingdom of Priests, the Body of Christ, where the Spirit gives His Gifts to ALL in whom He lives. Let them be FREE 24 hours a day, in every setting and situation, at every given moment, to be used by God, or Jesus the Head is being usurped by mere men. Jesus is ALIVE and IN His People -- let’s let the Head be the Head! Don’t, out of fear or ambition, push Jesus aside with man-made gimmicks and structure. GOD said “They are rejecting ME” when a “system” was set up to create a “king of the church” environment. “It is the same now.”

What in the WORLD are men thinking -- to do what God forbids, and the Bible demonstrates did not happen? In most of today’s religious world, Jesus is usurped as LIVING Head of His own church by “Father \_\_\_” and “Pastor \_\_\_” who totally dominate the religious world and virtually every congregation. Can we really call “Christian” what does not obey Jesus? “If you love Me, you will obey Me.” Maybe it’s time to turn a lot of things around that have been long since ignored,

forgotten, or over-ruled by the traditions of men, the praise of men, and the control of men? In reality, the thing humans do, often actually dethrones Jesus... and that is yucky.

“I must decrease, that He may increase.” This is going to be REALLY COOL when we actually DO this His Way, and see the Fruit of it! :

To appeal in a difficult situation to some who are *obviously* “over you in the Lord” (Heb. 13:7ff), or to be corrected by such, or anyone—that is a good thing. It is not “spiritual” to say, “I don’t need anyone but Jesus.” GOD said that if you are really “baptized into the Spirit,” then you *must* be totally connected to His People. You must have a sense and a way of life that says to others, “I HAVE NEED OF YOU!” Independence (the “I only need Jesus” and “I’ll make my own decisions—me and Jesus are enough” version of “independence”) is not even close to being “spiritual.” It is very weak and disobedient and unproductive. If we don’t “discern the Body,” we are in big trouble with God.

To work together in mutual submission with other Gifts and those who will give an account for your soul (the Samuels God puts around us)—that’s a good thing. But, in organic Life, those people can change from day to day and situation to situation. You won’t be “assigned” to some certain “cell” or “leader” or any such thing. There won’t be any limitations other than seeking Jesus and His Counsel on the Highest possible plane, on one’s knees and in His People. God can use different ones as their various Gifts and levels of maturity are useful to Him at any given time. “When revelation comes to the second, let the first one sit down!”

In an unBiblical structure (which is offensive to God, as He said to Samuel), then someone is “the official leader” of my cell group or my congregation or parish, or the whole papal universe. This “vicar” role (“substitute” for Christ), whether in a cell group, “house church,” a religious facility congregation, or a galaxy...is destructive, disobedient, unfruitful, and evil. If JESUS is still Head of HIS Church, then Samuel (organic) leadership will permeate the Life of the Body of Christ in a hundred forms, emanating from whomever is walking closely with Jesus and is needed in that time and place (some more or less visibly), with no titles or expectations or controlling. In a Samuel environment where JESUS is permitted to be Head, there is no org chart and ironclad pecking order or assigned bosses or speakers or “worship leaders” for meetings or “cell” meetings or programs. GIFTS

and maturity (*Jesus currently expressing Himself*) will “show the way” as to how we’ll go. There surely will be authority, but it will be the authority of Anointing and Life, not of expectation or title or office or knowledge or personality or reputation. Samuel, not Saul. Internal “drawing” of Life towards the voice and thoughts of Jesus flourishing in His People day by day, situation by situation is how He works through the “treasure in earthen vessels”—not some counseling appointment or sermon by a hireling or titled official holy man of the congregation. The sheep KNOW the Shepherd’s Voice.

If Jesus is truly Head in any time the Saints are together, whether at home after dinner, or when “the whole church is together” (1Cor. 14), *ANYTHING* can happen. Everyone has “considered how to spur one another on to love and good works” (if they are in Touch and walking with their Messiah), and they are watching and listening and willing (not trying to be seen or heard—just willing). Everyone has come “with a word of instruction, or a song...” If Jesus is Head, in reality (rather than a figurehead, as A.W. Tozer often was heard to say) there are no expectations of some particular person or persons that everything must revolve around. There are no “automatic speakers” or *anything* that would be even a tiny bit difficult to “pre-empt” by the HEAD, Jesus! “When Revelation comes to the second person, let the first person, who is teaching SIT DOWN!” Maybe there’ll be someone with revelation, maybe there won’t be. Perhaps a few particular people are typically more filled with the Spirit than others (Acts 6, etc.), or are more visible due to their particular gifts than others. That’s *fine*. But to not build in such a way as to make it *possible* and even *easy* for the Spirit of Christ Jesus to speak through whomever He desires, *WHENEVER* He wishes—this is *USURPING JESUS’ HEADSHIP* by bad building practices. This would be Saul, rather than Samuel.

And beware of the “invisible infrastructure” that can sneak up on us when we are making a transition from religious tradition and shallow external form—to Reality. The “invisible pastor” still orchestrates and manhandles and controls. He does this, perhaps out of fear that things won’t go well without him. Or he may do this because others are not being responsible Priests, and he feels like he’s got to bail everyone out. He may do this because he is determined that things not be an “embarrassment” to Jesus. He may do this purely out of habit, or because he doesn’t know any better. He may do this because he desires attention or financial security, or is ambitious. Perhaps he didn’t get

to be the pastor in his old environment, but now that he is liberated and in a “house church” everyone can plainly see how spiritual and right he is. The “invisible pastor” in the “invisible infrastructure” has lots of reasons for trying to control things—but it’s not because he is being sought out as the most anointed person that anyone knows (like Samuel was). He simply is wearing his nametag with his title of “pastor” *inside* his jacket now, instead of *outside* where it could be seen. He is *pretending* to not be the pastor, but like the puppeteer, he is pulling the strings even still—while hidden backstage to make it seem like the puppets are acting on their own. This is Saul in disguise—not Samuel!

Samuel is needed and desired and useful beyond words to God’s People. Don’t think he is not needed and that Christianity is supposed to be a generic committee vote environment! Check out your Bible, and you’ll see this from Genesis to Revelation. “Generic Christianity” is a curse that God sends on people that are proud and disobedient! (Isa. 1, 3, 5). But the many Samuels (day to day anointing on whomever is available to Jesus in the purest way) do not need or desire to make the decisions or orchestrate anything “backstage.” Samuel is available when needed, but desires no involvement in anything for himself. He is drawn in because of his special Gifts, essential to God’s People’s health and prosperity. Saul, on the other hand, was born out of people’s laziness and fear and apathy and unwillingness to stretch toward God and trust Him.

Samuel “equips the saints for works of service,” while Saul ensures a place for himself as focal point (by any number of interesting ploys). Samuel is “like the wind”—drawing attention to JESUS; while Saul draws the attention to himself—loving to be titled or called in respectful ways, and loving to hear himself speak.

I hope that is helpful in answering the leadership-related question, for now! And as for the last question...

## Behold, All Things Are NEW!

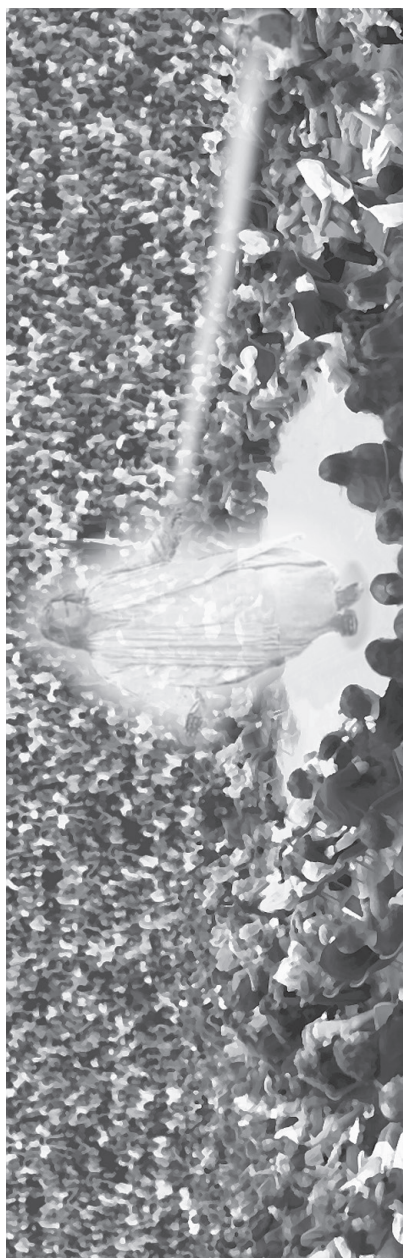
Regarding the Old Testament/New Testament, I wasn’t totally sure what exactly you were asking. The Old Covenant was “for our learning” and shows us the types and shadows and visual aids that allow us to know God’s Heart and Mind. We cannot be justified in any way by anything in that Covenant, of course. And surely animal sacrifices and temple worship (Jerusalem is the only authorized place for a temple) and the like cannot

be considered part of the Christian Covenant. Since one can't have part of a Covenant (a "contract," if you will) without the entirety of it, we best not think of the Old Agreement as something to be pursued at all, unless we are also willing to go back to animal sacrifices. Not to mention the fact that that Covenant could not bring about the forgiveness of sins, so it did not truly resolve the real problem anyway!

Suffice it to say, the Old Covenant is "obsolete" according to the Hebrews writer—and a death warrant if we try to embrace it, according to Paul. It has its place as a "schoolmaster" to show us our deep need for the Covenant Man, the second Adam, Jesus. Yesu DID keep the Covenant and fulfilled it *absolutely and completely*. Then, as we "hide our lives in Christ," we become swallowed by His fulfillment, His Righteousness, and His pleasure to the Father—all of this apart from any merit whatsoever on our part! "The Father loves the Son." And all of those clothed with Christ, those who have truly died with Him in His death, now stand without blame before the Father!

We look to the OT for guidance as to the personality of our God—the same yesterday, today and forever. We want to see His value system, and to learn and experience the riches of Aaron's staff that had budded, the hidden manna, and the tablets of stone! (Heb. 9:4-5). These are for us, "upon whom the fulfillment of the ages has come"! But the OT is not a Law for us. *Jesus* is our Sabbath Rest (Rom. 4; Heb. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10; Col. 1-2). This is very rich stuff! YOWZA!!!

“When Revelation Comes to the Second,  
Let the First One SIT DOWN!”



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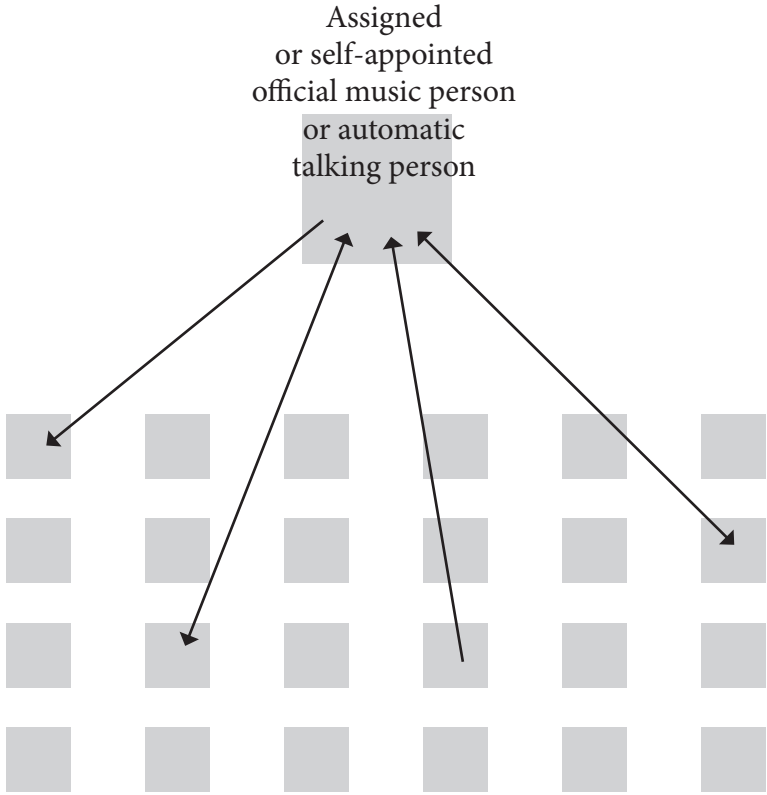
# IF HE is Truly Head of His Church...

The almost universal (to *all* “world” religions, including “cultural christianity”) clergy/laity caste system and pre-planned interactive “show” is not in the Bible, nor in God’s Heart and Mind. Jesus spoke out with clarity and forcefulness, and even name-calling, against a system filled with traditions and hirelings and those who elevate themselves over God’s People. Even the “Twelve Apostles of the Lamb” were to be just “brothers amongst brothers” in the “midst” of the Saints, not “over” them, according to Jesus Himself. God is desiring Samuel leadership, in the midst of Life, without title or position, but only love and gift, as needed. Otherwise, we are “rejecting God” by allowing and desiring a Saul type of “leadership” model, according to God’s declaration to Samuel, and to His People. Of course, this is all a radical call compared to the traditions of men that most have been brain-dirtied by for their entire lifetimes. But, until we re-evaluate our ways by the Scriptures, we can only continue to get very lukewarm, leaven-filled results, as modern cultural religion always does.

Here is the essence of one issue we must reconsider: Are our times together “about” Jesus or “FROM” Jesus? Obedience and humility and liberty for ALL the Saints makes all the difference! *“From Him and through Him and to Him are ALL THINGS!”* The man-made model of “attendance” and “holy man” christianity guarantees IMMENSE loss. Jesus does NOT get HIS Way in you, or through you, or to you as HE pleases when men control—with their “creativity” and power plays. The fear-based, or self-promotion, way is financially profitable and ego elevating for the clergy-caste. No wonder there is so much energy and name-calling when these things are presented to many of them. It is “the Stone the BUILDERS rejected that has become the Chief Cornerstone.” The “builders” are the ones with something to lose. Or at least they THINK they have something to lose, because they have not sufficiently trusted Jesus or His People. Nevertheless, it is absolutely certain that Jesus forbids (Mat.23, etc) such man-made pyramid structures and ALL the religious titles that are so common

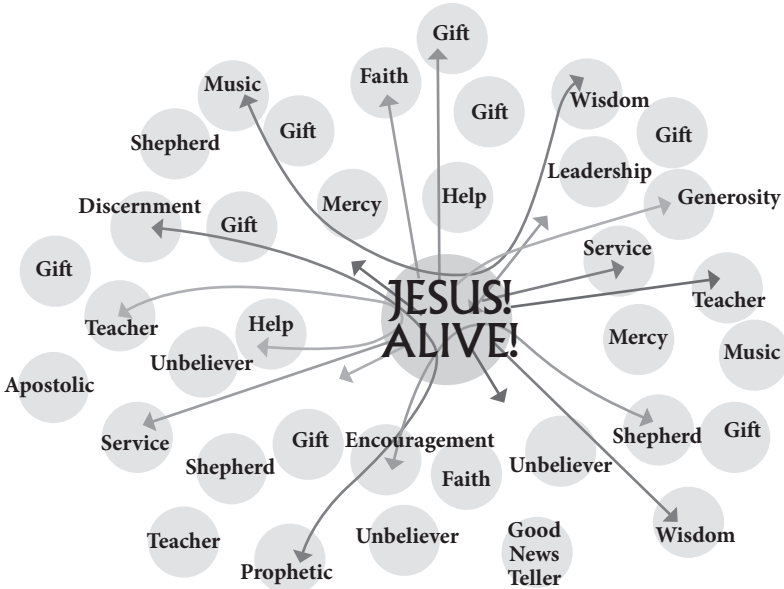
today. It is shameful and a great loss because His Gifts are wasted, and His Voice is not heard. And this is true even if the “sermon” was “good” or Biblical, or the “music” was “Inspiring.” We’ll spare you the “statistics” of the bad “fruit” relating to modern christianity, in spite of “good sermons” and “inspiring music.” The attendance-based, clergy-controlled religion is not *from* Him, even if it is “for” Him. It makes all the difference as to whether “the gates of Hell prevail” or whether they are OVERCOME by His daily Life (1Cor. 12, Acts 2:42-47, Heb. 3:12-14). He wants to be HEAD of His Church, not the topic of those gathered in His Name.

In this model pictured below, typical of the religious models in institutions and “house churches,” there is some mere man officially “in charge” through whom everything must pass. He officially starts, officially ends, officially teaches or “assigns” the teaching or “worshipping.” He makes the decisions, answers the questions, and



controls the “flow.” This is unBiblical (1Cor. 14:26) and far less than Fruitful. Leaven in the batch, quenched Gifts, and Jesus’ lost Lordship are all but guaranteed in this model. Also, such a “method” is never found in the Bible. That should be quite convicting.

Paul in 1 Cor.14 clearly describes a time when “the whole church” is together. He describes the involvement of all of the Saints who have Jesus living inside. Christians, as described a few moments earlier in the letter (Ch.12), who are living daily together under His Lordship *should continue to live as Priests* when the church is together in one place. All have opportunity to respond to Jesus and His current Headship, as true Priests, whenever the church is together. There is no domineering or pre-appointed head religious men or women delivering a pre-rehearsed canned speech or song show. This model below of “when revelation comes to the second, let the first one SIT DOWN” is in keeping with the ONLY Picture in the New Testament of Jesus’ Headship in a Meeting in His “Kingdom of Priests.” All of the Gifts poured out upon the Body of Christ, the Church, can FUNCTION at ANY given moment. “When Revelation comes to the second, let the first one SIT DOWN!” saith the Lord. There is no place for controlling who or what may happen, choreographed in advance for oratorical or music, or entertainment, or control purposes.



In a Church where Jesus is presumed currently active, involved, and Alive, rather than a historic relic to be appreciated and venerated and taught about, there is Liberty. Everyone with Jesus living within and functioning as such *daily* amongst the Believers, has a responsibility to offer their Gifts “unto the edification of the Body.” ALL of Jesus is poured out upon His Body, in ALL of His Gifts—and any Gift may be needed at any given time. If a young man opens up about difficulties in the workplace, or a sister admits she has difficulty with the children, Gifts of Teacher, or Encouragement, or Shepherd, or Helps may all spring up, as “Revelation comes to the second!” This is the only “Picture” of a time when “the whole church is Together” in the Bible. And in this “picture” Jesus is allowed to be a LIVING Head of His own church, rather than a man-made organization, controlled by mere men. Each person indwelt by the Living Christ must be Free to be moved and used by Jesus in response to what is currently happening. THAT alone is the “Body of Christ.” “Meetings” must then be the overflow of what is already happening every day in daily “house to house” Together-Life in Jesus. There must be a place for JESUS to rule and lead through His PEOPLE and His Gifts AT ALL TIMES, in homes and so-called “meetings.” Men will try to mimic this by throwing in a token “ministry time”—whatever that is—but staying in control themselves. Don’t accept any gimmicks when JESUS can instead live through all of His Gifts and People.

HIS heart of “a Kingdom of Priests”—with Jesus truly and practically as Head of His Body—is our topic here. And, of course, this discussion is not about some childish and unBiblical version of “amateur hour” and everyone “taking turns” and the “pooling of ignorance” and opinion, or “everyone is supposed to say something” and “if you spoke more than 5 minutes ‘last week’ then you can’t talk ‘this week’, blah blah. Certainly His Church is not a “democracy.” His Church is to be a Theocracy where ANOINTING and GIFTS and HIS CURRENT THOUGHT Rule over our interactions in surprising and ever-changing, unplanned ways. At times (unplanned) one person may be responding to God out loud for a long period of time. But he is not “expected” to this time or ever.

There is liberty and obedience to His Ways in 1Cor. 14. But, keep in mind that Paul also addressed in this chapter possible abuses by people ignoring headship, or taking advantage of their “liberty” due to ambition or emotion or lack of wisdom. Again, remember that the entire context for 1Cor. 14 includes “chapters” 10-13, where God’s

Heart is that His People live as “one Loaf” discerning the Body and DAILY living out their lives intertwined just as the hand is intertwined to the fingers and wrist. In this context of Biblical *LIFE* in the church, 1Cor. 14 can also be obeyed. “When revelation comes to the second, let the first one SIT DOWN.” No “show” and no “holy man” running the show. “He is the same yesterday, today, and forever!” Fear, greed, power, and ambition of a few cannot be permitted to rob His People of their Inheritance. Jesus is ALIVE and SPEAKING through His Gifts “as He wills” when we are truly His Body, rather than acting out a ceremony on a holy day.

Yes, there may be “overseers” who serve and help facilitate. And, yes, there will be times for “proclamation” to unBelievers in public as Paul did in certain instances recorded in the book of Acts. Still, unlike today, even in the times of “proclamation” there was “dialogue” (the Greek word of what happened in Troas)—not unintermittible “monologue.” And this “proclamation” type of situation with unBelievers in Ephesus or Athens shouldn’t be confused with times when “the whole church is together.” (Certainly, though, unBelievers will often be present when the Family of God is together—1Cor. 14.) Times when the local Body of Christ is enjoying one another all in the same place is clearly different than when one is “street preaching” to a collected mass of unBelievers. As one example, Paul used a pagan “school” for the purpose of speaking to unBelievers about Jesus (Acts 19:8-10), spreading God’s Word to “everyone in the Province of Asia.” This, of course, is different than when the church, the Redeemed and Indwelt, are meeting together as in 1Cor. 12-14 or Acts 20 where Paul “dialogued” (as mentioned the Greek word) with his Family until dawn in an informal environment.

Jesus desires to build His Church that the gates of Hell no longer prevail against! “THIS is HOW all men will know you are MY Disciples.” He wants US together to “become a habitation” for Him—daily, intertwined “joined and knit together,” and “contending as One Man for the Faith.” And in this *daily* intimacy of “mother, brother, sister” Quality of Life Jesus has authored, THEN all of His People (from the overflow of “daily” totally intertwined lives, Acts 2:42-47, 1Cor. 12-13) MAY be used by the Spirit of Christ, at any given time. It’s simple really. ☺ JUST as when He was here with us in the physical body, JESUS gets the say. When we are not quenching His Spirit with man-made plans and hierarchies and liturgies and traditions and showmanship, and independent worldly lives, He is free to express

Himself and His Gifts, just as when He was here in the physical body. His current Thought and Anointing, whether for a moment or “until dawn”—that is our passion. “When Revelation comes to the second, let the first one sit down...!”

Having said all that, it’s essential to say again that NONE of this really matters much if there is no Quality of daily Life as is described in 1Cor. 12-13 as the prerequisite for “chapter 14.” In fact, without that daily Life this is somewhat “dangerous.” We can’t simply talk about “meetings” without missing something very crucial. The Topic is much larger. This is about the Dynamic of Jesus’ Life in His People! And worldly, disConnected, self-centered living by religious people is why the pre-arranged show by a holy man became an obvious “safeguard” from strange, wild-eyed, sinful men using “freedom” as a platform for their ambitions. Quality of daily life, 1 Cor. 12-13, is a prerequisite and assumption for the Freedom in 1 Cor. 14.

We must combine these previous “pictures” regarding the times when Saints are together en-masse as a Priesthood rather than “audience”, with the Intended (Eph. 3:10) daily Life of Acts 2:42-47, 1Cor. 12, Heb. 3:12-14, and a “HUNDRED mothers, brothers, and sisters.” Jesus said this IS the Plan. **It is Quality of Life He has called His People to live out Together that is at stake here, not “meeting format”!** He desires an Inheritance, not a “meeting” or “knowledge transference” or “emotional singing”. His Heart is for a Corporate Man, Luke 9:23-27, 57-62—true Christianity, “from the least to the greatest” clothed with HIS Spirit.

# Part 2: Bringing it Back to the Basics

Transcripts from Some Special Times in Africa  
Spoken extemporaneously from village to village



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# Four Truths for a Foundation

*Salima, Africa, October 3, 1999*

*(This was spoken extemporaneously by three brothers at a stop in a village in Africa, at a pentecostal denominational expression. IN ONE DAY the entire “congregation” radically responded to Jesus and has never looked back. At great personal cost, many changes were made, forever transforming many people and even their economic structure in that village. In a matter of a FEW HOURS word was out in their area within other religious groups that something supernatural was going on amongst them. I wish it were possible to have captured the things that were said by the local brothers from that village in Africa during the next hour after these thoughts were deposited with the Saints there. It was and is amazing and inspiring, truly, to see their courage and “zeal for the Father’s House” expressed by “love of the Truth” and action in the time since that day.)*

**A**precious treasure is awakening God’s people around the world right now. There are special truths that have always been in your Bible that will change your life and change the way Church is expressed, in order to more highly exalt our King Jesus and see His Dream fulfilled! It is our hope, by the Holy Spirit, that all of our eyes will be opened to see these beautiful truths! God wants to build His House so we can all be stronger together. He wants to build His House so the gates of hell cannot prevail any longer. He wants to build His House so relationships can be healed. He wants to build His House so that He will be free to heal our bodies, our minds, and our souls. He wants to build His House so we can be strong and wise, and the Good News of Jesus can go forth, stronger than ever before.

Do you have the courage to hear these things? Will you obey the Word of God as you hear these things? Will you change your lives regardless of the cost? If you have the courage to obey and to risk, then please read on.

There are four Truths upon which we must build. Without them, God's House will never be strong, and the gates of hell will continue to make a shambles of the House. However, if we understand these four things and obey them, and if we are willing to take risks for these Truths of God, then God will honor this and He will send His Power into our lives. The poor shall be rich and the weak shall be strong! This has always been God's heart and intention. However, this treasure has been stolen from us from the very first century on. We've been robbed by the empty traditions of men.

## Truth #1: What is a Christian?

The first foundational Truth is to properly define what a Christian is. We have been very sloppy about this around the world and in every culture. Because we have not been clear about what a Christian is, we have built much of God's House on the sand. We have defined what makes someone a Christian by such things as sentiment or emotions or family upbringing. We have defined what a Christian is by whether a person has the "right" set of beliefs. We have defined a Christian by whether a person sings well, or attends enough, or tithes properly. That is *not* how Jesus defined Christianity.

Jesus said, "Unless you forsake all, you cannot be my disciple." Jesus said, "Unless you take up your cross every day, you cannot follow me." In the book of Acts, the Bible says, "The disciples were called 'Christians' first in Antioch." So, whenever you see the word "disciple" in the teachings of Jesus, think in your mind the word "Christian." When Jesus said, "Unless you forsake everything you cannot be My disciple," He was saying *you cannot be a Christian if you don't give away your life*. He did not say, "Unless you attend, you cannot be a Christian." He did not say, "Unless you read your Bible, you cannot be a Christian." He did not say, "Unless you give money, you cannot be a Christian." Jesus said, "Unless you die to your very self, you cannot be a Christian!"

Jesus is calling for a people who will die to their very selves. They will forsake everything to come after Him. They will forsake their pride and material goods to follow Him. They will turn away from personal sin and selfishness. They will love others more than they love themselves. This relationship with Jesus will change how they act every single day.

Unless we define the word "Christian" the way Jesus does, the House will sink into the sand and be washed away. This is what Jesus the King

promised would happen if we build on the sand of hearing, singing and talking, but do not obey. The house we build will perhaps be something that is fun for us, but it will mean nothing to Jesus. The house we build may make us a little happier because we are singing and getting together, but it doesn't mean anything if God is not happy about it! It doesn't mean anything if Satan is still winning the battle in our lives. If we are not building a life and a Church that brings pleasure to Jesus, then we are wasting our time and God's time.

## Serious Consequences

The number one foundation stone in building God's House is describing what a Christian is the way the Bible describes what a Christian is. *We must make our decisions according to what God calls a Christian.* Can a person be a member of God's Church and not be a Christian? Absolutely not! But around the world people are being taught that it is okay for Christians and non-Christians to be part of the Church. The Bible says this is not true! In 1 Corinthians 5, the Bible says, "Remove the leaven from the batch." Remove the sin from the Church. This is very important to understand, because God said, "A little bit of leaven leavens the whole batch."

Do you remember when the walls of Jericho came crashing down? God's people were mighty in a supernatural way. However, right after the walls of Jericho fell, Israel was defeated in battle. They were crushed! Why was Israel crushed in battle? Because one man in all of Israel had sin in his tent. God was very upset because one man in the whole Church had sin in his life that was hidden. That man, Achan, had an idol buried under his tent. God caused *all of Israel* to suffer a great defeat because of it. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. Right? God is still very unhappy when people in His Church have hidden sin in their lives. This breaks His heart. The Bible says that God brings judgment for this.

Is it okay for us to say that someone who has never really given his life totally to Jesus can come and be part of the Church? *No!* This is a *very* big mistake. God brings judgment on the *whole House* because of that one person who claims to be a Christian, but has never really given his life to Jesus. So, if we are going to see a Glorious House that does the work of God, the first thing we must do is define the word "Christian" the same way Jesus does. The Scriptures say, "Unless you forsake all, you cannot be My disciple." "If you love father and mother

and children more than Me, you cannot be My disciple.” “If you love the world and the things of the world, you have become My enemy.” “God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble.”

We must accurately define what a Christian—a member of the Church—really is! You cannot claim to be washed in Jesus’ Blood, and be a part of Jesus’ Body and pretend you are a Christian if your heart does not belong to Jesus when you are at home, or at work, or in the fields. If your relationships are not Holy relationships, you must repent and give your life to Jesus.

## Truth #2: What is Leadership?

The second thing we must define, the second foundation stone of building God’s House, has to do with what leadership is in God’s House. This is a very wonderful Truth! This will excite you and change your life. In countries all over the world, we have all made a very big mistake about leadership in the Church. In many places the person who studies the Bible in seminary or bible schools, or a good businessman or speaker, gets to be the leader or the “pastor.” We have seen in India and other countries, many times, that the person with a bicycle who can also read is chosen to be the leader. This is not God’s way! God’s leadership is not based on who can read, or who knows the most, or who can speak the best, or who has the best business experience, or who has wealth or education or charm or good looks or a bicycle.

## Living Like Jesus

I will give you an example from the Scriptures. In Acts 6, there were some Greek widows who were very hungry at times because they were forgotten. When food was distributed they were overlooked and not cared for properly. The Church in Jerusalem had to decide how to solve this problem. They decided to choose some men to solve the problem. If you read your Bible, you will find out that there was a certain way to choose those men. Does the Bible say, “Choose from among you seven men who know their Bibles”? No. “Choose from among you seven men who can sing well”? No. “Choose from among you seven men who are experienced in business, or in the food business”? No. “Choose from among you seven men who can speak very well”? No. The way to solve the problem was, “Choose from among yourselves seven men who are full of the Holy Ghost and full of wisdom.”

These were men who were tested every day. These were *not* men who went to school to become spiritual, or who simply spoke well. *These men were friends of God and deep friends of their brothers and sisters every day.* Stephen and Philip and those seven men were in people's homes every day, trying to help them. They would draw the water for the other believers and help them. They would hold the hands of the children of their friends and talk to them and teach them. They would go to people's homes when they were discouraged. They would go into people's workplaces during the day to encourage them. And they weren't even so-called leaders! They were just normal brothers who were living Jesus' life every day. "Choose from among yourselves seven men who look like Jesus, seven men who can see God and hear God. Choose seven men who are washing the feet of the saints every day. Seven normal, everyday brothers who love God deeply from the heart, and demonstrate a supernatural connectedness to the Messiah."

Because these men look like Jesus, every day in people's homes, then we know they are full of the Holy Spirit. They are not full of the Holy Spirit because they can yell louder or sing better or say more things. They are full of the Holy Spirit of Jesus *because they look like Jesus with their daily lives.* This is the *only* kind of leadership in the Bible. In the New Covenant, Jesus told the twelve apostles to call no man teacher, call no man father, call no man leader, call no man master, call no man rabbi, call no man pastor, call no man reverend, for you are all brothers! So now we have a wonderful, different view of leadership.

## So Different From the World

Learning this was very difficult for me, personally. Many, many years ago I used to be the "pastor" until I realized that the Bible said I was only supposed to be a brother amongst brothers. I was to use whatever gifts I may have "in the midst, as one who serves"—rather than as a boss or someone to look at all the time. If that was true for Peter, John, James, and the other apostles, it has to be true of any of us, no exceptions! "You are all just brothers."

I walked away from large amounts of money I had made in the business world to be a "pastor." And *now* I had to walk away from the money and position of being in an unBiblical position that men call "Pastor" of a church. I had to decide I was going to be a "*brother amongst brothers.*" Whatever Jesus has done in my life will show up in homes

and in other lives as I hold the children's hands. I didn't have to be a big shot anymore! I didn't have to be the main man anymore. I could just do what Paul said he did with the Thessalonians, and the Philippians, and the Believers in the town of Corinth—and that is to love people as a father and friend, and as a brother from house to house.

Paul said, “I went from house to house with tears.” He *loved* the people as a father or as a brother. He nurtured their lives as a mother would nurture a child. The other believers did that for him, too. This is true leadership in the True New Testament Church.

Jesus said to the apostles, “The Gentiles have a certain way to have leadership, but not so with you.” In the True Church, the Church against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, *leadership is very different from the way of the world system*. Leadership comes from within, not “lording it over” from the top.

## The Gifts and Authority of Jesus

Let me paint a picture for you. The Bible says in Ephesians 4 that when Jesus went to Heaven, He gave gifts to men. Jesus took all the gifts that He had (and Jesus had many spiritual gifts, didn't He?), and He gave them to His people as a whole. He didn't take all the gifts that He had and deposit them on the “pastor” or on one “man of God.” The Scriptures say *He took all of His gifts and gave them to His whole body*. The Bible says the Spirit is deposited and given as a Gift, as the Spirit wills, over the whole Church. If you are truly a Christian, if you have truly forsaken your very life for Jesus, then the Holy Spirit gives you a very special gift. Your gift is part of Jesus.

Before Jesus went back to Heaven, He said, “All authority in Heaven and on earth belongs to Me.” Do you remember that Jesus said that? All authority belongs to Jesus and no one else! So, if JESUS gave part of Himself to you, part to this person and part to that person, then whatever spiritual gifts He gave each of you, there is *authority* in that gift. Jesus gave the gifts, and He has all authority.

There are many kinds of gifts listed in the Bible. The Holy Spirit, for example, gives mercy as a gift. The gift of mercy is part of Jesus that He gave to some people. It is a supernatural gift. All of us should have mercy, shouldn't we? But there is supernatural mercy that is a gift of the Holy Spirit. And all authority belongs to Jesus. So, if He gave you

the special gift of mercy, you have been given authority in the area of mercy. If you have the supernatural gift of mercy and I do not, and if all authority belongs to Jesus and you have that piece of Jesus, then I honor that gift in you. You have authority in that area. Do you understand? This is what leadership is about!

All authority belongs to Jesus and we all have our own special gifts. For example, there are gifts of teaching. Hebrews 5 says, “We all ought to be teachers by now.” But in Ephesians 4 and Romans 12 it says there are supernatural gifts of teaching that Jesus gives. *This means there is authority in that gift because Jesus gives it and He has all authority.* We are to submit to each other in this. But teaching is only *one* gift and *one* part of Jesus. *There are many other gifts.* All since all authority belongs to Jesus and every gift that each of us has is a part of Jesus, then we submit to the gifts that are in each of us because Jesus has deposited them.

There is not some special authority that is in one “man of God” and everyone else just sits and watches. Because of the way men have built the church over the last 1800+ years, we have acted as if there is only one gift—the gift of “pastor.” (Or perhaps everyone else is allowed to have the “gift of giving money”!) But pastor/shepherd is only one gift! If we build wrongly, we all lose. If one man is pushed to the front to be the “pastor” and everyone else just sits and listens all the time, then no one gets to share your gift. They only get the “pastor’s” gifts. That is too small and corruptible! If we want to see the greatness of God, and if we want to see all of our lives change and our children’s lives change, we need ALL of Jesus. We must not settle for just part of Jesus. Amen?

## Courage to Change and Courage to Run

Do you see why we said you must have courage? Things must change! You can’t keep doing what you have been doing. You are going to have to decide to use your gifts more and welcome others to do so also. You are going to have to decide to be obedient and to have courage. If you keep sitting in your chair or on the floor all the time and don’t use your gifts more than you have been, your gifts will continue to dwindle away. “He who has been given a trust or gift must prove faithful.” Do you remember what happened to the man who buried his talent? Jesus said, “You wicked, lazy servant.” That’s what Jesus says to us when we don’t do what we are supposed to do. If I don’t use my gift or if you don’t use your gift, we are “wicked and lazy.”

Do you see how the traditions of men steal and rob the Word of God? What if you were an Olympic runner lying in a bed and someone took a rope and tied it around you? Even though you might be a champion athlete, if you were there tied to the bed your muscles would shrivel, and you would eventually die. All your potential would be lost because you have been roped to a bed for months or years. Do you see how the traditions of men steal and rob the Word of God? The way we have built for over 1800 years in God's House has roped most of God's people to the bed! They have not been able to get up and run and fulfill their destiny because humans have built wrongly, not following the Word of God. If we build or structure the church in a way that exalts one man or a "staff" and quenches others' gifts, we are criminals in the Heavenly Courts because of the damage and loss many will suffer because of "leaven in the batch" and un-used Gifts! It's not usually because people are "bad" that we have been building wrongly. Mostly it's because we just didn't know how to build God's House, by God's Design.

So, remember that the first building block for a true Foundation is that only *true Christians* can call themselves members of the Church. The second foundation stone that will build God's House is that we have to understand leadership properly. We have placed just one man in charge for 1800 years. We have taken one gift, the gift of "pastor" \*(or shepherd, better translated) and made it the primary gift. This is *far* from true in the Church in the Bible! And it must not be true now, either. This has roped most of God's people to the bed so they could no longer be who God called them to be. Leadership is in *all* of God's people. The Bible calls us a Kingdom of priests. The Bible does not say a Kingdom *with* priests, but a Kingdom *of* priests. There is not just a special group like the Levite priests of the Old Testament. In the New Covenant, *all* of God's people are supposed to be priests to one another. GOD said, "When Revelation comes to the second, *let the first one sit down!!*"

*If you are full of the Holy Ghost and full of wisdom, then you are a leader.* It's not whether you went to school, or if you speak very well. It's not whether you are male or female, or young or old. Leadership is a person with a gift of Jesus and relationship with Jesus, full of the Holy Ghost and full of wisdom. Leadership is holding the children's hands every day. Leadership is healing the wounds of God's people from house to house every day. Leadership is helping to solve problems

of sin in people's lives and washing people's feet every day. That is what leadership is and it is the *only* kind of leadership of which the Bible speaks—using the part of Jesus that His Spirit deposited in each of us. That is our area of leadership and authority. This means we have to change how we currently function. We have to change how we view leadership and how we act out the process of leadership.

This is very revolutionary. This will change how we function in our meetings, how we function in our every day lives. There is a cost to it—a price that we pay. But God rewards us one hundred times whatever we give up, according to the exact Promise of Jesus.

When I was the “pastor,” I decided that I was going to live differently. I decided to believe and obey the Scriptures about Leadership. I chose to be a brother in the middle of brothers rather than up in front of brothers. To be honest, I was afraid. I was afraid of how I would support my family. I was afraid that perhaps I would lose touch with God somehow and that people would not respect me anymore. I was afraid of many things. But I knew what God said in the Bible. He wanted me to be a brother amongst brothers. In my everyday life, I wouldn't be the boss anymore. I would just be one of the brothers, and still use my gifts from Jesus as “a brother amongst brothers” who were also equally using their gifts. It changed *everything* for me, but God was very, very faithful. He promised that no one who has ever given up anything would fail to receive one hundred times as much or more than what was given up. God keeps His promises! Amen!

## A Circle Around the Throne

From a practical standpoint, I want to suggest to you that if we really want to honor the gifts that are in each of us, and draw out the gifts that are in all of God's People, then we need to change many things. As silly as it sounds, one of those things may be how we sit when we are gathered together. When Jesus was here, He had a circle of people around Him. “To those seated in the circle around Him—these are my mothers, my brothers, my sisters” (Mark 3). Seated in a circle around Him! Isn't that the most natural thing to do, when we are gathered to hear HIM, and not a mere man with limited gifts? This may sound very simple to you, and it may not even sound very important, but I assure you it is. I've heard that the words for “pulpit” and “flesh” are pronounced the same way in French.

If someone at the workplace or in the market says something to you, does it matter *how* they say it? Of course it does! If they are leaning back, sitting against a stone and say something quietly with a yawn, that would be very different than if they said the same things with their face right up to yours and glared in your eyes with fire. *HOW* anything is said matters a great deal.

When we sit with everyone facing the front, it brings all the attention to one man. We are not equals amongst equals any longer. I am subservient to whoever has taken the throne in front of me as my master, or the conductor or facilitator or traffic cop or expert of the “class” or “service.” But note this well! A true servant of God does not desire attention for himself. John the Baptist, who was the greatest man born of woman up until that time said, “Jesus must increase, I must decrease.” Every true man of God says the same thing, “Jesus must increase, I must decrease. I don’t want to draw attention to myself. I don’t want people looking at me all the time as the person who has all the answers. I don’t take great joy in being the one who gets to speak. I just want to love and serve Jesus, and help everyone else do that, too. Jesus must increase. I must decrease.”

Every true man of God wants to back away so Jesus will get the spotlight rather than himself. Again, some will say this is meaningless, but having been in many countries and cities I assure you, it is not unimportant. It is absolutely important *how* we say something. When we set the chairs in rows instead of a circle seated around Jesus, it’s like turning a spotlight on one man. Everyone else is just an audience and one mere man is the attraction. That is *very wrong* because there are many gifts amongst us, and they are all parts of Jesus. If we put everyone looking toward the front, we are exalting only one gift. How proud a man would have to be to allow himself always the “chief seat” or the spotlight.

So, what if instead all the gifts have an equal place? Perhaps there is someone with the gift of shepherd sitting in the circle. Maybe someone with a gift of teacher is sitting here and a gift of mercy sitting there. The gift of help may sit here and one with a gift of prophecy may sit here. All of the gifts have equal place because they are all Jesus! Does this make sense? (If you have a computer, take a look at [www.JesusLifeTogether.com/JesusAsHead](http://www.JesusLifeTogether.com/JesusAsHead) to see a “picture” of this.)

Now, if a mother in this circle is in tears about raising her children, the gift of teacher can speak to her and teach about what Paul says

in Titus about women. The gift of mercy could offer thoughts of mercy; perhaps she had young children at one time and could share the feelings of it. The gift that has prophetic insight can see into the heart of *why* this sister is having problems with her children, and so on. Now, finally, we can truly obey the Command from God, “When Revelation comes to the second person, let the first one sit down.” Hallelujah!! (Shouts, echoed!)

## Everyone, Equally Important

In 1 Corinthians 14, God also said, “When you come together, brothers, and the whole Church is together, let everything be done for the building up of the Body. Every one of you has a word of instruction, a song, a revelation.” There is no boss except Jesus! “*Call no man leader, master, teacher, or pastor. You are all brothers.*” You all have Jesus and He is equal in each of us. Certainly there will be maturity differences, and some gifts are more “public,” while other gifts are more quiet or less visible in public settings. But, all are available and have opportunity. Sometimes we need the mercy of Jesus and sometimes we need the teaching of Jesus. Sometimes we need the songs of Jesus and sometimes we need the help of Jesus to solve problems. But it’s all equally Jesus. Please do read 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

Can you see that this takes courage? Can you see that this takes faith and obedience? Can you see that this will change your life if you begin to live in these things? You will no longer be roped to the bed! Your gift will no longer be pushed back. Your gift is different than my gift, but yours is equal to mine. I need your gift just as much as you need mine.

Some of the most important things that have happened in my life have happened because a twelve-year-old with their gift affected my life. Women affect my life and children affect my life. Old people affect my life and not just on Sunday morning, but every day!

We are a Kingdom of Priests *every day*. Meetings are just extra, really. Ninety percent of our growth comes from living together, and maybe only ten percent comes from meetings. That means you have to get out of your house and into other people’s homes. You bring water, or food, or clothing to their house. When you see they are angry with a child, you may need to pull them aside to talk with them and walk with them. When you see pride in their life, you put your arm around them and ask them not to have pride. When you see selfishness in a

brother's life, you put your arm around him and say, "Please don't be selfish anymore." We don't just close our eyes until the next meeting. We live in the middle of each other's lives every day as priests doing the work of God, and as "a hundred mothers, brothers, and sisters." This, too, is an absolute command from God in Hebrews 3, and many, many other scriptures.

The first foundation stone is "What is a Christian? What is a member of the Church?" If you have people who are not truly converted to Jesus in the Church, then you will constantly have battles and fights that you don't need to have. The Bible says, "From the least to the greatest, they will all know Him." When everyone who calls himself a member *truly* is in love with Jesus, there is so much more peace—no fighting, no gossip. And there is *deep love of one another every day*. You cannot be a true member of the Church of Jesus unless you have forsaken your very life. Only Christians can be members of the Church. Everyone else is only visiting. But they are not members of Jesus' Church.

This is absolutely what the Bible says. And "leaven" must be removed from the batch, or we do not love Jesus as much as we say. "If you love Me, you will obey My Commands." The Church is for the bonding and strengthening and equipping and protecting of those washed in His Blood, having chosen to die to themselves in order to marry the Master, Jesus, forever. Anyone who has not made that decision, as evidenced by their lives and choices, and whether or not they "love the Light" (Jn. 3, 1Jn. 1), is *not* to consider themselves a Christian or a member of the Body of Christ. This is what God has said.

Any other definition of "church" is man-made, and the "gates of hell" *will* prevail against such a counterfeit. Look around. You will see it on every street corner in city after city, nation after nation. It is *not* God's Plan, but only something to accommodate men's flesh, while using the logo of Jesus to salve their consciences. But there is no healing there! The Messiah only circulates where He can leave a Lampstand!

The second foundation stone has to do with leadership. The Spirit and Current Life of the Resurrected Christ—is our only leader. "The world won't see Me, but *you will!*" The measure of that Spirit that anyone has, the gift that one may have, that maturity and depth of real, living relationship with the Living Jesus that they have—that is the biblical definition of "Leadership."

## Truth #3: Daily Life

The third foundation stone has to do with our daily life together and we've talked a little bit about that. Daily life has nothing to do with how many meetings we have, but rather how much we are involved in each other's lives. Are we involved every day as a priesthood in the marriages and with the children of those around us, and with the work habits and the character traits of those around us? Are we involved every day, on a heart level with brothers and sisters? Do we "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ"? Do we "confess your sins one to another, and so be healed"? Do we "contend as one Man for the Faith," "joined and knit together by every supporting ligament"—and accept *nothing less* as "true Church" and the very "Body of Christ"? Only *there* will you find out what Jesus meant by, "I will build MY Church that the gates of hell cannot overcome or withstand!" Everything else is a "house built upon the sand" of compromise, lukewarmness, disobedience, disconnectedness, and rationalization. And it will bear the appropriate fruit, unfortunately. God said it *does* matter *how* we build!

I will show you one Scripture, and it will change the rest of your life if you will obey it. If you will do this one Scripture, you will be amazed at how these other things make sense. It is a *command* from Jesus. Will you do it? Will you? Do you love Him? It will change your whole life to DO what He says, rather than just agree with it or study it or sing about it or have meetings about it! Let's look at it together. The Scripture is Hebrews 3:12-14:

*"Be careful then, dear friends. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ."*

Notice what this Scripture says—this is from God. Almighty God says to you and me that we must every day warn each other and help each other. We must be alongside each other every day. The Holy Spirit chose to say "every day." He didn't say every Sunday. He didn't say every Sunday and Wednesday. He didn't even say in meetings. He said get involved on a Truth level in each other's lives every day. If others are available or could be, and you do not get involved because of lifestyle,

or pride, or selfishness, or choice of living situation, God said you will become harder and unable to feel what He feels. You will be deceived into thinking that you know what is right when you do not. That is what Scripture specifically says! He didn't just say to do it. He said if you *don't* do this, it will hurt you greatly. If I don't have brothers talking to me every day about my life—*every day*—I will become hard. I will become deceived. You may say, "But I read my Bible every day!" "But I pray every day!" "My wife is a Christian and I see her every day!" That's not what God said. You can read your Bible and pray every day, but if you won't be involved in each other's lives every day, you will become more and more hard, and more and more deceived. God says this in Hebrews 3:12-14. Do you believe the Bible? Do you believe God?

Who wrote the Bible? God! God said that we have to be involved in each other's lives every day. If you see me being selfish, you need to come to me and say, "Brother, don't be selfish. That makes Jesus sad." If you see me being proud, please help me and remind me that God opposes the proud. I don't want God to oppose me! You have to help me, because I can't see it all the time. No one can. "Admonish one another daily so that none of you are hardened and deceived." This is an important (and almost totally disobeyed worldwide) part of our daily life together. This is one key way you are a priest using your gifts, and "an ambassador of Christ, as if God were making His appeal through you."

## Truth #4: Meetings

For 1800 years, the Christian world has confused the issues of who is a Christian... who is a leader... what daily life is supposed to look like... and what meetings are supposed to look like. Our Father wants to restore these things to you in your lives now. Just as the Word of God had been neglected in King Josiah's day, and Truth was found buried in the rubble of men's kingdoms and traditions, so today God's Truths, so long ignored (but always in the Bible) can set men free. God will change your life miraculously and change everyone around you as a result. These are very powerful and precious truths. Whether there are few or many in your village, as Jonathan, David's close friend once said, "God is not hindered to save by many or by few." "He who is given a trust must prove faithful." We must have the courage to do something about Truth we have ignored or disobeyed in the past. And He Himself will be your Shepherd, your Fortress, and your Rear Guard as you live boldly for Him.

We must have the courage to have meetings like the Bible describes in 1 Corinthians 14, “When you come together, brothers, everyone has a word of instruction, a song, a revelation.” There is no one in charge except for Jesus Himself. We gather together having considered how we can “spur each other on toward love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24-26). We must give thought and prayer about how we can help each other when we do come together, and each of us takes responsibility to be a bearer of the Word of God and the Love of God. We have *each* “considered how to spur one another on to love and good works.” This is in Hebrews 10. Please be sure and look at the very next scripture! This is for all of us, even in “meetings”!

1 Corinthians 14 says, “When revelation comes to the second person—when a second person hears something from God—let the first one sit down.” That’s what the Bible says. Why don’t we do what the Bible says? No “special person” should be “automatically” expected to do anything—except listen and respond to God like everyone else. If someone brings a teaching from Jesus and others come with a word of instruction or song or revelation; if this brother or sister is sharing something that Jesus showed them and revelation comes to a second person, the first one sits down—if we are responding to God’s command, rather than the traditions of men. Just like the Bible has always said.

Why don’t we do that? It is because we have inherited a heavy load of traditions from the roman catholics and from our “protestant” and “denominational” and pagan forefathers. The “priest” or “pastor” or MC or CEO is up front, talking to the “lesser” laity—all the poor people, all the audience—just sitting and listening. This is likely the practice and “doctrine” that Jesus said He hated—that of the “Nicolaitans” (translated as those who “conquer His People”). But GOD has said all of that must change, for His sake and ours.

Instead, Jesus said to “the circle seated around Him” that *everyone* has a word of instruction, a song, a revelation. We are all equal. We are all brothers and sisters with different parts of Jesus poured into us individually for the common good. How amazing and wonderful this is! He is setting us FREE from the “empty traditions handed down by our forefathers” with its clergy, laity and ritual. He’s setting us free into the “dangerous” world of trusting and loving HIM as our all-in-all! And there will be no chaos there, because He calls Himself “the God of Peace” and “of order.” It is simply *His* order, rather than man’s manipulations “for” Him.

## Foundations for Change

Is this different from what you are used to? Do we have the courage to build God's way? Is it frightening? Does it sound like fun? It is very fun! Some men who are part of the Church we are a part of had been Christians for twenty years and were still babies. But when they learned these ways and began to function as priests, they grew ten year's worth in just one year. Hallelujah! Others had been "leaders" of churches that had hundreds and even thousands of people. They found out they were still only spiritual babies! They thought they were leaders, but they found out that many children and mothers were more spiritual than they were. They had to grow up from being babies, and they have! All of this is very frightening, but it is also very exciting.

If you put into practice these truths that have always been in your Bibles, you will be amazed at how much closer to Jesus you will be two years from now. "Admonish one another daily." Be involved with each other's children and marriages and workplaces "every day." Go there! You must get out of your "comfort zone" and go there when you would not have done so before! Yes, I mean YOU! :) Please, for Jesus! Speak the Word "as of God" into each other's lives, in a practical, loving, wise way, every day. "When you come together, brothers, *everyone* has a word of instruction, a song, a revelation." "When revelation comes to the second, let the first one sit down." As you walk this out, you may find that some whom you thought were Christians don't love Jesus as much as you always thought they did. You also may find some whom you thought to be very weak are becoming stronger and wiser than you could ever imagine. God's ways expose frauds and counterfeits, and make the weak very strong. Glory to God!

These riches are entrusted to you. Put them into practice for Jesus' sake. These stones are foundational. You must define what a Christian really is by what Jesus said. You must understand leadership and what it is really supposed to be. Live your lives every day, together, encouraging each other, building one another up. Help each other to grow and love Jesus more throughout your afternoons and evenings. Come and meet together around King Jesus.

If you love Jesus and build the right way, the gates of hell will no longer prevail. Sin will be crushed. Weakness and sickness will be healed. Sins will be forgiven. Kindness will lead many to repentance. Relationships will be built or restored, beyond what you could imagine in your

wonderful dreams. You will shine like stars in the universe, displaying the goodness of God. And the Bride, the Church, will “make herself ready” and be ready when the Groom returns!! Amen?



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# Five Chairs

*Tuesday Afternoon, October 5, 1999*

By God's grace, I'd like to impart to you some tools for understanding and discerning people's behavior. Let's suppose for a moment that we have before us, five chairs. And seated in those five chairs are five individuals representing five types of people that you are likely to meet during your journey on earth.

## The First Two Chairs

In the first chair, we have an unbeliever or pagan—someone who makes no claim to follow Jesus at all. Perhaps this person is a Muslim or a Hindu or an atheist. This person does not claim to be a Christian.

In chair number two, however, we have a person who claims to follow Jesus, but this person does not obey Jesus. At meetings, this person appears to love Jesus. But he does not really love Him because he does not obey Him. In Matthew 7, Jesus said that there would be many people who say, "Lord, Lord." There will be many who do high-profile works in His Name, but to whom He will say, "Depart from Me, I never knew you."

Everyone knows that the person in chair one is not saved because this person doesn't even claim to follow Jesus. We know that unless you have the Son, you cannot have the Father. Unless you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, the Blood will not wash away your sins. This person does not claim to be interested in the Savior. He doesn't believe that Jesus is the Son of God. This person cannot be saved because he does not trust in Jesus. Jesus' Blood does not wash away this person's sins. Until this person in chair one surrenders to Jesus, he cannot be saved. He might be considered a wonderful person and a good father and a good worker, but he cannot be saved without the cleansing of the Blood of Jesus.

On the other hand, the person in the second chair says, "I'm a Christian." But the behavior of this person is bad, even though this person may do seemingly "good" works in Jesus' Name. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus

said that on the Day of Judgment, people like this will say, “Jesus, you taught in our streets. You ate at our table. We did miracles in your name. We gave our wealth to the poor.” But Jesus says to these people in Matthew 7:21, “You did not obey me. You did not do the will of my Father. I never knew you.” Jesus is indicating here that many people who profess to be Christians, and even do mighty works in His Name, are actually on the broad road that leads to destruction. These people claim to be Christians, they claim they are members of the Church, but in reality, they are not.

The person in the first chair is not saved because of unbelief. The person in the second chair is not saved because of disobedience, which the Bible says is also unbelief.

## The Other Three Chairs

Now the people in the next three chairs represent true, Blood-bought followers of Jesus. These three are Christians. But I want to clarify something so that there is no confusion with the person in chair number two.

There is a very intriguing passage in 1 John 2 that identifies the individuals we have in our last three chairs. John said, “I write to you children, I write to you fathers, I write to you young men.” And then he said it again, “I write to you children, I write to you fathers, I write to you young men.” Now our normal way of thinking of the order of things is children, young men, and then fathers. Right? But God gives this order, “Children, fathers, young men.”

Children, fathers, young men—these are all saved individuals. These are people that believe Jesus is the Son of God, and their sins are forgiven and they are washed in His blood. Chair three represents children, chair four represents fathers, and chair five represents young men. You could think of them as babies, mature or responsible adults, and then warriors.

The thing I want to make clear is that sometimes the behavior of children, even though they are totally saved, looks like the behavior of unsaved people (like the person in chair two). But the person in chair three (the True child) is washed in the Blood of Jesus. The person in chair two may claim to have been washed in the Blood of Jesus. This person might even sing songs about the Blood of Jesus saving

them, but because this person can go on and on deliberately rebelling against Jesus, this person is not truly a Follower of Jesus. “Anyone that claims to be in Him must walk as Jesus walked.” “Everyone that will not listen to Jesus will be completely cut off from amongst the People.” “Everyone that has this Hope purifies himself as He is pure.” “No one who is truly born of God will continue to sin, because God’s Seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God.”

## The Chair Two/Chair Three Dilemma

Sometimes the behavior of the person in chair two might even be better than the behavior of the person in chair three. But there is something you have to understand about the Good News of Jesus. The person in chair three is saved because he has surrendered to Jesus and sought cleansing in His Blood. In Ephesians 1 and Galatians 3, God said that when a person believes in his heart (not just in his head) in Jesus Christ, that He gives that person the gift of the Holy Spirit to live inside of them. The Holy Spirit is given to everyone who truly believes and trusts in Jesus from the heart.

So now you have a dilemma. If you’re only judging by the behavior, how do you know how to respond? What if you encounter the baby Christian who behaves poorly, and you have an unbeliever that claims to be a Christian, but, for all you can see, perhaps behaves a little better? Well, has anyone ever been saved from sin because they have good behavior? Is that the Good News of Jesus? Is the Good News that we’re saved by our good behavior? Of course not! We’re saved by the Blood of Jesus. We’re saved from our sins past, and we’re saved from our sins future by the Blood of Jesus Christ.

So then, why does it say in the Bible in the book of Galatians that everyone that lives like a sinner will not enter the Kingdom of God? That sounds like our salvation is affected by our behavior. But we know that can’t be true. We’re saved by the Blood of Jesus, not by our behavior. So then, why does the Bible say that everyone who lives in sin and continues to live in sin cannot enter the Kingdom of God and will not go to Heaven? Why did Jesus say, “The sheep are the ones who do My will and obey Me, and the goats are the ones who would not obey Me”? Jesus said the sheep are going to heaven, and the goats are going to hell. And Jesus said you know the sheep by what they do, and you

know the goats by what they don't do. That sounds like we're saved by our behavior. But we know that can't be true.

## Resolving the Dilemma

What is the message here? How do we understand this aspect of the Gospel? Well, this is the mystery and the power of the Good News of Jesus. Everyone who has truly given their heart to Jesus and has turned away from their past is given the gift of the Holy Spirit. We read in the book of 1 John that there are many signs of what the indwelling Spirit looks like in a person's life. There are many who will say, "Lord, Lord," but will hear Jesus say, "I don't even know you." So we know that a person is not necessarily a Christian just because that person claims to be or does seemingly wonderful things in the Name of Jesus.

The book of 1 John was written about sixty years after Pentecost. The Apostle John was perhaps eighty-five to ninety years old. John had many years to think and to pray about what a true Christian looks like. By that time, sixty years after the day of Pentecost, there were many people that had grown up in the Church. There were new babies born who grew up and had their own babies in that amount of time. So there were many people that grew up saying the right words because their parents said the right words. By this time, there were many people who "grew up in the church" and so knew all the songs and could clap and sing and say all the right words. But John recognized that though some might appear Christian, they might have never truly given their lives to Jesus. A person is not a Christian because his or her parents are Christians, right? A person is not a Christian because that person attends Christian meetings. A person is not a Christian because of mentally believing the right things. A person, according to Jesus, is not even a Christian by virtue of performing miracles in His Name. There are going to be people on that Day, who have apparently done miracles in His Name, and He will tell them, "Depart from Me into outer darkness. I never knew you."

## A Deposit of the Holy Spirit

As I mentioned, the book of 1 John was written sixty years after Pentecost. John answers many of these same questions that he likely

had to face also. John wrote many different things in the book of 1 John that describe what a genuine Christian looks like. Over and over he describes what it looks like if someone has evidence of the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit. The Bible says that everyone who is truly a Christian has a deposit or a down payment called the Holy Spirit.

When a person is buying a house or buying a car, sometimes they will give a down payment or a first payment. That deposit, or down payment indicates that the buyer is serious about the purchase. That first payment is like a guarantee that the full payment will come. The Bible says that God, as a down payment, gave the Holy Spirit to everyone who believes. This is the proof to us that we will inherit eternal life forever. If someone is missing the down payment, the deposit of the Holy Spirit, it is an indication that there has been no agreement or covenant made between this person and Jesus.

This is why John, the apostle, says that the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is not whether they do miracles, not whether they believe the right things, but whether they have the Holy Spirit. And what does it look like when a person truly has the Holy Spirit? Is it doing miracles? Is it singing and attending meetings? No, those are not indicators that help us understand who has the Spirit and who does not. The person in chair three, who is a baby in the faith, may have truly surrendered to Jesus from the heart, but might display bad behavior sometimes.

## Some Love the Light

John and Jesus gave us one very important test to help us make sense of this confusion. Jesus put it this way, “Some love the light, and some hate the light” (Jn. 3). John said, “If we can continue to sin, then we don’t know God, and we have proven that we don’t have the Holy Spirit” (1Jn. 1-4).

Jesus said, “Some love the Light, and some hate the Light.” This saved person’s behavior might not be very good sometimes, but because this person has the Holy Spirit in their life, this person will love the light and love the truth. Like a newborn baby, this person will crave the pure spiritual milk of the Word. When you approach this person and say, “Your behavior at work, or with your wife is disconcerting, brother. Do you realize that when you do these things you’re hurting many people, including Jesus?” The person in chair three may start to cry

and say, “You’re right. I know you speak the truth. In my heart, I am sad about how I have treated my wife. Thank you for coming to tell me. I want you to tell me these things. I need your help.” This is very strong evidence that this person has the Holy Spirit and is truly saved.

Perhaps this person’s behavior is not very good at home or at the workplace at first, but the Bible says that if one is truly saved, the Holy Spirit will manifest Himself with a love for the Light and exposure of Truth. This person will say, “Pray for me! Ask Jesus to help me! Please—YOU help me, too? I invite you to speak the words and insights of Jesus to me anytime. I will open my heart and welcome Light and Truth and His Priesthood of all Believers.”

What does the person in chair two say? This person does not have the Holy Spirit. This person may appear to do miracles in Jesus’ name. This person may sing and dance and even preach sermons, but still not have the Holy Spirit. How do you know this person does not have the Holy Spirit and is not really saved? Because when you go to this person and say, “Your behavior is not very good with your wife,” this person says, “You’re judging me! Get the log out of your own eye! You’re being legalistic! Mind your own business! Who do you think you are to talk to me like that? Don’t you know I’m a “pastor”? You can’t talk to me like that! Touch not God’s anointed!” This person is not saved, because this person does not love the Light. There is strong evidence that this person does not have the Holy Spirit, because this person does not love the Light. Some love the Truth and so are saved. Some do not love the Truth and are not saved (2Thes. 2:10). Some love the Light and some hate the Light because their deeds are evil (Jn. 3:19-21).

So, if you judge only by behavior, you’ll make mistakes. Sometimes the behavior of the chair number two people and the chair number three people looks very similar. In fact, sometimes chair number two people look better than chair number three Christians. Chair number two people appear, at times, to be doing great works for Jesus. But Jesus in John 3, and the Apostle John in the letter of 1 John say behavior is not how you judge. You can only understand who is saved and who is not by who has the Spirit. And a key evidence of the Spirit living inside of a person is that person’s response to Light.

## The New Covenant

I'll go back all the way to the Old Testament to prove this point. The prophesy about the coming of Jesus in the New Covenant can be found in Jeremiah 31 and also in Ezekiel 36. In both cases, He said the same thing about the coming of the New Covenant. God said that in the Old Covenant, a man says to his neighbor, "Know the Lord, know the Lord!" (We've tried to re-enact the Old Covenant in modern church for many years now, and it's the wrong idea.)

The New Covenant, according to both Jeremiah and Ezekiel, works like this: "The proof that I've forgiven their sins and remembered their transgressions no more, the proof that I've truly forgiven their sins and made them Christians is that I'll put my Spirit in them and I will cause them to keep my commands and decrees." The proof that a person is truly a Christian and their sins are forgiven, according to prophecy six hundred years before Jesus, is that Jesus will put His Spirit in them and He will turn their hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. He will put His Spirit in them and now the sheep will know the Shepherd's voice.

## The Proof of the Holy Spirit

A Christian, a partaker of the New Covenant, loves the Truth (2Thes. 2:10) and loves the Light (Jn. 3:19-21), and is now a "partaker of the DIVINE nature" (2Pet. 1:4; Rom. 6:1-14). That's the proof that the Spirit lives in them or in any of us. We don't have to take everyone's word for it just because they say, "Lord! Lord!" This is good news! Pagans or false religionists no longer can control the Churches! We can now obey, out of relationship, the command to "get the leaven out of the batch" without being "judgmental"! If they do not love the Light of exposure because they earnestly desire to grow in Jesus, but rather resent and resist and close others out by being defensive, they are not saved, according to Jesus, and cannot be considered part of His Church. Now, remember: ONLY WITH DAILY RELATIONSHIPS can you EVER know if anyone loves the Light and the Truth, and is therefore a child of God. A few meetings a week will never allow anyone to know if someone loves the Light and is just weak, or if they hate the Light and therefore are not yet Saved. If they do not love the Truth and desire it with all their hearts (rather than resist the Truth with pride and defensiveness and blame-shifting), then the Holy Spirit says they are not saved at all. This is very helpful

to understand! IF they are saved, they WILL have the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9, Galatians 3, Ephesians 1). And the PROOF that they have the Holy Spirit in them (no matter how many times they tell you a great “testimony” and say, “Lord, Lord!” Matthew 7) is that they love to obey. They are new creations and now love the Light, and love the Truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10), and “like newborn babies crave” the Word of God to be *applied in their lives* (1 Peter 2). Under the New Covenant, we won’t have to convince someone, “Know the Lord, know the Lord.” We won’t have to say, “Change your behavior so you can act like a Christian.” Now we can say, “You’re behavior is not like Jesus.” And true believers, like newborn babies craving milk, will say, “You’re right. God forgive me! Will you forgive me too? 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 say I need your help to be all I can be for Jesus. Can you help me? Please pray for me. And if you see me acting like that again, please come to me again. And if I’m not listening to you very well, please bring two or three and come talk to me again, the way my Master and my beloved Jesus said to do.”

Do you remember that scripture in Matthew 18? If you talk to a brother or sister and at first they don’t understand you or won’t hear you, Jesus says you should bring two or three others to help them understand. Then, if they still don’t understand and won’t change, you should tell the whole Church. Isn’t that what our Lord taught us to do?

Now, let’s say you come to me and I’m angry with my children, and you say, “You shouldn’t be angry with your children like that. You can be kind.” Or I’m quarreling with people and having arguments with people, and you come to me and say, “God said the Lord’s servant must not quarrel.” If I’m a little baby, I might say, “You know, I don’t really see what you’re saying. I don’t really agree with you. I don’t understand what you’re saying. You say my behavior is bad, but I don’t really see it that way. Will you please bring three others to help me understand, because I don’t agree with you? If you’re right, I want to know about it, because I want to change. So please bring two or three others to help me understand and then even tell the Church if you need to, because I want to understand.”

## Look at the Heart, Not Behavior

This heart is the proof that the Holy Spirit lives inside of a person. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the deposit that guarantees their inheritance.

“This is the verdict,” says Jesus, in John 3. This is what separates innocent from guilty. Not that everyone is perfect, but the ones who have their sins forgiven ALL “love the Light.” They have the gift of the Spirit that they didn’t have before. Now, from deep inside, their hearts of stone have become soft hearts of flesh. From deep inside, God is causing them to keep His commands and decrees. From deep inside, they care about Jesus’ words about their behavior. The sheep know the Shepherd’s voice because they have the Spirit of Jesus. The sheep say, “I want to follow Jesus! Lead me that way.” The goats say, “Leave me alone! I can do miracles! I can give my money to the poor! I know things. I’m better than you, and I don’t care what you say.”

Looking at behavior is not the best way to understand the heart. If a person’s behavior is bad, that’s an indication that there is a problem. But if you cannot talk to them because they do not love the Light, then you have a serious problem. That person is not saved. If, on the other hand, a person’s behavior is not very good because they are still a baby, the behavior is still a problem. They just may not know any better, but they love the Light and want help. And that’s a very workable situation.

We must not look only at the behavior problems. Many people have problems because, perhaps, their parents raised them poorly. Others perhaps had friends who were bad company before they became disciples of Jesus. Perhaps before coming to Jesus many were deep in sin (as I was and some of you were), and so we came into the Kingdom with pretty bad habits. Again, the issue is *do we love the Light?!*

Do you remember this example from Scriptures? The believers in Corinth were new Christians. None of them had been Christians for more than three or four years. They lived in a very wicked city called Corinth. There were many evil things in that city. Many of the believers in the Church in Corinth had been involved in those evil things, including homosexuality and many other things, according to the letter. These believers had come out of those evil, wicked things, but they were still babies. They had given their lives to Jesus, but they still had weaknesses and bad habits. So their behavior was not yet perfect. But do you remember what Paul said when he confronted some of their problems? He said, “I knew that you would obey.”

In the second letter to the Corinthians, in chapter 7 Paul said, “When you got my first letter, you responded with great energy and great

repentance. You were frightened by the evil that you saw in your own lives. You were alarmed by it, and you were very earnest and passionate to rid yourself of that sin.” Paul said, “I bragged to Titus that I knew when you got my letter that you would repent.” That’s what it says in 2 Corinthians 7.

Their behavior was very bad in the Church in Corinth. Paul wrote the first letter to them confronting all of their different kinds of sin. But they were truly saved, and Paul knew that they were, so he was able to write, “I knew you had the Holy Spirit, so I knew that when I brought these things to your attention that you would repent. And I even told Titus you would repent. So now Titus has returned to me and brought me a lovely message, and it brings great joy to my heart to hear you have repented just as I told him you would.” Any person who truly has the Holy Spirit will welcome a letter or welcome a brother coming to them and helping them. They want to change.

The Good News of Jesus Christ is that we are washed by His Blood and all of our sins are forgiven because we put all of our faith in Jesus as our Savior. The proof that we have done that from the heart, the deposit that guarantees our inheritance, is the Holy Spirit given to every true Christian. If a person has the Holy Spirit, they will love the Light and love the Truth... and then their behavior will begin to change. They repent of how they treat their husband or their wife, and they change. They repent of how they treat their coworkers, or their children, or their neighbors, and they change. They repent of their past sins and wicked habits, and they change and become more mature.

## God’s Plan for Growing Us Up

Now, do you see how the Church comes into this issue? God’s plan is a treasure in earthen vessels. God’s plan is a priesthood of believers. God’s plan is for His people to “admonish one another every day.” As we truly live this out together, one benefit is that all of God’s true children become more and more mature. Another result of walking together as God intended is that if someone doesn’t love the Light, then they are exposed as a pretender. If they are uncorrectable, if they don’t care what Jesus says about these things, if they get angry and arrogant, then they are exposed as being a counterfeit Christian. It becomes clear that they must not have ever really given their life to

Jesus because the truth is one cannot have the Holy Spirit and not love the Light (John 3, 1 John 1, 3).

So, if the church is truly being the Church, then as priests we will all help each other to grow in maturity. We will all be Light and Life to one another. We will all help each other see things that we can't see in ourselves. If I'm selfish, I can't always see my selfishness. But my selfishness is hurting Jesus. My selfishness is harming my ability to love Jesus. If I have selfishness, it's harming my ability to be blessed by God, because God won't bless selfishness. It harms my testimony for Jesus if I'm a selfish man. So the purpose of a priesthood is to help each other know God better every day—in the marketplace, in the home, in the workplace. In the Church, I can grow from being a baby who is selfish, and eventually become a true man of God.

Paul said (1Cor. 3) that some people who are saved barely escape through the flames. These people go to Heaven, but they sneak through the flames to get there. Read it in 1 Corinthians 3 yourself. The Bible says that some people are saved, but they are burned escaping through the flames. But that is not God's intention! It is not God's desire that we just barely make it to Heaven. God's intention is not that a bunch of babies with lots of sin in their life go to Heaven. God's intention is that we be a City set on a hill that cannot be hidden. God's intention is that we be established as the Chief among the mountains. God's intention is that we be a Bride that has made herself ready. God's intention is that we be a pure, spotless and blameless Bride. God's intention is that His Church be an equal yoke for the Son of God when He comes back for His Bride.

Everyone permitted by God into the Church loves the Light. Some of us may be immature. Some of us may even behave badly sometimes. But if we truly have the Spirit of God, if we are true Christians rather than counterfeit Christians—then we will love the Light. And loving the Light together with other brothers and sisters, we will be able to help each other to grow. Then everyone will grow stronger and stronger and wiser and wiser. We can have more and more love of Jesus and more and more power from God in our lives. The testimony of Jesus can get stronger and stronger and humiliate the enemy. There will no longer be a bunch of babies who are an embarrassment to Jesus' Testimony—a bunch of babies with bad behavior that look nothing like Jesus. A bunch of babies with bad behavior is not impressive to the gates of hell. A bunch of babies with bad behavior will not help unbelievers become followers of Jesus.

If we are a Church of men and women of God who are mature and look like Jesus with our lives...if the Church is a glorious, wise, wonderful Bride for Jesus with the power of God and the character of God in our lives every day, then people will be very impressed with Jesus and they'll want to come to know Him!!

So, consider this issue of what a false Christian is (chair number two) and what a true Christian is (chairs three, four and five). Consider that good behavior does not necessarily mean you're a Christian (Mat. 7). Consider that bad behavior does not necessarily mean that you're not washed by the Blood of Jesus. The real issue according to John 3, 1 John 1, 2 Thessalonians 2, and 1 Peter 2 is that a true believer has the Spirit of God. A true believer's behavior might be bad sometimes, like sometimes a young child's behavior is not good. But if they are truly born a second time with the Spirit, like a newborn baby they will crave Truth and crave Light. The purpose of the Church is to help the person with bad behavior who does love Truth to have the wisdom and the courage to obey Jesus and become more mature.

So, we must define a Christian properly. We must also live like the Church is supposed to live—admonishing one another daily so that none are hardened or deceived by sin. We must live as a priesthood. Then all the babies will get stronger and stronger. Then Jesus will have His testimony—a Bride filled with His Spirit and His personality. Jesus will have His Church that the gates of hell will not prevail against. And then, the beauty of Jesus will be here for all of Islam and all of Hinduism and everyone to see. We must not be just babies who say the right things, but don't live like Jesus. And, the Church is not a collection of counterfeit Christians who say the right things but don't have the Spirit of Jesus living inside of them, as a Person. But we can be and will be a glorious Bride for Jesus. This is the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

## Power to Change, Power to Expose

Now, back to the five chairs illustration. The people who might sit in chairs two, three, four and five are all found in most religious assemblies today. These four kinds of people are all in Baptist, Nazarene, Methodist and Pentecostal Assemblies. Because we have been building the Church wrong, all of these people are all together. All the “four chairs” are together, including those in chair number

two that should not be permitted in the Churches as “members.” But, for lack of true, deep relationships in a daily Priesthood (as God has desired and commanded), those in chair number two are welcomed (in disobedience to the Master, [1Cor. 5]). And just as bad, those in chair number three are often ignored or rejected. Frankly, more than 85% of those permitted in the churches worldwide are either in chair number two or chair number three. This is very sad. This is also unnecessary if we were building JESUS’ WAY! Very seldom would you have an Islamic or a Hindu man that thought he was part of the Church. But the normal religious church (which is not really a church as God defines a Church) will have all four of these kinds of people together. Do you understand?

If we live the way Jesus said and begin to build the way the Church is supposed to be built, then we can find out who the pretenders are and who those who are weak are and we can help. If the Church is built around daily relationships instead of a meeting on Sunday, then all of these four types of people will be having relationship every day. The pretender and the true children, fathers and young men will be in relationship with one another every day. As you know, the Bible says to admonish one another every day. The Bible says true Christianity confesses sin one to another on a daily basis. We know the Bible says we’re supposed to serve one another, love one another, and bear one another’s burdens in order to fulfill the Law of Christ. If that’s what the Church looks like, then you have power to change things and to expose things.

Do you remember in Acts 2:42-47, from the very first day of Christianity, all of the believers were together and had everything in common? This was not because of “culture” or “expedience”—it was people living out the Life and Teachings of Jesus. People today hide behind arguments of “culture” to excuse the fact that they love the world and the things of the world, and want a god of convenience for Sunday morning and Wednesday night, and “cell group Friday.” But GOD’S People, born from above with JESUS’ PRIORITIES were daily and in public and from house to house. They were all together every day, devoted to the apostles’ teaching, devoted to fellowship, devoted to breaking of bread, devoted to prayer. They did not have a “common purse” (Acts 5:4-5), but the New Life inside of them, as Jesus commanded, “counted none of their possessions as their own.” The Bible says they were of one accord, contending as one man for the faith. The Bible says they were

joined and knit together by every supporting ligament. That is the New Testament Church—daily, close relationships. Every single member of the Church lives like they have a hundred mothers, brothers, and sisters. If that’s how we build, there is power from God to change, and power to expose and remove the enemy’s strongholds in our lives.

## We Must Build God’s Way

If we build the way men build, with the traditions of men, we have a Sunday morning meeting and a sermon, and then these people, even false Christians in “chair number two,” just all show up like an audience. Now, 1 Corinthians 5 says we must get the leaven out of the batch. The Bible says if there are gossipers among you, or immoral people, or selfish, idolatrous people, or people that love the world, we must remove them from the assembly. The Scriptures say we must not even eat with people who claim to be believers but live this way. We must not associate with them or be their friends. JESUS says we MUST “expel them from your midst.” The Bible says anyone that calls himself a brother and lives in those sins must be removed from the assembly. Now, how do you do that on Sunday mornings? We can’t do that. It’s impossible on Sunday mornings, or a quality of life that is defined by Sunday morning for many of the “members.”

Why isn’t it possible to obey the Scriptures that call us to be One, and to “get the leaven out of the batch”? Because we have built wrong. Because of the way we have built with the traditions of men, this weak person (the child in chair three) looks very bad, and this person who is not even saved (chair two) looks like a hero many times. Sometimes he is even a deacon, or an elder, or the “pastor”! This chair two person is doing “miracles” in Jesus’ name. On Sunday mornings, this man is a hero—and he’s not even a Christian! This other person in chair three looks weak. But this weak person is saved—and this person in chair number two that makes excuses and does not “love the Light,” this “hero,” is not saved at all. He is leaven, and God said he must not be permitted to be there.

Now some people use the teachings of Jesus in the parable of the wheat and the tares (Mat. 13) to excuse sin in the church, saying, “We must let the wheat and the weeds grow up together, as Jesus said. The angels will take care of it at the end of the age.” This is a terrible mistake. It is twisting what Jesus said (sometimes unknowingly, sometimes

knowingly for their own benefit!) Read the parable yourself, and you will see that Jesus did NOT contradict Paul, who by the Spirit commanded us to remove the leaven from the batch! Jesus did NOT say, “You must allow weeds to grow up in the Church.” Jesus said, “The field is the WORLD!” Jesus did NOT say, “The field is the CHURCH.” Of course, we are “in the world, but not of it,” and the enemy will sow weeds “IN THE WORLD.” We are NOT to try to create a social and spiritual “utopia” in the “WORLD” by trying to remove all the weeds from “the WORLD.” We are to be “the salt of the earth” and the “light of the world,” and “this is how ALL MEN will know that you are My disciples”! The Church must be “a city set on a Hill that cannot be hidden,” so that “they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the Day He visits us.” We ARE to allow the weeds to grow up with the wheat, “IN THE WORLD.” However, Jesus did NOT say, “The field is the CHURCH.” The weeds and wheat do NOT grow up together in the Church, according to God.

*“Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.*

*“I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.*

*“What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. ‘Expel the wicked man from among you’” (1 Corinthians 5:6-13).*

Jesus did not contradict Himself, of course. The “field” where wheat and weeds grow together until the end of the age, is not “the Church.” According to Jesus, the “field is the WORLD.” Do not ever let anyone mislead you with a message of disobedience and compromise!

Now, to be practical. If we will begin to build correctly, the way the Bible says a Church is to be built, then all four of these kinds of people

will have relationships with each other every day. This person in chair number two looks like a hero in a meeting—he can sing SO good, and he knows SO much Bible! Isn't he wonderful! But as you have relationship every day, you can see he is angry with his wife. When you walk up to his house on a Tuesday, you may hear him yelling at his children. Or you go to his house on a Thursday night just to visit and read some Scriptures with him, and you find he is not at home. You might ask his wife, "Where's your husband? I wanted to read some Scriptures with him?" And she says, "I don't know where he is. He is not at his office. He just leaves, and comes back late and I don't know where he has been." How are you going to find that out on Sunday mornings? You only find out this man loves the world and has a secret life if you're at his house on Thursday night. He's not going to wear a sign on Sunday morning that says, "I'm a hypocrite and I have a secret life." So, then you say to him, "I came to your house to pray with you and to read the Scriptures last night, and you weren't there. Where were you? Your wife didn't know where you were. Were you off with a couple of brothers sharing Jesus in the streets?"

He responds, "No, I wasn't. But it's none of your business where I was."

Then you say, "Oh, okay. Then you will not talk with me about this? Can I know why?"

"It is none of your business. Get the log out of your own eye. You are being legalistic and judgmental."

"Okay, I hear where you are coming from, and would beg you to soften! Maybe there are no problems at all. I just need to ask, because I am unsettled in my heart. But won't you at least talk to me and help me understand?"

"No. Mind your own business."

"Well, then, I need to do what my Jesus said to do next, in a case like this. I guess I need to go get two or three brothers and we'll have another conversation about this. Anyone that you would prefer, that we both would agree is sold out for Jesus and is discerning? Jesus has commanded me to bring two or three others and talk about these things. Since you claim to be a follower of Jesus, you won't mind if I obey Jesus and bring two or three others and we can sit down and talk about this."

He responds with, "I don't want to talk to two or three brothers. Mind your own business."

Then you realize, “Oh, we have a bigger problem here.” If it does not change, then the fact that he does not “love the Light” or “love the Truth” proves that he is instead “leaven” which must be removed from the Church if there is no repentance.

## A Helpful Tool

Now, how did we find out we had a very serious problem in this family? This man was such a superman on Sunday mornings. How did we discover that this man was a hypocrite leading a double life? We found out by being in his home on Thursday night. In the end, we found out this brother did not love the Light. And because he didn't love the Light, he proved he did not have the Spirit. He didn't want to change. He didn't care what you thought. 1 Corinthians 5 says if a person calls himself a brother, yet lives in sin, do not eat with him, do not associate with him as a friend, and put him out of your midst. If we build the way men build, then we would never even KNOW there is a problem in this man's life! His conscience is getting harder and harder. But if we build the way Jesus tells us to build, by admonishing one another daily, perhaps this person could become a Real person.

*“See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But admonish one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first” (Hebrews 3:12-14).*

If we build in the traditions of men and do a Sunday morning preaching thing, we may think this man is a Christian. But God says, “I never knew him.” How can we help him if his sin or rebellion or love of the world is never exposed? Sometimes the best evangelism happens inside the traditions of men to people who already think they are Christians.

If we build the right way every day, from house to house, then sin will be exposed and we will find out whether or not others love the Light. If they do not love the Light, then we put them where they should be, which is, according to God, “Expel them from your midst.” Now this man is not a superhero anymore. He is going to start thinking about his own soul, because he doesn't have all the props around him anymore. Perhaps now he can become a true Christian.

Also, by building God's Way, we discover true RICHES we would never have known! If we are, as God has commanded, involved in each other's lives and families and jobs and their Work for the Messiah together every day, wonderful things will happen that would never have happened just by some "cell group program" or Sunday morning meeting. IF we will live as God said, "contending as one man for the Faith," "we being many are ONE," and "ALL the Believers were together and shared everything in their lives"—wondrous things will happen. But this requires "seeking FIRST the KINGDOM" rather than leading self-centered, separate lives according to flesh and blood rather than according to Spiritual re-birth.

History shows many men that were in "chair number two" and were christian leaders, but not even yet saved! Have you ever heard of Charles Finney? As a grown man, he was a choir leader in a church. He found out that he wasn't even a Christian. Then he had a true conversion and became a man of God. Charles Finney went on to bring 500,000 people to Jesus in his lifetime. Did you know John Wesley was a very zealous and religious man growing up? And he found out that he was not even a Christian. He then had a true conversion and became a true man of God. I can name many, many other men that we know of today as very powerful men of God from history—they were even leaders in Christianity—and they found out they were never really Christians yet.

If the Church is really a Church with daily relationships, then we can help people that are pretenders. By obeying God and being involved in their lives, being a Priesthood and bringing and receiving daily "Light" and "admonishment," we will be serving them and serving our God in a wonderful way! And, if they are very proud and stubborn, if necessary we will have to obey God by putting them out of the Church if they won't hear the Word of God. This is a "tool" in God's "toolbox" to truly help people that are very proud and disobedient. But, if we do it God's Way, we can truly help them to be a miraculous story like Finney or Wesley, perhaps! We can make them hungry for the Word of God, by "do not eat with them, and do not associate with those that call themselves brothers, but will not turn from sin." This is far better than allowing them to instead be deceived into thinking they're already okay. Perhaps, they will repent and become true children of God. Some of the most powerful men of God that history has ever known once thought they were Christians. They learned they were not and later became true Christians.

So the best thing we can do for a person that does not love the light is to obey what Jesus said and what Paul said, “Go to them and them alone” and try to win them. If they continue in sin and they won’t hear you, then bring two or three others. If they don’t love the light and they don’t care, then we must obey God and put them out of the Church. Perhaps their soul will be saved because we used this tool that God gave us to wake them up. We don’t do this out of anger or out of self-righteousness. We do it out of obedience to God. We love them. We want them to have true conversion rather than be self-deceived. This is a tool that God has given us to help wake up people who are religious, but deceived.

Unless we admonish one another every day and have true relationship every day, this person’s true condition might never even be known. The Bible says a little leaven leavens the whole batch. So, if a person has a secret sin in his life and hasn’t dealt with it, then all of God’s people are hurt because of it. God’s People were beaten severely in Ai because of one man’s (Achan’s) idol buried in his tent. God had His PEOPLE deal with this matter, as you recall. We must build the Church the way it is supposed to be built so that we can really have an unleavened house. Only then can more and more people move from chair number two, to chair number three, to chair number four, and chair number five!

## Let’s Help Each Other Grow Up

Now, there’s another reason we must build the Church properly. This has to do with the weak person [chair three]—the one whose behavior isn’t very good, but they are truly saved. If we build the way men build in the traditions of men, then we will preach sermons to this person. We may try to get him involved in a program. But if we build man’s way, this person’s sin will also continue and go unexposed. Perhaps he cries about that sin when he goes to sleep at night because the sheep know the Shepherd’s voice and he is a true Christian with a soft heart. This person doesn’t want to be weak. This person talks to Jesus about the sin. But in the traditions of men, he doesn’t have any Help. He hears a sermon and he tries very hard. But many times, the sin goes on for years. Then he gives up.

On the other hand, if we build the way God has told us to build, there is much hope. In God’s House this same person, by the time he is one week old in Christ, will already have four or five brothers who are

helping him with his weaknesses. They are praying together. They're talking together. They are talking about the words of Jesus. This person is confessing his sins to others. These believers are admonishing one another daily and bringing their gifts into this person's life. So, instead of suffering alone, this baby Christian has people involved in his life every day helping him to change. No one has a secret life, or a separate life unknown to those that Jesus has "joined and knit" him to, "baptized by one Spirit, into one Body." We're all helping each other with our weaknesses (and we all have them). There are no heroes. We're all helping each other as brothers among brothers.

So, let's say this person has been a Christian for one week. He has true faith in Jesus as his Messiah. The Bible says his sins are washed away. The Bible says if he confesses his sins to Him, God is faithful and just, and the Blood continually cleanses us of all sin. So, let's say these brothers are working together to help this new Christian, and he has not yet totally overcome that sin, but his heart is soft. He has the Spirit and he loves the Truth. He wants to change. What if this believer dies before that sin is conquered in his life? This person is as saved as Jesus Christ and Paul of Tarsus. By the Blood of Jesus, this person is as saved as any man could ever be saved. It is not our behavior that saves us! It is the Blood of Jesus that saves us from our sins! This believer loved the truth. He wanted to change. So he is totally saved, not partially saved. This is the great salvation that we have, brothers and sisters. Amen?!

## The Good News of the Kingdom!

Let me give you one Scripture that helps pull all of this together. In the book of Hebrews, the Bible says that we are made perfect and being made holy. We're made perfect—that has already happened when we truly gave our lives to Jesus. Made perfect and being made holy. The word "holy" means pure and useful to God. The Father loves the Son, and as many as have been baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. As many as have given their lives to Jesus from the heart have put on Christ and have become clothed with Christ.

Therefore, the newest baby Christian and the most mature Christian are saved exactly the same because the Father has saved His Son, Jesus. So, when the Father looks down and He sees people that are washed in the Blood of the Lamb, the death angel marches right on by and will not touch them. The Blood of Jesus has made this person 100% saved.

In our illustration of the five chairs, all those in chairs three, four, and five (children, fathers, young men)—they are all 100% saved.

Only Jesus was truly perfect, right? When we're clothed with Jesus, we become perfect like Jesus. As far as our salvation goes, we have become perfect like Jesus when we put on Jesus. We're made perfect and being made holy. That's what the scriptures teach. If you have the Spirit inside, when you're truly saved, then you are made as perfect as Jesus Himself. Your sins have been atoned for. The price has been paid for all of your sins. You are made perfect in the Spirit of Jesus.

Now the other issue we're talking about relative to the Church is the process of not only being made perfect, but also becoming holy—a "useful vessel in the House of God." If the Church is built the way God wants the Church to be built, and we're involved every day in relationships with each other and we're a Kingdom of priests, we're not going to help anyone be more perfect. They are already perfect by the Blood of Jesus. But we will help make them more useful to God. We'll make them stronger in Christ. We'll make them have more of a love affair with Jesus. And now, instead of us just getting salvation from Jesus, Jesus could get something from us! The babies get something from Jesus. The fathers and the young men give something back to Jesus! The Lamb of God should get the reward of His suffering. Amen?

The Church that Jesus wants to build is the process of all of us becoming mature. If we build with the traditions of men, most people stay babies forever. They are an embarrassment to Jesus rather than a joy to Jesus. If we build according to God's plan, according to the pattern, then babies turn into Stephen, Philip, Paul and John. And from the least to the greatest, they all become more and more like Jesus together and the Church becomes a City set on a hill that can't be hidden. Together, according to Paul, we become a habitation of God by the Spirit. And not only do we get a reward of salvation, but now, at last, Jesus gets the reward of a true Church! That is the Good News of the Kingdom. Made perfect and being made holy.

*"God is light; and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He, Himself, is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the Blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin."*

*“If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us and to cleanse us” (1 John 1:5-9).*

There is a person who loves the Light. There is another person who claims to be without sin, but really loves darkness. From this passage, it's very clear God regards them very differently.

*“I am writing to you little children because your sins have been forgiven for His name's sake; I'm writing to you fathers because you know Him who has been from the beginning; I'm writing to you young men because you have overcome the evil one” (1 John 2:12-13).*

If we build God's way, it will be clear who loves the Light and who loves the darkness. And if we build God's way, all who love the Light can go from being young children to fathers to young men. This is wonderful Good News!!

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# Being Filled With the Holy Spirit— TOGETHER!!!

*Tuesday Morning, October 5, 1999*

*From a time together in Africa, translated to and from Chichewa, different brothers' thoughts and heart expressions merged....*

Recently, a brother was speaking about being able to hear Jesus' voice and the necessity of living in Jesus to be able to hear His voice. This has very much to do with our personal relationship with Jesus. This also has very much to do with us being the Church of Jesus, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.

The Bible tells us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit must be in us and fill us all the way to the top. That's a command from God. This means we can obey the command or disobey the command to be filled with the Spirit. We know that to be a Christian, we must be in Christ, and that Christ must be in us. Amen? However, it is possible to be in Christ and to not be *filled* with Christ. It is possible to never experience Jesus or hear Him the way we should. Unfortunately, this is the case for most Christians today. But there is revelation from God about how this can change. The solution has to do with building the Church properly so "the gates of hell cannot prevail." We must build our lives so that all of God's people, from the least to the greatest, can be filled with the Spirit—not just one or two leaders, but *all* of God's people filled with the Holy Spirit.

## Totally Immersed!

Let me draw a picture for you to help illustrate this idea. Suppose you have a bucket of water. Let's say that being in the bucket of water is the same as being in Christ. Now picture a cup of water with a lid on it. The cup is like the individual that has Christ inside of them. In order

for this person to be a Christian, he must be in Christ. So the filled cup must be in the bucket of water. If a person is filled with the Holy Ghost, he will be totally in Christ—the cup will sink to the bottom. However, if a person is *not filled* with Christ, if there is air in his cup, he will float to the top. If we are not filled with the Holy Spirit, as an individual, we may be in Christ and be saved, but we may never really be totally immersed in Jesus.

Paul wrote to the Church in Galatia (ch. 4), “I am in the pains of childbirth, like I am about to have a baby. I am having labor pains until Christ is formed in you.” He was writing to people in the Church of Galatia who were already saved (it says that in chapter 3). There was much weakness in this Church, however. They did not have Christ fully formed in them. They had some air in them, the air of the world, rather than just Christ. So they floated to the top. They were not totally immersed in the Spirit of Christ. Because they were not individually, totally filled with Christ, they didn’t sink totally into Christ.

Romans 12:1-2 states that in order to know the good, perfect and pleasing will of God—in order to truly hear God as an individual, we must not conform to the “patterns of the world.” We must not love what the world loves. We must not think like the world thinks or talk like they talk. We must raise our families differently than the world does. We must spend our time and money differently than the world spends their time and money. God said that our spiritual worship is not to be like the world in any way. God said to have our minds transformed, like from a caterpillar to a butterfly, by the Word of God. *Then* we can hear God. “Then we can know the good, perfect and pleasing will of God.” If we have some of the world in us, instead of being transformed by the Word of God, we float to the top. Even though we can be in Christ and be saved, we are no longer deep in the purposes of God.

## We Need Each Other

The purpose of the Church is to help everyone be filled with the Holy Spirit, so we can help each other get the world out of our lives. Hebrews 3 says, “We must admonish and help and warn one another every single day so that none of us will be hardened and deceived.” The Bible says we must help each other every single day. We must get out of our homes and get into each other’s lives, in the workplace and in other people’s homes. We must look into each other’s lives and

see how we can love each other. We need to help each other to no longer be conformed to the patterns of the world. Some people say, "I have my own relationship with God and I'll leave everyone else to have their own relationship with God." That's not what the Bible says. The Bible says, "Admonish one another every day so that no one will be hardened and deceived." The Bible says we are a priesthood of believers and we help each other to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We each use the gifts that are inside of us to help other people to be full of the Holy Spirit. Every single member of the Church helps every other member of the Church.

This is very different from how most people around the world have built together in christianity. In most countries, people come together on Sundays and preach sermons, and maybe they have "bible studies" with the children or even with the adults. In most "churches" around the world, no matter what country, people come together on Sunday and sit in rows, and the official "holy man" comes before them and delivers a sermon. But this is not what the Bible says Christianity is supposed to be. We have, in every country, built the Church wrong for almost 2,000 years!

*Why* have we built the wrong way? Because we have built an Old Covenant way where there is a priest and a bunch of people in an audience. A Levite priest would offer sacrifices for all the people. He was a special man of God who would help other people to know God. That's a good thing if you were a Jew 2000 years ago! If we want to be Christians instead of Jews, we should build like Christians. Amen? We have built wrong in Christianity in every country. But God is now restoring New Testament Christianity to every country.

## A Kingdom of Priests

In the New Covenant, all of God's people are supposed to be priests to one another. God's intent is not one special holy man who can give sermons. The Bible says that Jesus ascended on high and gave His gifts to all of His people. He made a Kingdom of priests. He put part of Himself in each of His people that are truly converted, young or old. That's why we need each other's gifts. We need *all* of Jesus' gifts! There are hundreds of gifts because ALL of Jesus was poured out on His Family. This is why Jesus said we are all to be brothers amongst

brothers. We don't need one man and one gift standing in front of us anymore. We must not permit that anymore. All of His truly converted and Indwelt, living in consecrated daily Life with one another and observably His (Heb. 3:12-14)—ALL are Priests!

God's heart is that the gift *you* have would be given to me and the gift *I* have would be given to you. Jesus said, "Call no man a teacher or a leader. Call no man master, reverend, pastor or priest." Even to the twelve apostles He said, "You are all brothers." If that is true for Peter and John, surely it is true for all of us! The gifts that each of the sisters and brothers have are part of Jesus. Even the children have gifts that are part of Jesus. We need all of those gifts in our lives. We are all brothers. That's what the Bible says.

"So when you come together, brothers, everyone has a word of instruction, a song, a revelation." This is what the Bible has always said in 1 Corinthians 14, "When you come together, brothers, everyone has a word of instruction, a song, a revelation, a prophecy." When we live that way, even the unbeliever falls on his face and cries out, "God is among you!" "When revelation comes to the second person, LET THE FIRST ONE SIT DOWN!" That's what it says in 1 Corinthians 14. This is not popular with those who "love to be first" and love to be in charge and viewed as the "most spiritual" and take the money of the saints.

We must be a Kingdom of priests. We must admonish one another every day. If we won't, the Bible says we will be hardened and deceived. Our conscience will be seared and we won't have conviction about things in our lives that are sinful. If I don't have you or several dedicated followers of Jesus involved in my life every day, and others are not in your life every day, then we will all become deceived and we won't know what is true anymore. This is what the Bible has always said. We must live life together, helping each other every day. If you want to ignore the Bible and say this is not true, you may start your own form of religion. Many people have. But all of you have shown by your sacrifice that you will do anything for Jesus, so let's go on to the highest places with Him now!

## Every Single Day

Jesus is building His Church against which the gates of hell will not prevail. Jesus is bringing the gifts out of people and allowing them to all be priests now—not just in meetings, but every day. The Bible says,

“Confess your sins one to another and pray for one another that you might be healed.” Wait! Do all of God’s people do this?! When was the last time you confessed sins to your brothers or your sisters? Do you want to be healed? Do you want to see the power of God in your life? The Bible says, “Confess your sins one to another.” Why do we not do this? We often don’t do this because we are afraid. We don’t do this because the traditions of men have swallowed us up. We stopped being real because we have so much pride. God has said to you and to me, “Open up your hearts, become soft and humble. Confess your sins to each other so that you can pray for each other and be healed.”

This is one of the ways we help each other be filled with the Holy Spirit. We open up our hearts to each other. “Admonish one another DAILY, every single day, so that none will be hardened and deceived,” thus saith the Lord. God has said we must open our lives to each other every single day. If we build in such a way that we only meet on Sundays and then we go back to our houses and live separately with our families, we will disobey God.

God has given very clear words about how we should walk together and help each other be filled with the Holy Spirit. God said, “Admonish one another every single day.” God said, “I put My Spirit and My Gifts inside of you, now lay down your life for your brothers every day.” God said, “Confess your sins to each other every day.” God said, “Bear one another’s burdens—and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

You can see this is a daily thing. How can you bear someone’s burdens in a meeting? To fulfill the very law of Christ, we must bear each other’s burdens. And where are these burdens? Are they in a Sunday meeting? No. The burdens of life happen with our children, with our wives, with our husbands, in our workplaces. The burdens of life are when we don’t have enough to eat or when our child is sick. The burdens of life are when our Islamic or false religion physical family hates us because we have turned to the real Jesus. It breaks our heart, and we don’t know what to do. I need you to help bear my burden when my baby is sick. I don’t want to hear your sermon on Sunday, if you won’t be there when my baby is sick. I don’t want to hear your expert knowledge, and expert speech, if you won’t help me when I’m having a difficulty with my wife. It is a daily thing—it is not about meetings. ***Bear one another’s burdens every day, and so fulfill the law of Christ.***

We have built the Church wrong in many nations for many years. God is calling now to a people who have enough courage and humility and

self-sacrifice to build properly. If we will build God's House according to the pattern that He has laid forth, the gates of hell will no longer prevail against God's people. "Greater works than I have done, you will do," says the Lord. When we look like Jesus as a Church, we will have the same Life and Power and Love as Jesus had when He was here. Jesus didn't just talk; He lived the Life. John 1 says, "The life became the light of men." It is the same now. The daily life becomes the light of men. If we want people to see the love of God, and if we want them to come to Jesus instead of the money and power of Islam; if we want to see people come to Jesus instead of their own selfishness and pride and worldliness, we must live the life of Jesus together every day.

## Part of Each Other

We have talked about being like a cup of water being totally filled and then immersed into Jesus. We can also talk about another picture—a bowl of potatoes, or a bowl of uncrushed maize. This is how we have built the church for the last 2,000 years: people come together in a bowl on Sunday like a bunch of individual potatoes, or individual kernels of maize. God's heart is not to have a bowl of potatoes, or of individuals in a bowl together for a day or two or three each week. And being in a home, instead of a religious facility is no better, if we do not change our hearts, and how we function with each other every day. Meeting together does not make us a Biblical Church. That is only what the Bible calls "a lecture hall." A bowl of individual potatoes is not a Church. You can throw all the potatoes, or all of the kernels of maize in the bowl every Sunday and it will still not be the Church—not really. The True Church is like a bowl of *mashed* potatoes, or maize flour—all melted together as one. "Contending as ONE MAN for the Faith." "One heart, one mind." "All together" and "of one accord." "We being many, are ONE." "Baptized by one Spirit into ONE body" where "NO ONE says to another, 'I have no need of you'" until next week.

A bowl of mashed potatoes or maize is your life becoming part of mine and my life becoming part of yours. When we are ONE as Jesus and the Father are ONE—that is the true Church. Others can be saved of course, without this daily life, but are not benefiting from Jesus' Plan for a local assembly showing the world His Life and experiencing His Power. "I will build my CHURCH that the gates of hell can no longer prevail against!" For your growth! For your wife and children and neighbors! A local "joined and knit together" true Church is God's Plan!

When your life is part of my life every day, and my life is part of yours every day...when your gift in Jesus is part of me and my gift in Jesus is part of you every day...when I confess my sin to you, and you confess your sin to me, and we pray for each other that we might be healed... when I know you well enough every day to know how to bear your burdens, when you know me well enough, so well that you can see in my eyes when I am hurting, and you bear my burdens—*that's when the Church is really beginning to become the Church of Jesus.* Jesus said, “This is how all men (Muslims, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, and the many weak and lukewarm in denominations) will know that Christianity is truly from Heaven. All the world will know that we are truly His by how we love each other.”

You can say words about the Blood and words about the Word of God, but until you begin to *live it* and *truly love each other*, they are only words. When the world sees us truly loving each other because our lives are totally lost in each other’s lives, then the power of God will fill us in extraordinary, immense, and powerful ways (and we will be persecuted and hated and lied about, according to Jesus!).

The Father loves the Son and we will begin to look like the Son, shining like stars in the universe, a city set on a hill that can’t be hidden. *That* is Jesus’ intention for His Bride, the Church. We must not just attend something and say some words. We must stop just sitting like little robots in chairs listening to someone give a speech. We must truly be involved in each other’s lives deeply every day, brothers amongst brothers. This is not about meetings, but about you offering your gift to me, and me offering mine to you, every day in our homes and in our workplaces, in the fields and in our families. This WILL require a change in how you choose to use your “spare time.” And you will need to change the things that you have previously considered “first” in your life, to instead “*Seek first the Kingdom.*”

## True Family!!

Jesus said, “If you truly give away your life and become a Christian, you could have one hundred mothers, one hundred brothers, one hundred sisters.” That means one hundred *intimate* relationships. That’s the very definition of Biblical Christianity! You will have hundreds of relationships that are as close as a mother with a son, or a brother and sister together. Close, close, close relationships. He didn’t say one

hundred third cousins or one hundred far distant relatives. He didn't say one hundred friends or one hundred next door neighbors. Jesus said, "My Church means one hundred relationships that are as close as a mother is to her child."

A good mother knows a child's cry. She knows her child's cry when he is hurt, or when he is hungry—those are two different cries. She knows her child's cry when he is tired versus when he is angry. A mother knows her child intimately—everything about that child. Jesus said, "In my True Church, you will have hundreds of relationships that are so close it will be as a mother with a child." You will be able to see in my eyes, and I will be able to see in your eyes when you are tired, when you are hungry, when you are angry, when you are sad. That's not really about meetings, is it? That's not about a Sunday morning service, is it? *That's about a daily life together, like a mother with a child.*

Can you imagine a mother only seeing her baby every Sunday morning?! That would be a very bad mother, wouldn't it? What would happen to the child? The child would die. That is what has happened to many Christians. We have built wrongly for so many years, with a man preaching and everyone listening, and we sing and dance, and then we go home and live separate lives. Because of this, many babies have died. Many mothers have broken hearts.

Jesus' intention for His Church is that we have one hundred mothers, brothers, and sisters. Our lands and possessions and our time and money are not our own. We ourselves are not our own. We were bought with the price of the Blood of Jesus. So we make decisions to lose our life into each other's lives every day. "Oh, I'm tired. I think I will go to bed." No. You go see your brother and love on your brother. "Work while it is daytime; night comes when no man works." "I think I will go do something that is fun for me." Bring a brother with you; bring several brothers with you. Do it with other people. "Well, I have to go to the market; I don't have time to be with my sisters or my brothers." Yes, you do. Bring them with you. Do it together. And then you can talk to people about Jesus in the marketplace together. Along the way you will see what your brothers' or sisters' needs are and what things they like and what things are important to them, because you're involved in their life. And their Gifts will be available to serve Jesus in the marketplace and events—not just your gift, which is too one-sided by itself. TOGETHER we have the Giftedness of Jesus and express His Life. The angel said, "Go together into the marketplace and

tell everyone of this NEW LIFE that you have in Jesus!” “THIS is HOW all men will know: By them seeing you LOVING ON EACH OTHER!” “The LIFE became (and becomes) the Light of men.”

If we wait until we have all our busy things done in order to be Family, *we will never be Family*. Family does all the busy things together. We wash our clothes together and we go to the market together. We go on trips together to talk to other people about Jesus. While we are together, we confess sins to one another. We say, “Sister, would you please pray for me? I am very tired from my young children, and I even got angry with my baby yesterday. I have asked God to forgive me, but I want you to forgive me, too.” Or, “Brother, would you please pray for me? I was at work, and I got angry with another man who tried to cheat me, and I said harsh words to him. I went to him and asked him to forgive me, and now I’m confessing my sin to you. Please, would you forgive me and pray for me, so I will be stronger next time?” Of course we will have time to go into our closets and pray in secret, and have time for quiet and simple things. But somewhere we have lost the Heart for Jesus’ Way of lives melted together. Jesus even took three brothers with Him when He went to pray in the Garden, at the most painful and delicate time of His life! And so should we. “Anyone that claims to be in Him, must walk as Jesus walked.” It is a Good and Wonder-ful way that has been lost in our modern culture of busy-ness, nuclear “family,” selfishness, laziness, and pride. Let’s reclaim it for Jesus, that the world may know and that we may grow!

## Open Our Hearts

This is very key. We must crack open our hearts and let other people come into our hearts. This is absolutely essential. There is no way around it. We must open our hearts to one another so that Jesus can come in and our brothers and sisters can come in. “The Kingdom of God is neither here nor there,” Jesus said, “The Kingdom of God is within you.” If you really want the Kingdom of God, it’s not just about believing the right things or going to a meeting. “The Kingdom of God is neither here nor there; it’s within you.” This means if I want the Kingdom of God, I have to get inside of you and you have to get inside of me. That’s where the Kingdom is. This takes courage, humility and obedience. Amen? We must be mashed potatoes or maize, not separate. We must be one hundred mothers, sisters, and brothers—not just one hundred good friends or acquaintances.

If we will begin to live this way more and more every day together... if we will get out of our homes and get into people's hearts and lives and welcome them into *our* hearts and lives, then we will see a Church that the gates of hell will not prevail against any longer! We won't need all the artificial divisions anymore of Baptist, Pentecostal, or Nazarene. We won't need division anymore *because Jesus will fill us!* We will see the Glory of God descend into our lives in a wonderful way. We won't need all these labels anymore. Now people will be filled with the Holy Spirit—all of them, and we will be immersed together in Christ.

We've seen these barriers broken down in many places. The Church that we are a part of has people from many different backgrounds that have put those backgrounds aside because we have fallen in love with Jesus, together, and we are helping each other grow to be like Him every day. Have that vision for your city. Jesus wants His people to be ONE. We won't become one because we decide to throw away our doctrines. We will only become one when we decide to throw away our sins. Not everyone *WANTS* this—but *YOU* can live or even die for it!

## A Kingdom Disarmed?

Suppose there were two kings—a good king and an evil king. The good king was much more powerful than the evil king. The army of the good king had weapons that could defeat the evil king. These weapons were extremely powerful. The evil king knew he could not stand against the good king. So the evil king called a meeting of his generals.

He said, "I have three plans. We cannot stand against these weapons, so let's first convince the good king's army that they do not need to practice with their weapons. Let's have them just meet together and *talk* about their weapons. Their leaders can talk about how wonderful the weapons are. They will feel good about the weapons, but they will forget how to use them."

"Here is my second plan. We will divide the good king's army. We will sow seeds of dissension among them. So then, instead of one army, we will have one hundred little groups. They will not know how to fight together. We will divide them and defeat them."

"And here is my third plan. We will convince the good king's army that they should let anyone join their army. We will tell them that a big

army is glorious and that anyone who is willing to put on a uniform can join. We will secretly send some of our soldiers to join their army. So, they have powerful weapons, but they won't know how to use them. They will be divided against each other. And their army will be full of people who are loyal to me, their enemy." In this way, the evil king was able to stand against the good king.

That is what has happened with the Church. The song is right, as we have just sung—the Blood of Jesus will never lose its power. The Word of Jesus will never lose its power. The Name of Jesus will never lose its power. Those are our weapons. Satan cannot stand against the Name, the Blood and the Word of Jesus. But the Church of Jesus has lost its power. Instead of being a priesthood of believers, we have become listeners or do-ers of programs and gimmicks. We have forgotten how to use the Name of Jesus, the Blood of Jesus and the Word of Jesus. We are satisfied with just getting together and listening to someone talk about those things. We are also divided against each other. There are hundreds of denominations, each with its own traditions. We let these divisions stand in our way so that we cannot join together and fight the enemy. We have also become impure. Many people in religious assemblies do not even know Jesus as their Savior and Lord. They are confused. They think they know Jesus, but they are not even in the bucket, because they have never truly given their lives to Him.

## A Testimony of Jesus' Life

So, in all these ways the Church has lost its power. But Jesus said that the Church that He builds would be able to overcome the gates of hell. What we have been talking about today is the answer to this problem. If we build God's way, we will be pure. Not because we are so good, but because many people are helping us each day. THIS is God's Way. If we build this way, we will be unified. And if we build this way, each member will be using his gifts or her gifts for the good of the whole. We won't just be listeners—we will be soldiers, and intimate Family. TRUE Family, according to Jesus in Mark 3:33-35. This is the way that the Church of Jesus can regain its power.

We rode here in a taxi this morning. The driver was saying, in pain, that Islam has been gaining much power in this country. Well, I personally don't care who has the most money. I don't care who has the greatest numbers. What I care about is that there will be a testimony of Jesus

Christ on this planet. A testimony that is pure, that is strong, and that is powerful to defeat satan in the lives of men, women and children. That can only happen if the Church of Jesus regains its power. We must help each other. We must build our lives together, every day. If we will live this way, then the name of Jesus will be held in high respect and honor. People will begin saying to us, "Tell us about this Jesus that you know." This is our destiny, if we will have the courage to build this way. Amen?

## Take the Basket Off the Plant!

Hebrews 3 says that we must encourage one another every day. We must warn each other every day. We must help each other every day with our children, with our wives, with our jobs, in the fields, in the marketplace... helping each other every day! Hebrews 3 goes on to say that if we don't do that, then two things will happen. We will become hard, and we will become deceived. If you have a cup of water and you pour it on soft ground, the soft ground soaks up the water. But if you pour that same water on this concrete, it rolls on the top. The ground is soft; the concrete is hard. Concrete is hard; it can't receive. If we don't live with each other every day as Hebrews 3 describes, we become hard. God's Word, God's Rain, God's Water can't get into our hearts; it can't penetrate. Our heart has become too hard.

We were just in another city one hundred kilometers from here, near Lake Malawi. The ground by the lake is soft, because the water is always on it. Far from the lake, the ground that doesn't get much rain is hard. We have to be in each other's lives every day or we get hard. We can't hear God. We can't grow. If you put a plant under a basket, the plant will die. The plant needs sunshine. Water is not enough and fertilizer is not enough. The plant needs light. Just like us! Reading our Bibles is not enough. Praying by ourselves is not enough. Attending a meeting on a Sunday is not enough. Like a plant under a basket, we can die. We need Light. Together we live this way. We provide Light for each other. Without that Light, we die. Without the Light of each other in our lives every day, we become hard.

The second thing that happens is that we become deceived. That means we don't *know* we are hard. We are deceived. We think we are soft, but we are hard. We like to sing and we like Bible stories. We might even like to speak a lot about Jesus. But we are hard and we don't know it, because brothers weren't helping us to be soft every day. This is very dangerous!

If a person is blind, but he thinks he is a good driver for a bus, he is deceived. You wouldn't get on his bus, right?! That is dangerous! Scary!

In the same way, we can become deceived. Without the light of God's people in our lives every day, not only will we be hard, we will be deceived. We won't see the part in us that is not like Jesus. Our minds will be deceived. This is a bad place to be. God's Light can't get in, and the bad stuff can't get out. We won't even know the bad stuff is there, because we are deceived. If you haven't been living every day with each other the way the Bible describes, then you are hard and deceived. That's what the Bible says. God does not lie. Everyone who is not building daily with other people, with the Word of God, becomes hard and deceived. But there is hope! If we will admonish and encourage each other daily, our hearts will soften and we will hear God more clearly through our brothers and sisters, and even through the Scriptures when we read them. When we live God's way, we soften. God's Light can come in. God's Rain can come in and finish filling us, and get the bad air out. There is much hope if we live God's way! There is no hope if we don't live God's way.

We have built the wrong way for many, many years. Most churches around the world are like plants under a basket. They may have heard good teaching, but they don't have much Light in their lives. Many are dead, others are shriveled. We need to take the basket off the plant. *One big way to do that is to be involved on a heart level with each other, to help each other, to encourage each other, to love each other—every day.*

He is building a People of Power  
He is building a People of Praise  
They are walking along with God  
And they're growing by His Precious Name  
Build Your Church, Lord,  
Make us one, Lord,  
In the Kingdom of Your Son  
Build Your Church, Lord,  
Make us one, Lord,  
In the Kingdom of Your Son.

## Take the Journey

The Bible is 100% true all the way through. It is about Jesus and His followers. These are Stories of how they hurt and how they learned in

their experiences with God. We can definitely learn from their stories, but we can also learn the same way they did: by facing God together in our daily lives. In that sense, we too are “living letters.” All the reading in the world could never change us the way the together-experience of Life can change us. Deep things we want to know never get all the way down into our hearts when they’re just read from paper. As we work things out together every day, Jesus teaches us the deep lessons of life that we could never learn from all the Bible study in the world, though these truths are in everyone’s Bible. “The pillar and foundation of Truth is the ekklesia—the church.” “The LIFE becomes the Light of men.”

Life was not meant to be like a grammar school where we learn ideas and then believe a certain list or “creed” of things. Instead, God has called us to become the same men and women of God as those who went before us—connected to the same God that they were—deeply in love with the same Jesus that they were. In order to do that, we not only need to know what they knew, but we need to feel what they felt. In order to feel what they felt, God has to take us on a Journey similar to theirs. So we take that journey in applying the Word of God together to our lives. We take that journey with tears in our eyes, with our weaknesses and our strengths, loving each other, and helping one another—in the bad times and the good times—with our eyes on our Hope, our Messiah. We are always moving forward, trusting that God will be our provider, helping us as we stay together.

Peter denied Jesus after walking with Him for three years, but when he heard the rooster crow, it broke his heart. And immediately he was back with his brother John. It is the same with us. There are times when we will do bad things and times when we will do good things. But whatever we do, we should do it together with our eyes together on Jesus and let Him make us deeper and deeper and more and more dependent on Him as the days go by. “The Life becomes the Light of men.” We must learn much about Jesus by living together and helping each other. God, help us to open our eyes.

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# Get Rid of the Walls

*Mzuzu, Africa 1996*

**I**n the world that we live in, in almost every country, the body of Jesus is broken into many parts. There are many reasons why the Body of Jesus is so badly broken. Sometimes it's because of the pride and the ambition of certain men. Sometimes it's because teachings are very different, and people divide over teachings. Many times the body of Jesus divides because of personality problems, where people bang against each other and then go apart.

It is our obligation and duty to Jesus to get rid of the walls and the barriers. Jesus wants the Body of Christ to be ONE all around the world. There are some things that need to change in order for this to happen, though. Our selfishness and pride must be put away. We must come together in order to understand Jesus' teachings—*together*, not apart. We must all be soft and humble to learn from each other.

One of the things that divide Jesus' body into many parts is the desire of men to put names on churches. When we look at the Bible only, we actually see that the true Church never had any name, really. There is no "Baptist church" in the Bible, neither "Apostolic" nor "Nazarene church" there either. There is no "Mennonite" or "Charismatic." There is *only* the Body of Jesus.

When you read about the Churches in the Bible, they are known by many names. But these are descriptions, not titles. A church might be called "the church of God in Corinth." It might be called "the firstborn ones." It is the same thing. It might be called the "elect ones," or the "chosen ones." It is the same as church of God in Corinth. **All of these names are descriptions of who they were, not a title that they wore.** For example, if I were to say, "Brother Henry," that could be a title. If I were to say "Henry, my dear brother," that is a description, and not a title. The churches in the Bible are called by many *descriptions*. But they are never called by a title. Not once in the Bible is the Church called by a title. "Baptist Church" is a title of a denomination; "brothers

in Christ” is a description. “Baptist” is a title. This is one of the things that divide us into pieces. Because if you have a title that is different from my title, that makes us different.

Is there still power in the Blood? Do we have to divide over names? Do you need a name other than Jesus’ name? There is no other name in heaven or on earth by which men can be saved. We don’t need to be “Baptists” nor “Mennonites”, neither “Apostolic” nor “Seventh Day Adventist.” *We need to be lovers of Jesus and lovers of each other.* That’s all. There IS power in the Blood, and nothing should divide us from one another. If there is a division between you and me, it should only be because one of us doesn’t want to love and obey Jesus. That would make us separate. But that’s the *only thing* that should make us separate from our brothers. If you have a title of “Baptist” and I’m a “Seventh Day Adventist,” then we have a division between us that makes Jesus sad. If we live our lives together and care for each other without any titles of “Baptist” or “Seventh Day Adventist,” then we can together learn to love and obey Jesus. But if we have different titles, we can’t be TOGETHER.

## What is the Name of Your Church?

For our dear Jesus’ sake, we must not have barriers. The way Paul said it was, “*A curse be on everyone that does not love the Lord.*” There should be no other curses. We must get rid of the walls, the barriers, and the titles. So if there is a church in your town, and there is power in the Blood, then we can be Christians together without having a name. The church we are a part of has been there for over ten years and we have never had a name, truly. When someone asks us, “What is the name of your church?”, we say, “We love Jesus.” If they are a Baptist, then there are no walls. They don’t think of me as the competition, and I invite them to just love Jesus too, with no titles. When someone asks one of our children, “What ‘church’ do you go to?”, they don’t know how to answer that except perhaps with, “Everyone I know loves Jesus.” If someone asks, “What ‘church’ do you attend?”, our children just say, “What do you mean?” They are part of Church every day. They don’t attend “church.” We are the church. And the children know this in their hearts, even when they are very young.

It is very important that we not have titles in our lives. It needs to begin with you and the lives that you reach out to in the religious

world. Beg them to please not have walls or barriers. If there is still power in the Blood, we must not have walls. Having a name that is not in the Bible creates walls. Some people say, “But our name is in the Bible. Our ‘church’ is called the ‘Church of God,’ and the Bible says that the Church in Corinth is called the ‘Church of God.’ So, we have a name that is in the Bible.” That’s not good thinking because Paul did not call the Church by a title. What he said was, “This is the Church that belongs to God.” It was not “The Church of God in Corinth” but rather God’s people who live in the city of Corinth. It was a *description* and not a title, and he also called that same group of people by two or three other names. Because it’s a description, there are many names for the Church. But when we make for ourselves one name and become that name, we have trampled on the blood of Christ because we have made walls between us and other people that love Jesus. If you are willing, the best answer when someone asks you, “What is the name of your ‘church,’” is to say, “I love Jesus. Do you?” That is the best answer. Then there are no barriers except whether or not they love Jesus. This is God’s way and the way of the Bible. We are not separated by names. As the apostle said, “Little children, love one another.” This is the thing that we do. We take pride not in our “church,” but in our husband, Jesus. Amen?

Someone I know was talking to a “pastor.” The pastor was very shocked when this person told him that they were the Church. The pastor had only thought of “church” as something that you go to on Sunday morning in a building. So when someone asks you what “church” you are a part of, you can ask God to give you wisdom for how to answer the question. There are hundreds of different answers. As you read the New Testament, you see that the believers could have answered that question hundreds of different ways too, because they had no title. If you ask God for wisdom for how to answer the question, God can show you what to say. But if you have a title and they ask you, “What ‘church’ are you a part of?” you only have one answer—the title. Now if you have no title, you can help draw them closer to Jesus by explaining to them that Jesus is alive and His Body is the Church. It’s not something you go to, it’s something you are. It’s a Family, not an organization. You can say all of these things when someone asks what “church” you are a part of—unless you have a title, because then they won’t believe you. They will think you are just like everyone else that goes to a building, except that maybe you believe different things than they do. But if you have no name, as the Churches in the Bible had no

one particular name, then when they ask the name of your “church,” you can tell them about the wonderful Family and Body of Jesus, and His Life living in His people.

## “Statements of Faith”—Another Barrier

One reason there are denominations is men’s pride. Another reason is different creeds, different “statements of faith”. When the “pastor” and the other person I told you about earlier began to speak together, the “pastor” did not know that person’s “statement of faith”. If that person and some other brothers got to know that man better, they would begin to talk about different things, out of their relationship. They might talk about the virgin birth of Jesus, about the death and resurrection of Jesus, about the fact that He is coming again for His People. They would begin to talk about what it means to be a Christian—that unless you lose your life for Jesus you cannot find it, and unless you take up your cross you cannot be His disciple. Out of their relationship, they would begin to work out what their “statement of faith” is.

Do you have a wife and children? What is your “statement of faith” for your family? There are things that are important to your family, but you don’t have a statement of faith for your family. In a sense you do, but not really; you would not put it up on the wall, but it’s in your heart, and it’s in your children’s hearts because you have taught them. If I came and lived in your home, you would not have to tell me your “statement of faith.” I would see it on your face. I would see it in how you treat your wife and children. I would see it in how hard you work, and at your dinner table, and when I find you on your knees in prayer in the corner. You wouldn’t put it on your wall, but you do have it.

When the Church is a Family, it is the same as that. We don’t have a creed that we put on the wall, but when you get to know us, you see it in our hearts. If someone came to be with our Family, our Church (which has hundreds of people), and they did not believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, that He is the son of God and that the blood of Christ is what saves us from our sins, we would not hand them a statement of faith, because we are a *Family* and don’t have one. Just like your family doesn’t have one. But because we really do have one *in our hearts*, just as your family does, it wouldn’t be very long before we were talking about important things.

The problem with making out a “statement of faith” and putting it on the wall is the same as having a name for a church. It builds walls and barriers between people. If a person comes to me and says, “Are you a Baptist?” and I say, “Yes, I’m a Baptist,” he thinks he knows me. But he really doesn’t; all he knows are things *about Baptists*, and now he assumes that he knows *me*. However, if I’m just a Christian with no title, then he is not afraid of me since he doesn’t think that he knows me yet. Now he has to *talk* to me to find out who I really am, because I’m not hiding behind the title of “Baptist”; he can talk to me or ask me about specific things—like the Blood of Jesus, and I can tell him what I believe about it. If I’m wrong, maybe he can help me change. But if I’m a Baptist, he has already said, “Goodbye.” When we don’t have barriers, then we can have relationships where we can help each other.

## Loving People, but Hating Mixture

While the Church in the Bible doesn’t have a dividing name to distinguish it from other Christians in a city, there *is* such a thing as a local Church. I say that because it *is important* that we have close relationships with each other. In the United States there are perhaps three kinds of situations within the Christian world. One is the kind that’s a part of the denominations with the titles. There are good people in those denominations as well as not so good people. Then there are people that have come out of denominations but haven’t given their lives away to other believers, so they are separate. They love Jesus and believe in truth, but they need people every day in their lives. The scriptures say to encourage one another daily, as long as it called today. And, if we won’t encourage each other daily, then we become hard in heart and self-deceived (Heb. 3:12-13).

Then there are others that are joined together every day in life. They are not part of the denominations, but they love the people in the denominations. They are devoted to each other every day and they are a Church. They are not wandering around aimlessly. They are what the Bible calls “joined and knit together by every supporting ligament.” When one part suffers, they all suffer. When one part is blessed, they all rejoice. They rise up and sit down and walk along together. It is a Church, but without a name and building, nor anything to attend; its members are inside of each other’s lives, loving each other every day.

So, there are those three kinds of situations. Most people go through the first situation at some point. Most of us became exposed to Jesus by the denominations, and so some good things have come from them. Some people, because their consciences are soft, see things that they can't live with in the denominations. Jesus said that He vomits lukewarmness out of His mouth. In some denominations there are some hot people and some cold people. When you mix hot and cold, what do you get? You get lukewarm. So, because Jesus gets sick with lukewarm, a person who thinks like Jesus is going to have a hard time with a situation where there is mixture. We can only be comfortable with mixture if we are not connected to Jesus, because He does not love mixture. So that leaves us with a great problem. We love the people, we want to help and serve, and we need them too. But there is mixture, and we don't know what to do. Some people have had to leave that situation. They were either kicked out, or they sadly left and are now by themselves. We would encourage them to quickly get involved every day with other good believers and to not stay separate very long. We do need to pray very much for the denominations and some of the very special people that are there, but the walls must come down and the lukewarmness must stop. The scriptures say to get the leaven out of the batch. This is our goal—to help get the leaven out of the batch.

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# What it Means to be a Priest

*Doing Things Jesus' Way*

*Mzuzu, Africa, 1996*

## No Special Titles—We are All Priests

The book of Revelation says Jesus purchased us and made us a Kingdom and priests to serve our God (Rev. 5). If we are all going to be priests, we need to know what it means to be a priest. If we are going to experience God's power in our lives, we must agree with God's thought for our lives. Jesus said, "Go...and I'll be with you." He taught us, "Do my will...and I will give you Life and Power."

False christendom has for many years pushed people down. It has taken a few people and pushed them up making some "leaders" rich and famous and powerful, while pushing most people down. In the United States, India, Poland, Romania, Brazil, and all around the world, there are "hero" Christians and "low" Christians. This is very wrong. Jesus said to the twelve apostles in Matthew 23 to "Call no man teacher, call no man father, call no man leader, call no man master, call no man 'rabbi,' call no man 'pastor,' call no man 'reverend'—for you are all brothers with one Father!" There are no "heroes" in True Christianity except for Jesus. There must be no official bosses who control the decisions, the money, and the people—except Jesus in and through His People together by His Spirit.

## A Living Sacrifice

When God wants us to be priests, He has a thought in His mind. A priest offers spiritual sacrifices to God. You can do that. God wants you to do that. That's not for "heroes." That's for all of us. A spiritual sacrifice—there are many parts to that. One part of a spiritual sacrifice,

as Paul said, is to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice. God wants you to be a priest by offering your body as a living sacrifice. Jesus wants your tongue, your eyes, and your ears. He also wants your mind, hands, and feet. You can offer the parts of your body as instruments of righteousness only. Or you can give in to sin, selfishness, pride, lust, and fear. But Jesus wants us to give all the parts of our bodies to Him as a sacrifice everyday, and we will be priests. Most people know about this first part of being a priest—offering your body as a sacrifice. *Not many people will do that, but most people know that.* Will you all **do** that?

## Serve the People and Help Each Other be More Like Jesus

Another function or part of a priest's duties in the Old Testament that not many people know about was to *serve* the people—not just to offer sacrifices, but also to serve the people. A priest in the Old Covenant would bring God to the people. Now, in the New Covenant, we are *all* priests. If you are truly a follower of Jesus, you are a priest. We don't sit and watch the priest do God's thing. *We are priests.* Do you believe in your heart that you are a priest? Then bring God to the people. There are two ways you can bring God to the people. One way is to tell others about Jesus in your neighborhoods. We are all priests, so we all bring Jesus to our neighbors and friends and families. Amen?

A priest also brings Jesus to the family of God. We do tell others about Jesus and His ways, but there is another way we bring Jesus to the people. Let me be very practical here. If you are a priest, *you will help others become more like Jesus.* If we look at a picture of Jesus in our heart and see Who He is, then look at our brothers and sisters and see a difference between them and Jesus, *as priests, we live to make them the same.* Is Jesus selfish? Are any brothers and sisters selfish? You are a priest; help them. Is Jesus afraid? If you ever see a brother or sister that lives in fear, help them. Does Jesus care for the little children? Did He say, "Bring the little children to me."? If you ever see a brother or sister that doesn't love the little children and care for them, then help them change. That's what a priest does. You help everyone become more like Jesus. If Jesus were married, would Jesus have ever been angry with his wife and yelled at her? If Jesus were a wife, would He ever be angry or selfish with His spouse? You know the answers to these questions. Jesus is Wonderful in ALL things!

You are priests. You must help your brothers and sisters become more like Jesus. This is very risky. This is dangerous. Why? Because someone might think that you are being prideful or judgmental. But no, you are being a priest as God has called you to be. We don't want to have pride or be judgmental. We want to have deep, deep love in our hearts for everyone. But we must beg them to change, to become more like Jesus—because we are priests of God. Every one of us is a priest of God. But we each have our own problems, too. There are things about each of us that are not exactly like Jesus. If I believe that you are a priest, then I must listen to you if you see things in my life that are not like Jesus. I must welcome you as a priest to see into my life and to help me. So we have courage and love to help others. We have courage and humility to have others help us and to speak into *our* lives. Church is NOT a place that you come to. *Church is people being priests together.* You become the Church when everyone helps each other *everyday* become more like Jesus. You are not a Church because you come somewhere and listen. You are a Church because you care deeply for each other every day. The Church is called the Body of Christ. If we are not helping each other become more like Christ, then we are not part of His Body. We must help each other.

Holy Father, Lord God Almighty, it's our prayer together that You would open our eyes and those of all your children everywhere. Holy God, show us how to be priests. We beg You for the courage, the help and the wisdom to be able to touch each other's lives. We beg You for the humility and the courage to welcome other people speaking into our lives. We need You so much. We want to be Your Church. We want to kick down the gates of hell and love each other into greatness. Holy Spirit, help us. Teach us Your ways. Help us to change fast. We do love You very much. Give us Your wisdom. We know that Your House is built with wisdom, and we desperately need that. Amen.

## Solving Problems

*“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the Church. If he refuses to listen even to the Church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever*

*you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:15-20).*

Most people that hear verse 20 think that this means when the Church is together and we are happy worshipping then Jesus is there. We sing praises to Jesus, we feel good and we feel His presence. While this is all true, this is not what verse 20 is about. This verse does talk about people being together and Jesus coming to be with them, but He is not talking about worship here; he is talking about solving problems. He is saying that as we are all priests and we help each other be more like Jesus, there are times when we will need to come and speak about things in each other’s lives. If you see me being selfish, you need to come to me and tell me this. If you sisters hear another sister gossip, you must talk to her about this. Gossip is sin. Gossip breaks Jesus’ heart. Gossip is slander and hurts Jesus. So if we see that these things are sin and wound Jesus in the side, as priests and as the body of Christ, we must help each other.

Jesus said that if there is sin you must “*go to him and him alone*” (v. 15). We never want to embarrass anyone or shame them. In love, we just want them to become more like Jesus. If they are selfish or if they gossip, they can’t hear God. Since we want them to hear God, we must help. If they are selfish or prideful or slanderous, then they can’t love God or love people very well. So as priests, we must go to them and help them become more like Jesus. But we must be very humble. We are not wagging a finger and pointing; we are grabbing their legs and begging them to give their lives to Jesus. We want so much for them to have a friendship with God, and they can’t have a friendship with God if there is sin in their hearts. So our master and teacher Jesus says to go to them and to them alone. Do not shame them nor embarrass them. Love them. But *go* to them and help them. You are a priest; you must go.

## If Two or Three Others Come... Jesus Comes, Too!

Jesus gives us solutions to problems if things are difficult. If we go to a brother or sister in humility to try to help and they say, “Go away, I

don't want to listen," or "Don't judge me. Get the log out of your own eye." Jesus gives us a solution to this problem. There is a chance that you might be wrong, but you still must go if you think you are right. You must try. If you are afraid to try, then you can't be a priest. You can't make Jesus happy unless you try. Sometimes you will be wrong, though, and that's okay, because then you will learn from that too. Jesus said that if you go to this brother or sister and they won't listen, then bring two or three others to try to help. This is not a teaching about "church discipline". This is a teaching about how to help each other.

*"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20).*

***Do you see how beautiful this is?!!*** If you need to bring two or three others to talk to this brother or sister, Jesus comes too. Where two or three are gathered to do His work, Jesus comes. This scripture is not about a worship service. This is about working together to help each other become like Jesus. If we go to a brother or sister, and they won't hear us because they don't understand or they don't like it, then we bring two or three others with us. This is a command of Jesus. He didn't say if they won't listen to you, just forget it or just pray about it. He said if they won't listen to you, bring two or three other good brothers and sisters, and Jesus will come, too. If we come in His name to do His work, He will come to help. He goes on to say that if that person still won't hear two or three witnesses, then tell it to the whole Church. Again, this is not "church discipline"; this is about bringing all the priests together to try to help solve a problem. That is very, very good.

Our Jesus is wise beyond measure. He's a Wonderful Counselor, isn't He? Jesus said that if we have problems being priests trying to help each other, we can bring in more people to help. If I come to you and I think that there's sin in your life and you don't agree, maybe it's because *I'm wrong*—maybe I don't see things correctly. When we bring two or three witnesses, maybe they'll tell me that *I'm wrong*. So Jesus wins, and everyone grows! This is a very special thing that you must understand if you're priests. Things don't always go smoothly, but we must have courage and love. We *must* obey Jesus in what He said to do when things don't work well. If things don't work well we must involve other people and listen to Jesus together. Sometimes one person is right. Sometimes the other person is right. And sometimes they're both right and we just don't understand. Sometimes they're both wrong. But when we obey Jesus' command to bring in two or

three others—if we are all listening to Jesus and really caring—then Jesus will solve our problems and help us.

## A Wonderful Tool

The Great High Priest will help all of His priests. But we must do it His way and not be lazy by not talking to each other. We must not be afraid to bring in others and talk about it. And if someone has come to speak with us, we must be willing to invite two or three others to come and talk with us. Because I love Jesus and I love the truth, and I'm willing to be wrong. Inviting others to help is a very wonderful display of God's wisdom. I know if two or three others come, Jesus comes, too.

As priests, we must think about these things and put them into practice. This is not a game. We are not trying to hurt each other by going back and forth talking to each other all the time. It's not about being a policeman. But it is about *loving each other enough to try and help*. Where there is sin, the ears are closed up to hear God. Where there is sin, the eyes are blind to see God. So as priests we must help each other to hear and see God by helping to remove the sin.

Jesus gave us these tools in the toolbox. If we can't solve the problem one-on-one, then He gives us as priests this tool of bringing in others to help solve the problem. This is even true in marriage. If my wife has a problem with me and I won't listen, I expect her to obey Jesus and bring in two or three others. Jesus didn't say all of this is true except in a marriage. He said these things are true for *all* believers. These things are true for all priests. If my wife sees sin in me and I won't listen, she must bring in two or three others. I want her to do that, because I love Jesus. Is that what everyone wants? This is challenging, isn't it?

## Welcome the Knife...for Healing

Each time, the knife will hurt. But Jesus is the Great Physician, and He cuts out the cancer to make us whole and strong. These things we are talking about will hurt a little bit sometimes. But if you will listen to Jesus' way and be humble and loving, then He will make you very strong and wise and whole. He will heal all of your diseases of the heart and the body. He will put deep love in your heart and give you Life. You will have Rivers of Living Water gushing from within you and Peace that passes all understanding. You will have a Joy that can't be expressed, full

of Glory. You will have the Power of an Indestructible Life. If you will do things Jesus' way and be priests, you will no longer be just "normal" people. You will be Full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom. But you have to welcome the knife to cut out the sin. You must be glad for the help, even when it hurts. This is the mind of a disciple of Jesus.

Anyone can sit in a building and listen to words. But Jesus has called us to be priests and kings. Paul rebuked the Corinthian believers when he said, "You are acting like mere men, like normal humans." But God has called us to judge even the angels. He has called us to be Full of Life and Glory and Power like His Son, Jesus. But we must welcome the knife to cut out the sin. We must help each other in order to experience these things for ourselves and for the Church. These things are very, very real. God said, "Try me, test me and see." Obey the ways of Jesus and be priests everyday. Be priests in your neighborhoods. Offer your bodies as living sacrifices and help each other be more like Jesus, and God will pour out blessing upon blessing into your hearts.

## Come to Give!!

There is another part of being a priest you must understand. This is small compared to the other things we just talked about. You must offer yourself as a living sacrifice and bring Jesus to the people, helping them to become more like Him. But there is part of being a priest that also has to do with meetings or gatherings. If you're not offering your body as a living sacrifice loving people in your neighborhoods, and helping each other become more like Jesus every day, then the meetings don't matter. But if you *are* doing those things as priests, then this is another part of being a priest.

If Jesus were physically in this room right now, He might be totally quiet sometimes. But most times Jesus would have something important to say. Jesus is here right now. If you really believe that you are a priest because God said so by the Blood of Jesus (not because you feel worthy, wise or strong), then you must be a priest in the times when the saints are all together, too. If Jesus lives inside of you and if you have been baptized into Him, into His Life and into His Spirit, then you too can hear God. As a priest, Jesus can speak through you also. You will never come to just listen or just sing. You will never come to just pray with everyone. If you are a priest, *you will come to give*. The book of Hebrews speaks of this.

*“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25).*

This is speaking of when the saints are together. In the first part it says to consider how to help each other grow. *“Consider how to spur each other on to love and good works.”* So as a priest, I come together with the saints thinking of how I can give and how you can give. You must have the courage to say what Jesus wants you to say. Don't be afraid of being wrong. If you are wrong, you can grow. Then it goes on to say, *“don't forsake being together.”* You need to be together often *“...and all the more as you see the Day of the Lord coming,”* as you see Jesus getting closer and closer.

## No Pretending, OK?

Jesus got very, very angry at only a very few things. Jesus got very angry at hypocrites. He got very angry at people who pretended to be a certain way when really in their heart they were a different way. Jesus got very angry about that, and He still does. We must not pretend to be one way, when really, in our hearts, we are a different way. We must talk about it with our brothers and try to solve the problems openly and honestly. God said, *“Confess your sins to one another.”* Confess and pray that you can be healed. Many people are very sick inside, spiritually or physically, because they won't open up their hearts and confess their sins to one another. They are afraid to do that. But in God's House we must not be afraid, because we love each other and we want to help. We will not gossip. We will not reject each other. We will help each other. So we can confess our sins freely. We will be sorrowful, but not afraid. Jesus will help us and clean us. But if we pretend there is no sin, then we are hypocrites and Jesus is angry. Jesus was and still is angry if we are hypocrites. We don't want Jesus to be angry with us, do we? So we must open our hearts.

## Don't Bury Your Talent

Jesus was also angry at another kind of person. He was angry at the man who buried his talent. Jesus called that man a wicked servant. He cast him into outer darkness. What I am saying to you is, as a priest,

you must not bury your talent. God has given each of you something special in your life. If you are a priest, use that thing that God has given you. The man in the parable that buried his money was afraid. Jesus was very unhappy with him for burying his talent. When all the saints are together, Jesus does not want you to come to just sit and listen. He doesn't want you to bury what He has put inside of you. You are a priest. Have the courage, strength, and faith in God to be able to speak out with the gift He has given you, every one of you. And don't be afraid like the man in the parable.

Consider how you might spur others on. If you are a priest with your neighborhood, with the believers, and with your body, then you can also be a priest when the saints are together. You need to be willing to bring a song that is special to you. Teach others a song that you learned when you were praying with Jesus in the morning. Perhaps you will be reading in one of the Psalms and you will ask Jesus to give you a melody for that song. And then as a priest, come and bring all the saints together, and teach them the song that Jesus gave you. That is being a priest. You must be willing to do that as a priest. Don't bury your talent.

Perhaps a brother will come and talk to you about a sin in your life. You listen to him, and it brings tears to your eyes, like the time Nathan spoke to David and David had a broken heart. God sends a Nathan—a brother—to you and he tells you about a sin and it breaks your heart. You talk to Jesus about it and consider different scriptures concerning it. Then you bring all the saints together in one place and perhaps tell them about what Jesus taught you. You show them the scriptures that you learned that changed your life, tell them about how you fell into sin and teach them how not to fall into it. You show them the things that God has shown you. That is a priest. You are priests. You can take the things that God is doing inside of you and open them up to your brothers and sisters. God wants all of us to do that. ALL of us. Are you willing?

So we come together in Jesus' name and we listen. But Jesus usually isn't quiet for very long. If things are quiet for a long, long time, it's probably because someone is not being a very good priest. Perhaps Jesus wants you to share a song and you are afraid. Perhaps Jesus wants me to read a scripture that was special to me in the morning, but I think, "Oh, I'm not good enough. I can't do that." And then it's quiet, because Jesus wanted to use me, but I wouldn't let him. I decided to bury my talent. If Jesus were here physically, it would not be quiet for

a very long time because there is so much that Jesus would want to do in each of our lives. If we are good priests, we will listen to Jesus. Jesus will use each of you. He will speak to all of us through all of His priests, if we are willing. Is everyone willing? Let Jesus use you.

## He Wants to Do Wonderful Things

Remember when Jesus went to a particular town. He wanted to do miracles there, but He could not because they did not believe. God wants to do miracles through each of your lives. But He cannot unless you believe. You must believe in your heart that God wants to use you. You must talk to Jesus about these things. Tell Him, “I believe. Help my unbelief.” Ask Jesus to make you soft and humble. Ask Jesus to help you have courage to use your gifts. Ask Jesus to get rid of your pride, because sometimes you will be wrong. But it’s okay to be wrong. We can help each other. It’s better to be wrong than to bury your talent. If you are wrong, we can all grow together, but if you bury your talent, Jesus is angry. So ask Jesus to help you be a better priest.

This is not about having a strong will or being a good speaker. This is about asking Jesus to help you. He is alive. He wants to work wonderful things *in* our hearts and *through* our hearts to others. But for Him to do a miracle, we must believe. So talk to Jesus about these things; don’t just think them in your head and agree with them. Instead, talk to the living Jesus about these things, and He will help us all, to His Glory.

## Ask Them to Live as Priests

As you are priests to your neighbors, you can help them to learn about Jesus too. If they are part of a religious group somewhere else, beg them to be priests where they are. Beg them to use their gifts with the people around them. Don’t let them go to their assembly just to listen. Ask them to look at the lives around them and help them become more like Jesus. If everyone everywhere does these things, the world will change. This is very powerful—because *we are releasing Jesus to be Jesus*. If we won’t be priests, Jesus stays in a bottle or in a book. If we *will* be priests and ask everyone else who wears Jesus’ name to be a priest, Jesus will be released to be Jesus EVERYWHERE! Our villages will change. Our cities will change. Our countries and our continents will all change. Jesus can be Jesus if we will be priests. Amen?

As we have come to know Jesus in the last ten years, we have learned more and more about what a Church and what a priest really are, and also how to be a priest. When we learn these things, it brings us to a situation of having to understand what to do about the denominations. The people in the denominations are not enemies. Some people are there because that's all they've ever known. If they knew more about Jesus, they would gladly follow. So it is very important that we love people, even in the denominations. We are very careful to not be proud. When God gives beggars like us a little bit of food, we should share the food and not judge others for not having food. This is Jesus' way to share all the food that he gives us—not to separate because of food, but to offer food.

These things are very, very important to have right in our hearts and minds. We will not accept lukewarmness or compromise. But we do believe Jesus will build His Church. So when we find people who really do love Jesus in the denominations, perhaps we shouldn't say, "Come out, come out," but instead, "Obey Jesus with the people that you know." We teach them the ways of Jesus as He has taught us. We ask them to teach everyone that they know the ways of Jesus. If they do this, in many denominations they *will* be thrown out. In many denominations people don't want to obey God. Some people do. Some people don't.

In the true Church that Jesus is building, EVERYONE wants to obey God and EVERYONE loves Jesus. Because we are all priests, we help each other. If someone doesn't love Jesus, they run away.

The prophecy in Jeremiah 31 of the New Testament Church is "*they will all know me, from the least to the greatest.*" In the true Church, they all know Jesus. In *most* denominations this is not true, and there is much lukewarmness. People love the world and live in sin and don't change. This is terrible and sad. But there are also some very good people in the denominations. Our job is not to make people come out. *Our job is to help them be priests where they are.* If they become priests where they are, many people will change, or they will be thrown out.

## Where Jesus Is...Sin Cannot Stay

If a brother or sister becomes more like Jesus in the denomination, either the denomination will change, or the denomination will kill them or throw them out (just like they did with Jesus). We are not afraid of the denominations. They're like a big fishing net that gathers

in all kinds of fish. There are some very good fish in the net and others that are not so good. Our job as priests is to call all the good fish to be priests where they are. And things can change there.

Did Nineveh change? Jonah got spit out of the mouth of the fish and he went into that terrible city. Sin abounded there, but the whole city changed for God—even the king. We must believe God can do this in the denominations. We must believe He can do this in Mzuzu. So when we have friends or people that we know in denominations, we don't ask them to come out. We ask them to be like Jesus with all their heart, to speak the Word of God to everyone they see there, to lay down their life, to love the people, and to not compromise or accept compromise. The people in Nineveh could have killed Jonah; he was all alone. But they repented and changed. And that's our heart for all the denominations—that we will be priests and try to help everyone change. We will try to help the good people we know in the denominations and ask them to be priests where they are so that they may help the people around them to change.

We will beg God with many tears for the denominations to change. Jesus wept; He shed tears over Jerusalem. He said, "*I would have gathered you like a hen gathers her chicks.*" But Jerusalem didn't want it and rejected Him—they killed Him. If we are faithful priests, they may kill us. Or perhaps the whole city will change. But we must be faithful priests. We must ask everyone we know to be faithful priests where they are. If they try to help the people that they know, they will become strong, and they might get thrown out. But then they can be with other believers that have a common heart, having first tried with the people around them. That's what a priest does. We must love those in the denominations. That's what Jesus does. But we don't accept compromise. We must live for Truth and ask everyone we know in the denominations to live for Truth too. If everyone does that, then Jesus will build his Church.

This is the Good News of Jesus. We must live this way for other people in the community. No compromise, no lukewarmness...*but we must love them and try to help them.* There must not be separation because of names and denominations. The separation should only come as a result of a person not wanting to obey Jesus. We don't know that until we try. The denomination name does not mean the person in the denomination is a bad person and does not want to obey Jesus. We don't know that until we try. This is how we must live with the denominations. We must

lay down our life for them and do everything we can to give them the Bread of Life and ask them to do the same thing with the people they know. Then we watch and see what Jesus does with that. Jesus said that if we do our part, He will build his Church and the walls of hell cannot withstand the attack. We are attacking satan's city, scaling the walls and knocking down the doors. We are loving people and bringing them from darkness to Light. We are not separating over names, but loving people—even to the death. We do the work of a priest, and the Lord will build His Church.



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# Jesus is the Only “Boss”

*Mulowe, Africa 1996*

## What Makes a Leader?

There are two kinds of leaders. One is a leader from the heart, out of a current relationship with God. Another is a leader by position who may have a title and may be the official “head person,” the official boss. Jesus said that a leader by position *must not be so*. The leaders of the Church are those who are walking most closely with God TODAY. If a brother or sister is not walking closely with God today, he may not be considered very much of a leader. If a person last week perhaps was not so close to God but has repented of the sin in his life and now is better able to hear God, he is more of a leader this week than he was last week. “Being a leader” comes out of relationship with God and God’s people. It is not out of an office or a title. We have many leaders in the city where I live, but we have no “officers.” A leader this week may not be a leader next week. Jesus said all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to HIM. This is still true. So, as much as we can hear Jesus, who has all authority, that’s how much authority a man has—only as much as he can hear Jesus. That’s all. “ALL authority in Heaven and on earth” belongs to Jesus, He said. A person who does not know or obey Jesus can only be a “figurehead.” Such a person may need to be obeyed as far as conscience allows, if they have a “position,” but they are only a “leader” in as far as they know, love, and obey the Head, Jesus.

## Birtherd Out of Laziness

There is a basic streak of laziness in us that makes us want to hide in the background and let someone else fight our battles for us; that’s where clergy and laity came from. Very early in the history of the church, all the way back in the second century, 1800 years ago, people began to want a king to rule over them. They wanted to have a “holy man” to be in charge of the church.

Perhaps this man was very close to God, but instead of wanting everyone to be a priest, God's people wanted to have a "holy man" to fight their battles. They wanted to take one man and make him king of the church. And perhaps this man *was* a very good man. The problem is not that this man had a relationship with God; it's good for *every* man to have a relationship with God. Perhaps this man had a strong and valid gift, but when he is set apart as being special and is called "the boss of the church," then there's a problem. That place is for Jesus alone. Jesus is the **only** boss of any True Church. A "pastor" must not be the boss of a church; there are no bosses but Jesus.

There is actually an example in the Bible of these two very different kinds of leaders. Samuel and Saul were both leaders of God's people, Israel. Samuel was a man of God who had influence in the nation because he knew God. Samuel had many of the qualities of a king in Israel—but Samuel wasn't a king! However, Saul was called a king. Israel wanted to have a king—they wanted to have one man be the boss. They wanted someone to replace Samuel, and they wanted a "king" like the nations around them. In some ways the leadership might look similar, but Samuel did not have a "position" of authority. Samuel functioned out of his relationship with God, and Saul functioned out of his position/office. Samuel had no office, secretary, nor salary. He was not in a "staff position" as king. Samuel was just a man of God who was respected as much as a king, but he had no office or position. He was not a king. He was not a "pastor." He just loved God with all his heart. And because he could hear God, he had influence. *He had no position... he had influence.* If a man truly knows God, he will help God's people. If he is called by God, he will be helping people. I will say it again: a true man of God has no position... he has influence. Job, chapter 29, is a description of a man respected by God and men, and feared and hated by Satan. Such a man needs no office or title or salary. If you are like Jesus, you will need no "power."

As an example, if I am a carpenter, I build things with wood. I make a chair, a table, or a door out of wood if I'm a carpenter. If I'm a mason, then I make things with bricks. Something I made out of bricks is the proof that I'm a mason. Something I made out of wood is the proof that I am a carpenter. Well, in the Bible this word "pastor" (a poor translation, actually) refers to a gift of *shepherd*, functioning daily amongst God's people alongside of other gifts—not a boss or "talking head" at a meeting. Where is the proof that I'm a pastor/shepherd? The

proof is that I love God's people! I help them day and night. I don't need an office to do that. I don't need a title. I don't need to be boss. I just love people with the gift that I have, and I help them. The proof that I'm a carpenter is the chair I've made. The proof that I'm a pastor/shepherd is that I feed God's people every day, and they are closer to Jesus because of me. If I see that one of God's people is hungry, it breaks my heart. If I see that one of God's people is in trouble or in danger, the shepherd's heart inside of me runs after them to protect them. That's the proof that I'm anointed of God to be a pastor. I don't need a name tag. I don't need a certificate on the wall and a diploma from a bible college. I need a heart to love and to do God's work, and will therefore bear supernatural fruit in any area in which He may have gifted me.

So, you're a carpenter? Then make chairs. You have the gift of shepherd? Then love people—feeding them, protecting them, and helping them. This is true for *any* gift! The proof of any gift is in the fruit that it bears.

The opposite of all this is also true, of course. It's an amazing fact that pagans in science and medicine and industry actually demand that those with opinions and critiques and self-proclaimed "expertise" have something to show, some fruit in their own lives, to demonstrate that they have a right to pontificate or lecture or condemn others. In the religious world, amazingly, there is far less integrity than even the pagans demonstrate. In religion, however, people are often far more blind and prejudiced. Criticism, expertise, judgments, and even relationship sabotage and slander flow easily from those with terrible fruit in their lives, families, and assemblies. Utterly amazing, but true, if you watch man's religion carefully and honestly. A person who does such things as lie or slander or act like an expert in engineering, or medicine, or business can actually be imprisoned. But, in religion they easily can gather an audience amongst the fearful or naive or those who can be coerced, blackmailed, or flattered into submission to the unfruitful machine and "experts." Weird, but true. It happens all the time, because that's how faulty empires keep their numbers. Fear and flattery, gossip, innuendo, slander, or emotional blackmail. No wonder Jesus didn't do well in the accepted religious world of His day. But, we can learn from Him and embrace the Scripture, and look for Fruit, not hear-say with agendas and hidden skeletons, budgets, and egos to protect.

Well, you get the idea. ☺

## “You Rejected ME!”

This is true for any gift. But men have destroyed much of Christianity by wanting to have a king. Samuel was not a king; he was a man of God. Saul was a king, and he destroyed God’s people. God said, “They’ve not rejected you, Samuel; they’ve rejected God.” When we want to have a man as boss, we are rejecting God. Samuel had great influence because *he knew God*, not because he had the position of king.

They almost look the same, don’t they? Someone from another country could come to Israel and say, “You have a king! Samuel is your king!” Israel would say, “Well, I know he looks like a king, because he is deeply respected and appreciated, but he is not a king. We have no king but God. Samuel just knows God very well. So we respect him and love him.” Other nations thought Israel had a king, King Samuel. But he was not a king. He was a man of God. He had no position. He went here, he went there, he disappeared, and he came back. Kings don’t do that. Men of God do that. Israel wanted to replace Samuel when he got old. They wanted to have a king like the other nations (or like the other denominations)!

When we want to have someone be boss over us, someone to fight our battles, then we reject God. *1 Samuel 8:7: “They have not rejected you, Samuel, they have rejected God.”* We must not try to have men be our boss. We must love the Samuels among us that know God, respecting them and responding to them, while accepting no position of boss except for Jesus Himself. We listen for Jesus’ voice in Samuel. And, as it says in 1 Corinthians 14, when revelation comes to the *next* “Samuel,” let the first “Samuel” sit down. This is very good.

## The Consequences

I would like you to hear what happens when you have a king over you. When you want to have a “bossman,” a clergyman. Here is the bad fruit that comes from it:

*“He said, ‘This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be*

*perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day.’ But the people refused to listen to Samuel. ‘No!’ they said. ‘We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles’” (1 Samuel 8:11-20).*

When we want to have a king over us, when we want to have an official boss in the church, he will steal our vision, steal our children and our money, and will make us his puppets. These things are not good. But they happen all over the religious world. In every country we have ever been to, wherever there is clergy/laity, wherever there are two classes of Christians—the bosses and the normal people—the hearts of the people are stolen. The gifts do not come forth. The gift of mercy and the gift of help are squashed. The gift of teaching and the gift of generosity...these things are squashed. When one man is in charge rather than Jesus being in charge, the hearts of the people are stolen.

God’s people prospered under Samuel because he did not have a position, he had a gift. It seems like a small change from Samuel to Saul because they both *seem* like kings. ***But one is a gift and the other is a position.*** When it’s a gift, God’s people prosper. When they have a position over them, God’s people are squashed, according to the Word of God. God can still use it for some good things. David was a good king. Some good things can happen when the system is wrong. But God said, “I have a better way. My way is Samuel, not Saul.” He said, “I can do some good things if you have a king, but when the problems come you will cry out and I will not answer.” This is what has happened in the denominations, because they build around a man’s gift and they make a man king. He could have been a Samuel, but they made him a Saul. And he was willing to let them make him king.

Some good things can still happen, but on the day of their calamity, they will cry out to God and He will not hear them, and things will fall apart. There will be politics and power plays and there will be gossip and slander, and all these curses that God said would happen will happen. While God can do many good things in any situation, we

want only the best. Isn't this true? God can bless *anything* out of His mercy, His kindness and His patience. But let's build His way so that we can get the full blessing! Let's have many Samuels among us instead of one Saul. Amen?

Another difficulty that could happen is if a man goes to get a religious title and education in a seminary, although his heart might be right, when he puts on himself a title, he has to pretend to be something that potentially he really is not. He could have a lot of difficulties in his household, with his marriage and his children, or with roommates and parents. However, because he has a religious title, people will look up to him, instead of just seeing him as a brother among brothers. He will have to act a certain way that's different than the way he acts at home, as opposed to just being a brother among brothers. There is something inside of us that makes it difficult for us to question the life of the "boss." So the leaders in a church should not *want* titles that would hinder the input and help of others in their lives.

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# David Livingstone and Bread from Heaven

*Chilembe, Africa 1996*

A brother spoke of David Livingstone bringing bread to Africa. David brought the nation of Africa a teaching about Jesus the Son of God. He brought a message about how Jesus loves His people, wants to forgive all of our sins and bring us a new life. I think we know this is very good news for us. David brought a bowl of bread with a lid on it, and we hear much teaching about how good this bread is. We used to come together every Sunday to talk about how good the bread is and the teaching is true. The bread is very, very good.

Part of the message that God has commissioned us to bring is not simply a teaching about how good the bread is, but what the Bible calls “the keys to the Kingdom”. Jesus’ teaching about *how* to use those keys unlocks the door, and His teaching about how to take the lid off of the bowl allows us to *eat* the bread. Jesus did not just come to forgive sins, as wonderful as that is, nor just to make us think about His teachings. Jesus came so that we could experience the same life with the Father that He experienced—not just live here, die, and then go to heaven. As the Bible says, He came here so that we could live in “the power of an indestructible life” to experience the same fellowship and life and love with the Father and His brothers that Jesus did. Jesus wants us to experience more than just teachings about the bread in the bowl; He wants us to eat the same bread that He ate with His Father.

## One Loaf

Much of what religion and christianity have done for many years is to teach us great teachings about the bread. It is now time to eat the bread. It is now time to move on from learning teachings *about* the church to *being* the church (Ephesians 3:10, Matthew 16:18). Jesus did

not come to make us smarter. He came to give us Life to the full—to experience His Life daily in one another, not to say borrowed words and sing and pray stained-glass religious words. He came to give us LIFE! “Little children, love one another.” This was the teaching of the Godhead and Jesus and John and Paul and Peter. We teach about the Family of God, not a religious event to attend. Do any of us attend our family at home? Or do we live in love with our family every day? You cannot attend a family. You can only *be* a family. The Bible is very clear on this point. You cannot *attend* a true church. You can only *be* a true church. A family that you attend is an orphanage, not a true family. An orphanage has a boss over it, and they all come together to eat meals. Perhaps they go out and play together and receive teaching from the bosses. So it does many things that a family does, but it’s still an orphanage and not a family. God is calling us to be a Family now. If you are not already a Family, there will be many changes that need to be made for Jesus’ sake. In order to experience Jesus’ Life and eat the Bread, we must be a Family. And if we are going to be a family for Jesus, we must help each other very much. We must no longer be selfish. We must put away all of our pride and decide that we are open for others to speak to us about Jesus changing our lives.

We must be honest with one another about how we feel. We cannot hide behind a face or a mask but instead must open our hearts and speak what we truly feel; it’s only then that Jesus can help us. Jesus was very angry about hypocrisy. The reason He was angry wasn’t because He hated the people. Jesus just knew that as long as we pretended to be one way when in our hearts we were a different way he couldn’t heal us on the inside as he so desperately wanted to.

Jesus calls satan the Father of Lies. Jesus was angry about hypocrisy for the same reason. When we put walls of lies and hypocrisy between each other, then Jesus can’t heal us on the inside the way He wants to. So if I am very sad and pretend to be happy, in one way I have not told you the truth. Jesus wants us to be honest with each other so that His Spirit can heal our hearts.

If we are not honest with each other then we are hypocrites and Jesus is not happy with us. This is part of being a family—being honest with each other about how we are feeling and how we are doing. But you must volunteer that; you must offer that to each other from the heart. If I am sad on the inside, I don’t want to be a complainer or a whiner. I want to believe God that He can help me. But I shouldn’t pretend

everything is okay if it really is not. I should humbly find good brothers and sisters to talk with about these things, because as two or three are together, Jesus comes to join us. So if I am willing to open up a little bit of my heart, it will allow the Holy Spirit to come heal it and will make Jesus very happy. If I build walls around myself, and try to be strong all by myself, then many times the healing power of Jesus will not come.

Jesus wants us to be a family where we open our hearts to each other. He meets us at that place when we do that in humility. Jesus wants us to not be complainers or whiners but, in humility, to be asking others for prayer, help, and wisdom. This is the way a Family must be. But this can't happen on Sunday morning only. The true Church is a Family daily, like any family is a family every day. Demand and expect that of yourself... "For Jesus who loves me, I will open my heart to others." This is a decision that you must make. You can decide to stay behind your mask, not open your heart and speak to your brothers and sisters about how you feel. You can decide to hide your tears and pain from others. But if you do this, you will not find the healing power of Jesus. He will only pour out His life to us if we are Family. Jesus will stay far away rather than changing our hearts and lives the way He wants to. He wants us to work these things out together as Family. And when we do open our hearts, Jesus in all of His power and love and glory comes to meet us. But if we have too much pride and fear and are afraid of what others might think or say about us, then Jesus won't meet us and give us the life and power that He wants to.

## Eating the Bread of Loving Each Other

So we come to you in Jesus' name with the testimony of the life and power of God, asking you to eat the bread, not just study about it, and asking you to be a church and a true Family, not just to attend. Jesus wants a place where He can live. He does not live in houses built with men's hands. He lives in a Family, and only in a Family. He wants a place to live where you are, not just people that study about the bread and attend "church", but a place where there is Family and you are the church every single day.

The Holy Spirit through Paul said that every day should be counted alike. Other religions have special "holy" days, but Jesus' highest way is that every day be alike. Jesus is our Sabbath rest. The more we get into Jesus every day, the more rest we have. God is calling you to be a

Family. Will you decide to be a Family? If there is a wall between you and another brother or sister, will you break it down? Will you grab hold of their ankle and beg them to soften their heart? Will you walk to the hill and pray with tears for them to soften their heart? Will you open your heart to them? Will you give your life away for each other every day, wrestling to present them whole and complete in Christ, and crying out to God for miracles of love? Will you do this for your savior Jesus? He doesn't want you to just know about His Life. He wants you to *experience* His Life.

This is the Good News of the Kingdom. You are invited into His life if you will turn away from your pride, your selfishness, and your laziness. You are invited to *experience* Jesus, not just know *about* him. Every day love each other from the heart and be involved with each other's lives, helping each other and all of the little children to become more like Jesus *every day*.

This is the call of God. This is the invitation of Jesus of Nazareth for you now. Eat the bread of love together every day and Jesus will fill your lives and make you whole like you've never been before. He will wash away and cleanse your fears and your hardness. The River of Jesus will flood and water your heart making it fertile ground. Your relationship and your love with the Father will grow and grow. You can see the very face of God, as you truly love each other. This is very good news. Today if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts. Be soft before God. Decide that every single day you will open your hearts to those around you and you will no longer be separate from one another, because you do these things for your Savior Jesus.

## The Church as a Family

In most families, there are true family members born of mother and father that we could call "problem children." Some children are more difficult than others, but if they are family, they are family, and we will help solve these problems. We don't take true children of the family and take them off to the hill and leave them. We just ask God for wisdom on how to bring them home into the family.

To help you have a bigger picture of what it should be like when the church is together, imagine in your mind a family at home, with

perhaps five boys and three girls, and a mother and father. Does the father do all of the speaking in the house? If one of the boys, a thirteen-year-old, has a thought, can he not express it? Does not the mother contribute her ideas to the family? Does not even the smallest child sometimes give direction for the family? Is there always freedom in a family for one of its members to speak? Is there always room for the smallest child to cry and to speak of a need? It must also be so when the whole church is together; even the smallest one can open his heart and cry about a need, and maybe the mother can help solve that problem. I mean a spiritual mother, when the church is all together. Maybe one of the spiritual fathers can help that child's problem. But this is how the church should be when it gathers together. Every member of the family can open their hearts, and other members of the family can help meet the needs. And this is not just in the gatherings. When three sisters wash clothing together, if they can sing in a gathering together, why can't they also sing when they are washing the clothes together?

If you can talk to the Father together in a gathering, can't all of His children talk to Jesus together as they walk down the road together? It's not about Sunday morning and Wednesday afternoon. There is nothing that happens in the meetings that shouldn't also happen as we walk along the way together. We don't wait for a meeting to tell brothers and sisters what Jesus has shown us today. We don't wait for a meeting to open up our hearts and ask for help with something. We are the same every day. In a family, if a little boy has a problem, does he have a special day when he is allowed to talk about it, or can he talk about it any time because there is love in family? This is True Church, where every day we can help each other. There is no difference between meetings and no meetings really, because we bring the teachings of Jesus to each other every day. We worship from the heart with each other every day, morning and night. As we go to gather food, we pray together and we worship together. This is the Family of Jesus.

Also, when we truly become one big Family, if you were to go home and beat your wife, or even just be harsh with her, she should be able to say to you, "That's not the way Jesus is." And you should try working it out together. Jesus said if that man will not listen to her, the woman should go and get two or three other members of God's family, and they should together talk to this man who is being too harsh. This is what Jesus taught us in Matthew 18; our homes are no longer a hiding place from Truth. We cannot be rulers of our own house and ignore

the teachings of Jesus. Now we are all a Family, and all of our houses belong to each other. So now a sister can bring in others to talk to her husband. We don't ignore the teachings of Jesus in our homes anymore. The teachings of Jesus are not just for a "church building". Now they are for when we go to the market or when we go to our homes or when we go to be schooled. Now the teachings of Jesus are for every circumstance and every situation. We are one family every day, all day, all night.

## Building Jesus' Way

Jesus said that when we put His word into practice, when the storms come (and they will), then the house will stand. It will stand because it is built on the rock of putting His word into practice, not just on thinking or singing about His word. If we only sing about it, pray about it and talk about it and don't change the way we live to *obey* His word with one another, then when the storms come, no matter how pretty the house may look, it will be flattened and destroyed. This is what Jesus promised in Matthew 7. So be sure and *build His way*, and DO something about His Truths. Obey them, and then the storms will not harm you.

In the same way a little bird or little rabbit hides underneath a rock when the storms come, you can hide in the shelter of Jesus' wing if you will build the way He calls you to. The storms will shake the trees and move heavy things. They will crash and the lightning will strike. But if you will build Jesus' way and turn your face towards Him when they come, you will be held safe in the shelter of His wings. The violent storms will pass and the sun will shine. The birds will begin to sing again, and life will be fresh and new. Please build Jesus' way. This is the word of the Lord to you today.

## How to Eat of the True Bread

There is also another point. In John 6 Jesus intentionally said things that are very hard. He said, "Eat my body and drink my blood," and He didn't try explaining this and making it easier for them. The Bible says that a multitude of people that had been following Him left then. They quit on Jesus and left Him because they couldn't understand with their minds. Jesus did not run after them and explain that He was talking

about the Lord's Supper. He made it hard for them intentionally. He turned to His disciples and asked, "Do you want to leave me also?" and Peter said, "Jesus, you have the words of life; we don't want to go anywhere. We don't want to leave."

Jesus only wants people to follow Him that can hear with their hearts and their Spirit. Jesus will intentionally put hard things in front of us—things and situations we don't understand—in order to separate the sheep from the goats. The people that must understand with their minds but don't listen with their spirits will not be able to follow the true Jesus. The true Jesus sometimes makes very strange situations to test our hearts. He says to us or does things among us that are very difficult such as, "Eat My body, and drink My blood." This sounds like a terrible thing, like something that the Bible could never say is okay. Yet, by this Jesus was testing those who were listening with their heart and those who were listening with their ears. Jesus was testing those who love the Spirit of Jesus and those who just love the externals. There are many things like this throughout the Bible where God separates people that listen with their ears from those that listen with their spirits. This is the way of God, and it always has been. The situation in John 6, in which many left Jesus, has been repeated in every generation before and after Jesus.

We are not God; He is God. We submit to the things that are God whether we understand them with our minds or not. This is also the teaching of the book of Job. Even today Jesus often speaks in parables that are hard to understand, to distinguish those people who love Him in their spirits, rather than those who are just using Him to make themselves feel better. Even today He speaks in parables of life that are sometimes hard to understand, to see which ones will leave him and which ones will say, "To whom shall we go? In You are light and life." It is really the same today as it was then.

## Jesus the Bread in Us

*"If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see Me anymore, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will*

*live. On that day you will realize that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you” (John 14:15-20).*

It is a very, very wonderful truth, that Jesus didn't go far away somewhere while we stay here and sing songs to Him and try to obey all the teachings that He gave us, and then someday in the far distant future He will come back for us. The wonderful teaching of Jesus is that He will be with us until the very end and has not left us as orphans. He told the disciples that when He came back the world would not see Him but we would. And we do... not with the seeing of the eyes but with the seeing of the Spirit. He said, “Obey Me and love Me. Love each other and be one as I and the Father are one.... The world will not see Me but you will see Me because I will come and make My home in you. I have been *with* you, but I shall be *in* you.”

This is not just a tricky teaching. This is the real thing. He is just as real in a real Church as if He were physically here. In fact, Jesus said it would be even better if He left because He would come back to be *in* us, and that would be even better than if He were to just come back and stand here. This is not just a figure of speech or an allegory or some mystical teaching. This is the real thing. The same Jesus who walked on water and raised dead people to life again would come and live *inside* of us in Power and Love and Glory. He would not come where the human eye of the world could see Him. But if we will love Him and give our lives for whatever He wants for our life, and love each other from the heart, then this same Jesus who walked on water and could walk through a locked door and give sight to the blind will live in our midst, inside of us, and allow us to have a love affair with Him, with the Father and with one another.

Some people did not taste death before Jesus came again in power because the day of Pentecost was only 50 days after Passover. He came back for us in only 50 days. He came not to be with us, but to be in us. This is a mystery that was withheld for ages and generations. In Colossians 1, the mystery of all the generations is this: Not Christ with you, not Christ simply coming back for you (though He will), but Christ *IN* you, the Hope of Glory. This is for all who will love Him and give away their lives for His purposes. Hallelujah! He did not leave us as orphans! And many people did not taste death until He came back in His glory to live inside of us. This is what Jesus meant in John 14.

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# God of Order and Ephesians 4

*Malemia, Africa 1996*

## A Conquering King and Gifts for His People

Our wonderful God has not failed to give us glimpses of His heart for His Church. If you look and pay close attention to the Scriptures, you can see mighty and glorious things about our King Jesus, and His Kingdom.

Jesus was a mighty conqueror. In Ephesians 4:8 it says, He “*led a crowd of captives and He gave gifts to men*” (NLT). Envision the way a conquering king would come back from a foreign land having acquired gold, silver, and valuables from the people whom he conquered. *Jesus has conquered his enemies and comes back in a parade of victory, giving out gifts to His people.* These gifts that are listed in Ephesians 4:11—apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers—are all a part of who Jesus is. When Jesus ascended on high in the clouds and sent His Holy Spirit, He not only made His Spirit to live inside of us for those who believe, but He also took a part of Himself and gave it to different people who believe in Him. Jesus was a faithful High Priest in *all* of God’s House. He was an apostle, a prophet, a Good Shepherd, and a Master Teacher. *He was the Good News manifested in the flesh.*

## The Body Needs All of His Gifts

The Bible says that when Jesus went to Heaven and sent His Spirit, He took parts of Himself and spread them out over the Body of Christ, the Church. It is very obvious to us that the different parts of our physical bodies do different things. You can see with your eyes, and you can hear with your ears. But you cannot hear with your nose, nor see with your mouth. :) All parts of the body are not the same, however, they all depend on each other very much.

Before continuing with Ephesians 4:11 you need to understand how much you need *all* of the Body of Christ. We *all* need *ALL* of the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12 says that we cannot say to others, “We don’t need you.” Instead we must say to one another, “I need you, I need you.” This is an attitude of heart that pleases Jesus very much.

Jesus had many gifts in Himself, and some of these are listed in Ephesians 4. In the *Church*, the Body of Christ needs *all* of these gifts. However, every *local* assembly will not have all the gifts. Perhaps there will need to be very good relationships between villages and cities. These relationships are good and necessary.

## The Gift of Building

The apostolic gift is a gift that is one of building. In the first century there were very few apostles, and not very many prophets. Perhaps there were more teachers and more shepherds, but not many evangelists. Not all of these gifts were in *every* local church, so the local assemblies needed to have other brothers and sisters involved with them from other cities. If the church or the body of Christ in your city is to grow strong, it will be because the Believers will see and tell one another that they need each other’s gifts.

A car has many parts—glass, steel, and rubber. It has an engine, a steering wheel, lights, a horn and wheels. If we were to pile all of the parts of a car into a room, that *STILL* wouldn’t give us the ability to *DRIVE* that car. Even if all the parts were very good parts, you still couldn’t get in the car and drive away—*unless the parts were put together properly*. In some ways, it would just be a pile of hardware and not have tremendous value. This shows the importance of the gift of apostle.

This part of Jesus, this gift of building, is *the gift that sees how to put all the parts together to make the “car” work*. There are not many apostles in the world, just as there were not in the first century. The Bible lists perhaps 26 apostles in all of the first century: the primary twelve Apostles and fourteen other apostles. While others may be sincere and truly love God’s work, they may not have the gift to be able to see how to put together the car. Others, without this gift of apostle, may not be able to see how to take all the parts in the Church and put them together to be a strong Church—one that is of one heart, one mind, one purpose.

## The Gift of Prophet

The second gift listed in Ephesians 4 is the gift of prophet. *A prophet is able to see and smell things that are very good or very bad.* He does not depend on just what he can hear or see with his natural ears or eyes. He is able to feel and to smell whether something is of Jesus or not. In this way, a prophet helps to provide *pure* building materials for the apostle. All of the four or five gifts that are listed here have a very special place in the Body of Christ. And if you do not have these gifts in your assembly, you should work very hard to build relationships with these gifts from other cities. When you read the book of Acts, you see this happen very often. The different gifts that are listed in Ephesians 4 travel from city to city and help to encourage and build the local saints together.

In order to accomplish this, the gifts of apostle and prophet are extremely important in eight or nine very important points listed. Without these gifts, God's people would be in terrible poverty. They could be very sincere and love God very much, and yet always be frustrated and in difficult positions. But with the help of these gifts, complicated situations could be solved.

## Mending the Body of Christ

The gifts in Ephesians 4:12 are necessary *to prepare God's people for works of service.* The word "prepare" means "to mend together or knit together." In the Greek, this is the word that God chose to define what these five gifts were for—to help "put the bone back in the right place." If an arm is broken, a doctor sets the bone in the proper place. Sometimes it hurts to put a broken bone back in place, but it is necessary or the body would be deformed and useless. These gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:12 help to mend the Body of Christ together and to set each part in its right place.

## Being Connected and Understanding the Teachings of Jesus

In Ephesians 4:13 we see that these gifts do even more for the local assemblies—they will help us all reach a *unity of the faith!* We are commanded earlier in the book of Ephesians to hold onto the *unity of the spirit.* God expects us to have unity of spirit, and God commands that we truly love one another.

However, there is a difference between unity of the spirit and unity of the faith. Without the gifts (mentioned in Ephesians 4:14) being in relationship with our local assemblies, we will be very confused about what to believe about things. It is by these gifts that we are equipped into *unity of the faith*.

*Unity of the spirit is being connected to everyone that is bought by the blood of Jesus.* We accept and love everyone who has the blood of Jesus covering them. And we desire to receive them the same way we would receive Jesus. *Unity of the faith is understanding together the teachings of Jesus*—teachings about baptism, laying on of hands, worship, assembling together, and the gift of the Spirit. These gifts will help make clear how to love each other, and about what leadership, and about what a Christian, truly is. If our assemblies do not have relationships with these five gifts, we will not have unity of the faith, and we will be very confused.

## Deep Intimacy

Ephesians 4:13 also says that the gifts help us to have a *full* knowledge of the Son of God. The Father's intent is that we would understand everything about Jesus. The word for "full knowledge" in this scripture is "epignosis." It is a word that means that we would have a deep intimacy with Jesus. God chose this word to say that we must have a deep intimate relationship with His Son. This is not a word about head-knowledge, but it is about a knowledge of the heart. It is the same word that has to do with Mary and Joseph not "*knowing*" each other intimately until after Jesus was born. It is the same word used when Adam "*knew*" Eve and they had a child.

So, these five gifts are absolutely necessary for the Church. They help God's people to have a full intimacy with Jesus and turn their faces toward Him and find rest and strength in Him when things are very hard. They will learn to call on the name of the Lord and not be ashamed or disappointed.

The words of one song say, "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to Him in prayer." These five gifts are necessary to help God's people have a friendship with Jesus—a very close intimacy with Him—so that when the violent storms come, they don't forget to hide in Jesus. They turn their faces toward Him, see His warm smile, and are able to make it

through the storm. These five gifts are necessary to have full knowledge, full intimacy, of Jesus.

## Steady in the Storm

Ephesians 4:13 adds that these gifts are necessary to attain *the whole measure of the fullness of Christ*. This means that our personality would become just like Jesus', so that we wouldn't be blown here and there by every wind of bad teaching or every wind of bad circumstance. We will be able to stand very strong in God's love. And when the storms blow across and shake everything that can be shaken, the life of Jesus inside of us will still be able to grow and become stronger. Usually God lets the storm really shake us and take us to the very brink of disaster. The Father did this with His own Son, Jesus. And Paul, another apostle, "despaired even of life," the scripture says. These are the opportunities that the Father gives us to become more like Him. And when the storms come, and the waves toss, and the winds blow, we won't be tossed to and fro. Rather, we will become stronger and stronger as we become closer to Jesus and closer to one another.

## Speaking the Truth in Love

Ephesians 4:15 says that we will learn to speak the truth in love. These gifts help us to be able to communicate with each other in a loving and truthful way. This is a very important thing in any relationship of love. Speaking the truth in love is finding a way to please the Father and one another by communicating properly. We must speak truth, but it must be covered with love, patience, and kindness. Our gentleness must be *evident*, our love and our peace *evident*. The gifts help us to be able to communicate in love in ways that we might not be able to without them.

## Learning to Trust Our Loving Master

The scripture also says in Ephesians 4:15 that these gifts help us to grow up into the head, which is Christ. *Jesus is the head of everything*. He is the Boss and the Master of the land and the sea. He is the Master of the clouds that rain and of the winds that blow. He is the Master of all of the little creeping animals and the larger animals. He is the Master of the birds of the air. He is the Master of every stone along the

road. Our Jesus is the Master of every star in the sky and every sun and moon. He also wants to be *our Master*, but He invites us to enter into His school, the school of Christ, where we learn to let Him be our Master too. We learn to trust Him. We learn that He is very wise, that He knows everything, and that He is very strong to protect us. When we don't let Him be our Master it is only because we don't trust Him enough, or don't trust that His ways are so perfect, and that His love is so great, that it never fails.

And so these gifts help us to grow up into the headship of Jesus, to see how wonderful He is—how trustworthy, strong, wise and loving He is. In this way, we can trust Him to have us do *whatever He wishes*.

David, a lover of God, wrote many love songs to the Father. The Father wrote a love song to David too, and called him a man after God's own heart. One of the reasons why David was a man after God's own heart was because he knew God was so good and wonderful that He would never let him down or lead him down a wrong path. God would not disappoint him or crush him. God would not give him a stone when he asked for bread. God would provide all things for him, if he would simply look to Him and yield to *His way in all things*. David would do anything that the Father asked, not because he was an obedient robot, but because he trusted the Father's love and wisdom so much. This is what we all learn together with these gifts: ***How reliable and trustworthy our Father is, and how Jesus gives good gifts, not bad ones, to His children.*** So we can trust Him to be our Head, because He is so very, very good to us.

## “I Have Need of You”

Ephesians 4:16 says that the whole body is “joined and held together by every supporting ligament.” Just as the arms and the legs are all fit together in the body, these gifts help the Body of Christ come together to be able to do God's work. You can imagine that a human body would not have much use if the arms and the legs were scattered in different places. They could be wonderful parts and very strong by themselves, but if they are not connected to each other in love, and connected to the head for the head's direction, then the body would be of very little value.

I want to encourage you, saints, to understand the value of these gifts and see all the wonderful things that come from them. Be committed

to welcoming brothers and sisters from other places to help you have this wonderful list of things that comes from having relationship with these gifts. Then we can become useful to Jesus. We can become loving and wise just as Jesus is. We can become much more able to reach our community, much more able to have loving families, much more able to raise loving, obedient children, and much more able to use our own gifts in love, *because we have welcomed these five gifts into our community*. Probably no local assembly has all of these gifts (at least I've never seen one yet). So God forces us to need each other from village to village, city to city. He wants us to know that we need each other, so that we won't remain babies or infants. He wants us to GROW into the FULLNESS of HIS SON!

*For more on this topic please refer to the Foundations Series book titled "The Plumb Line."*



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# A Foundation of Jesus

*Chisitu, Africa 1996*

## People... Not Buildings

The Bible teaches that God does not dwell in houses built by men's hands. Ephesians 2 and many other Bible passages say that *we* are the dwelling place or the habitation of God by the Spirit—the Church.

We know what a church building looks like, so if *God's* house is *people* and not buildings, what does *it* look like?

When you walk or drive down the road, you can usually identify a religious building because it looks like a religious building. But since a true Church is made out of people, *and is not a building*, then what does it *really* look like? How would you recognize the difference between a true Church and a false one? The following is a description of the Church when it is made out of *people* and not stones.

When Jesus is looking to and fro to find a *real* Church, how will He recognize it? First of all, a true Church made of living stones that Jesus looks at and loves must be made of good materials. If any building is built out of faulty materials, you know that it will fall. If the wood that holds up the roof is rotten, it will fall down. Bricks that are soft, improperly made, or made from the wrong materials cannot support weight and will fall down. A true Church that is made by God, not by man's hands, is made out of living stones—true Christians—as opposed to dead stones, bricks or straw. If the House that God is making out of men and women is going to be able to stand, it must not have bad stones in it (1 Corinthians 3-5).

## From the Least to the Greatest, They Will All Know Him

The prophecy about the New Testament said that the Church God builds (Jer. 31, Heb. 8, Heb. 10) is the true Church, and from the least to the greatest, all its members will know the Living God.

In the “church” of the Old Testament, you became a member because of who your parents were (Jews). If you basically believed the right thing and your parents were part of this church, and you “attended church” regularly and tithed, then you were a member of the “church.” *In the New Testament Church of Jesus, this is not true—you must give your heart to God.* The prophecy about the New Testament said that the Church God builds (Jer. 31, Heb. 8, Heb. 10) is the true Church, and *from the least to the greatest ALL its members will know the Living God.* If a person does not truly know God, they *cannot* be a member of Jesus’ Church. That would be like building a house with soft brick or rotten wood. The House that Jesus makes is the best house in the world, and Jesus will only use true and good materials to build His House.

## No Compromise

Acts 3 says that Jesus was a prophet and He would build His church, and anyone that would not obey Him would be completely cut off from among the people. This is the same thing that Jesus said in Matthew 18. He said that if a person continues to be hateful, stubborn or selfish and continues to have habits such as drinking, yelling at their wives or children, cheating in their daily business, lying or being lazy, then we must go to them and try to help them. However, if they don’t care about obeying the teachings of Jesus, then we must bring two or three others and talk to that person again. If they *still* don’t care what Jesus says, and they don’t want to change, then we must talk to the *whole* church and (we must) ask the person to leave.

1 Corinthians 5 says we must remove leaven from the batch. Jesus commands us to not eat with nor associate with a person who will not change their life according to the teaching of Jesus. *There can be no fellowship with them*, and they *must* be expelled from our midst, the Bible says. Jesus is a *great* builder. He will not build with soft stones or rotten wood. He wants to build a Glorious House to live in—one that’s fitting for the King that He is.

## Choosing Building Materials

So the building materials in God's house must be of the best quality. This does NOT mean that every person is perfect. It does mean that *every person wants to love and obey Jesus* and doesn't despise help from others who want to help them love and obey Jesus; they *want* that help. Good building material for God's House is when a person "loves the light," according to Jesus Himself. Bad building material, like rotten wood, is someone who does not want that help. That person says, "Don't judge me. Mind your own business." They say defensively, "Get the log out of your own eye." That is bad building material, which He said is unacceptable in His House. Jesus will *not* build His house that way. That is rotten wood and will be completely cut off from among the people (Acts 3:23, Matthew 18, 1 Corinthians 5). In a True church, a person that acts that way is not welcome. It doesn't matter how much money they have or how well they know their Bible. They might even be a leader, but if they don't respond softly to the teachings of Jesus, then they cannot be a part of Jesus' true Church that is made in the Spirit. If they resist love and pleading, wisdom, help and patience, then to allow them to continue amongst God's People would be for us to defy Jesus also by ignoring His commands.

Jesus will *only* build with good building materials. If we have married Him in Covenant and Oath, turned from all other loves, been Born twice, have soft hearts, love His teachings, truly want to change the things in our lives that need to change, and turn our face to Him in moments of adversity or difficulty, asking Him and our brothers and sisters to help us, then we are beautiful living stones for the House that Jesus dwells in. This is all about the *kind* of materials that God builds His House with.

## A House Built With Wisdom

Now that we have defined what are good building materials for God's House...consider this: Suppose we take all the good stones, all the good wood, and all the good, suitable building materials that Jesus chooses for His House and heap all those good materials in a pile. Guess what? We still don't have a house. God's House requires even more than just good building materials (true Christians). Just because all the materials for a house are heaped in a pile, does not mean you have a house to

sleep in. That pile won't protect you from the storm, no matter how good the materials may be.

There is a way we must build with these good building materials—a way that Jesus wants to build using His living stones. Just as a religious building has a certain look to it, so does a true Church of Jesus; it's made not of stones, but of people, Living Stones. And it *must* be built a certain way together in order to be a good House for Jesus to live in.

There is a certain way to build a house so that it is easy to live in and so that it can stand the storms. Jesus is a very wise builder and builds His House that way. We will talk about what Jesus' House looks like, because if we will not build His way, the house will fall when the storms come. This is also how we must build, with the very best of materials. Bad materials are not welcome in the House, unless they change to become good materials, according to Jesus.

The rich young ruler was considered to be a pretty good man. But he was not welcome at that time to be part of Jesus' House because he held greed in his heart. He depended on his money rather than on God. It made him too sorrowful to give away his money. So Jesus said, "You cannot be a part of the Church that way. Until you change your heart, you are not welcome to be a Living stone in My House." That is still how Jesus builds His House. He looks at us and loves us as He did that man, but He also calls us to change. And if we will not change, in spite of all of His love and all of His promises, He will not be able to use us as a Living stone. He will set us aside until we soften our heart.

## The Design of the House

But if we have good materials to build the House, its design still must be good. Jesus has chosen for His House a design that looks the same in every country, no matter what the language or the culture. The design is that all of God's people lay down their lives to love and serve each other *every single day, as Family, together*. The true church of Jesus, designed His way to be strong, must be a Family every day. They eat together from house to house, they serve each other and help each other in many ways every day. They speak God's word to each other daily to help them become more like Jesus. When they see sin, they go for a walk and talk about it together. They don't wait for "Sunday" to hear someone preach a sermon about it. God's Intent (Eph. 3:10, 1 Peter 2) is that we are all daily priests and ambassadors

of God to one another and the world “as we rise up, sit down, and walk along the way.”

We are all called to be priests for Jesus. We are all called to bear the word of God and help one another. This means that if you see your neighbor being selfish or angry, or if you see drinking, or pride that breaks Jesus’ heart, then each of us will take responsibility to help each other change. This is for every day. It has nothing to do with Sundays. The true Church of Jesus is made of Living Stones, and the design of the House is everyday Family. It’s not something that we “attend,” but it’s something that we are every day. If we will build this way—changing our selfish or lazy lives, and truly learning how to love each other like family every single day, taking responsibility to serve and help each other with the word of God—then it will be a House that Jesus can live in and can love. It will be a House of good design that will be easy for Jesus and for all of us to live in and make our home in.

It will be a very, very strong House of good Design. When the storms come and batter on the House, it will stand *because it has only good materials, and because the design is good*. There will be very little damage to this wonderful House, and we will all be safe. Just as Father was very specific about what materials and design Noah should use to build the Ark, so also Jesus has a plan for materials and design of His House. And His Plan is not , in the New Agreement, a holy man giving a speech to an “attendance based” organization of disconnected people. It is NOW “a hundred mothers, brothers, sisters”—deep daily intertwined intimate “from the least to the greatest” relationships of Light-lovers.

This is the good news of the Kingdom of Jesus. He said, “My Father has much zeal for the house being built.” The Father strongly desires that we build His house His way. In many countries and cities very seldom is the house built the way Jesus wants it built. In almost every “church” in almost every country, there are people that come together with rituals and traditions and then go their separate ways living their lives however they please. Maybe they sin freely, or maybe they try not to. But it’s not a house, because they are not a family, every day, together.

## Sticking Together as One

It is only when all the stones are stuck together, by the glue of practical love and vulnerability, and built by God’s design, that it becomes

a place that He can call home. Even if you are a pretty good living stone and try to live a holy life, you are still just one stone. If I put that stone on the ground, it still would not be a home for Jesus. He doesn't want just individual good stones to sit out in a field. We must make ourselves, even force ourselves, to stick together to other stones. Every day we must demand of ourselves that we be stuck together with the other stones, daily in God's design for a House... as we "rise up, as we sit down, as we walk along the road" together. Washing the clothes together, and going to market together. As we work in the fields, make the bricks, cut firewood, or fix meals, let us do it *together* so that we will be one Family instead of many individuals or many families. It is in these "trivial" issues of daily life that we bond our Faith, Hope, and Love together. These daily tasks, lived out together as a Family, are the "windows of the soul" that allow us to truly wash each other in the water of the Word, rather than the make-believe religion of "attending" religious ceremonies and sing-alongs and holy man speeches. Jesus is not building anything but family.

## A Hundred Fathers, Mothers, Brothers, Sisters

Jesus said if you truly obey My will, you will have a hundred fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters—not a hundred neighbors, but a hundred very close family members. This is the will of God. These are the teachings of Jesus Christ—that He builds His house with good materials. Bad materials are not welcome if they won't change when they hear Jesus' words. Jesus' House is built by *His* design, not ours. And His design is a "hundred fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters." His design is that we would "confess our sins one to another" and be healed. His design is that we would "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." His design is that we would be "one together, as He and the Father are one"—so united that when you've seen Tim, you've seen David. When you've seen the Son, you've seen the Father. Jesus said we would be one just as they are one, so we must also be one that way. God's desire is not for separate stones that come together on Sunday to "attend" a speech or ceremony, but His desire is a family that is built together every day, intertwined in all areas of daily life, as Family.

This is a design of God. The storms will come and this house will stand. Jesus will come and inhabit it, and it will bring Him pleasure. This is God's will for His people in every country, and we invite you to take this very seriously.

## Bringing Great Pleasure to Jesus

If there are any changes that need to be made, Jesus said, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” So please make the changes that Jesus is calling you to make. Don’t be afraid. Some people do not love the Truth and will be angry about these things because they have things to hide in their own life; the true ways of God are always opposed by satan, the enemy.

So have courage, endurance and patience in these things. Show your love to Jesus by doing everything you can to obey these teachings of Jesus. Find brothers and sisters that you can be with, pray with, and talk with every single day. Break down the barriers between your brothers and sisters—barriers of fear and of pride, barriers of laziness or of embarrassment, barriers of shyness, and barriers of judgment. Take all of those barriers and wash them away for Jesus’ sake. Learn how to love each other every day. This will not only bring great pleasure to Jesus, because it is the right design for His church, but it will radically change *your* life also. Put the Lord to the test; these things are true.

To you genuine Christians, those of you who have the Holy Spirit living inside—one day, we will have no more language barrier. The curse of the tower of Babel will be broken; all true living stones will be able to have true, full communication and fellowship with each other.



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# House of God

*Komba, Africa, 1996*

## A “Healthy” Family—The Bride Prepared

Before very long, Jesus will come back for His Bride. The Bible says that Jesus will come back for His Bride when she has made herself ready. How can we position our lives to be prepared? Well, consider this picture with me.

When most of our religious or spiritual endeavors happen in one place on one day each week, then it is like eating just one meal every week. That’s NOT how Father made us to live. We need to feed our physical bodies most every day in order to live. He also made our spirits to need to eat many times throughout a week—to eat bread from heaven and to love on one another daily, daily, daily. He made us to be a Kingdom of Priests together and to bring each other the Bread of Life as we rise up, as we sit down, and as we walk along the way.

Our *worship* of Jesus is as we cut wood together and as we wash clothes together. We teach each other the Word of God in the places of our lives as we walk to the market together. If we see a man that is harsh with his wife, we bring him the Word of God and wrestle with him to help him see Jesus. When we see a man or woman that is selfish with their possessions, we love them with the Word of God each day. We don’t wait for someone to “preach a sermon” about it on Sunday, but we offer them the Word of God because we are all priests.

A little child who would eat only one meal every week would be sick and weak. This is also true for the Bride of Christ. We must be feeding each other every day—day and night, day and night—in order to grow strong. We feed each other the Word of God. We worship together every day. We ask God to help us every day.

Most people would think that a physical family would be very ill if it were only together on Sunday and Wednesday. In the Bible, we read about the Family of God in Acts 2. It says clearly that they were together every day and were devoted *every day* to the teaching of the apostles, to

fellowship with one another, and to prayer together. Every day, every night. They did not count their possessions as their own; they broke bread and ate meals together in one another's homes every day.

We were taught many years ago that christianity and church is something we attend and then we go back to our old lives. We have two or maybe three different worlds. We have the world of our home and family, the world of our work and occupations, and the world of our "church". This was not how our Jesus lived. Our Jesus taught us that all these worlds are together and the same. Anyone who has given their life away for Jesus has 100 fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, lands, and possessions—not 100 next-door-neighbors and third cousins, but 100 mommies and daddies. This is what Jesus taught us. This is what the CHURCH is meant to be. It's not a place to go, but who we are every day. The Church is as intimate and close with one another as a mommy is with her newborn baby. These are the very words of Jesus.

## Obstacles

So what keeps us from living these things? The first obstacle is the incomplete teaching that we have had over the years. But even when we become familiar with the teachings of Jesus about these things, there are other barriers or obstacles that keep us from living the way Jesus wants us to live as a Church. If we are selfish or lazy, we don't want to be the Church that Jesus wants us to be. We want to live our own lives the way we want to live them. If someone comes to you or me and brings us the words of Jesus about how we are treating our wife or husband, a selfish person says, "Mind your own business. Stay away."

But this is not Jesus' way. Jesus said, "Everyone that knows Me and loves Me loves the teachings that I teach." A lover of Jesus will say, "Thank you so much for helping me. I want to love Jesus more. I was blind and you helped me to see a little bit, and I thank you for that." This is how the Family of God lives together every day. We help each other to know Jesus better by helping each other put away sin, loving one another more, and by caring for others' needs more than we care for our own. These are the teachings of Jesus. This is how He lived His life for us, and now He has called us to live this way for one another. This is how the Bride is made ready for the return of her groom, Jesus.

We become more and more beautiful as we learn how to truly love each other more. As we put away our selfishness and pride that keep us separate from each other, and as we willingly open our hearts to be vulnerable with each other, then the Spirit of God, the Grace of God and the Love of God pour out on us... and we become a beautiful Bride READY for the return of our groom, Jesus.

This is the will of the Father for us—not to “attend a bride,” but to be a Bride. We can only BE His church and live His Life as we love each other and exchange our lives with each other every day. This involves more than just a “Hi!” and “I love you!” when I walk by. Instead, I open my heart to you and ask you to help me. If you see sin in my life, things that are not like Jesus, then you come to me and beg me to turn my life to Jesus. You don’t turn the other way and ignore it. You are an ambassador of Jesus as if God were making His appeal to me through you.

This is a Church—to live this way every day, not *attending* the house of God, but *being* the place where God lives. Then our homes, our workplace and our church all become one. There are no more barriers from my heart to yours and no more barriers between my home and yours. I put away selfishness, pride, laziness and unbelief, and I love others as Jesus has loved me. When everyone does that, from the least to the greatest, Jesus pours out His healing oil, and we are a Church, a beautiful Bride. If we are content to just attend something on Sunday morning, we will miss the heart and the call of our God, and be like some other religions that are meaningless.

## Leadership in the House of God

In Acts 20, Paul was speaking to some leaders and said, “It was the Holy Spirit that made you overseers.” This is very different than man’s way. In most countries that we have been to, the way a person becomes a leader in God’s House is that perhaps he goes to bible college or seminary, or perhaps can read better than other people can, or is a leader in business or some other area, or perhaps he can speak better than others. But these are all the wrong reasons. *These are not the ways that God makes leaders.*

There have been times when we have traveled to churches in various cities and were asked to speak to the leaders. At that point, there were two ways that we could decide who the leaders were. The normal way

to decide is, “Who are the people on staff, or who are the people chosen by men to be leaders?” Perhaps the leaders are all the ones that have titles, such as “pastor” or “reverend.”

But this is not how Jesus picks His leaders. He didn’t choose men with college or seminary backgrounds. He chose men as He looked into their hearts and saw that they were willing to leave their nets and their desires for human life and follow after Him to serve Him no matter what. So, when we have been asked to speak to leaders in various cities or countries, instead of inviting everyone that has a title or a position to come, we have said, “Everyone that feels as if God is using them to touch other people’s lives, everyone who goes to sleep praying for other saints, who during their days cares about other saints and other unbelievers, who has a heart to serve God’s purposes in the earth, male or female, young or old, if you are caring for other people’s souls and not just for your own, then you are a leader. Come. Let’s talk.” This is how the Holy Spirit makes overseers. This is unlike the way man does it, which is to make a leader of a person with position and education.

In Acts 6, there was much work to do in Jerusalem. They did not say, “Choose from among yourselves seven men who have a seminary education and can read better or speak better than others.” They said, “*Choose from among yourselves seven men who are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.*” You see them loving people and helping people in their daily life. These are the men or women that the Holy Spirit is raising up. It does not take a certificate on the wall with a gold seal. *It takes a large heart with the Holy Spirit’s seal.* So these are some teachings about leadership, because God wants to raise up leaders from among every people.

What men think of as being important, God does not. When Samuel was trying to find a man to be king, several of David’s brothers *looked* like they would be good leaders. But the small, uneducated shepherd boy was the one that God chose. He doesn’t care about a man or woman’s externals. He looks at the quality and the largeness of a person’s heart. David was willing to risk his life to save his little lambs from the lion and the bear. Little David killed a lion and a bear in order to save one of God’s little lambs. David told King Saul, “I killed a lion; I killed a bear; I can kill Goliath.” Because David was willing to risk his life to save a little lamb, God saw that David would also risk his life for God’s Lambs. This is a mark of a man or woman that God will raise up as a leader, not a man or woman with credentials or education necessarily, but a person that will risk their life for God’s Lambs.

The book of Acts also says that David was a man after God's own heart because he would do whatever God said. David made mistakes in his life; we know that. But his heart was to do whatever God said. For that reason, God could pour His anointing oil all over him and allow David to be a great leader among His people—because he would risk his life for God's lambs and do whatever God asked him to do. This is God's kind of leadership: *The men, women and children that will risk their lives for God's Lambs, that will do whatever God says, that will do whatever God asks them—these are men, women and children that are after God's own heart. Amen?*



**Part 3:  
Practical and  
Related Questions  
on this Topic of  
Leadership**



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# Spiritual Caste System?

*Tuesday Evening, July 3, 2001*

*Hello, It's me, the one with lots of questions, always... ☺ I'm finding myself in confusion at the moment in a relationship I have with an older sister in the Lord. People have told me I need to be "accountable" to someone, and I have always stood against that and have never looked for an older person to make myself "accountable" to. Yet the relationship that is forming here doesn't seem to be one of equality. She feels the need to mentor me and teach me, and I do get a lot out of it. On the other hand, though, I'm getting really confused about what kind of relationship the older and younger should have. Sometimes I wish we were on an equal plain, but then I wonder if that's just pride. I mean, all my "home church" friends would just about freak out if they realized how much I "submit" (dare I use that word?) to her instruction. And I'm not sure sometimes what's the due honor I should give and what's honoring her too much. So anyway, if you have anything to share, please do.*

**H**i there, ☺ Well, there are several aspects of all of this, "the multifaceted Wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). First of all, I would *highly* recommend that all your relationships *always* stay "two-sided"—as far as that is *Reality*. Meaning, don't let your pride say, "I ought to be able to teach *her* something *too!*" That would be evil. Frankly, you *wouldn't* have much you could teach, say, Paul of Tarsus. Not that you would *never* see something that he had missed. You would sometimes, in all likelihood, since Father likes to set things like that up to entertain us with our need of one another (1Cor. 12). However, it would be rare, and it would be mostly a "one-way street." Not because he was trying to be "superior," but simply because he would be far ahead of you in his Walk with Jesus and Knowledge of Him. That's fine. Milk him for all it's worth!

"Are *all* apostles?" NO! And some do "equip" others "for works of service" because of the Gifts they have been granted. No problem there. But, it is not a role or an office or "automatic" *ANYTHING*. Just

the flow of Life would demonstrate that you have much to learn, and God will use those who are taller to see things you cannot yet see.

There should be no resistance to *organic* exchange of Life and “submitting” to others who reflect the Glory of Jesus in a way that you cannot, or in Gifts that you do not and will not have. Not a problem. The Centurion showed Jesus the greatest Faith in all of Israel by knowing *how* to submit. Whoever doesn’t know *how* or simply *won’t* be submissive cannot know God or be “entrusted with much.” Their pride will disqualify them, regardless of gift or knowledge, from ever being much for Him, except in their own eyes.

So, to recap:

- 1) Submitting is fine, and biblically required.
- 2) Gleaning from the Gifted or more mature is excellent—“You became mimickers of us and of the Lord!”
- 3) There is to be no *automatic* flow of direction, as in “I am discipling YOU, not the other way around.” That would be a terrible shame and very unhealthy. There is no legal “pecking order” to be imposed on anyone, even the newest babe in Christ. That is Saul rather than Samuel and is ugly and dangerous.

Is everyone “equal” with Moses? Korah and Miriam thought so, and paid a price. Is everyone “equal” with Samuel? Obviously not. And the New Testament is clear on that point as well. “You who are *spiritual*, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.” Not everyone IS Spiritual. “You are carnal, as mere men. But we have the mind of Christ.” “Choose from among yourselves seven men full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom.” They’ll be easy to recognize, because not everyone is “full of the Holy Spirit and full of Wisdom.” And only such as these are to be “over” any matter, even matters as mundane as feeding older women who are part of the Church. Everyone is NOT the “same” in that regard (if the Scriptures are True and I think they are) ☺. Also, it is true that some *will* “give an account for your soul!” How Special is *that*?

There is no “caste system” in terms of “pecking order,” but the amount of JESUS expressed in a person from one moment to the next has *everything* to do with how we relate to one another! There *are* differences between the Quality and Intimacy and Gifts of Spiritual Life. That’s just simply what the Bible says, again and again. The same Jesus, yet different expressions (Gifts), and different levels of yieldedness

(Maturity). Only the proud or those who don't know God's Word would suggest otherwise. It's just in there. BUT (don't miss this!!!), all of that is very different than Saul having a "role" that is "automatic" rather than Samuel's organic, free-flowing, day-to-day Life...which *could* flow either direction from one moment to the next. That has to be a possibility, with nothing hindering!

Don't allow anyone, no matter what they have to "offer," to be unapproachable because of their perceived "role" or "office." Clergy/laity (in its various forms) and domineering of others is certainly evil. And yet, no less evil and unBiblical is unsubmitiveness, and proud independence and disconnectedness. We can surely avoid *both* traps, eh?



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# Using Old Testament Circumstances to Build Today?

*Friday Afternoon, January 26, 2001*

*A question...*

*Hi there, ☺ We met a few years ago... At the time, I was a single mom with a boy about 4 years old. Now I am married to a godly man.*

*My question is this: I was watching the video you guys made on Dec. 31, 1993 to answer questions from people, and something you said didn't make sense to me. You were commenting on church structure and organization in reference to the cell church or cell group movement and you said that some people use the example of Moses and Jethro to justify their way of building. This is where Jethro counseled Moses to delegate responsibility because too many people were coming to Moses to solve their problems. You said that people today take the advice of a pagan priest (Jethro) and apply it to church structure.*

*While I don't agree with the way most evangelical churches structure themselves, I don't see anywhere in scripture where the Lord or the apostles condemn what Moses did. It seems to me that the Bible is clear that Jethro's advice was wisdom for Moses in that situation.*

*Please elaborate on how you came to the conclusion you did, or if you hold a different view now, to explain that instance in Scripture. I did find it disturbing that you condemned something that the Bible does not. It seems extra-biblical to me, but I don't want to miss something or be ignorant. I really appreciate you taking the time to answer this. I also appreciated the sacrifice you made to come to see us a few years ago...*

**H**i... Good to hear from you. Of course I do remember you. ☺ I'm delighted to hear that you are in relationship with other godly people (of course!), and particularly that Father has blessed you with a godly man in your life, up close! That's wonderful!

In partial answer to your question, I guess I would have to say that you sort of have it backwards! ☺ To try to create "cell groups" out of the advice of a demon-worshipping (Midian) "priest" IS, in fact, *very* "extra-Biblical"! Whether Moses had some stress relief from that matter or not isn't relevant, really.

God allowed all sorts of things that He did not author and was not pleased with. King David was a good guy in most respects, and "after God's Heart," but having a King was *very* much against God's Will. "They have *rejected* Me!" says the Lord. Does a good result out of David's Kingship mean that God is now pleased with that "administrative addition" to Israel's Life? A thousand times, NO! Of course not. If God saw fit to relieve some stress from Moses based on the demon-worshipping "priest's" advice, that's okay with me. "Advice" even from Nebuchadnezzar (God calls him, "Nebuchadnezzar, My servant!") can work out fine, but we surely can't take something *totally* unrelated from the Old Testament ("kings," or Jethro's advice to Moses) and *make it into a "pattern" for a New Testament Church????* WOW!! How *incredibly* "extra-Biblical"—as you put it!!!!

The facts are simple; we can't in any way establish that Jethro's "advice" was from God. It is "extra-Biblical" to *say so* since God did *not say so* anywhere—check it out yourself! Wouldn't that make it "extra-Biblical" to claim it was from God? Of course! And, David's kingship cannot be said to be from God simply because David did okay in the man-made pattern of "administration." Not *only* can we *NOT* make an "extra-Biblical" statement and say that Jethro's "advice" was from God, we *surely* would be in danger of great sin against God and the Bible ("extra-Biblical" to the MAX!!) to say that Jethro's advice to MOSES 3500 years ago is now some kind of "pattern" we can follow for a New Testament Church! How INCREDIBLY "extra-Biblical" that would be!!!

I've even heard recently the *ridiculous* man-made rationalization that because Jesus had people sit in 50s and 100s (so that there would be rows between people to walk in, presumably, as he fed the 5000, and that passing food short distances in a smaller group rather than across a thousand laps)...is reason to break a New Testament Church into

“small groups” or “cells”—or a so-called “house-church” should “split” when it reaches those numbers. HOW ABSURD!!! That circumstance of feeding people in a crowd has *nothing* to do with the Way God builds in His Church! If we want to *feed people fish* that way, it has merit, though surely it would not be the “official way” to feed people fish. But it has *nothing whatsoever to do with new testament church*—to create rows and files and aisles to walk in when we are feeding 5000 hungry people in a field! It is turning the Bible into a *game* to suggest that this is “how to structure a church.” How “extra-Biblical”!!!!!! NEVER does the New Testament Church, led by the Spirit and the Apostles of Jesus, play such games!!

There is *no hint* of such Freudian practices in the book of Acts, and the letters from the Apostles and Servants of Jesus, as they Record the Life of God in His People! To apply Jethro’s advice to Moses this way—to justify *totally unrelated* issues in the New Testament—is a man-made game with the Word of God. There is no “Moses” in the New Testament, anyway! That is a faulty paradigm to begin with! The “pastoral system” is totally “extra-Biblical” in every regard.

So, here’s the deal... My entire point (I had hoped!) was that it is *extra biblical* to claim that Jethro’s advice is from God when the Bible does NOT say it is. It is far *worse* than extra-Biblical (in addition to still being extra-Biblical) to turn that into some man-made administrative structure for the CHURCH 3500 years later! So, I’m with you on being opposed to extra-Biblical! I haven’t seen that video in many years, but that is what I was trying to communicate (with my 104° fever at the time ☺): “Extra-Biblical is a *bad idea!* Let’s not play games with the Scriptures to justify something God has not justified. He has not authorized such an administrative game for His People in a New Testament Church! He didn’t even authorize or use it for the judges, or the kings—let alone for His Church!”

Well, I hope that clears it up. I am certainly opposed to “extra-Biblical” as you can see. And I apologize if I wasn’t thorough enough on that tape (6 1/2 hours was plenty for me, but not nearly enough to thoroughly deal with every issue that comes up!), but I surely didn’t mean to imply that “extra-Biblical” is okay. That was the very point I was opposing at the time, I had hoped. Again, sorry for not communicating well! I always try, prayerfully, even in tears, to be as clear as I can be, but obviously fail at times, I am disappointed to say.

All of that aside, again, I'm delighted to hear of the changes Father has brought into your life to prosper you. Awesome. Keep in touch as you are able or inclined!

In His Peace and Grace, and prayer for you and all of those around you and your son and husband (Greet them all for us, if you can!).

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# A Few “Leadership” Thoughts...

*Saturday Morning, November 14, 1998*

*A little correspondence, ongoing with several, about how to deal in a group of Believers where much good is happening, but the Life of Christ is only being lived out by a 10% “committed nucleus.” This overall lukewarmness seems to be “unfortunate”—but acceptable to the leadership, in the sense that it is not being acted upon in any visible way, years on end. What to do? How to feel?*

*A question...*

*While in a fairly “contemporary” religious setting, probably considered far “advanced” from the norm today, I still have a dilemma that I don’t know quite how to deal with. While we meet often in homes and there is the freedom for far more “participation” from the members, the “priesthood,” than typically one would find, there is still a problem. Many lives are unchanged. There is shallowness, worldliness, wild teens, bad child-rearing, many folks that are hardly known (except during meetings), and other problems that the more traditional environments leave unchanged as well. There appears to be a logjam here—even between the leader and leaders—that is preventing a full corporate expression of Jesus’ Life. Yes, there are many of us who gather together for worship or prayer at “agreed upon” times and places (all in homes, of course). But it’s also very recognizable that only a FEW of us are actually laying down our lives for each other—and even that leaves a lot of room for improvement. What do we do with the many others who are among us and are seemingly content to “meter out” just enough sacrifice to make it a little less comfortable than the average bear? I’m not satisfied with that, and I’m sure (based on the letters to the Churches in Revelation) that Jesus is not either. But let me return my question to that of the leadership, since I feel like this is at LEAST where the solution must start.*

*My question is this: How should I view the man who is considered to be, and obviously is, the primary leader? (And I think the question could be broadened to this: “How should we view authors of good ‘christian’ books, ‘christian music artists,’ television and conference and traveling ‘christian’ speakers, and the lot? Though their lives are unknown to us, the things they SAY seem good.”)*

*The man I refer to is a wonderful teacher and a good friend and lives what seems to be a godly life, but does not get very involved in the daily lives of those that he is responsible for (Heb. 13:17). As I mentioned, the lives of those around him are a mess, but his teaching is excellent! He is wise as a counselor when problems are presented to him. He could write a better book than most that are on the shelves at the “christian” bookstores these days. Yet, his relationships wouldn’t reflect the changed lives. There does not seem to be an ever-widening circle of those that he is with daily, and those that they influence—becoming more and more like Jesus. He seldom gets out of his house and has no real alarm for the lives of those in his “church,” though it is often the topic of conversation and of sermons. How should I view this? Is it a problem that there is a spiritual mess around him, after all of these years? If you asked him, he’d tell you he cares. He prays often (I can attest to this) for the sins of apathy and worldliness and worse, that are a part of our “fellowship” and the “christian” world in general. So why does it continue on in evil, year after year? And why is he not doing anything more about it than “preaching” about it? Could it just be that his Gift or his training and experiences have limited his fruitfulness and involvement in changing these things, but that’s not really his fault?*

**T**his, obviously, is a very good question. For starters, it’s important to note that Jesus said, “Wisdom is proved right by her **children**.” It’s not “Wisdom” *from* **GOD** if the “children” (those *born* of this Truth and nurtured daily *by* this Truth, all embedded in *relationship*) can’t be found. If it’s *really* from God, there should be godly offspring. Those who are “IMITATORS of us, and the Lord.” Those who “follow US as we follow CHRIST.” There should be those who we have laid our lives down for “hand to hand, eye to eye, and mouth to mouth,” and they have had *Life* imparted to them through *relationship*. Not “information transferal.”

Generation after generation, men of Faith and Intimacy with God will be showing other “faithful men” into LIFE as well. If those around this

man (for years as you've said?) are still not very "sharp" spiritually, then his discernment or willingness to stand up for Jesus isn't as strong as his teaching (or songs he has written, or \_\_\_\_\_) would lead you to believe. Wisdom is proved *right* by her *children*. Look for the babies, not the information or emotions. Look for the fruit, not the leaves.

*"...if they had stood in My Counsel, they would have proclaimed My words to My people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds.*

*"Am I only a God nearby,' declares the LORD, 'and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?' declares the LORD. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' declares the LORD.*

*"I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in My name. They say, "I had a dream! I had a dream!" How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds?..." "Is not my word like fire,' declares the LORD, 'and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?*

*"Therefore,' declares the LORD, 'I am against the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me'" (Jeremiah 23:22-30).*

*"The visions of your prophets were false and worthless; they did not expose your sin to ward off your captivity. The oracles they gave you were false and misleading" (Lamentations 2:14).*

It can't be any more clear and radical than this. Why was *Jesus Himself* so blessed and celebrated by His Father? Here is the prophecy in Hebrews 1:9. Understand that this is how *we too* draw near to God through the Son. "How can two walk together unless they are in agreement?"

*"You (Jesus) have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy" (Hebrews 1:9).*

If a man or woman, reputed to be a "strong christian" or a "visible leader" or whatever, is *not* passionately about changing lives from the midst of daily relationship, there is a serious problem. In fact, to hang around such a person, regardless of their seeming "wisdom," *would* result in the weakening of Spiritual Life *in you* if you are with him much. No matter how enlightening or inspiring it may seem at the time, it is not Real if they are not laying down their *lives* for others in

a daily, practical way, “in the midst” as Jesus was. I hope the Scriptures and these few brief thoughts are helpful in finding the Way in this. Sorry it’s painful for now. And please, don’t ever look down on or mistreat this brother. That’s obviously not Jesus’ way. Be redemptive!

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*Thanks so much for the response. I think that really helps give me some direction and a reference point for what seems like contradictions in the daily life of the fellowship. It’s just hard to imagine that the “quality of life” could be so much like the world and the religious stuff that is so prevalent, and yet the teaching is so good! I just have had the hardest time understanding how I should view it all! Applying the verses, I don’t think it’s so much that he is a “false prophet” as it is I’m afraid that he, like many other “shepherds,” got to the point where he just “preaches” against sin (even if correctly) rather than being hands-on with the flock. Does that make sense?*

I wouldn’t have thought of him as a “false prophet” either, from the descriptive info you all have passed on. Not at all! However, if a man doesn’t *turn* people from their sin (he only says words about it and then doesn’t follow through) or grieve visibly “**as in the pains of CHILDBIRTH**” (to describe it the way Paul did)—then something IS wrong with his relationship with God. Make no mistake about it. It goes beyond “one gift versus another,” or “bad habits from a previous religious background.” If a child is dying, and you see it and you love them...*you can’t help* but be vigorously involved in the solution, night and day. If you only teach about the illness and the afterlife...but aren’t *vigorously* involved in trying to change it, then either you can’t See, or you don’t care. It is *definitely* a bigger statement than simply their experiences or giftings holding them back. It is really a GENETIC response...when we “stand in His Counsel.” Do they have a problem with GOD? Yes. “False Teacher”? I don’t think so.

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*I’m beginning to see the importance of all of this, as it relates to the Church as a whole, as well as my spiritual well being, and that of my family. Is it a waste of time to be in this situation here in this city?*

I would definitely NOT suggest that he, or the situation, is a waste of time! It IS a problem that needs to be addressed, however. As a disciple of Jesus, we NEVER have the right to:

- 1) Blend in with that which does not bring pleasure to Father, or
- 2) Simply sit back and whine or judge it.

**We must get involved. This is not an OBSTACLE to God's Work, it IS God's Work!**

That doesn't mean that you would never be free to do something different, somewhere else perhaps, but you've got to put your heart into trying to help. Even Nineveh can change! Jesus was able to say, "I would have gathered you...but YOU would not." Giving up is not an option. It is for YOUR Good, too! The butterfly that is cut out of the cocoon prematurely, without having to do the work, will die instead of fly! God means for us to press through the challenges that HE puts in front of us, for the Time He has determined. Don't look for shortcuts! However, if you don't See it clearly, you won't be much help.

Let's look again at the primary leadership and their "less than effective involvement in changing the 'quality of Life' in the church, amongst teens and 'periphery' and all."

(By the way, "periphery" should NOT exist! "The field is the WORLD," Jesus said in the parable of the wheat and tares—NOT "the CHURCH," as so many want us to believe He said! Reconcile this with the Holy Spirit's command to "get the leaven out of the batch!" in 1 Corinthians 5.)

Back to the subject. ☺ Is it okay, because one's gift is, say, music or teaching, to NOT be involved in daily, gut-wrenching, visible activity in "wrestling to present everyone perfect in Christ"? Well, we all know that to not care for your family makes you worse than an infidel, no matter one's environment growing up or what one's gift may or may not be! Right?

Consider an earthly "father" biologically. Is he innocent before God for not wanting to spend time with his children, having no particular interest in involving himself with their friendships or activities, and offering little training beyond a weekly pep talk? This is abominable, regardless of his upbringing. He is *still* "worse than an infidel" in God's Sight—no matter his previous experiences. Why? Because

God has made known His Plan in every corner of His creation, from the lioness to the penguin, and there are no excuses for “seeing no need” for nurturing those in need or in danger. I’m still not suggesting anyone is a waste of time, or that the primary leadership doesn’t have wonderful things (by God’s Grace) to “bring to the table.” Yet it IS sin to only inform, but not nurture and protect and lay down one’s LIFE for the sheep daily. “Anyone that claims to be in Him, must walk as Jesus walked.” And, “He came to be WITH them, that He might send them out.” *“The LIFE became the Light of men...” not the other way around.* So, don’t give up—but they are **not** innocent. “ANYONE” that has stood in God’s Council will turn His People from their sins. And so, if the years roll by and they are NOT turning people from their sins, there is a serious problem in the leaders’ personal lives with Christ no matter HOW profound their teaching is. I’m not picking on anyone in particular (I’m sure they all have some tremendous qualities), but this is true for everyone, of course. Bye, for now. ☺

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*I’m thinking through this prayerfully. I receive what you’ve said 100% and marvel that I didn’t see it before. How could I miss something so basic? I guess that’s why this equipping thing exists, eh? No kidding. ☺*

*Now, I’m trying to figure out what to do about it. I really care about these folks, so I think I have an obligation before God to try to open his eyes also on this matter. I want to do so only with great humility and respect, as a lowly servant and helper, or co-explorer/learner, not as a teacher in any way, which would be absolutely ridiculous anyway in the circumstance. I forgot to say that what got me thinking along these lines of what to do was your analogy of a father. I liked this very much and may even share it with him. I got to thinking, “Well, what would I do if I knew and cared about a neglectful father like that?” I sensed immediately that I would want to “walk alongside” him, throw my arm across his shoulders as we tried to walk through better parenting together. I hope I’ll have that opportunity/privilege with him.*

Be of good cheer! He’s RISEN and coming back for a “Bride that has made herself ready!”

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# Family...Reward From Him

*Wednesday Morning, March 14, 2001*

I had this thought today, that when Jesus said, “*If you receive a prophet as a prophet, you receive a prophet’s reward...*” (Mat. 10:41), He was telling us that the ability of a Thing to come into our lives and *ble*ss us was dependent upon how we *re*ceive that Thing. It’s not even dependent so much on who we are or what we have in ourselves—because much of that is in His hands alone. But what HE’S after is whether we acknowledge its Source, and therefore give it *honor* and *priority* in our hearts, and submit and envelope ourselves in what is His.

HOW we respond to His Things would determine whether or not it could affect us in a Supernatural way, rather than just lifeless information or the stagnant passing of time. And I thought how True for this incredible Inheritance: “If you receive a Family, as a Family, you receive the Reward of [having] a Family!!!!!!” The degree to which we recognize and receive each other in “consciousness of God” (as Peter put it)—the Christ-in-you in each other, as our kinsmen and clan and nationality and history and future and Building Block of Oneness—the degree to which we see that in each other and our times together, that is what determines the degree to which we HAVE that Rock of security and solidarity. That would be the unseen Place where He can pour out the oil of His Life to refresh our hearts simply because we are Together, in His Name, in His Vision, in Him and in “one another.” This is what we have experienced, if I can try to put words on it.

We can be more than “mere humans” trying to overcome loneliness or burdens...rather, we can be Children sharing together our inheritance of LIFE, so that He can Touch us. If we receive His Family (to follow Jesus’ Thought about RECEIVING a Prophet, or anything that HE has sent), rather than second-guess, lord it over, live in suspicion or pride or independence—only THEN can He Fill us with the REWARD of a Family—because we See it and participate in it

at that level! “IF...THEN...a HUNDRED mothers, brothers, sisters, lands, possessions—and LIFE that always was and always will be.” “If you receive a Family, as a Family, you will receive the reward of a Family.” ☺

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# I've Heard About a People

I've heard about a people  
God said they'd be around  
And I really want to meet them  
To share in what they've found

I hear that they don't "go to church"  
Their thrill is something greater  
They really love to BE His Church  
The bride of their Creator!

These people don't describe themselves  
With some subdividing name  
To be His, and His alone  
Is all they ever claim

No priest (by any other name)  
Is there to run the show  
But as brothers, family, all together  
Each daily shares Who they know.

Between "the world" and "things of God"  
Their love and life are not divided  
All their time and goods are His to use  
In the opportunities He's provided

Daily life with one another  
Full of the richness of shadowless Light  
Is not just for a "committed nucleus"  
But they ALL love Him, with all their might!

None of them are "perfect"  
And all will make mistakes  
But because of daily, mutual Life

He strengthens the weak, He shows the fakes  
Their Lord's return is not a point  
On which they argue and divide  
But in hushed tones of anticipation  
They share a deep longing that they can't hide

That human cry of "Why?" and "How?"  
Has been stilled within their soul  
By the awesome presence of the great I Am  
And the words "In Him you are whole."

Heaven holds for them one special treasure  
Not health and wealth from the well-known story  
But the seeing of their Lord and Savior  
No veil to dim His glory!

His Church will not just "happen"  
Time and Place? He Alone decides  
Only He can plant a Lampstand  
Where He circulates, and confides

He gives the Gifts to build His Home  
Architectural gifts, local gifts, and you  
And while "two or three" delight His heart  
A Hilltop CITY is His due!

I've Heard about these People  
But, should we chase around?  
If we really want to know them  
Watch JESUS free the bound!

He wants to have a People  
Where He is DAILY crowned!  
And in His Grace they may be BUILT  
Instead of simply found!