



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.9.2

This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF contains chapters 5-6 of the book *The Divine Quest*.

Very few people will ever reach a goal apart from focusing intently upon it. An athlete running a race must focus on the finish line. A farmer tending a field must focus upon the crop that will be harvested. A soldier in battle must clear his mind of all distractions except pleasing the one who has chosen him to be a soldier.

The apostle Paul used all of these examples when writing to the young disciple Timothy (II Timothy 2:4-6).

When we stand before God on the day of judgment He will examine

our lives to see if we fulfilled the work He prepared for us to accomplish.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Paul in looking back at the end of his life was satisfied that he had done all the Father had appointed for him to do. He said:

II Timothy 4:7

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course...

Paul made it his goal daily to know the Father's will that he might

do it. Do you have the same intense focus in your life? How will you attain the goal unless you are focused on the goal? If you have embraced other goals, selfish goals, then you will surely fail to arrive at the destination God created you for.

Colossians 1:16

All things have been created by Him and for Him.

Have you been living as if your life is your own? If you have, then you will arrive at a very different destination than what God desires for you.

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

Food for Thought

"Deny your weakness, and you will never realize God's strength in you."

Joni Eareckson Tada

"God asks no man whether he will accept life. That is not the choice. You must accept it. The only choice is how."

Henry Ward Beecher

Scripture Memory

Romans 8:36-37

Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

Parables Newsletter

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- *The Divine Quest*
- Chapters 5-6

The Divine Quest

Faith Comes by Hearing

Perhaps the single greatest source of comfort that I have had as God's Spirit has directed our family to an ever expanding walk of faith, has been found in dwelling upon the things God has spoken to us. The Spirit has directed us down paths that bring fear to the natural man, and this fear

Without hearing there can be no true faith.

has to be dealt with and overcome. By meditating upon the words Yahweh has spoken to me I have time after time been brought to a place of peace, and I have felt

the nagging fear and anxiety that was coming against me dissipate. Sometimes it has dissipated just enough to allow me the courage to continue on the path of obedience, with fear and trembling. At other times as I have meditated upon the things God has spoken to me, all fear and anxiety has fled away, giving way to a peace that surpasses understanding.

I am confident that complete peace is the portion and inheritance of the overcomer in Christ. Yet it is a place to be attained by warfare and perseverance. It is something that we must grow in, and as we arise to meet the challenges before us, entrusting ourselves into the hands of a loving God who cares for us, we will find ourselves gaining a greater confidence and a more sure peace.

Spiritual hearing is a key factor in the process of our growth in faith. On the one hand, we must hear the voice of the Spirit speak to us to lead us into the walk of faith that He has chosen for us. We are not to be presumptuous and choose a path of faith for ourselves, foolishly putting God to the test. God is not obligated to come through for us in our need if He has not led us to the test of faith before us. We must know that God's Spirit has directed us to the particular course of obedience we are pursuing. If we have no assurance of having heard God's voice in some matter of obedience, then we have nothing to stand upon.

The Spirit first revealed this to me many years ago as I contemplated the life of Abraham. Abraham is called "the father of faith", and his life is recorded for our instruction. Abraham was only able to walk in faith as he heard from God. Consider a few events of his life.

God called Abraham to leave his father's household and to journey to a land he did not know. He was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, and out of Haran, to go forth into the land Yahweh promised to him and his descendants. Abraham heard the voice of God calling him to journey forth, and this voice of instruction provided the impetus necessary to respond with faith and obedience. The Scriptures are clear that Yahweh called Abraham, and gave him instruction in this matter.

Genesis 12:1-4

Now Yahweh said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." So Abram went forth as Yahweh had spoken to him.

Hearing from God is a necessary part of a life of faith. Without hearing there can be no true faith. Many are teaching a type of faith today that lacks this vital necessity of hearing God give us direction. Many are teaching a false faith that originates in man's own mind and imagination. They encourage the saints to envision the things they want and then stand in confidence, claiming that they have these things. Elwin Roach wrote regarding this type of teaching:

Some have called this type of faith the "Prosperity Message", although in less favorable circles it has been

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called “Name it and Claim it”, “Bless it and Confess it”, “Blab it and Grab it”, or “What the Heck, Write the Check”...

It is one thing to have the Faith of God as a result of an impregnation of His anointed word, which will move mountains, but it is entirely another matter when a man carves an image in his positive-thinking mind and calls it *faith*, and then holds God ransom with the written word which his carnal mind has little or no understanding of. This, dear reader, is not faith, not even in the farthest stretch of the imagination. It is presumption, and God is not obligated to pay up!

Many of the saints today have built upon the shifting sands of a false faith doctrine. Its teachings rest upon a belief in a principle of faith. It is taught that if one can work up enough confidence to believe something when they ask for it in prayer, then they will be assured of having their request. The key to this type of faith is the ability of man to believe something. The saints are told that if they can conceive something, and believe in its fulfillment, then they can have it.

This is not the type of faith that Abraham demonstrated. Abraham did not think to himself one day, “I sure am tired of this city of Ur. I would like to live somewhere far away from here, so I think I will take my wife and hit the road, and I will trust God to protect me and bless me in my journey.” No! Abraham did not initiate this journey. We read where Yahweh spoke to him and gave him a command. So Abraham’s faith began with hearing. The literal translation of Romans 10:17 is, “So faith is **out of** hearing.” That is, faith has its origin in hearing a word from God, and it is from this word that faith appears. All acts of faith must have their origin in a word from God. Some who have tried to walk in faith without such a word

have stumbled badly, and many have made a shipwreck of their lives.

Abraham heard God speak to him to leave his father’s household, and he responded with obedience, trusting the One who commanded him to go forth. This trusting obedience pleased God. The crowning act of Abraham’s faith was when he took his son Isaac and laid him on an altar to sacrifice him to Yahweh. This was much later in Abraham’s life, and it too was precipitated by a word from God.

Genesis 22:1-2

Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

Abraham KNEW that he had heard the voice of God. He did not have to wonder, “Does God want me to do this thing? Am I sure this is His will?” If Abraham had not heard from God clearly, then he would have nothing for his faith to arise out of. Because Abraham knew he had heard from God, he was able to respond with trusting obedience.

Abraham KNEW that he had heard the voice of God.

We can only exercise this same faith that Abraham walked in if we have heard the voice of God leading us to some act of faith. If there is no hearing, there is no faith.

In between Abraham’s call to leave his father’s house, and his testing in the matter of his son, the Spirit has recorded for us some other events in Abraham’s life that equally serve as instruction for the saints. Two events are particularly related to us. Both involved Abraham leaving the land

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God had promised to him and dwelling for a time in a foreign land, due to a severe drought being in the land. In both instances Abraham walked in unbelief and suffered disgrace and shame. He was buffeted by fear in both places, and gave into fear by asking his wife to lie about her relationship to him.

Genesis 12:10-13

Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 'Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you.'"

Abraham, the father of faith, did not manifest faith in this deed. Instead, he manifested fear and unbelief. The result was that his wife was taken from him and actually given to Pharaoh to be

Abraham went to Egypt of his own initiative...

Pharaoh's wife. What a terrible thing this was. Abraham allowed his wife to be given to another man to have relations with her. He allowed this in order to

save his own skin. In His mercy, Yahweh kept Pharaoh from touching Sarah, though when Abraham's deceit was made known to Pharaoh, shame and reproach were brought upon Abraham and his wife.

Genesis 12:18-20

Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go." Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that be-

longed to him.

Abraham was escorted out of Egypt in shame. His purpose for going to Egypt was to escape the famine in his own land, but he found that he was not able to escape it. What is glaringly absent in this account is any mention of Abraham hearing from God. We are not told that Abraham was instructed by God to go to Egypt. If Abraham had heard Yahweh tell him to go to Egypt, and if Yahweh had told him that He would protect him and keep him while in that land, then Abraham would have had something for faith to arise out of. Yet no such word was given. Abraham went to Egypt of his own initiative, and because he had no command from God, he lacked confidence in the situation.

Later Abraham repeated this same error when he went to Gerar with all of his possessions. Again, we have no word that God had sent him there. He once more lied about Sarah being his wife, and once more he suffered reproach. Without a word from God there is nothing for faith to arise from, and we will suffer terribly as the flesh and Satan fills our hearts and minds with visions of fear and calamity. To stave off this assault of fear, we must have a word from God to stand on. Before choosing a course to follow, we should press in to hear from God. We must refuse to move without receiving instruction from God, knowing that His word is our strength and security. What He has said, He will surely accomplish. He has not promised to accomplish the things we have imagined, or the plans we have chosen for ourselves.

The Father has done some tremendous things in our family. He has performed miraculous things for which only He can get the credit. Our son was born with a hereditary bone disease called Osteogenesis Imperfecta, and by the time he was seven years old he had already broken thirteen bones and had two surgeries to correct fractures. We had some years earlier applied for government SSI benefits on him and we had been accepted. This provided us with free medical benefits on

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him and a monthly stipend of between \$300-\$400 a month. However, these things gave me no satisfaction, for I desired for my son to be healed.

I began to pray in earnest, asking God to heal my son. I was distressed over his condition, and he was spending so much time in casts that his muscles and bones were not able to grow stronger and this exacerbated the situation, making him more prone to have more fractures. As I was praying one day about this, the Lord spoke to me and told me that He would heal my son, but that He required that I cancel the SSI benefits on him. The Lord demanded that I exercise faith before I would see His provision.

To natural sight and reason, this was a foolish thing to do. My son was freshly out of a cast and had already broken two bones that year. Medical treatment was very expensive and many people fought long and hard battles, even hiring lawyers, to attain the benefits we were receiving. I considered, however, that it would be much better for my son to be healed and to have no more fractures, than to have the government pick up the tab each time he broke a bone. I wanted my son to be able to run and play and do all the things that other boys did.

I shared with my wife what the Lord had spoken to me, and we decided to follow the Lord in obedience, to cancel the benefits we were receiving on our son, and to trust the Lord to heal him. When we called the government agency to ask them to cancel our benefits, they did not understand why we would make such a request. They tried to get us to reconsider, but we told them that we no longer wanted the benefits they offered.

The Lord told me to not baby my son, but to allow him to ride bikes, skateboard, play on trampolines, roughhouse with other kids, and do all the things other boys were doing, and that He would protect him. That was over six years ago, as my son is now thirteen years of age, and God has pre-

served him and he has not suffered another fracture.

My faith arose out of hearing the voice of God. I did not just decide for myself that I would cancel all medical benefits on my son and believe that God would heal him. I pressed into God in prayer, and when I heard from Him faith resulted. This is ever the pattern for faith. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

A year after God led me to trust Him for the health of my son, He spoke to me again and told me that He now wanted me to trust Him for the health of our entire family. I was working as a

computer professional at a local hospital and they had excellent medical benefits at a reasonable cost. I was serving as a minister at a local church at the same time, and the Father was calling me to steps of faith as an example to the body. I knew I had heard from God again, and I shared what I had heard with my wife. This caused her much fear, and she opposed this decision initially, but later she came to agreement with me in the matter.

My faith arose out of hearing the voice of God.

When I went to the office at work to cancel my health insurance, I was informed that changes to benefits could only be made during a two week period that occurred in December. This was some months away, so I determined then that when the date arrived I would cancel health insurance on my entire family and trust God to keep us in health.

Several weeks before the date that I could drop my insurance I began to manifest symptoms of diabetes. I began experiencing dry cottony mouth and constant thirst. I had extremely frequent urination, even having to get up 5 or 6 times a night

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to use the bathroom and get another drink of water. I experienced blurred vision and occasional dizziness. One day while at work I became dizzy and, being right there in the emergency room, I asked them to run some tests on me and they checked my blood sugar and it was about 370 when it should be no higher than 120. The attending doctor told me I was diabetic and that I needed to go see my family physician and get started on a diabetic regimen for treatment.

I knew what God had spoken to me about trusting Him for our health and His instructions to cancel my health insurance. The timing of this physical attack, just weeks before I could cancel this insurance

I considered what life would be like if God could not be trusted.

seemed more than coincidental. I knew it was a test. The pressure was poured on even more. Some nurses I knew at the hospital had heard about my case and

they dealt with diabetic education and treatment. They began telling me regularly that I needed to see a doctor quickly. They gave me brochures about diabetes and they told me horror stories of amputated limbs, blindness, organ failure, and other effects of leaving diabetes untreated. They told me that they had patients in the hospital at that moment whose blood sugar was no worse than mine and these patients were on intravenous insulin drips.

I struggled greatly during the next weeks and my symptoms persisted. I became nervous and distracted by all that was coming against me and I even was so distracted that I pulled right out in front of an oncoming van while driving and only avoided a collision because my wife screamed and I slammed on the brakes. I had great pressure from family to not cancel insurance, but again my choices seemed pretty plain.

As I considered it, I could go to a doctor and begin treatment for diabetes, a treatment I would be on for the rest of my life, or I could cast myself

wholly over onto the Lord and trust Him to bring complete healing. The prospects of being healed when compared to lifelong diabetic management, knowing that there was no medical cure for diabetes and the condition usually worsened with age, caused me to prefer entrusting myself to God with anticipation of complete healing.

Another contributing factor that weighed in my choice to trust God was that I considered what life would be like if God could not be trusted. I considered what the years ahead would be like if I devoted my life to serving a God who would not, or could not, meet my needs. The prospect was horrendous. I decided that I would rather go ahead and die of diabetes than to spend the rest of my life with the thought that God would not be there for me in my hour of greatest need. Life to me was not worth living if God could not be trusted. The only fulfillment and satisfaction I could envision in life was in entrusting myself to a heavenly Father who genuinely cared for me and who would not abandon me when I placed my life in His hands. How unbearable it seemed to me to serve a God I could not trust.

With some trepidation, I went to the office at work during the allotted time and I asked them to cancel health insurance for myself and my family. I never took the advice of the emergency room doctor or the nurses, to go and see a family physician to begin treatment, and I cast myself wholly over onto Yahweh for healing. Over the next weeks I began to lose weight, when all of my previous efforts to do so had failed. I lost about forty pounds and all of the symptoms of diabetes disappeared. Within 1-2 months I experienced complete healing, and to this date, now more than five years later, I have had no reoccurrence of any of the symptoms.

Once more the pattern was shown in my life, that the word of God precedes faith. I had heard the Lord tell me that He wanted me to cancel health insurance on our family, and it would have been an easy enough thing to do if we had all been in

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great health. Yet He allowed me to be tested by asking me to do this thing when I was suffering from a serious condition and was being advised to seek medical attention quickly. Praise Yahweh! He is faithful! As Paul wrote:

II Timothy 1:12

For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.

Because hearing is such an important part of faith, being that which faith arises out of, the Spirit of God is willing to give us many confirmations of His will when we ask for it. We see this revealed most clearly in the life of Gideon. Gideon lived in a time when the children of God had been suffering defeat by their enemies on a continual basis for many years. Midianite bands had been coming in and raiding their land at the time of harvest and taking all their produce from the Israelites. Gideon was threshing grain in a hiding place when the angel of God appeared to him.

God knew that asking Gideon to take three hundred men into battle against more than one hundred thousand of the enemy would require much faith in God. On top of this, for Gideon's entire life he had only seen the Israelites meet defeat at the hands of the enemy. How could he now expect that God would bring them a great deliverance with so few men? Gideon wanted to be certain that God was speaking to him and that He would accomplish what He had said. He asked for confirmation and Yahweh was pleased to give it to him.

Judges 6:36-40

Then Gideon said to God, "If You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken, behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken." And it

was so. When he arose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece, he drained the dew from the fleece, a bowl full of water. Then Gideon said to God, "Do not let Your anger burn against me that I may speak once more; please let me make a test once more with the fleece, let it now be dry only on the fleece, and let there be dew on all the ground." God did so that night; for it was dry only on the fleece, and dew was on all the ground.

This is the mercy, kindness and gentleness of Yahweh. He did not reprove Gideon in this matter, but did according to what Gideon asked. Yahweh even went beyond what Gideon had asked.

*This is the mercy,
kindness and
gentleness of Yahweh.*

The sign of the fleece was given before God had whittled Gideon's army of 32,000 down to just 300 men. In His mercy He gave him one more tremendous confirmation that Gideon had not even asked for.

Judges 7:9-15

Now the same night it came about that Yahweh said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hands. But if you are afraid to go down, go with Purah your servant down to the camp, and you will hear what they say; and afterward your hands will be strengthened that you may go down against the camp." So he went with Purah his servant down to the outposts of the army that was in the camp. Now the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the sons of the east were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as numerous as the sand on the seashore. When Gideon came, behold, a man was relating a dream to his friend. And he said, "Behold, I had a dream; a loaf of barley bread was tumbling into the camp of Midian, and it came to the tent and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat." His friend replied, "This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given Midian and all the

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camp into his hand." When Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship. He returned to the camp of Israel and said, "Arise, for Yahweh has given the camp of Midian into your hands."

I too would have bowed to the ground and worshiped upon receiving such a confirmation from the Lord. With great love and tenderness He does lead us into a walk of faith.

In the day we live in we also have few examples of men and women who are walking in faith. We live in that hour that Paul spoke of to Timothy where men "would have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." The churches today are weak and anemic and are overrun by the enemy. Pastors are sending those who come to them in need to the world to find their answers. Re-

The churches today are weak and anemic and are overrun by the enemy.

cently a couple we have known for many years were on the verge of divorce after having been married more than twenty years. They went to the pastor of the largest Baptist church in town for counseling and as a last attempt to find reconciliation. The pastor advised the husband to take drugs to deal with an anger problem and to go to a psychiatrist.

This is just one of a myriad of examples that demonstrate the powerlessness of the church. Worldliness is entering into the church, and in many instances is being freely invited in. Faith is largely absent and defeat is everywhere. In this environment the Spirit is calling forth a remnant to embark upon a walk of faith, and recognizing the environment of powerlessness and unbelief that people are being called out from, He is willing to give many assurances of His will. I have at times asked for further confirmation of Yahweh's will for me, and He has been pleased to provide it. He has even given me assurances when I did not ask.

One of the greatest challenges the Spirit has given to me has been to trust Him for our financial needs. He has called us, as a demonstration to the body of His ability to provide for all of our needs, and as an encouragement to the saints to pray and to rest in the confidence of His love, to trust Him for all of our finances. This calling first began in October of 1999 when the Spirit spoke to me to leave my employer whom I had been with for fourteen years, and to trust Him to meet all of our needs.

This was a daunting word for me to receive, for I did not have money saved up in the bank to see me through, nor did I have any other source of income. Therefore, I asked for numerous confirmations and the Spirit provided them. The command of the Spirit calling me to leave my employer was upon my mind continuously, and one day as I walked through our kitchen my eye was attracted to a daily devotional calendar. The verse stood out to me, Exodus 14:14. The numbers caught my attention first, for I had been with my employer fourteen years, and later the name of the book was also given as confirmation. The word Exodus means to journey out from a place, to leave one's previous habitat. I knew the Spirit was calling me to journey forth and to leave my job and to embark on a life of faith in the area of finances.

A few days later I was asking the Father for further confirmation, and I heard the Spirit tell me to go to my computer and look up the first occurrence of the number fourteen in Scripture. I typed the word 'fourteen' into my Bible program and ran a search. A snippet of each verse that this word occurred in appeared on my screen, and the very first one startled me. It said, "I have worked for you for fourteen years." This quote was from Genesis 31:41, and it was from Jacob's conversation with his father-in-law Laban as Jacob was leaving his household.

This was a tremendous thing that God was calling me unto. I did not personally know any other

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saint, not even any minister, who was trusting God for their financial provision in this way. I had been raised among churches whose members lived by sight, and where faith was a rare commodity. I lacked the confidence that would have been mine had I seen numerous examples of others who were living in this way.

I did leave my job, and for eighteen months our family lived in complete dependence upon the Father. I could fill many pages recounting the miraculous provision we saw, and one day I hope to do so. Yet, despite all of this, I continued to struggle in my faith. The main reason was that I was receiving much discouragement from other saints and ministers, telling me that the way I was living was unscriptural. I received many accusations and condemnations of this walk of faith. I was carrying around many wounds that I had received from the hands of the brethren. I had even been put out of the church I was ministering in for preaching a message of faith, and for living it out by my example. This was the most difficult thing, as the ministers who rejected me were close brothers whom I had shared many experiences with, and who had at one time declared their intention to follow God in faith wherever He led.

So after eighteen months of struggle I asked the Father to give me a tent-making occupation as Paul had in order to take away my reproach and give me time to heal. He miraculously opened up a job teaching computer concepts to college students, and this had the effect of removing the reproach I was receiving from all quarters. It also gave me the time I needed to heal from many hurts, so that I might go and rejoin the battle again. The job was to last for two years, though the Father began slowly drying up the stream to teach me to not trust in the job for my provision, but to trust Him instead. When I first began the job I was given thirty hours a week to teach, and this was adequate to pay for all of our needs. After about nine months my hours were reduced to twenty hours a week, and after another nine months my hours were reduced to ten hours a

week.

Working ten hours a week was insufficient to meet the needs of a family of four, as it barely paid our rent at the time. Yet the Father made up what we were lacking in a variety of ways. We never knew lack in food, clothing, shelter, or any good and necessary thing. We were well provided for. It was not so difficult then when, at the end of two years, He spoke to me and told me it was time to quit my teaching job and trust Him once more to provide for all of our needs. If He could meet our needs while I was working only ten hours a week, then He could certainly do it with me working no hours a week. Within a month of my quitting this job He showed us we were to move to be a part of a new work He was raising up, and the location would have rendered it impractical to keep teaching anyway, for the distance would have been too great.

Since we have once more embarked upon this adventure of faith in knowing God as our total provider, He has shown us His tenderness by giving us many confirmations of His will, and confirming us with numerous testimonies of men who have followed a similar course at the leading of the Spirit of God. A book arrived in the mail one day soon after I had quit my job, and it was titled “*Rees Howells - Intercessor*.” I did not order the book, but a Christian brother felt that I needed to read it, so he ordered it to be delivered to our home. It was just what I needed. When I opened the book to the index, the first chapter to catch my attention was titled “*Called Out From Wage Earning*.” It was the first thing I read. The entire book was a great confirmation of the path set before us, as Rees Howells was one who was called to a life of faith and the Spirit gave me much encouragement as I read of His dealings with this servant of His.

I had even been put out of the church...

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A few weeks later another brother felt led to send me the biography of the life of Bill Britton, called “*A Prophet on Wheels*.” His life is even more contemporary than that of Rees Howells, and it is

I am a just God, those who put their life in My hands need never fear.

filled with similar testimonies of God’s provision in the life of one who was called out from wage earning to a life of faith. We have recently also acquired a couple

books on the life of George Muller, and the accounts of the daily faithfulness of God in the provision for hundreds, and even thousands, of orphans in England are incredible.

In all of this the Spirit has given us many confirmations of His will for us to step out in faith and walk in a way that is rarely seen in our present generation. He has been most kind to confirm our path over and over.

Back on July 24, 2002, during the period of time that I was teaching college classes, my hours had just been cut due to a lack of students, and I had also just had the longest break of the year between classes, this being about three weeks, where I received no income at all. We had bills due and no money on hand, and I called the family together for prayer. I wanted to hear from God as to whether I should seek another job, or whether we should look to Him to supply our need. I gave each member of our family a piece of paper and a pen and I asked them to go to their rooms and write down whatever the Spirit should give them. During this time I asked the Father to speak a clear word to me through my family.

A short time later we gathered back together and my daughter Kristin, who was fourteen years of age at the time, handed me the paper she had written on. The anointing on the words she wrote has been so powerful that I have carried them with me constantly. There have been days when I have pulled them out numerous times to be encouraged by the words that the Spirit spoke to me

through my daughter. Here is what the Spirit had Kristin record.

I have great things in store for your family.

Marvelous things that only I can get the credit for.

My sheep will hear My voice and they will know that it is I, the Lord thy God.

My provision is on its way. My timing is perfect.

You need not fear any trouble, instead, trust Me.

The time has not yet come to reveal all things, but behold, it is drawing nigh.

You need have no less than great expectations, for I, the Lord thy God, am in control.

Watch and wait.

You must put behind you all foolish thoughts of doubt and disbelief, for great is My reward for those who trust.

Forget not those things which I have done for you, and expect greater things in the future.

I am a just God, those who put their life in My hands need never fear.

Await with anticipation the things that are to come. They are drawing near.

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Those things which I have spoken to you will be fulfilled, for I do not lie.

I have listened to your heart's cry. I have not turned a deaf ear.

I am a father who loves to give good gifts to His children. Trust My timing.

You must learn to listen to My voice, and My voice alone. Take the path which I have set for you. Do not turn to the right or to the left.

Hearing from God is crucial to a life of faith. We can be sure that the enemy will buffet us with many false and lying words as he seeks to instill fear in our hearts and turn us from the path set before us. It is critical that we learn to listen only to the voice of God. As this prophetic word states, this is something that we must learn. It does not come in a moment of time, but as the fruit of continual pressing in.

Recently we had a day here in our new location where the wind blew hard all day long. The wind picked up speed as the day wore on and the trees were bent over under the onslaught. In the spirit I was also undergoing fierce gales of oppression as the enemy relentlessly attacked throughout the day. Anxiety kept buffeting me, and I had to fight to keep standing firm upon the ground of faith. I wondered how long the assault would last and when I would finally break through to realms of peace. Late in the day the peace finally came, even as the wind was abating outside.

It is the Father's will to allow us to be subjected to such onslaughts. In this way we learn to mature in our faith and to come to a place of steadfastness. At such times we must stand upon the word that

has been sown in our spirit and upon our confidence in the love of God that will never allow us to encounter more than we can bear. His words to us must be more real to us than the physical world around us. We must give much attention to hearing from Him, for:

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Prayer:

Father, teach us to hear Your voice, and to distinguish it clearly from the voice of the enemy. Though the adversary comes in disguise, masquerading as a messenger of truth, he is a liar and the truth is not in him. May his disguise be revealed and his true nature uncovered, for he seeks only to kill, steal and destroy. You, however, have established plans for us, to give us a future and a hope. Teach us to wait patiently upon a word from You, and to stand when the word is given, not turning aside to the left or to the right.

It is critical that we learn to listen only to the voice of God.

Your word, Father, is precious to us. Your word sustains the weary one, and gives courage to the fainthearted. We are but dust, but when You breathe upon us we are given life. Breathe upon us Father. Fill us with Your Spirit. May Your anointing carry us through all the trials of life and bring us safely to Your side.

Our Strength and Shield

In the preceding chapters I shared some events in which the Spirit of God has called my family to step out in faith and to lean totally upon Him.

The Divine Quest

Some who have read of the victories and miraculous provision we have seen in our lives as we looked to Him have thought that we must be a different type of person than they are. Satan would like to convince those who read these

You are a perfect candidate for God to display His mighty power through.

things that it is only some type of elite saint who can experience such victories and perform exploits in the name of Christ, and that only a few are given faith to experience such a walk.

This is merely one more lie of the enemy to keep the saints from having the confidence to believe that they too can experience the overcoming power of God in their lives. Let me tell you the truth of this matter.

I think that God has chosen me to walk in places of faith, and to write about them, in order that the church might know that Yahweh is capable of taking the weakest, most fearful, and anxiety prone man, and through His power and love He is able to make such a one stand. Some saints after having read of some of our experiences have written to comment that I must possess a powerful faith, and this makes it sound like the power to walk this path of faith is something that is in me. Such ones have formed the exact wrong conclusion, for I am exceedingly weak in myself, and it is only the strength and grace of God that keeps me standing. Paul expressed this beautifully.

II Corinthians 12:9

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Paul has also described the type of people God has primarily chosen to do His works.

I Corinthians 1:26-29

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God.

Do you feel that you are described in the passage above? If so, then congratulations to you! You are a perfect candidate for God to display His mighty power through. By choosing the foolish and weak and base and despised things of this world, and then displaying His awesome power through such vessels, He receives all the glory. God chose me for this particular walk based upon my insufficiency, and my inadequacy, and my weakness. If I had been a strong and self-confident person, full of faith in my own abilities, then I would have been led to boast about the great man of faith that I am.

A few years back I wrote an article detailing some of the magnificent victories God has wrought on behalf of my family, and in it I described myself in this way:

From my youth I have been beset with feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. I felt that I was somehow inferior to other people and that I was lacking in certain vital areas that I really couldn't define, but which I felt nonetheless. I rarely looked people in the eyes when I spoke to them because of my insecurity. I was placed in a public speaking class once when I was in High School and the first day we had to state our name and say one short fact about ourselves. I was mortified. I turned red and stammered and sweated and I went immediately afterward and dropped the class.

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I became so frightened about being in the public eye and put on the spot that I would avoid every situation that held fear for me. I was consumed with a fear of other people and their opinions of me, thinking that people would see my lack and failings and I would somehow be rejected. One of the most trying episodes for me was getting a haircut. While getting a haircut I was a captive and could not flee until it was over. I was afraid that I would get nervous while getting a haircut and that it would be noticed. I would begin to sweat profusely and this was impossible for the barber to not notice since my hair would be glistening with sweat while he was trying to cut it. Haircuts for me became miserable times as I tried to do everything to not think about getting nervous, only to fail time after time and to have my head dripping with sweat while the barber cut my hair. I even had a barber hand me a towel to dry my hair and wipe my brow as he noticed my discomfort.

I share these things with you to show you that I have not been a bold or self confident person. You can then understand that when I tell you how I have seen the power of God manifested in my life that God has done these things through a weak and insignificant vessel that He has chosen to display His power through. We are told that He has chosen the weak and the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.

God has taken someone who could not even say his name in public and He has called me to publicly proclaim the word of God. This I have done now from my early twenties and God has used my own insecurity to cause me to cast myself upon Him for His strength, His enabling, and His ability to have His word proclaimed. I have often stood upon God's own words to Moses, "Did I not create man's lips? I will be with your mouth and give you the words to speak." In our weakness we look to the promises of God and we press into them and rely heavily upon them. It is then that we see His power manifested.

Like Paul, I would rather boast about my weakness in order to magnify the grace of God that is available to all of the saints. In the previous chapter on hearing God I shared how vital it is to hear the voice of God to both direct our steps and to give us confirmations along the way. Gideon had no confidence in himself, nor in the Israelites' ability to defeat their foes. Because of this he asked for a number of confirmations to God's will, and he received them. When God first called me to step out from wage earning and to trust Him for our provision, I asked Him for so many confirmations that I became ashamed to ask for more. Yet He was patient with me and gave me all the confirmation I needed.

I would not have anyone to receive the impression that God chose me for some inherent strength in me. He did not choose me because He knew He could speak a word of direction to me one time and I would go forth fearlessly with no anxiety or shadow of doubt. I have needed many assurances, and He has walked with me as a father would walk with a small child, holding my hand and speaking words of comfort to me all along the way.

This has also been how He has walked with those men and women in the Bible who we view as the champions of faith.

Moses is revered today, as he has been for thousands of years, for the mighty power of God that was demonstrated through him. Yet by his own confession he could not even speak. He tried to convince Yahweh that He had called the wrong man. I find great comfort in this, for at times I have felt the same way. In the writing "*The Lion, the Bear and Goliath*" I wrote some about the men God has chosen to display His power through.

He has walked with me as a father would walk with a small child.

We sometimes have a view of certain Biblical

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personalities as being cut from a different mold than us. We think they were not beset with our petty weaknesses of the flesh, with doubts, fears, and uncertainty. In thinking this we actually make things more difficult for ourselves because when we find these weaknesses resident in our frame we become convinced that we are not cut from the same cloth as the saints of God whom we read about as overcomers. But let me assure you, they all experienced these same fleshly battles.

Abraham, the father of faith, was afraid that he would be killed by foreigners when he sojourned

A trait of all overcomers in Christ is humility.

in their land because of the beauty of his wife. He therefore had her passed off as his sister and she was even taken to be another man's wife on two occasions,

but God protected her from any sexual involvement.

Jacob ran for his life from the anger of his brother who vowed to kill him. He later deceived his father-in-law and snuck away from his household to avoid a confrontation with him. Later, as he approached his homeland, he was gripped with fear at the prospect of meeting his brother again and he was afraid that he and his wives and children would be killed. He took steps to at least spare some of them, even when God had told him to return to his homeland and God vowed to be with him.

David, who is often thought to be as fearless of an individual as there ever was, wrote so many Psalms that expressed how his soul was being overwhelmed by his trials and adversaries that it is impossible to think that he didn't struggle with these same human feelings of weakness. He cried out over and over for God to come to him quickly lest he should perish and his soul should be swallowed up in despair.

But how about the New Testament? Wasn't Paul a man who endured so many things and who did so courageously without any fear at all? Listen to his own words.

I Corinthians 2:1-4

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Yahshua the Messiah, and Him crucified. **And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.** And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power...

It seems somehow incongruent that Paul could preach "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," yet he was physically "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." Yet Paul understood that God's power is not shown through our natural strength, but through our weakness. It is in our weakness that we deem ourselves incapable of performing anything of eternal value so that we throw ourselves unreservedly over onto the Father and say "God, if anything of worth or value is to come forth it must come from You, for I am unable to accomplish it." This acknowledgment of our weakness opens the door for the power of God to be manifest.

A trait of all overcomers in Christ is humility. Such ones do not have an elevated opinion of themselves, or of their own strength and abilities. Their confidence is in God Who has called them, and Who will surely keep them through all trials. This, once more, is a reason that Satan so opposes faith in the hearts of men and women. True faith exalts God. The false faith that is rampant in this hour exalts men, and men love to be exalted. The world can watch men prancing around on stage blowing on people and pushing on their foreheads, so that all can see the power in them as men and women fall to the ground. They present

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themselves as great giants of faith. True faith that pleases God does not act unbecomingly, but is marked by humility.

As I have been writing this book, the Spirit has been reminding me of my own weakness and dependence upon Him. There have been a number of days recently when the Lord has pulled back His hand of protection from me just a little bit, and He has allowed the enemy to buffet me. I have felt that a fierce gale was raging in my soul, and words of anxiety and fear and doubt and unbelief were being carried to me on the wind. These words would slam into me and I would feel my flesh responding with a desire to flee. Satan has sought to move me from the ground the Spirit has told me to stand upon, and I have felt myself teetering at times.

Yesterday was one such day. I dealt with battles raging in my soul all day long, and I prayed, and confessed, and praised God, but the intensity of the battle would not weaken. After a time I began to grow weary, and I even got down on my knees and wept as I prayed to God for strength and deliverance. I felt isolated and very vulnerable. In the evening I sent out an e-mail to the saints asking them to stand in intercession with me. I shortly received a number of e-mails back as brothers and sisters in Christ said they were standing with me in prayer. Before I even read their letters, however, I felt the impact of their prayers as the storm in my soul finally subsided and the light and peace of Christ came flooding in.

The Spirit spoke to me through this and disclosed to me my great dependence upon Him. I have no reason to boast, weak and fearful as I am. If I have been able to stand in past trials, it has only been because He has strengthened me and given me the grace to do so. This strength and grace is available to all of the saints. After this experience, the Spirit began leading me to Scriptures that brought forth this point very clearly. He is the One who makes the saints to stand. The ability is

not in ourselves.

Jude 24-25

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Yahshua Messiah our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

A part of our faith in the character of God is trusting that He will keep us in the time of trial. We must believe that He will never suffer the righteous to be overcome by evil, and that His hand of protection will shelter us in the storm. When the storms were blowing in my own life, His hand was ever present. He told the Devil that He could go only so far and no more. He never totally removed His protection from me. He is like a master metalworker who is watching the temperature of the fire with great intensity so that it will heat the metal enough for the impurities to rise to the surface where they can be removed, but not too high that the metal should become brittle or damaged.

This strength and grace is available to all of the saints.

In the book of Job we see this watchfulness of the Lord. Satan had to get permission to attack Job, and God set precise limits on what Satan could and could not do.

Job 1:9-12

Then Satan answered Yahweh, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side?... Then Yahweh said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him."

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In the lives of the saints today, Satan still has to get permission from the Lord to touch us. We see this revealed in Yahshua's words to Peter.

Luke 22:31-32

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

In these few words it is revealed that Satan has to get permission to touch the saint. The Lord will never allow Satan to have a greater access to us

The flesh is of no profit in a spiritual struggle.

than we are able to bear, and Yahshua also intercedes for us during the trial. This should be a comfort to all the saints. Consider also the purpose for the testing that

Christ allows here. It states that Satan desired to sift Peter as wheat. When wheat is sifted, the impurities in the wheat are revealed and are discarded. This produces a beneficial effect in the life of the saint.

The impurity that was present in Peter's life was self confidence, a trust in his own abilities. The next verses reveal this stronghold in Peter's flesh that had to be broken, bringing forth a humility in him.

Luke 22:33-34

But [Peter] said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!" And He said, "I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me."

Peter had such a confidence in his own strength that he stated that even if all of the other disciples abandoned Christ, that he would not do so

(Matthew 26:33-35). The confidence that Peter manifested with these words is not the type of faith that pleases God. Peter's faith was based upon confidence in his own ability to stay the course and not deny the Lord. Peter learned before the day was out that determination and self effort are incapable of providing the strength to stand in the face of the enemy.

This was also the lesson the Spirit brought to me yesterday. I was near to abandoning the course and giving in to fear and anxiety. The Lord was allowing Satan to sift me to reveal the weakness of my own flesh that I would place no confidence in the flesh. Our only confidence should be in God's ability and willingness to cause us to stand. The flesh is of no profit in a spiritual struggle.

Paul knew much about battling the enemy, and he was wise enough to not trust in his own strength. He knew that the Lord would never allow him, or any saint, to encounter more than they could handle as they manifested faith in the character of God.

I Corinthians 10:13

No test has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tried beyond what you are able to bear, but with the testing will provide the way out, an egress, so that you will be able to endure it.

(Author's translation)

Paul knew that it was not by his own strength that he stood, for he boasted in his weakness that he might more readily receive the power of God. Paul received strength continuously from God in his many trials.

I Timothy 1:12

I thank Messiah Yahshua our Lord, ***who has strengthened me...***

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II Timothy 4:16-17

At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But ***the Lord stood with me and strengthened me...***

I believe God will use many saints in these latter days to perform great exploits of faith. The dead will be raised, miracles will be performed, multitudes will be healed, the Spirit will be imparted, and greater works than Christ performed will be seen. In all of this no man or woman will have reason to boast in themselves. If left to our own strength for a moment, we would be overwhelmed. We have One to lean on Who has all strength, all power, and all might. His name is Yahweh, and in Him I will make my boast.

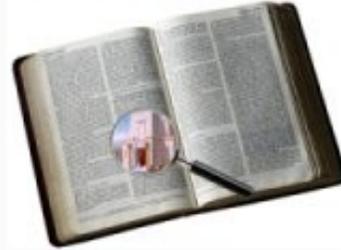
Jeremiah 9:23-24

Thus says Yahweh, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am Yahweh who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares Yahweh.

Prayer:

Father, my confidence rests upon the many testimonies of Your love and care for me. I may merely be dust, but I am dust that You have filled with Your life. You are the One who has called me. You will also cause me to stand. Teach my fearful heart to rest in You. Shelter me under Your wings. Call me into the place of sanctuary. Hide me until the storms of life are over. You are my rock and my strong tower. In You alone will I seek refuge, my Lord and my God.

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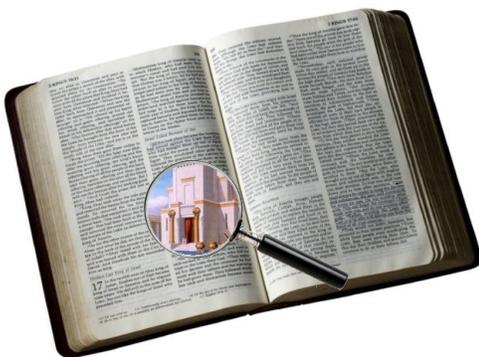
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PARABLES PRECEPT— The Bible



In the last issue we looked at how many books are in the Bible. In this issue I would like to speak about the order of the books.

You may have guessed that the books are listed in the order in which they were written, oldest to most recent. This is not the case, however. Once more the

traditions of men have entered into the arrangement of the books of the Bible.

Many scholars consider the book of Job to be the oldest of the Scripture writings, followed by the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). However, the book of Job appears as the 18th of 39 books among Protestant Bibles, and the 14th of 22 books in the Jewish Scriptures.

The Jewish Old Testament, the **TaNaKh**, is divided into sections according to the category of writing. First are the five books of Moses called the Torah, or teachings. Then come the **Neviim**, or prophets, followed by

the **Ketubim**, or writings.

The order of the books of the Old Testament among popular Christian Bibles is very much different. They too are laid out by category, but the categories differ from the Hebrew Tanakh. Following are the divisions of our common Christian Bibles.

- Pentateuch (five books of Moses)
- Historical Books
- Wisdom Books
- Major Prophets
- Minor Prophets

Can you determine which books belong to each group? With a little thought you can probably figure it out.