



THREE MONTH
DAILY
DEVOTIONAL

VOLUME FOUR / SERIES ONE

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VOLUME FOUR

SERIES ONE

These brief messages are offered to the reader as “starters” for meditation before the Lord and introductions to a time of prayer. We encourage the reader to take one daily message at a time, leaving tomorrow’s message in tomorrow’s hands. Reading each section more than once may be helpful.

**THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN
HIS REIGN**



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DAY 1 - THE ABSURDITY OF PRAYER

You can't prove, even to yourself, that anybody's listening.

You can't demonstrate that it "works."

You can't measure the results.

Talk about a leap of faith!

And yet, any one who has the slightest inclination to draw near to Jesus and follow him will soon discover the necessity of prayer.

Prayer is a major teaching of Jesus for those who follow him.

Prayer that is based on his mercy, not our worthiness.

Prayer made effective, not by our tears, but by his cross.

Prayer that forces us to reconcile with each other...

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Mark 11:24-25

Prayer warms the Father's heart.

We don't measure it. We don't analyze it. We just do it.

"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Or what man of you, if his son asks him for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?"

Matthew 7:7-11

DAY 2 - AM I A SPIRITUAL SLOB?

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control.

II Timothy 1:7

If you want to walk by faith, you cannot allow yourself to become a spiritual slob.

The vast majority of professing Christians have no conception of the importance of discipline.

They are spiritually flabby.

They are blown around by every new wind that claims to be "the truth."

Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

I Corinthians 9:26-27

God puts the life of the Spirit into me,

but it's up to me to make sure this new life doesn't get snuffed out...

by my self-indulgence,

by my vanity,

by my complacency.

Self-discipline:

1. Making sure that I drink daily from the spring of living water which the Lord has given me.

No one can do this for me. I have to do it.

2. Making sure that I present my body to the Lord daily as a living sacrifice.

No one can do this for me. I have to do it.

3. Making sure to cut away everything that distracts me from my focus on obedience to the Master.

God will help me to recognize the things which are a distraction in my life.

Eating habits.

How I use time.

Wasted words (gossip, etc.).

Signs of sloth.

DAY 3 - CONNECTING WITH GOD

It's not our "opinions" about God that matter....

It's not our "beliefs" about God that show the way...

Nothing happens until we connect.

And how can we connect with God, unless God draws near and connects us with himself?

Unless God speaks and we pay attention.

Nicodemus recognized God in Jesus.

"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him."

But Nicodemus, for all his learning and moral rectitude, was not yet connected.

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

We can only connect with God when God raises us out of our spiritual graves and makes us alive with his Spirit.

And we can only stay connected with God by staying alive

in the Spirit.

And we can only stay alive in the Spirit of God by walking in the light that the Spirit gives.

"Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit,"

John 3

"Every one who asks, receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."

DAY 4 - DEALING WITH STORM CLOUDS

The war, bloodshed, and carnage which we see in the nightly news no longer seem distant.

We are beginning to taste the uncertainty which others have been living with for years.

We see our own "security" hanging by a thread.

Lord, what's going on?

How far are you allowing the chaos to spread?

"When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

Luke 12:54-56

i.e. "Can't you figure it out?"

"Can't you see what's going on?"

The Lord himself expects us to be able to "interpret the

present time."

History may be "out of control" as far as the powers of this world are concerned.

But history is unfolding exactly as our Lord promised it would.

His warning: "See that you are not alarmed."

His promise: "Lo, I am with you always."

"And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold. But he who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come."

Matthew 24:10-14

DAY 5 - DELIVER US FROM EVIL

...From the evil without.

...From the evil within.

Evil is not simply "the absence of good" like cold is the "absence of heat."

Evil has a life of its own.

Evil is intelligent.

Evil is clever.

Evil is a spiritual force.

Evil can insinuate itself into the mind and heart undetected.

Evil knows how to present itself as an angel of light.

It's primary weapon of conquest is deceit.

Like the Mafia, it's much easier to get into it than to get out of it.

Once in the grip of evil we need the help of the living God to escape.

Hence, "Deliver us from evil."

Our Lord Jesus taught that prayer, not to perverse sinners, but to devout men: his own disciples.

If they needed to pray such a prayer, so do we.

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; but when one stronger than he assails him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoil. He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

Luke 11:21-23

Lord Jesus, you alone can deliver us from the "strong man." Open our eyes to see our need. Give us the wisdom to seek your constant help, that we may no longer be prisoners of Evil parading itself as Good.

DAY 6 - GOD HAS APPOINTED YOU....

"Brother Saul, receive you sight....The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Just One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard..."

Acts 22:13-15

Long before he knew a thing about it, Saul of Tarsus was appointed by God to be a witness to his Messiah.

When the time arrived, Saul was told.

He rose, got baptized, and answered his call.

It was not your initiative, but God's, that brought you to such a moment in your life.

God is the author of your faith.

God is the source of your salvation.

God the Father sent Jesus into your life.

He now pours into you the Living Water of his Spirit.

No one can come to me unless the Father who has sent me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

And yet.....***Many are called, but few are chosen.***

Saul of Tarsus answered the call with a surrendered life.

He denied himself, took up his cross and followed Jesus.

He went where he was sent.

Spoke what he was given.

Served with joy.

The same Spirit who lifted Saul into a new life and kept him there will do the same for you.....

....provided you walk in the light you are now receiving.

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts; And lead me in the way everlasting!

DAY 7 - WHO ARE THE ELECT?

"And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?"

His elect?

Some are and some aren't?

Who's who?

Where do I fit into this picture?

And if the Lord had not shortened the days, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days. And then if any one says to you, "Look, here is the Christ!" or "Look, there he is!" do not believe it. False Christs and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

Mark 13:20-22

Sounds like some people are lucky.

God chose them.

They're the elect.

And the rest? Too bad!

But wait a minute! "Many are called, but few chosen."

i.e. Many are called to the Kingdom Banquet, but only a few respond.

Many are offered the Living Water, but only a few receive it.

Many hear the words of the Lord Jesus, but few do them.

The elect: Those who hear the Word of God and keep it.

Those who answer the call of the Shepherd.

Those who do the will of the Father.

Those who "cry to God day and night."

Those who deny themselves, take up their cross daily and follow the Lord Jesus.

God knows who they are.

God alone.

DAY 8 - TEMPORARY

Exactly where we go from here is known to God alone.

All we know is that our stay here is temporary.

When our time is up, we're gone.

Nevertheless man being in honor abideth not:

He is like the beasts that perish.....

But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: For he shall receive me.

Psalms 49

How do I know that God will receive me?

How can I be sure that he will not let me drift in realms unknown?

He will receive me on the "other side" if he has me now.

He will surely guide my journey in the beyond, if he guides me now.

Eternal life begins on this side of the grave.

Eternal life is simply knowing the One True God

---as he reveals himself in the Incarnate Word.

Eternal life is "Christ in you the hope of glory."

Eternal life is to be indwelt by his Holy Spirit.

And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son has not life.

I John 5:11-12

Sooner or later, somewhere somehow, this gift of life is offered to every soul who has ever walked this earth.

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

What we do with the offer is up to us.

DAY 9 - DISTRACTED

"Salute no one on the road."

We set out with good intentions.

We're focused on what the Master has sent us to do.

When voices begin to call to us from the left and the right.

"Help!"

"Over here!"

"How can you follow Jesus and ignore my plea!"

Legitimate needs.

Good causes.

How can we refuse?

Soon we're so bogged down in "causes" and "programs" and "crusades" that the Master's clear instructions are lost in the confusion.

And when it was day he departed and went into a lonely place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them; but he said to them, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose."

Luke 4:42-43

Jesus' first priority was his Father's will, not human need.

As he obeyed the Father human needs were met---the Father's way.

Our first priority is the Master's will.

If we listen and obey, human needs will be met---the Master's way.

The Pool of Bethesda was crowded with infirmed people.

Jesus picked out one man and healed him.

Didn't he care about the others?

Of course he cared about the others.

But Jesus allowed nothing to distract him from the Father's direction.

It's the only way to bear fruit that lasts.

DAY 10 - HUNG UP

The mighty River or the Spirit carries us forward in the purpose of God.

We see glory.

We learn.

We minister.

We speak a sustaining word to one who is weary.

Life from God burns in our hearts.

.....Then we get snagged.

A low-hanging branch catches us as we're flowing in the Spirit's current.

A new fascination.

A sudden resentment.

A consuming project.

Anxiety.

A distracting love.

The River moves on without us.

We're stuck.

"This is only temporary," we say to ourselves.

But time goes on.

The River passes us by---not because it has forsaken us....but because we have forsaken it.

Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me. He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Revelation 3:19-22

DAY 11 - WHAT A COINCIDENCE!

Coincidence: "An accidental and remarkable occurrence of events, ideas, etc. at the same time, in a way that sometimes suggests a causal relationship."

That book that came into your hands...

That person who suddenly reappeared in your life...

The timing of that phone call.....

What's going on?

Who is behind this strange coinciding of events?

Is the living God at work in this?

Is the evil one trying to distract me?

Was it "just a coincidence?"

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself. Why, we felt that we had received the sentence of death; but that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead; he delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us; on him we have

set our hope that he will deliver us again.

II Corinthians 1:8-10

If you are walking with God, nothing is a coincidence.

The Lord is there.

And he knows what's going on, even if you don't.

Whatever happens---usual or unusual---as you go through the day, happens with the permission of the living God.

His presence, even in the darkest hour, is able to transfigure every event into something redemptive.

Practice his presence.

Wait on him.

Trust him.

And you will mount up on wings like the eagle.

"Lo, I am with you all the days, to the end of the age." Matthew 28

DAY 12 - FINDING MY WAY BACK

What do I do when I wake up one day and discover I'm lost?

The road seemed right, but now I'm in a wilderness.

Where did I go wrong, Lord?

How do I get back to the real road through the crazy maze behind me?

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

Proverbs 14

Agreed. But what do I do now?

Call for help!

Cry out for light!

***Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.
From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee,
when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the
rock that is higher than I.***

Psalms 61

You lost your way the minute you started relying on your own wisdom.

You will find your way back the instant you give up the pretense of "knowing" and look to the One who alone knows the way.

A simple prayer....

A direct act of obedience to whatever light you have....

An admission to your own heart, that you are lost without his help....

And you will soon receive light to backtrack until you reach the Way again.

"I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 8:12

DAY 13 - FIGHT IT OR FLY WITH IT

God's grace pursues us day and night.

It speaks to us through people we meet.

It touches us in every circumstance.

It calls us through one "coincidence" after another.

For our good!

For our deliverance from darkness!

Yet, we're inclined to fight it.

Wherever his word is alive and speaking, the Lord is there.

He never forces his love upon us.

He knocks on the door, but never forces it.

He just keeps knocking and waiting.

He just keeps watching and praying.

For us.

For our good.

For our deliverance from darkness.

We can keep fighting him.....

or we can yield, and rise with him to new life---
daily...hourly....moment by moment.

He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become sons and daughters of God; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:11-13

DAY 14 - GIVING THANKS

After the miracle it's easy to give thanks.

But what about those ordinary days?

There is a discipline of thanksgiving that opens our hearts to the presence of God, and holds them there.

---A discipline, because it will not happen spontaneously.

---It's a consciously formed habit.

We begin the day with thanksgiving.

....Thanking God for who he is, for his unspeakable mercy.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise!

Psalm 100

We walk through the day giving thanks.

....Thanking God for the gift of his Son, for his presence in all things.

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do

everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:17

We end the day breathing thanks, as we lie down to sleep.

...Thanking God for his provision and protection (seen and unseen) during the past day.

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

Psalm 4

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

DAY 15 - MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

They hear...

They're open to the Living Word who speaks to them and directs their path.

AND I KNOW THEM

They're known...

They know that they are known personally by the Shepherd, who calls them by name.

AND THEY FOLLOW ME

They obey...

When the Master says, "Let go of that grudge," they do it.

When he says, "Reach out to Lazarus, the needy one at your gate," they obey.

When he says, "Forgive as you have been forgiven," they find that they can do it, and they forgive.

When he says, "Trust me," they put their doubts into his hands.

AND I GIVE THEM ETERNAL LIFE, AND NO ONE

SHALL SNATCH THEM OUT OF MY HAND.

They live...

They are alive with the life of The World to Come. The Spirit of God is their sustaining breath. They are in the world, but not of it. The joy of the Lord is their strength.

Many are called, but few are chosen.

Matthew 22:14

DAY 16 - ME CRUCIFIED?

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

I'm alive.

I'm walking around.

I get up and go to work every day.

So what do you mean, Crucified?

Exactly what the apostle Paul means: Dead.

You can only live with Christ on this earth after you have died with him.

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Matthew 16:24-25

To carry a cross is to reckon oneself dead.

To lose one's life for his sake is to let go of it.

So that now I'm dead to myself and alive only to God.

I have no rights.

I have no claim on this world.

I am no longer my own.

I am his.

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Colossians 3: 1-3

When you're crucified with Christ, you're free to live in his resurrection power.

It's the only way.

DAY 17 - DON'T BE AFRAID TO FEAR GOD

Yes, "God is love,"

True, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son."

Fact: "Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

And how often we hear Jesus say to us: "Fear not."

Yet Jesus never removed "fear of God" from the kingdom agenda.

God loves us.

We are of more value than many sparrows.

But we never play games with God's love.

"Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name."

"I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has the power to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God."

*Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered.
Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows."*

Luke 12:4-7

We are to fear no one on this earth.

---not even those who are determined to kill us.

Death is the end of their power over us.

There is nothing more they can do.

But we are to fear the One who will one day say to those who spurn his saving love:

"Have it your way."

When God speaks those words,

hell has begun.

DAY 18 - DO IT HIS WAY OR FORGET IT!

The Master says, "Follow me."

We answer, "Yes, Lord I will follow you....."

"But first let me bury my father...."

"But first let me say farewell to those at my home...."

"Here's a little suggestion that will speed church growth..."

"First I need to raise support for my ministry....."

Pay attention to Jesus response every time the disciples tried to "improve" on his approach: And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you not are on the side of God, but of men"

Matthew 16:22-23

But when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for a large sum, and given to the poor." But Jesus said to them,

"Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me....." Matthew 26:8-10

Jesus says, "Go make disciples."

He never adds,

"After you have raised sufficient funds."

"After you've cleaned up your act."

"After your kids are out of college."

"Start where you are, and trust me to guide you."

"I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

John 15:5

DAY 19 - FAITH IS WHAT YOU DO

---Not what you claim to believe, but what you do in answer to God's constant call---

That's faith.

"Follow me."

...and Matthew left his tax collecting and followed.

"Seek first the kingdom of God."

...they obeyed, and God provided.

"Behold, Lord, half my goods I'm giving to the poor, and if I've defrauded anyone, I will restore it fourfold."

..."Today salvation has come to this house."

You can have the doctrines "down cold," and be a complete unbeliever in your actual daily life.

You can be a theologian with profound insights....

And yet....

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"

Luke 6:46

"Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 7:24

The Holy Spirit is given to us...

---to enable us to walk the walk,

---to convict us into repentance when we turn aside,

---to help us back on our feet when we stumble,

---to empower us to stay in the light.

To live by faith is to walk in the light by the power of the Spirit.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

Matthew 5:6

DAY 20 - GETTING TO THE REAL WORK

"I like to get my prayers out of the way early, so I can get on with the real work."

The real work?

What's **that**?

What do you think your prayers are?

A duty?

A ritual?

A courtesy toward God?

"My day goes better when I start out with prayer," as if prayer is the warm-up for the main act.

Prayer IS the real work.

It is not the warm-up to the "real work."

It is not our daily "mood-setter."

Prayer is the essential work.

Everything else is gravy!

Every major event in our Master's ministry was connected

with prayer:

His baptism.

His choosing of disciples.

His transfiguration.

His crucifixion.

The Lord Jesus gives no instructions as to how to heal, or cast out demons, or preach, or even how to make disciples. But he never ceases to teach the disciples---and us---how to pray.

When you pray say, "Our Father who art in heaven....."

He taught them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

"If you ask anything in my name, I will do it."

The Lord Jesus himself will teach us to pray, when we begin praying in earnest. His Spirit will help us, interceding for us with sighs too deep for words. Prayer: that's the real work.

DAY 21 - GOD DOESN'T NEED YOUR HELP

.....God is looking for your obedience.

So much of our "work for God" is a product of our own ambition.

---Elaborate church edifices God never told us to build.

---"Christian ministries" God never asked us to create.

Like the Temple in Jerusalem, the hour is coming when "there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down."

Except the Lord build the house,

They labor in vain that build it.

The living God can accomplish more through five minutes of child-like obedience than through years and years of flesh-driven "Christian Enterprise."

"Go and learn what this means,

'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.'"

God doesn't need our help.

He is looking for our obedience.

"Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.'"

Matthew 7:21-23

Beware of using the name of Christ

without conforming to the mind of Christ,

who "humbled himself and became obedient unto death."

DAY 22 - HALLOWED BE THY NAME

Our Lord Jesus put that at the top of this model prayer,
this perfect prayer
which he taught us.

Hallowed be thy Name.

Until we are able to digest those words,
until our hearts are able to pray those words,
it is impossible to proceed through the rest of
The Lord's Prayer---with faith.

Hallowed be thy Name.

The name of the living God....

---so holy that a devout Jew would never utter it.

---so holy that the very sound of it brings angels and
even demons to their knees, with faces to the ground.

In a world of blind arrogance, where the very concept of
The Holy is lost in the cacophony of a thousand clamoring
egos, God can only be approached by those whose hearts
are broken enough to say, "Hallowed be thy Name,"---and

mean it.

"God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector...."

----This man doesn't "get it."

"God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

---This man does.

O Father, help us to find our way down to the place where we can truly and continuously pray: ***"Hallowed be thy Name!"***

DAY 23 - HERE TO "MAKE A DIFFERENCE" OR HERE TO DO THE FATHER'S WILL?

God bless all the men and women who are out there
"making a difference!"

---Sacrificing, so that others can get a chance at a better
life.

---Bringing healing to the sick, help to the forgotten.

Their "cup of cold water" will surely be
remembered by heaven.

Who can deny that they often put us to shame?

But once we have received the call to discipleship, we are
no longer the ones to decide where or how we will "make
a difference."

Jesus our Master---**whose death and resurrection
have made the ultimate difference**---calls us to
lose our lives in doing the Father's will.

***"Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will
enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the***

will of my Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 7:21

"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?"

Matthew 16:24-26

If I am a disciple of Jesus, my life is no longer my own.

It belongs to him.

If he says, "Give to the person in need," what choice do I have?

If he commands me to relinquish that grudge, the issue is settled.

If he sends me out to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel, I go.

And when he commands me to love, he empowers me to obey.

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love

one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35

DAY 24 - HIS BLOOD--- NOT YOUR SWEAT!

But I prayed with such fervor!

I fasted for three days and nights!

And nothing happened.

God did not answer my prayer.

The minute we put the slightest confidence in our "earnestness at prayer" it ceases to be prayer.

It's not how many tears you shed.

It's not how fervent you thought you were.

Your only claim on God is the Blood of the Lamb.

Your only platform for genuine prayer is Redemption.

Not your fervor, God's mercy!

Nothing else.

Now therefore, O our God, hearken to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplications, and for thy own sake, O Lord, cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary,

which is desolate. O my God, incline thy ear and hear; open thy eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name; for we do not present our supplications before thee on the ground of our righteousness, but on the ground of thy great mercy.

Daniel 9:17-18

Come to the Heavenly Father on the basis of Jesus' blood---not your sweat---and you will be heard.

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

DAY 25 - HOLY DISCONTENT

Our spiritual lives are often driven by a discontent which is unholy.

Impatience.

Ambition.

Resentment.

Greed.

It happens to the "best" of us.

"Are you the one who is to come, or do we look for another?" asked the Baptizer of the Messiah.

On the other hand, there is a discontent which is holy, and which we often lack....

"I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished!"

The greatest need in the Body of Christ at this hour is for the Spirit to stir us with holy discontent.

To shake us out of our complacency.

To awaken us out of our self-righteous slumber.

To eject us from the judgment seat, which belongs to God.

.....A discontent with ourselves that leads to repentance.

*When I kept silent, my bones wasted away
Because of my groaning all day long;*

*Day and night your hand was heavy upon me; The
sap in me dried up as in a summer drought.*

*When I acknowledged my sin to you, When I
stopped concealing my guilt,*

*And said, "I will confess my offenses to Adonai
(Lord)"; Then you, you forgave the guilt of my
sin.*

Psalm 32

(Translation by David Stern)

DAY 26 - HOLY UNITY

The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one. I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou has loved me.

John 17:22-23

Not unity around a doctrine.

Not unity around an "approved form of worship."

Not unity around a "common spiritual experience."

Not unity within a "church structure" which claims to be divine.

Not unity around "apostolic succession."

Unity in and through the Lord Jesus alone.

Unity in and through the glory of his cross and death.

Unity of the Spirit, practiced in the bond of peace.

Where there is no unity, there is no redemptive power.

Where there is unity, whatever we bind on earth is bound in heaven; whatever we lose on earth is loosed in heaven. (Matthew 18) Unity cannot be engineered by us.

The only contribution each of us can make to the unity of the Body is to make sure we are continuously reconciled with the Father---and with every person "who has something against us."

(Matthew 5)

After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. Jesus said to the twelve, "Will you also go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

John 6:66-69

DAY 27 - HOW DID THEY DO THAT?

And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Luke 5:11

They left everything.

They let go of their past.

They gave up their present security.

They trusted their future entirely to this
Prophet who had gripped their lives.

When Jesus says "Follow me," he asks for nothing less from us.

If our hearts say, "Yes, Lord, lead on," he always shows us how.

....How to let go of our past, (through the power of his blood.)

....How to let go of our "security" (through the power of his Spirit).

....How to entrust our future to him, as we take our first steps of obedience to his call.

The Lord Jesus did not call you to a "doctrinal position".

He did not call you to membership in a "religious structure".

He did not call you to a "certain lifestyle".

He did not call you to a "Christian Revolution."

He called you to follow him.

To deny yourself, take up your cross daily,
and follow his living Word.

"For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?"

Matthew 16:25-26

DAY 28 - HOW DO YOU MAKE A DISCIPLE?

"All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

But how do you make a disciple?

Jesus never commanded us to "get them saved."

Jesus never told us to get a "decision."

He said, "Make disciples."

A disciple is not made in five minutes.

A disciple is a person who has died to this world in baptism and risen with the Lord Jesus to new life in the Spirit.

A disciple is a person who is learning all that Jesus requires.....and is obeying, by the power of the Spirit.

A disciple is a person who is learning to fit in with the other struggling saints in this "School of

Forgiveness" which is Christ's Body on Earth.

A disciple is a man or woman of constant, disciplined prayer, since the Lord Jesus commands his disciples that they "ought always to pray, and not lose heart."

A disciple is not a volunteer, but a man or woman under a call from the Risen Lord, to "seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

A disciple, by abiding in Jesus, and living his word, goes forth and makes disciples.

Any disciple can make a disciple by the power of the indwelling Lord Jesus.

What the Lord Jesus commands us to do he gives us the power and the patience to do.

DAY 29 - HOW SOON IS SOON?

"Behold I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

Revelations 22:12-13

Soon.

Jesus never implied that we could relax and dabble in distractions.

He said, "Stay awake."

Which means: "Abide in me."

"Pay attention to my words to you."

"Stay under my yoke."

"Walk with me."

"Be my witness."

---with your life.

---with your mouth.

Whether you live or die, he is coming.

And you will answer for what you did with the grace he poured out upon you through his shed blood.

You will account to him for the fruit you have borne by the power of his Resurrection Spirit.

Don't make the mistake of trusting your "experience of salvation,"

your certainty that you are "one of the elect,"

your "superior kindness."

Trust only Jesus,

enough to repent of yourself and answer his call---daily.

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life and that they may enter the City by the Gates.

Revelation 22:14

DAY 30 - JUST PASSING THROUGH

Our great-grandparents have their turn.

Our grandparents have their turn.

Our parents have their turn.

And we have ours.

We're all just passing through.

We're here....and then we're gone.

Gone where?

As for man, his days are as grass:

As the flower of the field so he flourisheth.

For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone;

And the place thereof shall know it no more.

But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting

Upon them that fear him,

And his righteousness unto their children's children.

Psalm 103

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him.

That mercy does not end in death.

"He is not God of the dead, but of the living."

Jesus said to (the woman at the well), "Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John 4: 11-14

DAY 31 - KEEPING IT FRESH

Stale faith is useless.

Yesterday's faith cannot help me today.

When the Master says, "Believe!" I cannot reach back to the past to find the power to do it.

Faith is an act of the will that chooses to trust God now, this instant, for that word he has spoken to me...

"Forgive!"

"Give."

"Fear not."

"Reach out."

"Repent....change direction."

"Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Faith is doing, by the Spirit's power, what we know the Lord is calling us to do.

Not "thinking about it."

Not "teaching it to others."

Not "writing books about it."

Not "preaching it."

Not "praying about it."

Doing it!

"If you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

Mark 9:22-27

DAY 32 - LIFE IS NOT A "REALITY SHOW"

It's the real thing.

Sooner or later each of us will answer for what we did with the light we received.

The issue at this moment for each of us is:

Am I walking in the Light?

Or am I running from it?

The Light is not mere energy.

The Light is Truth Incarnate: a Person.

The Light speaks to your soul,
offers healing to your mind,
brings hope,
lifts you out of despair.

.....But he can only do this if you turn toward him,
and open your spirit to his truth.

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and world was made through him, yet the world knew

him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become sons and daughters of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:9-13

Even if you have never encountered the light in a way that made sense to you, this moment, as you read these words, could change all that.

Invite the Light to come to you, enter you, and direct your steps.

He will.

And you will experience what it is to rise out of darkness into true Light.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 8:12

DAY 33 - LORD GOD WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

Why are you allowing evil men, who cloak themselves in the garb of religion, to tear this world apart?

Why do you permit fanatics to destroy every attempt we make to bring peace and order to troubled war-torn lands?

People are dying of starvation, and we can't even bring them food. Our way is blocked by murderers and rapists who claim to be serving God!

The assumption is, of course, that we're the "good guys."

That's how we see ourselves.

We're the "good guys" and God is letting the "bad guys" tear up the world.

*Thou who art of purer eyes than to behold evil
and canst not look on wrong,
why dost thou look on faithless men,
and art silent when the wicked swallows up*

the man more righteous than himself?

Habakkuk 1:13

We may be the "good guys" in our own eyes, but not in God's.

We're wasting our time, complaining about the bad guys.

The Lord God asks: "What have you done with the light you've been given?"

The Lord is in his holy temple;

Let all the earth keep silence before him.

Habakkuk 2:20

Not: whose side is God on?

Rather: whose side are we on?

"Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 7:21

DAY 34 - LOW-PROFILE SAINTHOOD

When Jesus tells us we are the light of the world, he doesn't mean we're celebrities---big or little.

And when Jesus implies that we are not to hide our light under a bushel he's reminding us that there is indeed a bushel often blocking the light from view.

What could that bushel be?

For most of us, even the shy ones, it's our ego.

They can't see God's light because of our ego.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 5:14-16

So who gets the glory when they see our "good works?"

Do they see God?

Are they drawn to God?

Are they filled with hope?

Take off the bushel. Let your light shine from a stand for all the world to see.

But every time you catch yourself using your "light" to vindicate yourself in the eyes of others, repent!

Because your "light" has suddenly become a bushel.

DAY 35 - MARKING TIME...

What's wrong with marking time?

I can't be "gung ho" all the time.

One does need to take a break once-in-a-while.

Right now, I'm on spiritual cruise-control.

Call it by it's real name:

complacency.

It pervades the "Christian World."

"I'm born again, and I'm doing okay."

Complacency is the first step into the realm of spiritual stupidity.

"I'm comfortable with myself."

"I'm a practical, common-sense Christian."

Every time we settle into complacency, we stumble.

It happened to Abraham in Egypt.

It happened to Peter in that Night of Darkness.

To whom of us has it not happened?

"For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich, and white garments to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see."

Revelation 3:17-18

In his mercy the Master awakens us out of our complacency with a call to repentance. If we refuse to listen, he may---still in mercy---allow us to crash into a "wall of awakening." If we continue to harden our heart to his call, we are in danger of hearing his chilling word of judgment: "Have it your way."

"Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me."

Revelation 3:19-20

DAY 36 – CONNECTING WITH THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

"I gave God a chance.

He did not answer my question.

He did not meet my expectations.

As far as I'm concerned, God does not exist."

If you expect the God of the universe to reveal himself to you on your terms,
you will wait forever.

There is only one way to meet God:
on his terms.

"Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:3-4

Before the Incomprehensible, you are but a child.

Before the Eternal, you are but a vain fool.

Before the Holy, all your "knowledge" withers to nothing.

The God of the universe is not obligated to "prove himself" to you.

It is you, who are under obligation to take off your shoes and worship the God your heart already dreads.

Until you do, God will remain hidden.

"Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

DAY 37 - NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW

We're not talking about the perfect crime.

We're talking about the petty twists and turns we take in daily life.

Inspired by vanity,

revenge,

envy,

bitterness.

No one will ever know why I said that.

Nor will they realize why I "forgot" to come to their aid.

They will never see the fantasies that fill my idle hours.

My heart contains secrets that scare me sometimes.

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.

Whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Luke 12:2-3

Never forget that your heavenly Father “understands (your) thought afar off.”

If you say “surely the darkness shall cover me,” even the night shall be light around you.

Deception is impossible.

The path of deception is the path of spiritual death.

We only begin to live when we come out into the light before God and man.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, the God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin.

I John 1:5-7

DAY 38 - OUR BUSY RUT

"If only I weren't so busy!"

"If only I could afford the time!"

"My life is nothing but a blur."

Busyness is not an external curse, it's a self-chosen rut.

Busyness is a prison cell with an open door, which we can leave whenever we choose.

"A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.'

But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.'

And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them, I pray you, have me excused.'

And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'"

Luke 14:16-20

The Kingdom of God is never busy.

The switchboard in Heaven is never busy.

Jesus is Lord of Time....yet we never see him "busy."

The simplest way to transform our busyness into a day well spent is to take time to:

- present our body as a living sacrifice to God,
- be transformed by the renewal of our mind,
- refocus on the call of the Lord Jesus upon our life,
- open ourselves afresh to the Spirit's guidance.

They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

Isaiah 40

DAY 39 - OVERLOAD

"Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."

It's too much!

Preparing the meal.

Having it ready on time.

Making sure everything is excellent for our special guest.

And I'm doing it all by myself!

Doesn't my sister have enough sense to come and help me?

It's not fair!

So what do you do, when you just feel overwhelmed?

When your heart says, "It's too much! I can't take it anymore!"

Whenever we reach the point of overload it's time to ask,

"Why am I doing this?"

"Who am I trying to please?"

"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the

good portion, which shall not be taken from her."

Whenever we reach overload, it's time to focus once again on

the one thing needful.

Seek it.

Find it.

Cling to it.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

John 6:68-69

Suddenly the stress is gone.

You have peace within.

DAY 40 - RAGE OR REPENTANCE

When the Word of God's grace is clearly heard,
there are only two possibilities:

Rage or Repentance

It's either: Crucify him!

Or: My Lord and my God!

Apathy and indifference may seem to be the "privilege" of
the spiritually blind and deaf.

But once they are confronted with Truth, they too
have no escape.

***He who is not with me is against me; he
who does not gather with me scatters.***

Comfortable Christendom lives in a world of its own.

It knows nothing of rage or repentance.

It believes that all you have to do is "get saved and
find a good Bible-believing church."

Jesus offers something far better and demands something
far deeper.

"He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it."

Matthew 10: 37-38

If you want the real thing go to the Real Source: the words of Jesus himself.

"Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away."

Matthew 24:35

DAY 41 - RELIGIOUS WORDS

Religious words come in handy at times.

We hear them from preachers, politicians, business leaders, celebrities.

They sound so appropriate, so fitting.

"God bless you all!"

They smooth the road, they soothe troubled waters.

"May the Lord help us through these difficult times!"

But be careful!

Religious words can quickly become blasphemy.

When religious words flow from a calculating, deceitful heart, they call down judgment on the one who speaks them and convey an atmosphere of spiritual death.

Our Lord had no patience with religious words.

"You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: 'This people honors me with

their lips, but their heart is far from me."

Matthew 15:7-8

Beware of using the name of God, or words connected with God as a means to an end.

Beware of exploiting the name of the Lord Jesus, as many do.

Beware of "testimony" coming from the mouth of a person whose life is its denial.

"I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Matthew 12:36-37

DAY 42 - RULES ARE SO MUCH EASIER

Tell me exactly what's required, and I'll do it.

Give me a principle to live by and I'll follow it.

The Bible as a Rule Book for Eternal Life:

That makes sense.

But Jesus confuses the issue for me.

First he says: "***Till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.***"

Then he says: "***You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.***"

So which is it? The Law or Jesus?

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."

Follow Jesus, and you will fulfill the Law.

Allow the words of Jesus to rule your life, and soon he will be living within you.

Obsession with the rules leads either to hypocrisy or despair.

Devotion to Jesus brings the life of heaven into you.

The source: Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The outcome: Out of your heart shall flow rivers of living water.

"Come to me all you who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you , and learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30

DAY 43 - SANCTIFIED SPECTATORS?

Lifting up our hands in praise to Jesus in the assembly.

Listening to wonderful teaching.

Putting some money in the bucket.

.....yet never moving from the Spectator Gallery into the Arena.

"Who says we have to go down into the Arena?"

We're saved by grace!"

But if the "grace" that saved us does not produce a life of discipleship, we need to examine what kind of "grace" we're relying on.

The Lord Jesus who saved us, empowers us to walk in the Father's will.

His grace empowers us to walk the walk.

If we fail to walk the walk, it is because we have spurned his grace.

"Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who

is in heaven."

Matthew 7:21

There is no such thing as a "Sanctified Spectator."

The life of faith cannot be lived in the Gallery, only in the Arena.

The same Lord who called you to himself,
sends you down into the Arena
where the Harvest is waiting for your labor.

"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? I tell you, lift up your eyes and see how the fields are already white for harvest. He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together..... I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

John 4: 35-38

DAY 44 - SELF-ESTEEM?

Is that the problem?

Low self-esteem?

"If I had more confidence in my own worth, would I be able to face life with less anxiety?"

Self-esteem is still bondage to "me."

As long as my confidence rests on who I am,
or who I think I am,
or who people think I am,
I'm on shaky ground.

True freedom involves a death and resurrection:
A death to "me" and all anxiety about my worth,
my image,
my importance.

A resurrection into a life where my only confidence is in the Lord, who now lives in me and rules my life.

I have been crucified with Christ: it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

Freedom from anxiety cannot be achieved through "improved self-esteem."

It can only be found in a life abandoned to God in faith.

"For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?"

Matthew 16:25-26

DAY 45 - "SHOW BUSINESS"

The minute the gospel of the Lord Jesus is mixed with "show business" we've moved from the realm of Spirit to the realm of religious flesh.

There are groups that try to stay "pure" by banning all musical instruments from worship.

Yet you can still be in "show business" without instruments.

There are groups with noisy bands blaring away on the platform.

Yet they can be in serious worship.

"Show business:"

---Trying to "make it happen."

---Trying to engineer a spiritual experience.

---Trying to manipulate hearts and minds.

The Spirit of God can move with power in our worship....

---Only when we take off our shoes.

---Only when we humble ourselves before God.

---Only when we silence our hearts and listen.

And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"

("SHOW BUSINESS") He was still speaking, when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, and were filled with awe.

(WORSHIP IN THE SPIRIT) But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

Help us, Father, in our worship, to see no one but Jesus only!

DAY 46 - SO WHY AREN'T WE DOING IT?

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father."

John 14:1-12

Was Jesus exaggerating, or are we missing the boat somewhere?

How many of us are "doing the works that he did"?

If Jesus has passed his authority to us through the gift of the Holy Spirit, how come that authority is not evident as we reach out to people in his name? (John 20) If we are "the light of the world," why aren't people giving glory to our Father as they see our good works? (Matthew 5) If ***"we are abiding in our Lord, and his word is abiding in us"***, why is the fruit of our prayers so sparse and meager? (John 15) There is only one place to go with such questions: to the Lord Jesus himself.

And we will only go to him with these questions when we become troubled with our own inadequacy.

Troubled enough to seek answers.

Troubled enough to cry out to him in our need.

Troubled enough to repent of our complacency.

God is not nearly as impressed with our accomplishments and "spirituality" as we are.

The one thing that endears us to the Father is our awareness of our desperate need of his mercy.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,
for they shall be filled.*

DAY 47 - SOUR ATTITUDE IN A SWEET VINEYARD

"I don't mind working in this Vineyard. But why has the Master stuck me in this boring corner?

It's slim picking here.

It's lonely.

No one seems to appreciate what I'm doing.

I'm not sure how long I can go on in this desolate place."

And if the Master moved you to a more "interesting" and "challenging" part of his Vineyard, would you do better work---with a better attitude?

Chances are your attitude would turn any part of the Vineyard into a dry place.

"If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

John 15:7-11

Whatever work you have been given to do, wherever you have been placed by the Lord's mercy, he will accomplish through you an eternal work....

....if you abide in his love,

....if you allow his joy to rule your heart.

Where he places you is up to the Master.

How you function in that place is up to you.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it."

John 14:12-14

DAY 48 - SURRENDER

YOUR NAME

If you want to be a voice for the Lord,
surrender your name to him,
so that he may keep it for you in his Vault of Obscurity.
Now, nobody knows your name....your real name.
It's hidden in God.

So you're free to speak the truth, *unhindered by vanity or fear.*

And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, he did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." They said to him then, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

John 1:19-23

The word from this man had power, because he was content to let his name be hidden in God.

He made no attempt to protect his image.

Or to defend his reputation.

Or to prove himself to the world.

Hence, his word was prophetic.

He was a bright and shining light.

His ministry was validated by the Spirit of God.

Beware of any man billed as "God's Man for the Hour."

Be wary of any woman presented as "God's Humble Servant."

The name we represent is that of Another.

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.

In that name we approach the living God.

In that name we make disciples.

In that name alone.

DAY 49 - A SPIRITUAL TIME BOMB

It's planted deep in the mind and forgotten.

Then at the appointed hour, it explodes.

You remember:

And immediately, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Luke 22:60-62

Not only do you remember, you will have no peace till you act.

"So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

Matthew 5: 23-24

This explosion within your soul was not an accident.

It was a word from the Lord....

....for your good, and for the good of all the lives connected with you. The Lord is speaking to your heart in love....

"Repent."

"Turn."

"Get it right."

This matter can no longer remain buried in forgetfulness.

This is your doorway to life from God.

.....Or judgment.

"Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny."

Matthew 5: 25-26

DAY 50 - THE ARROGANT STANCE

You don't have to have a PhD to enter the realm of the arrogant.

It's not how much you know

It's how much you think you know
that inspires the illusion of superiority.

Arrogance is the source of all spiritual blindness.

God himself withdraws his light from the self-styled "wise and prudent."

"I thank thee, father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to babes; yea, Father for such was thy gracious will."

Matthew 11:25-26

"But how could any one accuse me of being arrogant?

Do they know what goes on in my heart?

Do they realize how insecure I am within?"

We live our lives, not before the eyes of men, but

before the eye of God.

So begin with a prayer from Psalm 139:

"Search me, O God and know my heart,

Try me and know my thoughts....

And lead me in the way everlasting!"

And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:2-4

The more you come to know Jesus, the less you know about anything else.

All support for arrogance is gone.

DAY 51 - THE AUTHORITY OF HEAVEN

---THE HUMILITY OF CHRIST

"All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciple of all nations...."

i.e. "By my authority you can do this."

However, we can minister with our Lord's authority only when we are clothed in his humility.

Religious authority is robed in ecclesiastical splendor.

Legal authority is robed in the power of the state.

Corporate authority is robed in the mystery of mammon.

Kingdom authority is clothed in the humility of the Lord Jesus.

By a word, he heals the sick,

opens the eyes of the blind,

brings good news to the poor,

frees the captives from Satan's grip.

Such authority is not given to anyone lightly.

It is safe only in the hands of those who are under the yoke,

who are learning from the Master

to be meek and lowly in heart.

"I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou has hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father for such was thy gracious will."

Matthew 11:25

"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high."

Luke 24: 46-49

DAY 52 - THE AWAKENING

"Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."

John 5:25

Physically alive.....Spiritually dead.

Eating and drinking, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage....

Yet dead to the reality of God.

Dead to the world that penetrates this world with searing light.

Then comes the moment when you hear his voice speaking directly to you.

You wake up.

You realize that you have been sleep-walking all your life.

You have been dead up to this moment.

"The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear

will live."

You can choose to hear.

Or you can choose to go back to sleep. Many do.

But you will never again be able to plead ignorance.

Once you have heard the voice of the Incarnate Word, your spiritual innocence is gone.

You either step into the light or you turn away from it.

There is no other option.

Working together with him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation." Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

II Corinthians 6:1-2

DAY 53 - THE END OF THE DREAM

There are God-inspired dreams.

And there are demonic dreams.

But the most common dreams of all are vanity dreams.

"Follow your dream!"

Sounds inspirational.

"If I try hard enough I can do it."

"If I believe in it, I can make it happen."

Then one day you wake up to the fact that your dream was empty.

It was vain.

It was not a goal, it was a distraction.

At first your soul weeps.

All those wasted days, pursuing a mirage!

Then you look at your feet.

You are standing at last on solid ground.

You have arrived at your Burning Bush.

God has awakened you out of your fantasy.

The Spirit is bringing you to life.

The Lord Jesus is calling you to follow him.

He is sending you into his Vineyard.

And this is not a dream.

"Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light."

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil.

Ephesians 5:14-15

DAY 54 - THE FEAR OF HOLY LOVE

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Psalm 111

Don't be afraid to fear God.

Be afraid **not** to fear him.

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

God's love is holy love.

God's word burns with holy fire.

God's salvation comes to us at the price of his own broken heart...

The atoning death of his beloved Son...

Because our guilt before his holy eyes is real.

Beware of the delusion that our heavenly Father is soft on sin.

That he overlooks our arrogance.

That he "understands" our waywardness like an indulgent uncle.

"Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 7:21

God remains invisible and unknowable to all who are blind to his holiness---who do not know enough to take off their shoes in his presence.

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews 12:28-29

DAY 55 - THE FOOLISHNESS OF PRAYER

What else can we call it?

It doesn't make sense.

It isn't logical.

And yet.....

He told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

Luke 10:1

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you."

John 15:7

"Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."

John 16:23-24

It's not that prayer "works."

It's that the Father listens for "the real thing" and responds.

Prayer is not a "means to an end."

Prayer is the way into the heart of the Lord of the universe.
There are no experts at prayer.

There are only child-like hearts that pray.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Romans 8:26-27

DAY 56 - THE LORD REIGNETH, LET THE EARTH REJOICE!

The Lord Reigns?

The natural eye scoffs:

If God is in charge of this mess, why should I rejoice?

Chaos on all sides,

Suffering,

Hardness of heart,

Love grown cold.

The eye of faith sees through the smoke, and remembers the words of the Master....

"See that you are not alarmed....Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.....this is but the beginning of the sufferings."

The eye of flesh sees an absurd world.

The eye of faith sees the powers of darkness already

under judgment.

The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; Let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him: Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, And burneth up his enemies round about. His lighenings enlightened the world; The earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

Psalm 97

DAY 57 - THE WOUNDED HEALER

But he was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, And with his stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 53

Never mind trying to figure out how it works.

You never will.

But it works.

Find this Wounded Healer, and you find life.

Start with whatever it is that weighs you down.

The problem that won't go away.

The pain (mental or physical) which drains your strength.

The anxiety which haunts your days.

"Lord, wherever you are, help me!"

"I don't deserve it.

My faith is weak.

I confess my need of forgiveness.

So I throw myself on your mercy."

"All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him/her who comes to me I will not cast out."

Cry out to him, and he will come to you.

Call on his name and he will visit you with healing.

"Jesus, Master! Have mercy on me!"

"But why should I call on him now, when I'm in trouble? When things were going well I never thought about him."

"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Matthew 9:12-13

DAY 58 - TIMIDITY AND THE FIRE OF GOD

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a Spirit of power and love, and self-discipline.

II Timothy 1:7

When it comes to witnessing to the Lord Jesus in this cynical world, who of us is not timid?

Street corner preaching may not be our thing.

We may be convinced that collaring people and checking their spiritual state is counter-productive.

But when a friend bares his soul,

when a neighbor weeps at our kitchen table,

when a child comes with a penetrating question,

how often we hesitate to speak the burning truth that will heal, restore, and deliver!

We think of our timidity as "normal."

After all, most "sensible Christians" are timid when it comes to bearing witness to the truth that is in Jesus.

But that spirit of timidity never came to us from God.

What about the Spirit of power, love and self-discipline?

If it's in us, it can only be there as a dying fire.

Time to stir up the fire till it bursts into flame.

Hence I remind you to fan the flame of the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a Spirit of power and love and self-discipline.

II Timothy 1:6-7

"But Lord, you know I'm a shy person!"

"Please keep in mind, Lord Jesus, that I was born an introvert!"

Silence.

He put the flame there.

But it's up to us to keep it burning.

DAY 59 - TRAVEL LIGHT

"Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

Luke 9:3-6

Some of us are weighed down with too many clothes.

Some of us are burdened with mountains of theology.

Cluttered with "church growth" and "family values."

Phones and gadgets that dull the Shepherd's voice.

Once we enter the kingdom of God it's essential to travel light.

To keep it simple.

To walk by faith.

To trust the Lord for our provision.

For our protection.

For the Spirit's sustaining power.

The Holy Spirit is hindered by the baggage we carry.

The less baggage, the more freely he can work through us.

The less clutter, the more directly his power moves.

"Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

"He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me."

"He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

DAY 60 - UNBIND HIM, AND LET HIM GO.

"Lazarus, come out!"

The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped in a cloth.

Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Jesus raised him from the dead.

But he expects us to help him out of his grave clothes.

Jesus never told us to get people "saved."

He told us to make disciples.

He saves them by his blood.

He brings them to life by his Spirit.

But we are sent to help them emerge from their grave clothes, so they can walk the walk.

What a pitiful sight! All these saved souls, still staggering around with their "hands and feet bound with bandages, and their faces wrapped in cloths."

Who's going to unbind them?

Who's going to set them free and turn them into disciples?

We will answer to God for every person we
"saved" but never "discipled."

"All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

DAY 61 - VOICES

If Satan can't lull us to sleep with compromise, he tries the opposite tactic: pushing us into extreme action the Lord never called for.

Not every voice that speaks to your heart is worthy of trust.

The voice that calls for sacrifice.

The voice that urges heroic action.

The voice that keeps saying, "What are you waiting for?"

They may sound spiritual, but they need to be tested.

Is this the voice of the Shepherd?

Or is this a counterfeit "angel" pushing me toward a path God never called for?

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God.

1 John 4:1

The Spirit of the Lord.....

...never calls for impulsive action,

...never overwhelms your will,

...never plays on your vanity, or your guilt,

...is never in a hurry.

Don't act in response to any "voice" until you are sure it is the voice of the Lord Jesus.

---Does it match his words in scripture?

---Is it confirmed by faithful sisters and brothers in the Body?

---Does his peace rule in your heart, or are you "righteously agitated"?

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand."

John 10:27-2

DAY 62 - WHAT IS EXALTED AMONG MEN....

.....Is an abomination in the sight of God.

These words of our Lord Jesus were directed, not only toward the Pharisees of old, but toward people of all ages who claim to believe in God.

"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they scoffed at him. But he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

Luke 16:13-16

What is exalted among men.....

The things we consider important, worry about, crave, lose sleep over, are often exalted among men.....

....i.e.. financial success in our private lives,
numerical success in our church life,
impressive connections with important people....
exalted among men...

an abomination in the sight of God?

So what's exalted in the sight of God?

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when men revile you and

persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:3-12

DAY 63 - WHAT'S MISSING?

I go to church.

I hear about God's awesome grace.

I worship.

I commune.

But when I return to the real world, I'm still trapped in a life which hardly radiates the glory of God, a life which rarely differs from that of my friends who never darken the door of the church.

What's missing?

Jesus talked about it....

The apostles talked about it....

Paul talked about it....

But we've lost sight of it.

Repentance.

"The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe the good news!"

"Unless you repent and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

Grace and Repentance are two sisters.

You will always find them together.

Remove one, and they both disappear.

Repentance: Turning my life away from myself toward God.

Changing direction.

Abandoning arrogance for a child-like spirit.

Giving up my fight against the Truth.

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son."

"Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

DAY 64 - WHERE AM I?

The first question we ask when we begin to awaken spiritually:

Where am I?

Suddenly we find ourselves in a place where we do not belong.

We are far from home.

We are lost.

"So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything.

But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.'

Luke 15:15-19

No one but the living God knows how many prayers are being raised before his throne on our behalf as

we stumble through the darkness!

No one but God understands how he uses those prayers to bring us to our senses.

But the minute we begin to say to ourselves,
"Where am I?" angels are at our side, waiting
to help us with the next step.

***"Ho, every one who thirsts, come to the waters;
And he who has no money, come buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and
without price... Incline your ear, and come to
me; Hear, that your soul may live."***

Isaiah 55

DAY 65 - WILL IT DO ANY GOOD?

"I've been disappointed so many times."

"What hope do I have that if I pursue God things will be different?"

"It seems like my prayers bring 'reverse results.'"

"If there is a God, he must have it 'in' for me!"

God never defends himself.

God never proves himself to the skeptic.

But his ear is always open to the broken heart, the contrite spirit.

Always.

For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite."

Isaiah 57:15

Will it do any good.....

To pray?

To seek God?

To cry out for help?

A genuine cry to God for help receives an answer.

Every time.

As a sign of his love for you, God will answer the cry of your heart.

Confess your doubts and misgivings to him.

And do not cease to cry out for the help you need.

---The help which he alone can give.

DAY 66 - YOUR BODY: A HOUSE OF PRAYER

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

I Corinthians 6:19-20

If my body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit, it's a House of Prayer.

But just as the Temple in Jerusalem was no longer a House of Prayer by the time Jesus arrived on the scene, my body can cease to fulfill its calling as a House of Prayer...

...unless I clear out the money changers
and keep it focused.

So how do I keep my Temple focused as a House of Prayer?

It's up to me to rekindle the flame each morning.

To stir up the gift of the Spirit within me.

To practice the presence of the Lord through the day.

To keep looking to the fountainhead of prayer---the Cross.

To "watch and pray" as the Master commands.

To pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers.

To pray for those who persecute us.

If our bodies are houses of prayer,

If presenting our bodies to God as a living sacrifice is spiritual worship,

If we are to glorify God with our bodies,

then the essential activity of our body is prayer.

Inwardly.

At all times.

Without ceasing.

And he told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart....."And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily."

Luke 18

DAY 67 - BIG SURPRISE! HE'S REALLY THERE!

It always comes as a shock.

We figured that maybe we'd find out after we die....maybe.

When it happens, we're never ready for it---

The day when suddenly the living God breaks into your life.

When you hear a word that cuts straight into your heart.

He's really there!

He knows me...everything about me!

He's speaking to me!

You may try to shake it off, like an alarming dream.

You may pretend to yourself that it never happened.

But once you know, you can never again not know!

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you you shall go, and whatever I command you you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord.

Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

Jeremiah 1:5-10

As surely as your eyes have found their way to these words, so surely the call of God, which has long since reached your heart, is awaiting a fresh response.

"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

"Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

"Feed my sheep."

DAY 68 - GOD SEEMS SO FAR AWAY!

"I can't seem to connect."

"Why does God make it so hard to know him?"

"I feel like I'm 'lost in space' when it comes to knowing God."

And yet,

We see a man who cries out in desperation---and is given a miracle.

We watch a woman who abandons herself to a promise of the Lord, and she receives it instantly.

Suddenly, for them, God is there.

Peace floods the soul.

The mind finds rest.

The body is washed in healing.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

God was there all the time. Where were we?

The problem is not God's distance. With him there is no distance.

It's our attitude.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven".

"Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

"How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory which comes from the only God?"

The instant we give up our beloved vanity and cry out to our Father with the heart of a child, the miracle begins.

DAY 69 - I'M SO UNWORTHY!

.....Don't make a production out of your unworthiness,
as if this proves your humility.

Groveling is just another form of pride.

Get off that "unworthiness" kick!

If Jesus has called you to be his disciples, then get
your mind off yourself...

---your worthiness

---your unworthiness

---your many talents

---your poor little single talent....

and focus on him.

Jesus himself is your worthiness.

Don't dishonor him by groveling.

Give thanks for the power of his cleansing blood.

Rise up and walk in his will.

Stand before God as one of his redeemed.

And then begin to serve in his strength.

Pray for laborers in his harvest.

Go out into the streets and lanes of this world.

Bring the forgotten ones to God's Banquet.

Offer....

Good news to the poor,

Freedom to the oppressed,

Sight to the blind,

Deliverance to the captives in darkness.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; Be not frightened, neither be dismayed; For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Joshua 1:9

DAY 70 - IT DOESN'T SEEM REAL

All this "faith" stuff.

It doesn't seem real.

It's like a game of pretend.

Who can deny it?

"Religion" is often nothing more than a game of pretend.

They tell us what to pretend.

And we join the game.

It makes us feel secure.

And yet.....

Anyone whose heart longs to know God---

---the true God,

---the living God,

will find him...see his light...hear his voice.

"And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds,

and to him who knocks it will be opened.

What father among you , if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

Luke 11:8-13

If you want to take a short-cut to "spiritual security" join a religious movement and play by the rules of the game.

If you want to know the living God, start seeking.

Ask....seek....knock. Your heavenly Father will give you more than you could ask or think.

He will lead you into fellowship with his Messiah, and with those who walk the walk of faith with him.

DAY 71 - NO ONE UNDERSTANDS ME!

"No one understands me!"

Are you just finding that out? Of course they don't understand you! You are a mystery, even to yourself.

To expect understanding---true understanding---even from your dearest loved one, is a setup for disappointment.

Sympathy, maybe.

Empathy, perhaps.

But understanding?

The only one who understands you is One who is an even greater mystery than you are.

He knows you better than you know yourself.

He is waiting for you to draw near.

Waiting to guide you to higher ground and freedom.

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and my uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest

my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thy hast beset me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me.

Psalm 139

Once you know the One who knows you, your search for an understanding Friend is over.

"All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:27-28

DAY 72 - NOT TALK, BUT POWER

The Kingdom of God is not talk but power.

God's power...

Power that opens the blind eye,

Power that breaks the chains wrapped around our minds,

Power that awakens the spiritually dead,

Power that flows through the spoken word.

"Let there be light!"

"Rise and walk!"

"Take heart, your sins are forgiven."

"Today you will be with me in Paradise."

It's not a matter of eloquence,

Force of personality,

Or some insight from the latest market study.

It's a matter of holy integrity,

finding its voice through the Spirit of the
Living God.

You will encounter this power when you meet a man or
woman who has been crucified with Christ.

Who is dead to self and alive only to him.

You will be indwelt by this power, when your heart is
nailed to his cross.

DAY 73 - THE FALSE PEARL

It's often just one "innocent" thing that keeps us from entering the realm of faith.

---Something that always blocks out the light,

---Keeps me from hearing the call of God.

My need of sleep.

My love of golf.

My wounded feelings.

My fear of change.

My innate laziness.

I cling to this thing as if it's my ultimate treasure.

The truth:

It's a False Pearl.

God cannot bring me out of darkness into the light until I see this False Pearl for what it is...

---and discard it.

The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Matthew 13: 45

Until our eyes see which pearl is which, and until we discard the False Pearl for the True, we remain trapped in a world of illusion.

DAY 74 - THE OTHER WITNESS

But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning.

John 15:26-27

The witness of the apostles.....

They tell us what they saw and heard.

They tell us that Jesus healed the sick.

They pass on to us the things Jesus taught.

They watched Jesus die.

They saw Jesus alive as the Firstborn of the New Creation.

So what do we do with their witness?

1. We can ignore it as a myth, a legend, an exaggeration of the facts.

2, Or we can find out for ourselves whether Jesus is who they say he is.

The minute we begin to seek the truth, we encounter the Other Witness who makes it all clear.

But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me.

Begin with the witness of the apostles.

Listen to what they have to say.

Pay attention like a child to every word that flows from Jesus' mouth.

Do this, and the Other Witness (the Holy Spirit) will reveal what can be known only by revelation.

And you will begin to understand for yourself who Jesus is and what his claim is upon your life.

All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out.

John 6:37

DAY 75 - WATCH OUT FOR THE SOFT-SELL!

Marketing techniques work for everything but the living Word.

When God speaks he speaks straight and true.

The Spirit of God never raises false hopes.

The Father of Lights never promises fantasy-fulfillment.

God's gift of life is free of charge.

But the Lord never hides what it will cost you to live that life in this world.

For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?

Matthew 16: 25-26

When the sick came for healing, Jesus healed them---without strings.

When the blind cried out for vision, he turned none of them away.

Every cry for help was heeded .

Each miracle was a sign pointing to God's World.

All were invited and welcomed.

But to enter God's world, you have to leave your old life behind.

And nobody can do that for you but you.

The Lord will give you all the power you need, but you have to take the first step.

Every one then who hears these world of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock.....

And every on who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.....

Matthew 7:24-26

DAY 76 - WHEN YOU'RE READY

God---the God of the Universe---forces himself on no one.
But he will open the door of whatever prison you may be
in,
and set you free
.....when you're ready.

Ready?

Yes, how can God set you free

---until you see your need?

---until you reach a point of desperation, and cry for help?

---until you open your heart wide enough to receive help?

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Our of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"

John 7:37-38

You will meet the living God the instant you are ready.

And you are ready the moment your cravings, longings, and desires melt into a single thirst: the thirst for God's help---on God's terms.

If you're still laying down the terms, you're not ready.

If you're still trying to get God to fit into your program, you're not ready.

But when you can say with a clear mind and a whole heart,

"Here I am, Lord.

I throw myself on your mercy.

I'm yours!"

....you are ready.

And you will receive from the Lord more than you could ask or think.

DAY 77 - ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD.....

....For those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

The only way you can prove the truth of those words is to live them.

When our hearts open wide to God's unspeakable love,
When we let go of our vanity and our burdensome egos,
 And offer ourselves back to him,
 And answer his call,

Then "all things work together for good."

All things...

 Even the hard-to-fathom things.

 We are on the path of life.

 We are guided from above.

God's part in this miracle is never in doubt.

He's there.

He does exactly what he promises to do.

Our part in the miracle is up to us.

We can respond with child-like faith, or we can turn and walk away.

"He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

"She who has my commandments and keeps them, she it is who loves me; and she who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love her and manifest myself to her."

John 14: 21

Any man or woman who longs to know God,

Who seeks God,

Who listens for God's voice,

Will soon be walking with the crucified and risen Lord.

And all things will somehow work together for good.

DAY 78 - ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN

*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

So if I'm living under the shadow of the Almighty, walking the walk of faith in the Lord Jesus, I'm secure in God.

Right?

Right. To be secure in the Shepherd, means that no one can snatch you out of the Shepherd's hand.

No demon.

No power in heaven or on earth can take you from him.

But understand, this does not guarantee smooth circumstances.

As far as your circumstances are concerned, anything can happen.

Jesus made clear that if they hated him, they will hate us.

If they persecuted him they will do the same to us.

***"In the world you will have tribulation;
but be of good cheer,
I have overcome the world."***

John 16:33

In this world anything can happen to us.

But of this we can be sure:

If we walk with the Master, under his yoke,
He will walk with us through the flames,
Sustain us through every storm.

Anything can happen. But we are safe if we abide in him.

If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered into the fire and burned. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.

John 15:6-8

DAY 79 - CREDIBILITY

Everybody in town knew her past.

The "better people" avoided her like the plague.

And yet,

when she came back from the well with news of this Jewish prophet, the whole town followed her back to the well.

So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city, and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Messiah?" They went out of the city and were coming to (Jesus).

John 4:28-30

What caused them to listen to this woman?

How come they dropped what they were doing and followed her to the well?

She had a credibility which she had never had before.

They could recognize it in her voice.

They could see it in her eyes.

They could feel it burning from her spirit.

It took hold of their hearts.

The people were moved.

Once you meet the One this woman met....

Once you open your heart to him the way she did....

Once you leave your "water jar" at the well go out and share what you know...

you have credibility too.

There are those who know, and never share.

There are those who "share" what they know not.

But those who know, and share what they know, receive an anointing that sets their witness on fire.

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."

John 15:16

DAY 80 - GOD OF THE HAPHAZARD

Totally unpredictable.

Never fitting into our neat categories.

Mysteriously evading all our attempts to observe him.

Allowing the most horrendous evil to sweep over a world which he created good.

And still.....

He scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He puts down the mighty from their thrones, and exalts those of low degree. He fills the hungry with good things, and sends the rich away empty.

Luke 1:51-53

Make no mistake about it. Things are not out of control. In the midst of the increasing chaos, he is guiding history toward its climax: The end of man's rule and the beginning of The Age of the Redeemed, under the rule of the Crucified and Risen Messiah.

There is not a thing taking place in this world which Jesus of Nazareth did not prepare us for. The breakdown we're observing now is but the beginning....

The prelude to the Final Battle.

"Take heed that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying I am the Christ; and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the sufferings."

Matthew 24: 4-8

And when the suffering ends, a new Day will dawn for those who are ready to welcome it.

May you be among them with a joyful heart!

DAY 81 - JESUS NEVER ASKED FOR VOLUNTEERS

A volunteer is still in control.

If he doesn't like the way things are going, he's free to quit.

If she does mediocre work, "Tough, I'm not getting paid."

A volunteer adjusts the agenda to suit.

***"I will follow you, Lord; but first let me say
farewell to those at my home."***

***Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to
the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of
God."***

Luke 9:61-61

Jesus calls for disciples only.

A disciple is in total submission to the Master.

To another he said, "Follow me."

But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my

father."

But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Luke 9:59-60

It's up to you.

Jesus will not beg you. Nor will he force you to be a disciple.

If you hear his call and choose to surrender your life to him in radical obedience, go for it!

You will never regret it.

But don't waste your time---or his---trying to be a volunteer.

DAY 82 - DISTRACT ME!

Distract me, so that I won't have to think about where I'm going.

Keep me entertained.

"As for that which fell among thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasure of life and their fruit does not mature."

Luke 8:14

Too often the life of God in us is choked out by thorns which we invite.

Instead of rooting them out before they take over our lives, we cultivate them.

The cares, riches, and pleasures of life become our main agenda.

We lose sight of the treasure.

We blind ourselves to the one prize worth living for.

The thorns take over.

God help us to see the treasure!

Once we hear again the clear call of your kingdom,
help us to joyfully abandon ourselves to it!

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Matthew 13:44

DAY 83 - DEFILED BY THE MOUTH

"Hear this and understand: not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

Matthew 15:10-11

I may know the doctrines well.

I may claim for myself all the promises of God.

But if my mouth speaks words that defile, my faith is shallow.

Half-truths.

Exaggerations.

Promises never fulfilled.

Subtle slander.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

Matthew 12:34

Sooner or later my mouth will spill what's in my heart.

The mark of a true rebirth: a new tongue.

The source of a new tongue: a new heart.

The way to a new heart: repentance.

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight....

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.....

Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Psalm 51

DAY 84 - EVERYBODY HAS A REASON.....

- an explanation

- an excuse

for lumbering on in their old monotonous rut.

"I'm used to it."

"It's all I've ever known."

"It ain't so bad."

"What can I do about it, anyway?"

"The thief comes only to steal (your life) and kill (your soul) and destroy (your hope); I came that they might have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep".

John 10:10-11

Once you decide that it's time to emerge from that old rut, cry out to the Good Shepherd.

He will hear you.

He will open the door for you into a new life.

He will give you the courage to enter and follow him forever.

The rest is up to you.

"Ask, and it will be given you;

Seek and you will find;

Knock and it will be opened to you.

For every one who asks receives,

And he who seeks finds,

And to him who knocks it will be opened.

Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread,

Will give him a stone?

Or if he asks for a fish,

Will give him a serpent?

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children,

How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things

To those who ask him?"

Matthew 7:7-11

DAY 85 - WHAT I DO WITH MY MONEY IS BETWEEN ME AND GOD

True.

And what you do with your money is directly connected to your walk with God---or lack of it.

"He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.

If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, how will you entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, how will you give you that which is your own?"

Luke 16:10-12

Your financial life, and your life of faith are not "two separate accounts."

They are one.

If you are following the Lord Jesus in a life of faith,

the first place it will show is in what you do with money.

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon."

DAY 86 - I HATE TO WAIT

It's bad enough having to wait on the phone when "all our representatives are busy."

It's bad enough to sit in the doctor's office for three hours beyond appointment time.

But when I call out to God for help, do I also have to wait?

And he told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart....."And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily...

"Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Luke 18

How can God expect me "always to pray and not lose heart," when even praying involves waiting?

Are the lines busy in heaven?

Is the "case load" too much for God?

Is this how he teaches us patience?

Is my faith too weak to "get results?"

The Heavenly Father is deeply moved by the cry of a broken heart.

He is drawn instantly to the poor in spirit in desperate need.

He welcomes those "pestering prayers" that never give up.

But a prayer of impatience is something else.

Prayer with an "attitude" has trouble reaching heaven.

The Father is never in a hurry.

He has time to wait until we settle down and humble ourselves.....until we learn to take off our shoes in his presence.

And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18

DAY 87 - I CAN'T SEEM TO GET THROUGH

I pray, but feel like I'm talking to myself.

As if no one is listening.

As if no one is there.

So what's the use?

***Thou hast wrapped thyself with a cloud So that
no prayer can pass through.***

Lamentations 3:44

If you wait for the cloud to go away,

you might wait for a long time.

Don't go by your feelings.

Don't check the atmosphere.

Don't be intimidated by that "cloud" overhead.

Just pray.

Your claim on God is not your worthiness, but Jesus'
blood.

Not your goodness, but God's unspeakable mercy.

Jesus took your guilt upon himself so that you can now stand before the Father and ask.

Even if this baffles your mind, it's no less true.

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not give us all things with him?

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.

Romans 8

Prayer comes to life when we get our eyes off ourselves,

Lift them above our fears and doubts,

And, with a child-like heart, begin asking the Father for help.

Every one who asks receives.

He who seeks, finds.

And to him who knocks, it will be opened.

DAY 88 - "IMPROVING ON JESUS" IS NOTHING NEW

People have been doing it for twenty centuries.

....Even churches.

....Even churches that claim to be "the True Church."

Adding a bit here and there.

Ignoring a bit here and there.

"Jesus was exaggerating for emphasis."

"Jesus didn't understand the complexities of sexuality."

"Jesus was the product of his time."

"Jesus needs a little help from his mother."

Interesting,

Jesus never defends himself.

Jesus never seeks to vindicate himself.

Once we have heard him speak, he leaves it up to each of us to decide what to do with him.

And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And he who sees me sees him who sent me. I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

"If any one hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day."

John 12:44-48

Each of us is responsible for what we do with the light we have received from God.

Once we have received the slightest glimmer of that light, we can never plead ignorance of what we have seen.

Before we try improving on Jesus, we do well to listen with a teachable heart to exactly what he has to say.

Where anything Jesus says is not clear, his Spirit will make it clear to a contrite heart.

DAY 89 - OPEN EXPECTATIONS/CLOSED EXPECTATIONS

Open expectations: You pray.

You wait for the Father to answer his way.

He does.

Closed expectations: You pray.

You wait for the Father to meet your specifications.

He doesn't.

The minute we expect the living God to fit into our program we have left God's world, for the world of fantasy.

The Father does answer our prayers.

He will give us more than we could ask or think.

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?

Romans 8:32

But God is not our servant.

The Living God cannot be manipulated.

***Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.***

We are standing on holy ground.

We take off our shoes in worship.

Relying on the blood of the Lamb, we cry out in our need,
leaving the specifics to him.

***And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day
and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he
will vindicate them speedily.***

Luke 18:7-8

DAY 90 - SO WHO'S RIGHT?

One of the biggest hindrances to knowing God is our preoccupation with our own rightness.

Consider the time and energy we spend....

Vindicating ourselves,

Justifying ourselves,

Arguing our position,

Proving the stupidity of those who fail to see it our way.

God seems to reserve his revelations for those who are ready to relinquish their own "rightness."

Then Job answered....

"I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,

but now my eye sees thee;

therefore I despise myself,

and repent in dust and ashes."

Job 42

The only one who is truly "right" is God himself.

In God's presence we become aware of how wrong we are by comparison.

The first step in getting to know the living God is to give up our obsession with our own "rightness."

For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Isaiah 57

Better to come as we are, giving up all pretense,
Than to approach heaven, armed with our "credentials."

DAY 91 - TO KNOW HIM

We can know a million facts about Jesus, and still not know him.

Jesus doesn't bring a resume.

His only resume is the scars in his hands and feet and side.

But listen to what he has to say...

Let his words sink into your soul....

Open your heart to them....

....and soon you will know Him.

Not as a "memory."

Not as an "idea."

But as your loving Friend and Master.

Jesus will speak personally to you.

He will receive the cries of your heart and turn them into prayers.

He will open your mind to understand scripture.

He will flood you with the very Spirit of God.

He will fill you with a love which you have never known, and it will overflow to others in word and deed.

Don't be satisfied until you know him...and know that he knows you.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

John 10:27-28

DAY 92 - WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

I thought that by this time in my life I'd be out there making an impact.

Yet here I am, trapped in a "Useless Cove."

Still waiting for a break.

I feel as though I've been by-passed.

Lord, why haven't you placed me where I can make a difference?

How can you expect me to bear fruit in this "dead zone?"

And the Lord answers:

You are exactly where you are supposed to be.

Open your eyes.

Begin serving in that place.

And it will no longer be a "dead zone."

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.

You are where you are in order to fulfill God's purpose---

not your version of God's purpose.

Start washing feet.

Start praying for the ones before your face.

Give thanks to God for who he is.

Give thanks for the place where he has put you.

And while you're at it, repent of your vanity.

Then the Lord Jesus will make an impact on that "dead zone" through you.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and ordained you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give it to you.

John 15:16

DAY 93 - A NOVEL IDEA

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands.

Serve the Lord with gladness!

It's a whole new way of living---serving the Lord with gladness.

It's a way of living that most Christians know nothing about.

They're too busy serving the Lord with weariness
serving the Lord with a chip on their shoulder
serving the Lord for profit
serving the Lord and their ego.

And this is why the road to the City of God is strewn with burnouts.

Nobody can keep going on this road unless they're having a good time---unless they're glad!

If you're not enjoying what you're doing for God, you won't last. You'll burn out.

And you only enjoy what you're doing for God if you're doing it for God, and for God alone.

"Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world." (the apostle Paul in Galatians 6:14) i.e.

I don't need profit,

I don't need ego strokes,

I don't need to grind an ax,

I've been crucified to all that.

All I want is to serve God, to please my Lord Jesus.

That's my joy.

That's my pleasure.

And not even the devil can take that from me.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands.

Serve the Lord with gladness!