

**PURPOSE
PASSION
AND
PURSUIT**

**THE THREE P'S
OF EFFECTIVE
PRAYER**

JIM COLLIER

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I would first like to thank my wife Linda without whose loving support this book would not have been possible. Thank you Linda from my heart – I love you!

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Foreword

Pastor Jim Collier has been a constant seeker of a deeper walk with our Lord Jesus Christ for many years. His devotion to Jesus has led him to share this relationship through "Purpose, Passion, and Pursuit - The Three "P's" of Effective Prayer. This book will take the reader into a depth of prayer we rarely see, but greatly need. This book is a must to be read by Believers who are not satisfied by their prayer life or seek a deeper walk of blessing in Jesus Christ.

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Introduction

The young doctor came out of the treatment room and just shook her head and I knew what it meant. It was November of 1991 and Althea, my wife of 16 years, had suddenly died after a long illness. The emotional pain that I felt at that moment cannot be put into words. Waiting at home were our four children who no longer had a mom to talk to or hug. We were facing what seemed like an impossible situation. How would I be able to raise our children alone? What would I do without my wife? What would our children do without their mother?

The next few days were like a bad dream. I would have gladly traded places with Althea. I knew she was with the Lord in heaven and I envied the fact that she was free from all problems and worries. I asked God why she died and not me. He had to know that our kids really needed their Mom. I had some other questions too. Was there anything else I could have done to change things? Did I pray enough or exercise faith enough for my wife's healing? What did I do wrong?

I began to cry out to God like a drowning man gasping for air. If we were to survive as a family we needed His help. The circumstances we faced did not allow me the luxury of going through the motions of prayer – I needed to know how to really pray and make contact with the Lord. All the questions of why things happened gradually gave way to more pressing needs. Everyday seemed to bring new challenges. Lives were hanging in the balance and I needed God's help.

I know you have heard this before but -- God is faithful. He helped us. He has proven His faithfulness time and time again since those tragic days. During the process of writing this book I found it very difficult to dwell upon some of the painful experiences of the past. But each time I remembered the pain or sorrow I also thought about how the Lord brought us through. In the process, He has shown me some of His truths that have revolutionized my life.

Today I am remarried to a lovely Christian woman who I love very much. She was a widow with two grown children when I married her. I am **blessed**. I am the Pastor of a new Church and the founder of a prayer-training ministry. All of our children are alive and healthy and we received a prophetic word from a well known preacher that all of our children would actively serve the Lord. It is clear that my **purpose did not end** with the death of my first wife and your purpose is not over either. It does not matter what you are going through. You can begin again.

Some of the questions I had when my first wife died were never answered but that is not a problem for me. I know God is in control. I know that he never once stopped loving my children and me during that time of overwhelming tragedy and change. I realize now that some of my questions were motivated more by some wrong ideas I had concerning God and the process of faith. Many things are becoming clearer as the Lord continues to bring me into a place of knowing Him.

I used to read books anxious to get the help I needed based upon what they promised. Now I am learning how to rest in the Lord. Why don't you allow God to take the pressure off and you will see a truth about Him that could change your life. You can find yourself *really* walking by faith and not by sight. He really is an awesome God!

My desire is that God will touch you through the reading of this book so that you come to realize and appropriate the wonderful power of prayer. Just relax – there is no pressure for us to perform. God will stir us into action but first let us come to Him and learn.

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.” (Matthew 11:28-30 – The Message)

Purpose in Prayer – The First P

Effective prayer causes God’s will to happen. It causes it to rain after a long draught. (See appendix at the end of this book for a study of James 5:16) It taps into the purpose of God and passionately refuses to take no for an answer. Effective prayer is when you pray with purpose, passion and pursuit. Numerous people of God have prayed this way throughout history. *They have found Him to be the living God and recognized their need to have a loving relationship with Him so that His will could be done in their lives.* You can pray this way too if you are willing to develop a growing relationship with the Lord. It is time for you to break through every barrier as you learn to pray using the 3P’s.

In order to have a living relationship with God we must be able to hear Him. Really hearing God involves listening and being ready to obey when we hear Him speak. Many Christians spend most of their time in prayer asking God to please speak to them or trying to figure out what He said. This learning to listen is the beginning of purposeful praying. The good news is that He is constantly speaking. All we need to do is to be willing to listen by getting our spiritual ears unclogged. When we do this we can grow in our understanding of God and His will. You can hear God and not understand Him but you can't understand Him without first hearing Him. Which brings us to a primary truth that will help us.

An unwilling God is not the problem. This truth about God is probably one of the most important things we can know yet it is also probably the least understood. The problem is never with God. We need to expect to hear Him speak. This truth gives us spiritual eyes that see and ears that hear. We expect to hear Him speak to us because we know this is His will. How are we going to obey Him unless we hear Him? God knows we need the love and acceptance that flows out of relationship with Him. He knows that we don’t function well without hearing His affirming voice on a regular basis. Take a piece of paper right now and a pen or pencil and do something. Write the following statement down ten times and say it to yourself as you write it. “God loves me and fully accepts me in Jesus Christ”. Don’t skip this step – please do what I asked you. It will be a blessing.

Do you see how this made you feel? The reason I asked you to write it down was *to slow your thinking down enough to where you really could hear* and begin to understand. Without an understanding of truth any real progress in the Lord is almost impossible. Here is what Jesus said about the powerful effect of truth in our lives when we know it.

(John 8:31-32 NIV) To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ***Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.***"

I think you should know that there is something that wars against the truth of God. I'm not talking about the devil here although he uses this as a weapon against the Christian. This opponent of the truth is the traditions of men. G.K. Chesterton said, "Tradition is the living faith of those now dead. Traditionalism is the dead faith of those now living". (See Matthew 15:3-6)

If a tradition does not cause us to live as victorious overcomers in Christ then we need to examine it, omit it from our lives, or make changes if needed. Praying with purpose requires a willingness to change as God unfolds to you new insights from His Word. If you value your traditions above the Word of God you can't pray with purpose. *Truth, when it is understood, turns us into listeners.* We become those who really hear and we want to gain even more understanding. With this new freedom we become fruitful followers of Christ and powerful people of prayer.

One of the basic truths about purpose revealed in Scripture is the Lord's principle of seedtime and harvest or sowing and reaping. Praying with purpose is prayer for the harvest. In every word that God speaks there is in it the seed of its own fulfillment. In other words, the answer is somewhere in God's word that is - *becoming alive* to us. When we learn to receive God's word we can pray the truth of it. All we have to do is be good soil and God brings forth a bountiful harvest of His will and purpose. The word He speaks is actually one of purpose *designed* to bring forth a harvest.

(Matthew 13:3-23 NIV) *Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop--a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear." The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. **Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.** This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with*

*their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' But **blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.** For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone **hears the message about the kingdom** and does not **understand** it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.*

The harvest or crop is the fruit or produce of the seed sown. It is related to *understanding* and as we shall see, *God is the one who gives understanding*. It is not enough to just hear the Word although that is the necessary first step. The hearing has to be processed through prayer. The Holy Spirit gives the understanding as we pray with purpose. This is where our relationship with the Lord has to develop. God will see if you are really listening. The evidence will be your obedience and willingness to do what He said. We don't just pray but we obey.

The harvest that comes forth from the seed is Christ-likeness. Prayer is for an abundant harvest. God gives us His understanding along the pathway of relationship! If our relationship with Him is a growing and developing one through prayer, then our understanding of the things of God will also be growing and developing. We will be people of righteousness who know how to keep pace with God.

*The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. **But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it.** He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."*

All the examples in the parable heard the word but not all of them understood it. We that understand will grow in Christ but it doesn't end there. Our being able to share what we have so others can receive and develop is the rest of the picture. We are not really fruitful until there is reproduction. Let's look a little more at this concept of understanding.

(1 Corinthians 2:12-16 NKJV) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is of God; **that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God**. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things

with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet He himself is rightly judged by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

This passage reveals several things. It shows that an unwilling God is not the problem. He gave us His Spirit so that we could know the things that He has freely given us. It also reveals that God desires for us to have understanding so that we can speak truth to others. The Holy Spirit desires for us to grow in our understanding. When we apply this truth to prayer we see a powerful idea. A fruitful prayer life is directly related to praying with understanding.

(1 Corinthians 14:13-19 NKJV) Therefore let him who speaks in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but **my understanding is unfruitful**. What is the result then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding: I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say Amen at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all: Yet in the church I had **rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others** also, than ten thousand words in an tongue.

Our understanding has to be fruitful for our life to be truly fruitful. Remember that fruitfulness is not just personal development but sharing and imparting truth to others so they can grow and develop too. Praying with purpose is fruitful praying. This is prayer that discerns the mind and will of God and prays it into manifestation as we obey Him through our actions. We can not share effectively what we lack in understanding. As we grow in our understanding of who we are in Christ and what we have received in Him we can share Him with others. There is a peace that is released in our lives when we really understand the Lord.

(James 3:18 KJV) And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

The Word of God states that a believer has the mind of Christ. I know you do not feel like you have the mind of Christ. “What about all of those wrong thoughts I get all the time”? I promise to answer that question before

we end this book. But for now allow me to continue. I believe the mind of Christ came into us when His Spirit did at new birth. Christ's mind is part of the package of Christ. I do not believe that we received a mindless Christ when we were born again. The problem is not that we do not have the mind of Christ, the problem is our lack of understanding. In order to get the right answers we need to ask the right questions. Much of our praying revolves around asking the wrong questions because we lack purpose and do not understand God. Listen to this quote by O Hallesby from his powerful book entitled "Prayer". It illustrates why understanding is so important in prayer.

"Here we see why prayer is essential. It is not for the purpose of making God good or generous. He is that from eternity.

Nor is it for the purpose of informing God concerning our needs. He knows what they are better than we do. Nor is it for the purpose of bringing God's gifts down from heaven to us. It is He who bestows the gifts, and by knocking at the door of our hearts, He reminds us that He desires to impart them to us.

No, prayer has one function, and that is to answer "Yes," when He knocks, to open the soul and give Him the opportunity to bring us the answer.

This throws light on the struggles and strivings, the work and the fasting connected with prayer. All these things have but one purpose: to induce us to open our hearts and to receive all that Jesus is willing to give, to put away all those things which would distract us and prevent us from hearing Jesus knock, that is, from hearing the Spirit of prayer when He tries to tell us what God is waiting to give us if we will only ask for it."

This takes us back to my statement at the beginning of the book. *"An unwilling God is not the problem"*. If you don't stop thinking that God is unwilling to bless, you will continue to hold back what you need. I remember hearing someone say, "God will upset your ideas to save your soul". I can testify that this is the truth. God will interrupt our wrong way of thinking but it is not just to save our soul, but frequently, it is to save our physical life too. We need to understand how to be good soil. We must learn how to live by faith and not according to natural perception and understanding.

The basic meaning for the word understanding is, "to put together". Natural reasoning says that $1+1+1=3$. God says that $1+1+1=1$. (The Father, Son and Holy Spirit) Someone once said, "God said it, I believe it, and that settles it". The real reality of the fact is that God said it and that settles it whether you believe it or not. God is the one running this show! When you pray with purpose you understand this fact.

The thoughts that need to be sown in us are the thoughts of God. There are many times when we don't hear God because of wrong ideas and thoughts running rampant in our minds. We think we understand something when we do not. We need a change in the way we perceive things. *We need to know the truth so that it can liberate us.* This is where the Lord will upset our thinking patterns to get us unstuck. God is taking us somewhere. We have to learn to let the same mind be in us that Jesus had. Let me give you an example from my own life.

“James, why won’t you let me comfort you”. The words pierced my heart and touched a deep place within me. I began to tremble and cry and I responded to this impassioned plea with one of my own, “comfort me Holy Spirit, please comfort me”. I had just had an encounter with the Spirit of God and the depth of emotion in His words had taken me by surprise. I had been trying to serve God and take care of my children and then I found myself sick and under a doctor’s care. God wanted to help me and He was letting me know that somehow I was blocking Him. The phrase that is frequently used today for what I was experiencing is a paradigm shift. When I said, “comfort me Holy Spirit” I was praying with the mind of Christ and He did.

Later I looked up all of the scripture verses I could find on comfort. I found a passage in 2 Corinthians that was very revealing.

(2 Corinthians 1:3-7 NIV) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all **comfort**, who **comforts** us in all our troubles, so that we can **comfort** those in any trouble with the **comfort** we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our **comfort** overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your **comfort** and salvation; if we are **comforted**, it is for your **comfort**, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our **comfort**.

The truth that God revealed to me once again is, *"An unwilling God is not the problem"*. I needed to receive His comfort so that His comfort could flow from me to others. The eyes of my understanding needed to be enlightened to this truth of God. He *wanted* to comfort me - God *wanted* to bless my life - He was just waiting for me to let Him do it. I had read the above portion of Scripture before but this time it was different. I knew God really wanted to comfort me. *Why didn't I just believe this truth the first time I read it years before?*

This brief but powerful encounter would change my life. The Bible states in the book of Hebrews that there is a rest for the people of God. Not only was I not resting but I was killing myself trying to serve Him and be a good father to my children. God in His mercy interrupted my state of affairs and gave me help. I know that many of you need help too. If the joy of the Lord is our strength, (and it is because the Word says so) - then there are a lot of weak Christians. Any honest observer can see that the Church is lacking joy. I know I did. Why? Where is our joy?

Maybe you have been struggling in your efforts to serve God. The more you try to do good the worse it gets. You are tired and ready to quit but you can't because you know God is real. Get ready for your breakthrough. Walking by faith is not that difficult. Praying with purpose and getting answers to your prayers should be your normal experience. It is actually easy. (Matthew 11:28-30) Jesus desires for us to be people who pray with purpose.

When we gain revelation and begin to see clearly God's awesome purpose for our lives and the way *He really is*, it can be overwhelming to us but very liberating. I gained some insight into how God really is during my encounter with Him. David experienced this same type of thing and he expressed his feelings about it in Psalm 139:

(Psalm 139:1-24 NIV) *For the director of music. Of David. A psalm. O LORD, you have searched me and **you know me**. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. You hem me in--behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? **Where can I flee from your presence?** If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. **How precious to me are your thoughts**, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you. If only you would slay the wicked, O God! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men! They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those*

*who hate you, O LORD, and abhor those who rise up against you? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart; **test me and know my anxious thoughts.** See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. [Bold letters added by me]*

This was a powerful experience for David. It obviously came out of God speaking to him. God was revealing Himself to David and giving him needed understanding. In this Psalm David was *praying with the insight God was giving Him*. When we experience hearing God's voice we have similar results. Just like David, we become overwhelmed with a sense of destiny and purpose. This is what happened to me when I heard the Holy Spirit's voice and the level of compassion in what He spoke to me. He was willing to bless me; He wanted to do it! I believe David's life was changed as he began to grasp the depth and reality of the love of God.

"God knows me, He calls me by name." "I have a purpose and a destiny to fulfill that was determined by God before I was born". When you start to have thoughts like these on a regular basis you are ready to move with God. You are ready to begin praying with purpose. "I know that my life is not an accident and I believe beyond a shadow of doubt that God created me". "He fashioned and formed me even before He started the process of the creation of my body". "He has ordained the exact number of days that I will be on planet earth so that I can accomplish the purpose he gave me before this world began."

(Ephesians 1:1-12 NIV) *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.***

Do you get the picture? It does not matter where you are or what you have done in the past. Open your spiritual ears to the Voice of God. Make

the written Word personal to you and listen as God continues to speak even beyond what you are reading. Make sure your mind is filled with the right kind of thoughts!

The Scripture states, " *who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will*". Knowing your purpose and working to fulfill it is wisdom. When you do this you will find yourself working with God. Paul said he was an apostle by the will of God. This is how the Apostle Paul ministered so effectively as a co-laborer together with God. This is how we co-labor together with Him. We each have a purpose and destiny in God – it is His will. It is like spiritual DNA that God had before He created us.

Learning to pray with this understanding is what it means to pray with purpose. We each need to have confidence that what we are doing is the right thing at the right time and this assurance can only come from fellowship with God. We need to know that what we pray for others is the will of God. Don't miss the revelation in the passage that we just read. *He predestined us in love*. It was the love of God that caused you to be created. It was the love of God that caused your husband, wife, son or daughter to be created. It is the love of God that causes His grace to flow freely to us. It is the love of God that covers a multitude of sins. Don't listen to the enemy's lies any longer. God is not the problem! He is actually working in you both to will and do.

(Philippians 2:12,13 NIV) Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Let me address another problem that keeps many Christians from praying with purpose. You do not have to physically feel God's presence to know He is with you as you pray. It is nice when you do, but it is not necessary for you to *feel* God's presence to walk according to the truth of this fact. You need to know who you are and not forget it. Everything God says about you is truth. When you read the Word listen to what He says to you. Do not try to make what He says to the unsaved and those outside of Christ apply to you. Let those things stir you into intercession and action so that others can be safe and secure, whole and affirmed, in Christ too. Pray the lost into the ark of His safety!

(Ephesians 2:10 NIV) *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Do you believe you were created to do good works? Do you believe God is working out His will in your life? Do you really believe that God loves you? Do you pray like these things are true? Do you believe God loves those you care about? Now is the time for you to pray with purpose. Don't hold back because of fear but break through it and obey God anyway.

The destiny God created you (and them) for is so awesome that if He told you all about it you wouldn't believe it. That is why scripture verses you read a long time ago are just coming alive to you now. He has to spoon-feed you little pieces of the revelation so that you do not choke on it.

He gave us the truth in His Word but we struggle to accept the revelation. We are God's workmanship. The word workmanship in the Greek actually means poem. You and I were created by God to be an expression of His creative genius – a work of art – a masterpiece. Do you believe this? The process of getting to this place of understanding and faith can be likened to hard, rocky soil being plowed and worked so that it will be good ground to plant in. It is a process. Has He been working on you? Has God been stirring you to embrace His truth and demolish every stronghold, lie, pretension and argument of the enemy? I don't know about you but God has been doing a complete overhaul on me. It is time for us to get serious about the things of God.

Like many of you I have had a difficult life. For the longest time it seemed like there was one trial after another with no end in sight. When times were good then *in my mind* God was good. Then, when I entered another trial I would wonder where God went. I would go back and forth wondering whether God really loved me. I am happy to report that those days of deception are over. There is one overriding conclusion I have come to after many years of difficult circumstances. It is this -***God is a good God.*** He is good all the time. There is a word that the Apostle Paul used continuously under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word is *logizomai* and it is frequently translated into the English word *reckon*. It basically means to weigh all of the information and make an informed decision. I did this and my conclusion is that He loves you and me with an unflinching love that will not quit.

The problems I face and you face have absolutely nothing to do with a God who is unwilling to bless. I will say it again! *An unwilling God is not the problem.* What we need is a mind full of the awareness of our purpose in Jesus Christ. To put it simply we need our minds filled with *the understanding* of the Word of God. The book of James states that an undecided person will not receive from God. The phrase actually used is double-minded. (See James 1:5-8) Too often we desire to walk with God

but we still want to think our own way. Then when we go through difficult circumstances we start to feel sorry for ourselves and hold wrong ideas about God. There is no surer road to defeat. We must learn to be single-minded and totally focused on Jesus Christ. The insights I am sharing with you will help make this possible. It did for me. When you keep passionately pursuing God through prayer you get answers. All you have to do is *keep praying with purpose*.

“Where purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable”. This quote by Myles Monroe is powerful and full of wisdom. I remember the first time I heard him say this. It transformed my life. When we don’t know God’s will through His Word and His Spirit we get over into the area of abuse. Abuse means abnormal use. If you don’t know the purpose for something the tendency is to abuse it or try to make it be something that it was never designed to be. We must stop doing this! This is when we pray or ask amiss. Is it any wonder we don’t receive the answers we need.

A simple definition of purpose is *“the reason why something was created”*. The understanding of purpose and the application of that understanding is a key to successful living. God has a purpose for everything. He has a purpose for your life and mine. He has a specific purpose for prayer. I believe the purpose for prayer is to facilitate and make possible the Father and His children working together “on earth as it is in heaven.” Dr. Cho in Korea said he relates to the Holy Spirit as his Senior Partner. There is a working together with God that finds its beginning in prayer that many Christians know nothing about.

In the Bible God’s purpose is clearly revealed for mankind in general. Your individual purpose will never contradict this overriding purpose. If it seems like it does then you have missed God. It is just that plain and simple. We need to learn how to discern His will and then pray until we receive it. Learn to read the Bible in context – don’t just pull out all your favorite verses. We discern God’s will through spending time with Him in prayer and learning to hear *His voice*. Remember, understanding flows along the pathway of relationship. God’s voice has a certain sound. The more you learn His sound the easier it becomes to discern it even when it is coming to you through other people. God will even send other people into your life to make sure you understand – if you really want to. Again, please remember this! *An unwilling God is not the problem*.

Clarity of purpose (“God’s will”) - properly embraced (this is called obedience) will release a godly enthusiasm -(the zeal of the Lord). This hunger and burning desire for God’s will that is coupled with this clear focus of purpose will enable the consistent, constant pursuit of any God given

objective. (**Take a moment and let that statement sink in**) It is God's idea for us to get answers to our prayers. My purpose in this teaching is not to get into some great philosophical discussion about the purpose of prayer. Somebody else can take on that task. My aim is to release revelation from the Word of God that will stir into action people of effective prayer – people who know how to pray and get answers. I believe you are one of those people and that's why you are reading this book.

There is a portion of scripture in the book of Isaiah that further illustrates how purpose is like God's principle of seedtime and harvest.

(Isaiah 55:8-11 NIV) "For my **thoughts** are not your **thoughts**, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my **thoughts** than your **thoughts**. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is **my word that goes out from my mouth**: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

God said that His Word will achieve the purpose for which He sent it or another way of saying this is that it will accomplish its intended purpose. Now let's take a moment to get a good understanding about this statement. God has promised that His Word will not return unto Him empty. How does God's Word return unto Him? If we look at this in context we see that the theme is seedtime and harvest. When you plant a seed you want to receive the fruit of that seed in return. As I stated before, I have found that the Word of God contains the seed of its own fulfillment. Some of you may be thinking, what does he mean by that statement? Let me explain it more simply.

When God is ready to move, when He is ready to do something – He releases His Word like a seed and then *He provides revelation and understanding*. Inherent in that released word or sent word is the power to bring it to pass. All we have to do is be good ground and receive the Word and cooperate with it through obedience so that it can bring forth fruit. In the Gospel of John, Christ is revealed as the living Word of God. In essence, Christ is the purpose of God and His will is going to be done. God is in control yet His sovereignty works through responsible human beings. This combination of grace and responsibility enables our growth and the fulfillment of all the potential God has given to us. God's word (seed) returns to Him as the harvest. How does all this work practically? I will illustrate it once again from my own life.

Thirteen years before my first wife went home to be with the Lord I was called to the ministry. *There was a definite revealing to me by the Lord that He desired for me to be a Pastor.* Over the years from that initial calling until my wife died it was a continual struggle to breakthrough into what I perceived as God's will for my life. Like so many other people with definite calls upon their lives I could not seem to move into full-time ministry although that was a definite desire. I started a business with the aim to finance my ministry. I even became ordained and started preaching at a small church and became an assistant pastor. When this did not work I went to college and became a professional mental health worker. (Why did I do this?)

For whatever reason I just could not seem to fully move into the call to be a minister. I wanted to be in full-time ministry but I just couldn't seem to make the transition. I even tried starting a church but I shut it down after a month went by. We joined a larger church and before long I was part of the preaching team but even when opportunities arose to add staff I was not chosen. Then when my wife died it seemed that the pull to be a pastor was finally over. But time and again the dream that God planted in my heart to serve in full-time Christian ministry would return. I realize now that the reason is the principle revealed in Isaiah 55:8-11. This dream was God's will.

Let's look at where I first got the idea that God wanted me to be a Pastor. When I received my initial call into the ministry God **quickened a portion of scripture to me**. This scripture went through the process of not just being logos or the written word of God to me but a rhema or now word. The scripture was where Jesus questioned Peter about the extent of his love for Him.

(John 21:15-17 NIV) When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep.

I felt God speaking this word to my heart. Not long after this while at a Bible study with several more experienced Christians, they said they felt impressed to tell me to fast and pray. They said I had a gift and God wanted to reveal it to me. I did this and soon I began to realize God was calling me

to be a Pastor. I questioned the validity of what I thought I was hearing so I asked for a sign. (Make it hard on God -He won't mind) I stopped at a Christian bookstore and the woman who owned it told me she was impressed to read a portion of scripture to me that she felt God wanted me to hear. You guessed it – it was John 21:15-17.

Look at the process. First God quickened a portion of scripture to me that involved my purpose. This came during a time of private prayer. Then He gave me plenty of confirmation to seal that word in my consciousness that it was in fact His will for my life. I believe in the prophetic but we need to balance it with God's "still small voice" and wise counsel. Don't call everything a word from the Lord but that which you identify as such stick with it.

From that moment on I knew God wanted me to be a Minister but I did not know how to bring it to pass. I lacked the understanding. It would be twenty years later before I finally entered full-time ministry. The reason I am doing what I do today – Pastor of a Church – traveling to Africa – writing books – training God's people in prayer – is all because of that initial word that God released into my heart. The reason why Joseph became Prime Minister in Egypt is because of this same process. When something is really God's will for your life, and you learn to cooperate with Him in His process of development and release, *it will come to pass*. There will always be a harvest. He loves you more than you can imagine. You must learn to cooperate with Him and His actions in your life.

God sent the Word (the heavenly vision or will for Joseph's life) and he was not disobedient to it but held onto it despite oppressive circumstances. God's word will not return unto Him void. It will always accomplish its purpose –even if it takes twenty years. **(Re-read the last two sentences to make sure you really understand)** The good news is that every dream from God does not have to take a long time to be fulfilled. Learning how to operate in the 3P's of prayer will enable you to extract the maximum benefit from the time you have. God is in control – not us. Don't miss what God is doing right now in your life waiting for something else to happen.

In the Bible there is a story about a young man named Gideon. Through a series of difficult trials and bad circumstances he found himself trying to thresh wheat in a winepress. The picture is one of poverty or containment by the enemy because you can't thresh wheat very well in a place where there is no wind. The wind was needed to blow away the husk and other unnecessary things in the wheat pile. In the Bible the Holy Spirit of God is sometimes referred to as the wind. We need the Spirit in our lives

to help us be productive and fulfill our destiny. We also need the Holy Spirit's wisdom so we can wage war against Satan's evil strategy of containment. I do not believe you can fully know your purpose and fulfill it without relationship between you and the Holy Spirit. We need the Spirit to gain understanding of God's purpose in His Word. Remember the parable of the sower! It is not enough just to hear but we need to hear *and understand*. We need to get the message.

Romans 10:17-19 NIV Consequently, faith comes from hearing *the message*, and *the message* is heard through the word of Christ. But I ask: **Did they not hear?** Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." Again I ask: **Did Israel not understand?** First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that **has no understanding.**"

Into this impossible situation the Word of the Lord came. God spoke to Gideon from under a very large tree. I found out that the name Gideon means, "someone called to cut down trees, someone called to tear down". *God will always speak to us out of our purpose.* God didn't speak to Gideon about threshing wheat in a winepress. No doubt Gideon knew what his name meant but he had to be reminded. In the midst of your trials God will remind you of your purpose. It is there with you at all times but frequently covered over by disappointments and frustrations. "***In love he predestined us***", take a moment right now and read Ephesians 1:1-12 and ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what's being said. (Don't skip over this step)

God called Gideon and told him that his purpose was to save the nation of Israel from destruction. (Not to thresh wheat in a pit with no wind). Your purpose involves salvation too— not only for you but for many others. I repeat, your purpose is not just for you. Just like George Bailey found out in the fictional movie, "It's a Wonderful Life", our lives touch countless other lives and the value of our existence is frequently not fully realized by each of us until some upsetting event. Many of us think the harvest is just personal development. That is only part of it – the rest of the harvest is reproduction and increase. *There is a Word going forth in the Church – God is looking for spiritual fathers and mothers.*

Gideon went through the transition period where *old ways of thinking gave way to God's way of thinking* as he interacted with the living God. Each of us will be changed and transformed the same way. (See Romans 12:2) Gideon got the *message* and went in the power of God and began to fulfill his purpose. He started chopping and tearing down things and he delivered Israel. {True to his name (purpose)} The rest of the story can be

found in the 6th chapter of the book of Judges in the Bible. The rest of your story is yet to be told.

We are called to be more than conquerors through Jesus Christ. It was never God's intention for His people to be slaves to circumstances but for us to tap into His purpose for our lives and to pursue it through prayer with a passionate intensity. Therefore, understanding of purpose is **the first key** to a powerful prayer life. Don't try to lead others in prayer without this understanding.

Purpose is the first key to powerful prayer - don't abuse prayer – learn to pray purposefully!

The statement Myles Monroe made that “if you don't know the purpose for something you will abuse it” applies in every area of life. Prayer is not an exception to this rule. If you don't know the purpose for prayer then you will abuse it. You will find yourself trying to make prayer be or do something that was never God's original intention. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to your success in prayer to know its purpose so that you can do it well. You may be trying to use prayer as a means for you to gain self esteem and acceptance. I have met intercessors who really needed to know that God loves them just the way they are. God has already met these two life needs and every other one in Christ. Our role in the Body of Christ does not make us more valuable to God. Do not abuse prayer!

Prayer is the key to the fulfillment of your calling and destiny upon this earth. The main ingredient missing from a lot of so-called prayer is a clear understanding and flowing in personal purpose and destiny. Without clear purpose there can be no sustained passionate praying. If you lack purpose in your praying the devil will find out and frustrate you. The Lord once spoke to me when I was expressing my frustrations to Him during a time of prayer, “James, how can I give you anything if you don't know what you want”. This struck me like a bolt of lightning and I understood how unfocused my prayers were. I was like a kite blowing in the wind and whichever way my circumstances went that is where I blew. The revelation about God's preceding Word of purpose and how to receive it is changing my life. All we have to do is *receive* the Word of God and rest. I like the illustration the Bible gives of this principle as seen in the life of Mary – the mother of Jesus:

(Luke 1:26-38NIV) In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, **you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.**" Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "**May it be to me as you have said.**" Then the angel left her.

God sent His Word to Mary. She received the Word as the Word of the Lord and submitted to it. "May it be to me as you have said." Receiving the Word of God and being good ground for it to be planted in so that it brings forth an abundant harvest is as simple as this. Many of us get hung up on this point of receiving – it is too simple. How do you know when you have really received the Word? The answer is simple – just like Mary – you become pregnant. The Word of God is a word that requires **obedience**. Really receiving the Word is obeying it. It is opening wide for the King of Glory to come in. Don't be troubled at what God is saying to you. Believe the Word of the Lord. You are highly favored. This is how you come to know and cooperate with the Lord in the fulfillment of your purpose.

Let me give a word of caution at this point. Do not try to put words in God's mouth. Let Him really speak to you. If you will get quiet long enough you will hear Him speak. Do not allow your nervousness and frustration to lead you into sin. "Be still and know that I am God" is the Word.

When you really receive a vision of God's purpose you become pregnant with it. If you are not pregnant then you have not received the seed. In the natural a man and woman must have intercourse before pregnancy can take place. Although the woman does not become pregnant every time this takes place, it is never going to happen without the seed being deposited. Even if the woman is impregnated through artificial insemination the seed has to be put into her. When the seed fertilizes with the egg a new individual called an embryo is created. This is a developing person who is coming forth.

We know that not all women who become pregnant have a baby. Some of them choose to abort the baby or interrupt the pregnancy. Some lose the baby while carrying it - through a miscarriage. Others carry the baby long enough for it to survive but it is still-born or born dead. All of these reasons why a baby is not born from the initial seed sown does not erase the fact that the purpose for pregnancy is for a baby to be born. The purpose for us becoming pregnant with the Word of God is for His will (baby) to be born (done) through us but unfortunately it does not always happen through us. There is nothing wrong with the seed – the problem is something else. Here it is!

There can be no “reaping” if you faint. There must a vision of purpose to goad you on. Purpose is not an option but it is the very life’s blood of effective prayer. If you won’t take the time to find out God’s purpose so that you can pursue it, you won’t be a powerful pray-er. I believe the reason most Christians don’t pray regularly is because of a lack of clear understanding of personal purpose; and then, a lack of understanding concerning the purpose for which they are praying. Our corporate prayer times lack effectiveness because of our lack of clear purpose. Once you see what God has in mind through prayer you will pray every time you can. Why are you praying?

1Jn. 5:14,15, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that **we have** the petitions that we have asked of Him.”

The purpose for prayer revealed in this scripture is that we receive answers from God. God has a will for my life, for your life, and for every life that has ever been on the earth. He has a will for every aspect and dimension of our lives. He has a will for your community, city and state. The scope of God’s purpose is vast yet God desires for each one of us to get the answers we need to our prayers. The way we do this is to receive the Word of His will (purpose) and carry it in the womb of prayer. When it is time – God will bring it to pass. Our responsibility is just to carry the seed of His purpose and to keep the right conditions for it to be born. The way we do this is to *stay in purpose* – to *remember that we are pregnant* and to *eat right* (The Word), *exercise* (Walk by Faith) and *not abuse* the baby or ourselves (Obedience).

As you can probably tell by now I feel that the understanding of purpose is the primary key to all effective prayer. Understanding of your purpose coupled to the understanding and pursuit of the specific purpose for

which you are praying will release God's will into your life. **Prayer is for your purpose and the purpose of others. Your purpose is captured through prayer. As an intercessor God uses you to pray concerning the purpose of others.** There will be obstacles to the fulfillment of purpose but effective prayer will keep you in pursuit of God's will. The obstacles will be overcome.

Spread out your petition before God, and then say, "Thy will, not mine, be done." The sweetest lesson I have learned in God's school is to let the Lord choose for me. --Dwight L. Moody

It is only when we pray for something according to the will of God that we have the promise of being heard and answered -- O. Hallesby

George Washington Carver said, "Ninety-nine percent of the failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses". I believe one of the main reasons people make excuses is fear. We won't succeed unless we are willing to face and overcome difficulties, and to be prepared to assume responsibilities. Jeremy Collier, no relation of mine, said, "How many feasible projects have **miscarried** through despondency, and been **strangled in their birth** by a cowardly imagination". It is always too soon to quit when you have a word from the Lord. Do not allow anybody or anything to rob you of your answers to prayer.

Our focus needs to be on hearing and understanding God so that we can obey Him. We need to learn how to travail in prayer until God's will is manifested in our lives or those we are praying for. The question you need to ask is not whether God will answer your prayer but whether you have a Word from the Lord. God is not a man and He does not lie. Jesus said that man would live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. (see Luke 4:4) The only reason we exist is because God spoke and our continued existence is totally dependent upon the Word of the Lord. (See Genesis 1 and Hebrews 11:3)

A clear understanding of God's purpose will breed desire or passion for its fulfillment. In Isaiah 1:19 it says, "If you are willing and obedient you will eat the good of the land". Before you can be fully willing to do something, you need to know what that something is. This level of

commitment is related to the embracing of a vision, a cause, or a purpose. This is why Biblical hope is so important.

The Bible in Hebrews chapter 11 in the 1st verse states very clearly that faith substantiates our hope. In other words, you can't have faith without hope. Therefore, in a very real sense, hope is the mother of faith. I believe purpose is like hope –the real Bible kind of hope. When I take the time to wait before God in prayer to find out His will or purpose *and* search His Word, I have seen incredible answers to prayer. We will not go through this process and effectively lead others into it without discovering our own individual purpose. How can we find it so we can pursue it? The Apostle Paul gave us some keys in the book of Philippians.

(Philippians 3:8-15 NIV) What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.

Here are some practical pointers on how to discover your purpose as revealed in this passage:

How to fulfill your purpose – the keys

1. **Find out what your purpose is** – you can't fulfill what you don't know. Paul said he wanted to know Him (verse 10). This is our ultimate purpose. I heard Joseph Garlington say one time that universal purpose for the church is to “win the lost at any cost”. Everybody needs to know who Jesus is. Practically, this is done when we see Him working through our skin in our specific purpose. What is your specific purpose – the way God designed you to fulfill your part in His universal purpose for the church?

3 Questions to help you find purpose!

- If you were going to be paid \$150,000 annually no matter what kind of work you did – what would you do?
 - If you received an inheritance and became suddenly wealthy – what would you do with the rest of your life?
 - What are your gifts and talents? (What do you do well? What do people usually compliment you on? What do you really like doing?) What would you do if money were not an issue?
2. **Learn to focus.** Paul said this one thing I do – not these 100 things I do. (see verse 13) He may have been involved in many things but one thing was his consuming passion. We need to be like this too. Paul told King Agrippa towards the end of his life that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. (His purpose was revealed by a Word that came from the mouth of God)
 3. **Let go of the past** – success or failure. (verse 13) Learn to live in the now. Today is the day of Salvation, the day of possibilities in God. Paul had made mistakes in the past just like you and I – but we can't change the past.
 4. **Learn how to seize the promises of God and not let go.** In the Old Testament the word is chazak (1 Samuel 30:6) and in the New Testament it is this word for apprehend or lay hold - 2638. katalambano, kat-al-amban'-o; from G2596 and G2983; to take eagerly, i.e. seize, possess, etc. (lit. or fig.):--apprehend, attain, come upon, comprehend, find, obtain, perceive, (over-) take.
 5. **Be passionate in your pursuit of God's purpose.** Paul said he pressed – the Greek work is dioko. This is when you give your all to your purpose. Proverbs 13:12, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life (NIV)
 6. **Be honest with God and yourself.** (see Philippians 3:12a) God will ask us the same question that He asked Adam, “Where are you?” (see Genesis 3:9) His interest is not in our physical location but the status of our hearts. (see Proverbs 4:20-24)
 7. **Trust God.** (see verse 15) God will always show us our current state so that we can change and conform to the image of Jesus. We usually go wrong before we go right. (see Romans 12:1-2)

I can say without hesitation that prayer is where the action is. I heard a person say one time that “the greatest thing God can do for you is answer

your prayers - I agree. There can be no greater thrill on this earth then to pray to the God of the universe and to see Him answer **your** prayers.

Let me give you an illustration about purpose. If I called you and gave you five dollars with no explanation you would probably wonder what it was for. Questions like, “Why is he giving me five dollars” or “I wonder what he wants me to do with this” would come into your mind. If enough time went by and your questions remained unanswered you would go on to something else with no clue to the purpose for my giving you five dollars. What you did not notice is that I gave you instructions on a piece of paper that you stuck in your pocket with the money. On the paper I asked you to please go to the store and buy me a loaf of bread, a dozen eggs and a quart of milk.

I had a purpose attached to what I gave you. I knew the purpose but you didn't and that is why I gave you the instructions. God has a purpose attached to the gift of your life. He has a purpose attached to the gift of prayer. If we still have questions after reading the clear instructions written down we can call (pray) and ask Him what exactly He meant. Once we hear Him though we need to obey.

God has given us specific instructions on how to spend our potential. The instructions are written on paper (the Bible) but more importantly they are written on our hearts. If we are willing, if there is a readiness to obey then potentially we can move into the next key principle of powerful prayer.

Passion in Prayer – The Second P

Samuel Chadwick said, "there is passion in praying that prevails. Elijah was a man of passions... All there was of him went into everything he did...Listen to his praying in the death chamber. Watch him on Carmel. Hear him plead the honor of God and unto the Lord for the affliction of the people. It is always the same: Abraham pleading for Sodom, Jacob wrestling in the stillness of the night, Moses standing in the breach, Hannah intoxicated with sorrow, David heartbroken with remorse and grief. Jesus in a sweat of blood. Add to that the list from the records of the church, personal observation and experience, and always there is the cost of passion until blood. It prevails. It turns ordinary mortals into men of power. It brings fire. It brings rain. It brings life. It brings God. There is no power like that of prevailing prayer.

Passion Defined

The English word passion comes from the Latin word *passio* that means suffering. It also means the state or capacity of being acted upon by external forces. The word has come to be identified with the sufferings of Christ between the night of The Last Supper and His death. It can also mean overriding emotion. (His ruling passion is money) It may mean an object of intense desire or deep interest. Sometimes in the way the word is used it means intense conviction or burning affection. In our time it has fallen in its usage to usually mean strong sexual desire.

Passion as we use it in our study is the classical definition of enthusiasm. The word enthusiasm is derived from the Latin word *entheos*. The prefix *en* means to thoroughly cover, to cover with, to go into or onto, to cause to be. *Theos* is the Latin word for God. If we combine the definitions we get the idea of being thoroughly covered with God or God being in us and causing us to be. I believe this is the idea of the anointing. God anoints us according to His purpose for our lives. When we have clear purpose we can move in a powerful anointing. God will cover us and operate in us according to His Divine purpose and will. Every Christian should be a person of great enthusiasm and passion. Our greatest passion should be for God Himself. Praying with passion is enthusiastic anointed prayer.

Have you ever noticed how enthusiastically people crowd around the machines in order to pay their money to purchase a chance to win seventy million dollars in the lottery. What is the process that leads up to this almost mass hysteria that grips millions of people all passionate about the possibility of getting rich quick? First the jackpot is publicized –“You have a chance to win seventy million dollars in the lottery”. Then millions of people *believe this report* and they hustle out to buy tickets so that they can win. They decide to take their hard - earned money and spend it on the one in several million chance of becoming rich. They don’t focus on the odds – they focus on the prize. You can tell. How? If they focused on the odds they wouldn’t play. The states that run lotteries know this – they don’t publicize the odds – just the prize. The odds are written on a little piece of paper hidden away somewhere while the prize is plastered everywhere.

If we lack **passion in our prayers** then something is wrong. Even people gambling are passionate about the possibilities of winning even though the odds are stacked against them. Holy desire and fervency in prayer is a sign of effective prayer. It shows that we have our eyes on the prize and not just the problem. It shows that we have believed God’s report and we are going after it. I am not advocating playing the lottery. Do not misinterpret what I am saying. I do not play the lottery because I would much rather invest my substance in a sure thing. I have believed God’s report. When I give tithes and offerings God has promised to bless me and I believe Him. The real issue is one of faith and obedience. Look at the following scriptures:

(Isaiah 53:1 KJV) Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

(John 12:37-38 KJV) But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

(Romans 10:16 KJV) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

When the Holy Spirit is involved in our prayers of faith and obedience we will see passionate pleas that come from burning desire. This passion is released when purpose is clearly known and we have a heart to obey. In

Proverbs 19:21 it states, “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is *the Lord’s purpose that prevails*”. In other words, God’s not obligated to fulfill our plans but He will fulfill His purpose. Do you believe His report?

If we know why we are praying and we are convinced it's the will of God, and we are ready to obey - then we will pray passionately. Since this godly passion and zeal is contingent upon knowing the Fathers intended purpose we should do what God instructed us through the Apostle James - we need to ask God for wisdom. God’s wisdom comes from His Word. That’s how I am able to discern God’s will in the area of tithes and offerings. This is how I am able to discern God’s will for my family, my Church, my city etc. Scripture is clear on this point. But there is a danger and temptation to take God’s word out of context. The protection against this is learning to read entire portions of Scripture and allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture. I believe failure to understand this one area is the cause of many problems in the Body of Christ.

This discerning of the will of God and persevering in prayer is absolutely necessary to the walk of faith. God knows this and that’s why we are instructed to ask for this required wisdom. The Holy Spirit is ready to reveal God’s wisdom to us. He knows we need a basis for our faith.

(1 Corinthians 2:9-16 NIV) However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"--but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But **we have the mind of Christ.**

The Holy Spirit reveals the mind or will of God related to God’s purpose or intention. Two steps take place in the person who is fueled by the passion of God. The first step is: the recognizing and perceiving of the will of God. You come to the awareness that something is God’s will – you understand. The second step is almost the same but there is a distinction. You become very aware of who it is revealing His will to you. “Hey, this is God talking, this is God asking me to do this”. Maybe you still have not

realized the secret to powerful, effective prayer. *God is after fellowship with us – He is our Father and we are His children.*

If the Holy Spirit is actively revealing the will of the Father to you, it is to solicit the proper response. God, the Holy Spirit, does not just frivolously go about revealing the Father's will, He does it with purpose. If you are being shown God's will then you need to respond and the response being called for is obedience. This is what it means to fear the Lord. I believe this passion for God and His will for our lives is our response to His love. It is God's unconditional love working in us and causing us to put aside selfishness and personal agendas for the expansion of His kingdom rule. *This is a key to powerful, effective prayer.*

“That’s too simple”. “I thought he was going to really reveal a secret key to finally give me the victory I have been seeking”. Hold up a second – don’t dismiss this truth because it seems too simple.

(2 Cor 11:3 KJV) But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the **simplicity** that is in Christ.

The Holy Spirit is passionate about His assignment. When we develop fellowship with Him and move with Him we will be passionate just like He is. Remember when the Holy Spirit asked me why I would not let Him comfort me and I sought scripture from the Bible to gain further insight into this Word I was hearing:

(2 Corinthians 1:3-7 NIV) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

The Holy Spirit is ready to supply all of our need according to the inheritance we have received in Christ but we have to let Him. The way we let Him is just to agree with His Word and receive it. There are challenges to our receiving – this is the suffering. Remember that one of the definitions of our word passion meant to be acted upon by external forces or to suffer. When we go through this process of holding onto the word of God no matter what the circumstances or trials - it brings forth a bountiful harvest and His

comfort flows from us to others. Jesus had to go through this process in Gethsemane prior to Calvary and we will have to embrace suffering too. In the days ahead we will hear more and more messages about the cross and the blood. Real authority comes into our lives when we obey God no matter the circumstances. This is not holding on through the sheer strength of human determination but *a deep love and passion for Jesus above all else*.

The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth. *I believe the one fundamental key truth He is constantly working to release in us is this understanding of the love of God.* We first got saved from revelation of God's love in Jesus Christ. This is the key to progression in Him too. Failure to accept the love of God causes many sincere believers to constantly struggle trying to earn something that is freely given. *We cannot earn the love of God.* It is the genius of God to create all people with a built in need for love and acceptance. He made us to need Him. Failure to accept the love of God has caused countless numbers of His children to misrepresent Him in their efforts to gain love and acceptance. We need to stop this and live knowing that God has already met all of our needs in Jesus Christ.

I have come to see that Jesus Christ manifested the love of God in His humanity. I have also come to realize that when I received this living Word as my Lord and Savior I received the love of God. The Holy Spirit said, "James – why won't you let me comfort you?" In my failure to really receive the love of God I was blocking Him from releasing His desire into my life. *He wanted to comfort me. He wanted me to receive from Him.* I now know that the Father's blessing is the birthright of all of His children. I thank God for how He is restoring the Church to a place of love and acceptance. When you attend a renewal type meeting you see tears of joy and rest being released to believers hungry for the love of God. *If God can get you healed then you can pray passionately without any thought of yourself.*

A word of caution is appropriate at this point. We won't be able to walk in this freedom without repentance if our heart is not right and our motives pure. I can pray with my whole heart or passionately when I am sure that what I am praying about will honor *Him* and cause *His* will to be done. The idea of just being willing is not enough. God is calling for wholehearted obedience. Look at this interesting interaction between Jesus and Peter.

(Matthew 16:13-19 NIV) When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my

Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

(Matthew 16:23 NIV) Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Jesus was stating that Peter and his words were a temptation to sin or to have false faith. Jesus knew what His purpose was. God had already revealed this to Him and Jesus in turn revealed it to the disciples including Peter. This that was coming through Peter was warring against Jesus' purpose (and Peter's). Notice the last part of the verse. Jesus said, "you do not **have in mind** the things of God, but the things of men."

A mind fixed upon the purpose and will of God is a powerful mind that God will use in the accomplishment of His will and purpose upon the earth. This is a mind full of faith in God's potential and the power of His purpose. A mind contrary to the will and purpose of God exhibited by Peter and his actions is a tool of satan. As we think, we are.

Thought precedes speech and action. Peter was not dwelling upon what God had just revealed to him but thoughts contrary to the known will of God. This was rebellion and the Bible is clear on where all rebellion started and still starts. Therefore, the author and finisher of rebellion is satan just as the author and finisher of faith is Jesus.

Pat Robertson in his monumental book "The Secret Kingdom" wrote that in the kingdom:

- Spirit controls matter
- Lesser authority yields to greater authority
- **The mind is the ultimate conduit of the spirit**
- Speech is the intermediate conduit between spirit and matter and between greater and lesser authority

Who we yield our minds to is of ultimate importance. The Bible tells us to "let this mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus".

(Mat 16:23 KJV) But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou **savourest** not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

The word translated “have in mind” in the NIV translation and “savourest” here in the KJV is the Greek word phreneo. Lets look at this word phreneo more closely.

(Phil 2:5 KJV) Let this **mind** be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

(Philippians 2:5 NIV) Your **attitude** should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

(Colossians 3:2 KJV) Set your **affection (phreneo)** on things above, not on things on the earth.

(Colossians 3:2 NIV) Set your **minds** on things above, not on earthly things.

Passionate pursuit of the will of God is contingent upon a mind that is stayed on Him. The mind is the primary area of battle. Before a Christian sins they are attacked in the area of their thought life. We must keep our mind upon God and His will for our lives. We will not be able to pray passionately without this mind of purpose. The Bible puts it this way.

(Philippians 2:3-5 NIV) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

(Phil 2:5 KJV) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

“You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God”. Somehow in a brief span of time Peter forgot whom he was talking to. He forgot that Jesus was the Christ and that he (Peter) was following Him and not the other way around. The tendency is for us to do the same thing. This is an area of warfare. Peter became very self-focused and not God focused. I believe the primary way we keep from forgetting is through worship. When we really worship our focus is kept upon God and His desires.

(John 4:23-24 NKJV) But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father is seeking such to worship him. God is Spirit: and those that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.

We must constantly keep our focus upon Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Jesus had not yet become Peter’s passion but He would be in the near future. Church legend records that Peter when he was facing execution for the cause of Christ pleaded with his persecutors not to crucify

him in the same position as His Lord Jesus Christ. It is said that Peter was crucified upside down. This is not the witness of someone who is concerned about himself. Peter had lost all sight of himself in his worship (love and devotion) of Christ. We should do the same.

Years ago a humble monk wrote a book called, “The Practice of the Presence of God”. The whole idea centered on our carrying on a conversation with God throughout the day and continually experiencing His presence. Brother Lawrence who wrote this book said that we should have a constant dialogue with God. Jesus called this abiding in Him. (See John 15) The focus was not just on God in heaven but also upon God who dwells with us and in us. I believe this is the central part of any real life of worship. It is not hard to pray continuously when we are practicing the Lord’s presence with us.

I love times of concentrated praise and worship where there is music and others who join in seeking God - like in a Church service. Yet, I have come to realize that if I am not seeking Him constantly then I am not living a real life of worship. I will not always be able to be in a Church service but I can always be with God. Anything else is only a religious exercise and less than God’s perfect will for my life. I have seen too many people who can praise God on Sunday but live like the world the other days of the week. There is too much sinning taking place in the Body of Christ and this truth being revealed will help stop it. The practicing of the presence of God is to be our passion. Please read this paragraph again right now – it is that important.

The following story from “The Life God Blesses” by Gordon Macdonald illustrates this point:

Not long ago, there was a conference of Christ-followers in England. At one meeting a Chinese pastor who had spent eighteen years in prison for his faith was introduced to give his witness to the assembled people. He recalled for the audience his prison experience with these words:

“My friends wonder what kind of work I did in the labor camp to keep me physically healthy. I answered them that life in the labor camp was very hard. The authorities in the camp put me to emptying the human waste cesspool.

“Most of the prisoners were afraid to approach the cesspool, but the authorities were aware of my background-I was well-educated, from a well-to-do family – and especially because they were atheist and they knew I was a Christian leader. So they enjoyed putting me to work in the human waste cesspool. But they did not know in those years how I enjoyed working there.

“It was more than two meters in breadth and two meters in length, filled with human waste collected from the entire camp. Once it was full, the human waste was kept until it was ripe and then dug out and sent to the field as fertilizer.

Because the pit was so deep, I could not reach the bottom to empty it, so I had to walk into the disease-ridden mass and scoop out the successive layers of human waste, all the time breathing the strong stench.

“The guards and all the prisoners kept a long way off because of the stench.

“So why did I enjoy working in the cesspool? I enjoyed the solitude. In the labor camp all the prisoners normally were under strict surveillance and no one could be alone. But when I worked in the cesspool, I could be alone and pray to our Lord as loudly as I needed. I could recite the Scriptures including all the Psalms I still remembered and no one was close enough to me to protest. That’s the reason I enjoyed working in the cesspool. Also I could sing loudly the hymns I still remembered.

“In those days one of my most favorite was “In the Garden.” Before I was arrested this was my favorite hymn, but at that time I did not realize the meaning of this hymn. When I worked in the cesspool, I knew and discovered a wonderful fellowship with our Lord. Again and again I sang this hymn and felt our Lord’s presence with me.

I come to the garden alone
While the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses.
And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there
None other has ever know.

“Again and again as I sang this hymn in the cesspool, I experienced the Lord’s presence. He never left me or forsook me. And so I survived and the cesspool became my private garden.”

These are the words of a simple man whose life God has chosen to bless.

When you are aware of the presence of God with you there is peace, assurance, confidence and passion – no matter the circumstances. Learning to pray from this position of power and strength should be our desire. We must understand that our purpose is from God, He is for us and not against us – and we can fulfill our purpose through His strength no matter what. Someone once said “to know Him is to love Him”. To have a passion for God is to love Him and know Him. We must make the seeking of God our number one passion. When we receive the comfort He freely gives we can see it poured out through us to others. Jesus said that out of our bellies or hearts would flow rivers of living water. (Refreshing, renewing and reviving) I believe this is His Life flowing out from us as we have ongoing fellowship and communion with Him.

When I teach intercessors and others in the principles of effective prayer I frequently make mention of praying what I call, “You said” prayers. This is prayer where you remind God of His promises to you or to others. This is when you realize the answers to your prayers are not contingent upon anything you do or do not do but only upon God’s word. You do not remind God because He forgot but because in the process you remember. The Holy Spirit brings to your remembrance the Word of promise and you go after it with renewed conviction. This kind of boldness and confidence only comes from real fellowship with God.

(Ephesians 3:19 Amplified Bible) [That you may really come] to know – practically, through experience for yourselves – the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge (without experience); that you may be filled (through all your being) unto all the fullness of God – [that is] may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself!

To pray with passion is to pray with enthusiasm. It is to pray in the presence of God. It is to be conscious of being anointed by God for your purpose – smeared and rubbed all over and filled up with the very presence of God Himself. It is to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Almighty God is working in union with you – using your unique personality – to bring to pass His awesome will. It is knowing that your will is His will and the power of God is behind your desire for fulfillment. It is communion with God. It is the love of God. It is the only way to fly!

When you pray with purpose and your prayers are passionate- based upon the integrity of God’s word and your love for Him -then you will draw the attention of the powers of darkness. The fulfillment of God’s purpose spells their ultimate defeat. The enemy will fight you every step of the way. Now is when you learn to fight the good fight of faith. It is a fight but it is a good fight because we win. You share in the passion of Jesus:

(Isaiah 9:7 NIV) Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The **zeal** of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

In the Bible our Lord is shown to be the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. But, He is also pictured as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Lets look at the final key to powerful effective prayer, the **pursuit**

Pursuit in Prayer – The Final P

Clarity of purpose in prayer will fire a passion that will enable us to prevail in prayer. **This is the pursuit.** Once we have been shown the will of God in any given situation and we are assured that it is God's will for us (we have embraced it as God's will), quitting is no longer an option. To do so is to be disobedient to God who has revealed it to us; it is to "be disobedient to the heavenly vision." How long should we pursue in prayer. The answer is, as long as Jesus does. When you rest in the love of God and know that you are free to love Him and everybody else – this will free you to live life all out. You can pray with holy abandonment because you are a worshipper of God.

The Bible says He ever lives to make intercession for the Church. (Hebrews 7:25) You must learn the secret of how to encourage yourself in the Lord. The Bible in 1 Samuel: 30 gives us the record of David encouraging himself in the Lord. Let's take a look at this.

(1 Sam 30:1-19 NIV) David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, and had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way. When David and his men came to Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. David's two wives had been captured-- Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God. Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." Abiathar brought it to him, and David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?" "Pursue them," he answered. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue." David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Ravine, where some stayed behind, for two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the ravine. But David and four hundred men continued the pursuit. They found an Egyptian in a field and brought him to David. They gave him water to drink and food to eat-- part of a cake of pressed figs and two cakes of raisins. He ate and was revived, for he had not eaten any food or drunk any water for three days and three nights. David asked him, "To whom do you belong, and where do you come from?" He said, "I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago. We raided the Negev of the Kerethites and the territory belonging to Judah and the Negev of Caleb. And we burned Ziklag." David asked him, "Can you lead me down to this raiding party?" He answered, "Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will take

you down to them." He led David down, and there they were, scattered over the countryside, eating, drinking and reveling because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah. David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled. David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back.

I am sure David wanted to pursue right away when he saw his family gone. But the Bible tells us that he didn't. David needed a word from the Lord and God gave him the word of pursuit as he sought Him in prayer. God was already involved and David needed to know it so that he could move in faith. David's pursuit was based upon the word he received from the Lord. We need to notice that it was a now word – one fresh from God. Any plans not made in consultation with the Lord are doomed to eventual failure. What we need is a Word from the Lord that comes from fellowship with Him. This is not just a word we grab out of the Bible and try to hold on to. This is a right now word – a proceeding word – it is rhema. A now word from God only comes through fellowship with Him. As you read the Bible or sit under anointed preaching and teaching you will hear Him speak to you. When you pray and ask Him questions you will hear Him speak to you. A rhema word is God speaking to you. It will be a knowing you have inside of you that God is actively involved in your life and He is giving you direction and guidance **now**.

When Mary said, "With God nothing will be impossible" the literal translation actually is that "no rhema will return to Him void or failing to accomplish its purpose. When God says pursue and recover all, we will recover all **if** we obey Him and pursue until we recover. The question is, "did you hear from God? Do you have a word from the Lord? If God wants you to do what you are doing, how can you fail? The only failure possible is your failure to obey. Powerful intercessors know this principle and they are used to help birth forth God's will. Is God calling you to be one of them?

Victories are won through prayer. Families are saved from destruction through prayer. David waged violent spiritual warfare where the Bible states that he "*encouraged* himself in the Lord. The Hebrew word is **chazak** which I mentioned earlier, it means to grab hold. A word picture is seen in its usage to describe how Joab grabbed hold of the horns of the altar when Solomon sent Beniniah to execute him for his part in murdering Abner;

(1 Kings 2:28-34 NIV) *When the news reached Joab, who had conspired with Adonijah though not with Absalom, he fled to the tent of the LORD and took hold of the horns of the altar. King Solomon was told that Joab had fled to the tent of the LORD and was beside the altar. Then Solomon ordered Benaiah son of Jehoiada, "Go, strike him down!"*

So Benaiah entered the tent of the LORD and said to Joab, "The king says, 'Come out!'" But he answered, "No, I will die here." Benaiah reported to the king, "This is how Joab answered me." Then the king commanded Benaiah, "Do as he says. Strike him down and bury him, and so clear me and my father's house of the guilt of the innocent blood that Joab shed. The LORD will repay him for the blood he shed, because without the knowledge of my father David he attacked two men and killed them with the sword. Both of them--Abner son of Ner, commander of Israel's army, and Amasa son of Jether, commander of Judah's army--were better men and more upright than he. May the guilt of their blood rest on the head of Joab and his descendants forever. But on David and his descendants, his house and his throne, may there be the Lord's peace forever." So Benaiah son of Jehoiada went up and struck down Joab and killed him, and he was buried on his own land in the desert.

Needless to say, Joab did not want to let go of the horns of the altar knowing that his executioner was waiting outside. There is a violent spiritual warfare we wage when we grab hold to the promises of God despite all circumstances to the contrary. It is always too soon to quit praying if we have not seen the will of God manifested in our lives. In Galatians 6:9 we are told, "We shall reap if we faint not". Even as I write this I am facing a challenge by the enemy to try and keep God's will from being done in our children's lives. He will not win!

Understanding the balance between the idea of God's sovereignty and the grace that He gives to us is important. We will not know how to receive from God consistently unless we understand the part we have to play in the whole process. One of the blessings of understanding God's sovereignty is the comfort and peace we have knowing the Father is in complete control of everything. But we will become passive without understanding the dynamic of grace. God told Joshua and Israel that He gave them the promise land. This did not imply that they were not to do anything to receive it. On the contrary, they had to fight and wage warfare to displace the squatters on their property. They had to bind themselves to the will of God and move out in obedience and in the process cause the enemy to loose his hold on what did not belong to him. God would lead them in the fight and fight for them but they had to fight.

An anachronism for grace is – **God's Riches At Christ's Expense**. The promise land of our inheritance in Christ is very real. It is the sum total of Salvation. Contrary to some popular teaching – we can't just do what we

want and have what we want – just because we see it in the Bible. There was a man who had a powerful prophetic gifting in the forties and fifties. He tried to be a teacher and taught error to his followers. It obviously was not God’s will for him to be a teacher of the Word but he tried. When we get outside of God’s purpose for our lives it is a dangerous place. God’s grace is available but we can’t just do what we want –He’s sovereign or in charge. Lack of balance in this area can cause all kinds of problems. The solution is to maintain active fellowship with God so that we know His personal will for our lives and so that we receive insight into how to pray for others.

Some things are clearly God’s will as revealed in His Word – the Bible. What we need insight into is: His timing, purpose and plans for those we are praying for, and other factors that are not as obvious to us. The Spirit of Christ in us will motivate us and lead us into certain actions when we are sensitive to His leading. Some live as if God saved us and then turned everything over to us and we don’t have to submit to Him. This is a wrong idea. Following this idea will only lead to the pursuit of a lot of carnal ideas and pleasures. God wants to bless and we have to walk by faith but the walk might be different than what we have thought. When we respond to the Lord’s desires we become co-laborers together with him. He is the Senior Partner and we are His assistants. We are to obey Him and share responsibility. The bottom line is He leads and we follow – we pray together and work together.

(Mark 16:20 NIV) Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

This is a good place to look at a fundamental concept of all spiritual warfare, the idea of binding and loosing. Once a person very recognized and respected in the Body of Christ at large gave me a prophecy. He told me that God had given me great credit in the bank of Heaven. I knew what this meant but someone else hearing this and trying to claim this promise for themselves might enter into confusion. On the surface it looks like I can just ask for what I want and God (the bank of Heaven) will give it to me. Like I said, I knew what this meant and the conclusion just stated is not the right one. Through years of training in God’s furnace of affliction, my desire has been and is being tuned to God’s desire. I am learning not to want anything outside of His will for my life. On the other hand, once I am shown that something is God’s will, then I begin to desire it, no matter what it is. I am more tenacious than a dog with a bone when it comes to not letting go of a

promise of God. God has worked in me the impetus to be a worshipper of God, totally yielded to His will and desires. David worshipped God – even when others talked of stoning him to death – even when he did not know the whereabouts or condition of his family – he worshipped.

Do not misunderstand me. I am not perfect. Sometimes I forget who I am in Jesus Christ. I choose to go another way other than God's will for my life. I have an enemy just like you do and he does not want me to be an overcomer in Jesus Christ. The Bible calls this failure to obey sin and like everyone else I sin at times. But when this occurs there is a conviction that comes upon me. I know that I have sinned and that I need cleansing. I experience guilt and if it were not for the grace of God I would lose all hope. But then I remember Jesus. Then I remember how He died for me. Then I remember how much He loves me and how much I love Him. It is during these times of returning that I EXPERIENCE the presence of God afresh and anew. I worship Him in spirit and truth. The Word of God states that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and that to fear God is to hate evil. I am learning how to walk in wisdom and in the fear of the Lord. (see Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 9:10 and 8:13)

(James 4:7-10 NIV) 7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

The offer to transact with the Bank of Heaven is open to all of God's children. The problem has been either ignorance to the rules and regulations of this bank or an unwillingness to submit to these rules. Once again I will remind you that *an unwilling God is not the problem*. Many times the devil is not even your real problem – it is your own stubborn rebellious will. Get right with God and the devil won't stick around. We need to learn how to surrender or submit to the will and plans of God. When God tells us to submit that is exactly what He means. The word for submit can mean, "come up under the authority of". It is a military term that every soldier can understand. Lack of understanding in this area will cause us to waste precious time. Anything done outside of the Lord's will is identified in the Bible as something without any lasting worth or value. Look at the following scriptures:

(1 Corinthians 3:9-16NIV) For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert

builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

(Matthew 7:NIV) By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

We do not have time to waste so we need to understand this Bank of Heaven idea. There is an advantage and a disadvantage to think of our interactions with God as being like that of a bank. The advantage is that it reminds us that the God we worship is a God of principles or laws. He is our source and He is willing to bless us when we come to Him the right way. God does have principles or laws and many of these laws are fixed and will work for Christian or unbeliever alike. One of these fixed laws is the law of tithing. I mentioned earlier how tithing and giving offerings is a much better deal than playing the lottery. There are people who do not confess Jesus as Lord who follow the law of tithing and they receive the benefit. This is hard for many Christians to understand but it is a fact. Yes, there are heathens who do not serve the Lord who receive the benefits of tithing and there are disobedient Christians who fail to receive the benefit because they won't tithe. Why don't you see rich people playing the lottery? Don't say because they don't need the money. They keep working even though they are rich. No – the reason they don't play the lottery is because they know it is not a good deal.

The disadvantage of the “Bank of Heaven” idea is how impersonal it seems. Yes, there are laws that work when we work them. But there is also an inherent danger involved in this concept. There is an old saying that, “You might get what you want but you won't want what you get if you leave God out.” This is one of the dangers of trying to operate in the fixed laws of

God without intimate relationship with the God who created the laws. The devil is just waiting for people who refuse to submit to God. If you are not actively submitting your mind, will and emotions to God on a daily basis then you are in danger. The instructions in the book of James on resisting the devil first told us to submit to God. We need the protection that living fellowship with God provides. We will not be making transactions with the Bank of Heaven throughout eternity but we will be worshipping God. The time to start is now.

A good question to ask is what happens in the interim of initial pursuit in prayer and full recovery? The answer is a fight! God is actively involved in the entire process and He is working in all the lives involved to clean up things and arrange things but many times answers to prayer take time and a lot of praying - not always, but sometimes. Dr Cho in his book “The Fourth Dimension” describes this process as incubation. He explains how we first need to have a *clear objective*, then we need to *see it as being done*, and then we should pray through to a place of assurance or *rest* and finally *confess* it.

I am grateful to Dr. Hayford for what I am about to share from his book entitled, “Prayer is Invading the Impossible”. When we know that we know that we are praying for God’s will to be done then a great boldness is released into our lives. The foundation for it was established by the Cross - (the blood of Jesus)- therefore we need to keep a balance - bold but humble. We are not talking about a false humility or passivity which is really giving in to the enemy but real humility which is strength under the control of the Holy Spirit. We need our self-will broken so that we will stay submitted to God. We may have to wrestle all night with the Man but we know the end result is the ability to prevail with God and man although we do it with a limp. (see Genesis 32) There is no substitute for real authority in prayer that comes from a full, wholehearted submission to God.

Spend time with God in conversation and relationship. Don’t just go to God in prayer every time you need something. Love Him and honor Him. Embrace the atmosphere of heaven while you are still here on earth. Allow the love of God to fill you up and flow out from you to love other people. Learn to receive your self - esteem and acceptance from who you are in Christ and not what you do. There really is a rest for the people of God.

I believe God is changing us and it will be reflected in our way of praying. God is purposeful, He is passionate, and He is in pursuit of His will. It is time for us to flow with the River of God. Answers to prayer will come rapidly in these days in which we live. Things are speeding up. Satan’s schemes are being exposed on a constant basis. New revelation is coming within the Body of Christ on how to really live as over-comers. I

will leave you with this thought that God willing I will develop in another book.

We are instructed in 2 Corinthians to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Every means all! But, it is obvious to even the casual observer that this is not happening within the Body. There is still too much selfishness and disunity. Why do you think this is happening?

There is a subtle but very harmful habit that many of us have. Those thoughts that are obviously evil that enter our mind we have no problem rejecting. But, if the thoughts have an introduction from a source we are familiar with we tend to be less discerning. We need to learn how to search the Scriptures again to see whether what is being taught is of God or not. Learn to read Christian books with your Bible close by. Look up the Scripture references and notice the context of what is being quoted. If too many verses are being taken out of context get rid of the book. When an author does this they are trying to prove a point and they have abandoned good procedures such as proper hermeneutics and exegesis. (I know these are big words but it would have taken another couple chapters just to explain what these two things are. Get your dictionary and look them up.)

There is one other area of caution. We seem to have a tendency to not discern what our thoughts are and what they are not. The emphasis I'm trying to make is where do the thoughts originate from that we allow in our mind. The Bible says that we Christians have the mind of Christ. The standard of Christian thinking is the Word of God. It does not matter whether your thoughts have personal pronouns such as I, my, etc. If the thought is not like Christ you need to learn to capture it and bring it to the light. Do not fall into the pride of thinking you can tell which thoughts are yours and which are not. The devil is a deceiver, a liar and an accuser. Learn to obey God.

God's thoughts are flowing to you right now. He is speaking and the good news is that you have the proper receiver. It is called the mind of Christ and you received it when you received the Spirit of Christ at salvation. It is time for you to pray with purpose, passion and pursuit. Get ready – your embarking on the adventure of a lifetime!

Appendix 1

(James 5:16-18 KJV) Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. **The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.** Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. {see 1Kings 17&18}

effectual

1754. energeo, en-erg-eh'-o; from G1756; to be active, efficient:--do, (be) effectual (fervent), be mighty in, shew forth self, work (effectually in).

1756. energeis, en-er-gace'; from G1722 and G2041: active, operative:--effectual, powerful.

1722. en, en; a prim. prep. denoting (fixed) position (in place, time or state), and (by impl.) instrumentality (medially or constructively), i.e. a relation of rest (intermediate between G1519 and G1537); "in," at, (up-) on, by, etc.:--about, after, against, + almost, X altogether, among, X as, at, before, between, (here-) by (+ all means), for (. . . sake of), + give self wholly to, (here-) in (-to, -wardly), X mightily, (because) of, (up-) on, [open-] ly, X outwardly, one, X quickly, X shortly, [speedi-] ly, X that, X there (-in, -on), through (-out), (un-) to(-ward), under, when, where (-with), while, with (-in). Often used in compounds, with substantially the same import; rarely with verbs of motion, and then not to indicate direction, except (elliptically) by a separate (and different) prep.

2041. ergon, er'-gon; from a prim. (but obsol.) ergo (to work); toil (as an effort or occupation); by impl. an act:--deed, doing, labour, work.

righteous

1342. dikaios, dik'-ah-yos; from G1349; equitable (in character or act); by impl. innocent, holy (absol. or rel.):--just, meet, right (-eous).

1343. dike, dee'-kay; prob. from G1166; right (as self-evident), i.e. justice (the principle, a decision, or its execution):--judgment, punish, vengeance.

1344. deiknuo, dike-noo'-o; a prol. form of an obs. prim. of the same mean.; to show (lit. or fig.):--shew.

avails

2480. ischuo, is-khoo'-o; from G2479; to have (or exercise) force (lit. or fig.):-- beable, avail, can do ([-not]), could, be good, might, prevail, be of strength, be whole, + much work.

2481. ischus, is-khoos'; from a der. of is (force; comp. eschon, a form of G2192); forcefulness (lit. or fig.):--ability, might ([-ily]), power, strength.

2482. echo, ekh'-o; (includ. an alt. form scheo, skheh'-o; used in certain tenses only); a prim. verb; to hold (used in very various applications, lit. or fig., direct or remote; such as possession, ability, contiguity, relation or condition):--be (able, X hold, possessed with), accompany, + begin to amend, can (+ -not), X conceive, count, diseased, do, + eat, + enjoy, + fear, following, have, hold, keep, + lack, + go to law, lie, + must needs, + of necessity, + need, next, + recover, + reign, + rest, return, X sick, take for, + tremble, + uncircumcised, use.

(James 5:16 NIV) Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

(James 5:16 NRSV) Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

(James 5:16b Amp) The earnest(heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available - dynamic in its working.

(Eph 3:1-12 KJV) For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the *effectual* working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that

now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

(Eph 4:15,16) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Appendix 2

Binding and Loosing

Mt. 16:16-19 Keys of the Kingdom - to bind/ contractual (the power of spoken words) - God deals in words - we bind with His Word. Binding is the calling forth of God's eternal counsels (purposes) - His established will. The process is the determination and calling forth of His will and then the release or loosing - the manifestation of God's will openly seen. God contracted for man's redemption and signed for it in blood -we can't stop as His agents in prayer until we see that contract fulfilled. **God does not need to be convinced - the gates of hell do!** We can have what heaven has already decided upon. Binding is contracting with God - to pray His will into manifestation upon the earth -we are His agents of change. We have to be like Mary and receive God's Word. Remember – the evidence that we receive is the birthing because God's Word never fails to accomplish it's purpose.

Dear Reader,

I pray this book has been has been a blessing to you. For many years I have taught these same things to anyone who would listen.

Think of "The Three P's" as a track to run on. The main thing is your fellowship with Jesus.

I learned these principles in the fire of trial and suffering. They have worked for me and I believe they will work for you too.

With Gratitude,

Jim Collier

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Prior to starting this work, Jim served as an elder at Life Center Ministries also in Harrisburg. His primary areas of responsibility were prayer and ministry team training and of course cell groups.

Jim moves in a strong anointing for prayer and prophetic ministry and Linda is a gifted singer and teacher. They were married in 1995 after their previous mates both went home to be with the Lord. Together they have eight children and five grandchildren.

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