

God Who Are You? And Who Am I?
Knowing and Experiencing God by
His Hebrew Names: Lessons in the
Wilderness

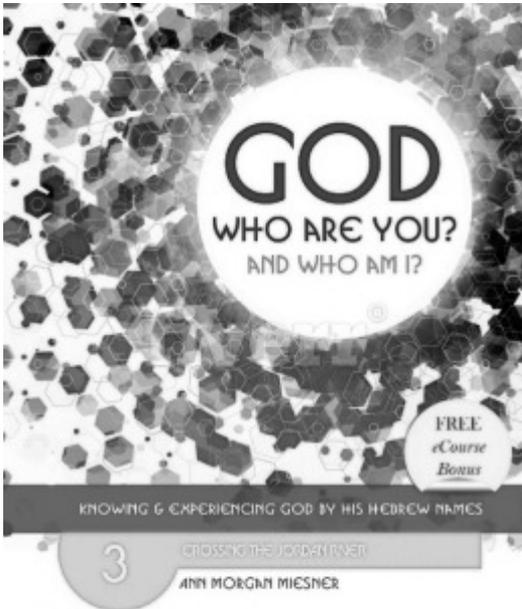
God Who Are You?, Volume 2

Ann Morgan Miesner

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DON'T FORGET TO GET BOOK 3
OF 4:
CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER

“I CAME TO A POINT where something had to change. My heart was in need of God more than ever. I began having intimate conversations with God, asking God to help me understand Him, to know Him for who He really is. I was asking God, “Do I really know You?”



“I wasn't aware there was a book written by Ann Morgan Miesner, called *GOD Who Are You? AND Who Am I?* One day I met Ann in an amazing time of fellowship and prayer, and she handed me the book.

“I am forever grateful for the way God answered my prayer. I couldn't stop being in awe as I read and studied and began relating to each of God's names and how He worked personally in my life from the very beginning. The book has been a source of insight and inspiration, as well as part of the emotional healing God was taking me through, rebuilding my spirit and vision. I can sincerely say that it is the kind of devotional meant for every woman or man who are truly interested in a deeper understanding of who God is, His nature and heart. I was able to see that God truly hears my prayers and cares enough to have a personal walk with me!

“May this study bless and deepen your search and relationship with the Lord as you learn how magnificent our God is and how He reveals Himself through His Holy names.”

--Lisa K., Oklahoma

eBook 3: CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER:

Chapter 12: God Is Jehovah-Jireh [The Lord's Provision Will Be Seen]

Chapter 13: Because God Is Jehovah-Jireh, I Am Free

Chapter 14: God Is Jehovah-Rapha [The Lord Is Healer]

Chapter 15: Because God Is Jehovah-Rapha, I Am Healed

Chapter 16: God Is El Elyon [The God Most High]

Chapter 17: Because God Is El Elyon, I Am Salt



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PREFACE



HAVE YOU EVER HEARD someone talking in the background, then they stopped talking as though they were waiting for someone to reply; then, you realized that *someone* was *you*? You'd like to say, "Don't you know my name?" It's irritating, and it makes us feel unimportant.

Recently, a secretary was training me to take over her job. She constantly talked and never once called me by my name. I never knew if she was talking to me or someone else, because she constantly jabbered. She also treated her employer this way. One day, he replied to her, as he looked at me in an understanding way, "I like my name." But, the woman never acknowledged that she heard or understood a word he said.

Likewise, our heavenly Father must feel the same way about His name. Otherwise, why would He have so many of them that reveal different aspects of His character? We show respect and acknowledge He is a very important person when we understand and honor Him by His name. The ironic thing is that when we come to understand even a small portion about God's names and who He is, we find who we are; we find out about ourselves and the answers to absolutely every problem we could ever face in life. We come to experience His great love for us and that He wants to meet our every need. He shows us we can overcome any difficulty, and then teaches us how. And through that overcoming process, we learn where we have come from and where we are going.

We are going to look at twelve of the more prominent Hebrew names of God and how they relate to us. We will experience God through the lives of women, and some men, who came to know God intimately by His name as they overcame great obstacles. These people, from ages twenty-two to eighty-two, from different denominations trusting in the One and only True God, came to find that God likes His name too. He responded to each of them as they called upon His name.

Be aware that our goal is to know God and to experience Him, to have an intimate relationship with Him. To *experience* is so much more than to *know* and even to understand. Many people, even Christians, know about God yet do not have *experiential knowledge* of who He is. According to Webster's dictionary, to experience means "anything or everything lived through, training and personal participation, knowledge, skill, etc., resulting from this; to undergo."

It is my prayer you will make a quality decision right now to do what it takes to trust God's *ability*, His *power* and His *goodness* in your own life as you experience, and undergo, the aspects of His nature, one name at a time. The best way to do this is to keep a daily journal as you face your personal struggles in His presence. At the end of each name of God (in the workbook and in the FREE eCourse Bonus) are questions or simple exercises to help you make this journey one of "personal participation." If you answer the questions and look up the Scriptures throughout, I guarantee it will be the most exciting *experiential* journey of your lifetime—which you will travel with your heavenly Father.

Be still and know that He is God. Stop, look and listen, and digest the material before moving to the next module and you will hear Him calling you by your name.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the [consistently] righteous man—upright and in right standing with God—runs into it and is safe, high [above evil] and strong. —Proverbs 18:10 (Amplified)



PART II

LESSONS IN THE WILDERNESS



And the Lord said to Joshua . . . “Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: ‘When you reach the edge of the Jordan’s waters, go and stand in the river.’”

Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God . . .”

—*Joshua 3:8-9*



CHAPTER 6

Jehovah-Shalom

[The Lord is Peace]



So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it, The Lord is Peace. . . .—Judges 6:24

SIX YEARS AFTER ACCEPTING the Lord as her Savior, Kim Crowe, now thirty-six years of age found peace. She joined a church that had a Bible-teaching and believing pastor. Women of the church decided to organize their own retreat, feeling they could minister to each other as well as someone from outside. As part of the retreat, they decided to wash each other's feet and serve communion. As long as they could show it was biblical, the pastor supported them.

Chanté J. and her mother taught from Scripture, and then, they prayed for the others. Standing on her tip toes to look in Kim's eyes, Chanté put her hands on Kim's shoulders saying, "No, you have to be last."

Chanté and her mother prayed for the other women who received tremendous emotional and spiritual healings. Kim thought, *How wonderful! What's going to happen when they come to me?*

Finally, Kim fell to her knees, and while looking up for one hour, her mind flashed back over her whole fear-filled life, as the two Godly women prayed in spiritual authority over her. The only thing Kim knew as a child was the occult. Her home was filled with spirit cables, Quija boards, tarot cards, horoscopes—all kinds of things the Bible calls

an abomination against the Lord. Her mother taught her, “Jesus is a lie and the things of Satan are real. Christianity is just a religion—nothing more.” At nine years of age, Kim was raped by an uncle; in her twenties, she was still afraid to go anywhere alone. Her mother forced her to join the Army in an effort to get her out of the house. While there, she deliberately became pregnant so she could have a child to love her.

After the Army, Kim met Terri, a girl who had been raised by foster parents, because her birth parents mistreated her. Although Terri had gone to church with them, she had not accepted Jesus, but she could “talk Bible.” The two smoked marijuana together, while reading the book of Revelation, scaring them silly.

If it had not been for two cousins who witnessed to Kim, she did not know where she would be right now. At first, she could not accept what they told her. First, there was a Creator who loved her. Second, there was a Savior who died for her. Last, He was the only way to heaven. Kim’s mom said, “It is all as true as you want it to be. There is no truth.” Although Terri’s own spiritual beliefs were not solidified, Terri convinced Kim to read the Bible and decide for herself what she believed.

Kim decided to send her seven-year-old daughter to church. Kim decided to go with her, just to make sure she was being taught the right things. Even before this decision, Kim felt God working in her life. She snorted speed daily, but woke up one morning and said, “I don’t want this anymore.”

Giving up drugs was harder. Terri told her, “The Bible doesn’t say you can’t smoke dope, so it’s okay.” Kim knew better. To her, it was the same as getting drunk. This revelation did not come to her until two weeks after she accepted Jesus.

Before Easter of 1984, the movie *Jesus of Nazareth* was on television. Kim watched it on a Friday night, then again on Saturday. There was a point where Jesus turned his head and looked straight into her

eyes and said, “Now is the time. You have to make a choice.” Kim later watched the movie many times, but that was not part of it.

After watching and hearing Jesus speak to her, Kim put her cigarette down, a three-pack-a-day habit, and prayed, “Lord, I don’t know if this is true. I don’t know if this is right. I don’t understand. I just cannot live any longer the way I’ve been living. I hate my life. I hate myself. I ask you to come into my life and change it.” Immediately, she felt something she never felt before. Peace. It was wonderful. She had heard of people who got an electric feeling or bubbled up with joy with a salvation experience, but she had what she needed—total peace.

Because of the occult influence, Kim had been bombarded by evil spirits, sometimes on an hourly basis. She had felt if she killed herself, everybody else would be better off. She had thought if she choked herself, she would be at peace. She had felt black inside. There was no life. None. But *now*, there was true peace and she was alive—alive for the first time in her life.

Chanté and her mother quoted Scripture over her as Kim recalled the Scriptures that had come to mean the most to her. In 2 Timothy 1:7 God told her that He had not given her a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Her mother thought she was crazy, but that’s not what the Bible told her. Second Timothy 3:16 said that all Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, for training in righteousness so that she would be thoroughly equipped. *If I’m thoroughly equipped, then I can’t be crazy.*

Romans 12:1-2 changed her life, “I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” She knew she could not do that by herself, because her mind had been damaged by drugs and verbal abuse. She prayed, “God, just take Your Word and pour it into my head.” As she read the Bible,

she pictured God pouring His Word into the top of her head so the words would fill her from the feet up.

It was working, but still, when she got out of the Word, the spirits would come back. At times, she would even hear the same voices, telling her how stupid she was, and planting thoughts of suicide in her mind. There were times when she would not go to Bible study or anywhere else, telling her friends, “I can’t go today. I feel ugly.” She knew that as a Christian, Christ lived within her, but the demons continued to harass and oppress her.

Kim was still looking up when she heard Chanté’s voice saying, “And finally, we ask you Father, to help Kim be strong in the Lord in His mighty power. We pray she will put on the full armor of God so that she can take her stand against the devil’s schemes. For her struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. And right now, in the name of Jesus Christ, we command this spirit of fear to leave! You can no longer oppress and harass our sister!” (see Eph. 6:10-12).

Kim and the others who were praying with their eyes open literally saw the darkness lift. It appeared like a sheer black curtain rising from her. It had blocked out the Son, but now Light came in and expelled the darkness. Kim thought, *It was just like in the books, “This Present Darkness” and “Piercing the Darkness.” Wow, they’re gone. I actually saw them leave!*

This battle was won by a small band of women who believed God’s Word and dared to use “the name of Jesus.” They believed God could bring victory, allowing Him to do His work through them. It did not take an army to help Kim find peace, just two or more believers with fully committed hearts, like Joshua and Caleb, obedient to fight—in intercessory prayer.

Gideon Did Not Need a Large Army

Gideon, a judge of the Old Testament, also found he did not need a large army to overcome fear in the land and in his own heart. The book of Judges tells the story of the Israelites in the Promised Land, after the death of Joshua, before the Lord gave them Kings—King Saul, David and Solomon, etc. Through the lifetimes of six judges, the people followed the Lord. Each time a judge died, or a generation died out, the people reverted back to worshipping the false god of their enemy—Baal. They chose gods of their own making, becoming selfish, rather than dying to self and allowing God to fight their battles for and through them.

After their enemies gained the advantage over them, due to their sin, God always forgave the Israelites. They confessed their sin and God repeatedly delivered them in the way only He could do—supernaturally, so only He could get the glory, just as He did for Kim. God never does anything to bring peace that could mistakenly be credited to man's human ability. There is no better example of this from the stories of the judges than that of Gideon.

After forty years of peace and Judge Deborah's death, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord for seven years. During this time, the Midianites and Amalekites oppressed them so much they actually retreated to the mountain clefts and caves to live. They came out to plant their crops, but the enemy invaded their country like locusts and camped on the land, ruining their crops and slaughtering the livestock. Once again, the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help.

The Lord sent a prophet, who said,

This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. I said to you, 'I am the Lord your God; do not worship

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the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.’ But you have not listened to me.—Judges 6:7-10

Then, one day, Gideon, the son of Joash, was threshing wheat in a hiding place safe from the Midianites. The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, and said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior” (Judg. 6:12).

“But sir,” Gideon replied, “if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.”

The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?”—Judges 6:13-14

Let us put ourselves in the shoes of Gideon. Suppose we are doing laundry, and the Lord appears to us and calls us a “warrior.” We are hungry to see the miracles we heard once happened, that are in the Bible, and now God is telling us that if we are to see those things happen, they must come through *me*. “Am not I sending you?” the Lord said. Chanté and her mother had to choose to be used by God. Chanté spent two years, after being delivered from drugs, in a lot of prayer asking God to change her and to use her.

No less than we would do, Gideon resisted, complaining his clan was the weakest of all and that he was the least in his family, thinking, *no one ever gives me a second thought*. But the Lord told him, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together” (Judg. 6:16).

Gideon wanted a sign that this person talking to him truly was the Lord. Gideon asked him to wait so he could prepare an offering.

The Lord waited. Gideon prepared a goat and unleavened bread and brought it to Him. The Lord had him put it on a rock, take his staff, touch the meat and bread; fire consumed the peace offering. Immediately, the Lord disappeared. This was the sign Gideon had asked for.

When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the Lord, he exclaimed, “Ah, Sovereign Lord! I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!”

But the Lord said to him, “Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.” So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it The Lord is Peace. . . .—Judges 6:22-24

Gideon heard these words of peace from the Lord after He had disappeared. The root word from Hebrew for peace is *shalôm*, meaning health, security, tranquility and welfare.^[1]

That night, the Lord was still with Gideon and instructed him to tear down his father’s altar to Baal. Gideon knew ten men who were willing to help him, and they obeyed. With the wood from the heathen altar, they created a proper altar for sacrifices to the Lord God.

Gideon and Kim both went against their parents’ wishes and way of life. Gideon did what his father was afraid to do. Surprisingly, his father stood up for Gideon to the town’s people saying, “If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar” (Judg. 6:31).

Unlike Gideon’s dad, Kim’s mother persecuted her by calling her “stupid” and berated her because of her Godly standards. Not only did she try to convince Kim she was crazy, but she put in the minds of Kim and her sister that each hated the other. It would only be after Kim’s mother’s death that the Lord would reveal to Kim if her mother ever became a Christian.

After much doubting Gideon chose to be obedient to the Lord and gathered all the men he could to help him defeat their enemies.

The Lord said to Gideon, “You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, announce now to the people, Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave. . . .—Judges 7:2-3

Twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained. Less than one third had faith in the Lord’s ability to save them. Still, the Lord said there were too many men. He told Gideon He would hand-pick them. Gideon took the men down to the water to drink. The men who lapped the water from their hand—those who stayed alert and watching, not taking their eyes off the situation—were chosen. Of the ten thousand men, only three hundred remained.

During that same night, the Lord told Gideon if he was afraid to attack and wanted encouragement, to go to the camp of the enemy and listen to what they were saying. Gideon and a friend arrived at the opposing camp outposts just as an enemy guard was telling his friend his dream, “A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed.”

“His friend responded, ‘This can be nothing than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands’” (Judg. 7:13-14).

Encouraged, Gideon worshiped God, ran back to the camp and shouted, “Get up! The Lord has given the Midianite camp into your hands” (Judg. 7:15).

Dividing the men into three companies, Gideon put trumpets, empty jars and torches in their hands. The men broke the jars, blew the trumpets, and shouted, “For the Lord and for Gideon!” The Lord caused the men in the enemy’s camp to turn on each other with their swords. Gideon and his men pursued the army and their leaders, over-

coming them all. During Gideon's lifetime, the land enjoyed peace for forty years.



KIM LEARNED, AS DID Gideon, she could trust God's ability, His power, and His goodness in her life. She learned there are times when God desires to exhibit that ability, power and goodness through others—when she was unable to do it for herself. (She also learned that many movies and television shows kept her in bondage.)

When Jesus raised his dear friend from the grave, He utilized help from others for Lazarus. He “. . . called in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, ‘Take off the grave clothes and let him go’” (John 11:44). Jesus then asked those around Lazarus to remove the soiled stinky rags from a four-day-old corpse, because Lazarus was so bound that he could not do it for himself.

Chanté and her mother were “mighty warriors” who stormed the kingdom of God like two ferocious BEARs—they did not rest until they possessed what they needed and wanted— peace for their friends. They knew that aside from Jehovah-Shalom there is no peace. They B-elieved God, they E-xpected the victory; they A-sked from God on Kim's behalf; and they R-eceived from the Lord. They did it all “in the name of Jesus.” By so doing, Jehovah gave strength; Jehovah-Shalom blessed his people with peace (see Ps. 29:11).



CHAPTER 7



Because He is Jehovah-Shalom, I am Like a B-E-A-R

In this life I'm a woman. In my next life, I'd like to come back as a bear. When you're a bear, you get to hibernate. You do nothing but sleep for six months. I could deal with that.

Before you hibernate, you're supposed to eat yourself stupid. I could deal with that, too.

When you're a girl bear, you birth your children (who are the size of walnuts) while you're sleeping and wake to partially grown, cute, cuddly cubs. I could definitely deal with that.

If you're a mama bear, everyone knows you mean business. You swat anyone who bothers your cubs. If your cubs get out of line, you swat them, too. I could deal with that.

If you're a bear, your mate expects you to wake up growling. He expects you to have hairy legs and excess body fat. Yup, gonna be a bear!

REINCARNATION IS NOT SUBSTANTIATED in the Bible, but this email *forward* is priceless. We don't have to wish to "come

back as a bear” to be like one. We already are. We are creatures of habit, just like bears. And, like bears, those habits may mean life or death.

Black bears of California have a natural food supply they must work hard to find. After coming out of hibernation with 50% less body weight, they search for berries, eat grass, tear apart logs for carpenter ants and dig up yellow jacket nests. Before winter arrives again, they can be found shaking acorns from oak trees, then picking them up one by one.^[2]

In the wild, brown-bear mothers in Alaska do not give the fish they catch to their cubs. They teach them how to feed themselves for their own survival. Like humans, though, most bears prefer what is readily available. They know what ice chests usually contain and can smell food even if it’s wrapped in plastic and locked in a car. They can tear the window out of a car door or rip open a locked trunk to get what they want. But, going to this unnatural means to get what they want may cost them their life when surprised campers or protective park rangers shoot them. Black bear yearlings, in their first season away from mom, know the least about finding wild foods and are most vulnerable to the temptation of easy meals. They may be the first to become campground bears and the most difficult to return to a natural diet.^[3]

Just like campground bears, we Christians can become dependent upon easy meals, being spoon-fed by others, if we don’t learn early in our walk with the Lord to go to our natural source of supply—God’s Word. This chapter will serve to give a taste of what Jehovah-Shalom can do in our lives such as bringing peace out of turmoil and working miracles when we need one. True fulfillment will come only as we seek our natural source of nourishment: eternal, living water and bread of life which is God’s Word. For us, this can mean spiritual life or death.

Kim had to learn this discipline—that peace remained only when she kept her eyes in the Word. Proverbs 30:8 says, “Feed me with the food that is needful for me” (ASV). When we ask God to do that, He

will, if we'll just open His book. God's wisdom is for every Christian who searches for it:

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.—Proverbs 2:1-8

Jehovah – Shalom Teaches Us the B-E-A-R Facts of Faith

What promises: wisdom, knowledge, understanding, victory and protection for the faithful ones! Digging for treasure in God's Word always brings a reward. When we create this habit of seeking nourishment from The Source, Jehovah-Shalom teaches us the "B-E-A-R" Facts of Faith: B-elieving the Word, E-xpecting from the Word, A-sk-ing from the Word and R-eceiving from the Word. "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

Faith is like a two-sided coin, with fear on the other side. Gideon feared, but at the word of the Lord, he reversed the coin and put his faith in God who brought the victory. Like Gideon we, too, can flip our coin when fear enters our heart. We do that by applying knowledge of these four principles of faith that work together. Hosea 4:6 says, "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge."

We will examine these four treasures from God's word after we understand *how* faith works. Faith is displayed in our lives through our ac-

tions and by our words working in conjunction with God's Word. After all, it was Joshua who was told by God that if he would meditate in His Word and not let it "depart from your mouth," (Joshua 1:8) observing to do everything in it, he would be prosperous and successful.

Words "from our mouth" matter. Pat Boone's daughter, Lindy Michaelis, had been digging in her natural source for food—her Bible. One day, her twenty-six-year-old son, Ryan Corbin, fell forty feet to the concrete floor through an unmarked roof opening of his apartment building in 2001.

Ryan was not breathing when paramedics arrived. For six months, Ryan was in a coma on maximum ventilator support with brain injury, and he was unresponsive to outside stimuli.^[4] Lindy spoke formative, positive words, along with Scripture, day after day over Ryan's lifeless body.

After four years of prayer by people all over the world, and constant "Mama Bear" mothering, Ryan is now in a wheelchair; he can move his legs, and he can recite memorized Scripture. Lindy attributes Ryan's recovery to the creative spoken word over him, for "Death and life are in the power of the tongue . . ." (Prov. 18:21 Amplified).



WHY ARE WORDS SO IMPORTANT? In looking at the power of the creative spoken word, it helps to see words as substance, capsules of energy transported from one place to another. This is what a radio does: transports words. Webster's dictionary defines a radio as "wireless transmission and reception of electric impulses or signals by means of electromagnetic waves into which sound is converted."^[5] When God spoke the words, "Let there be light,"^[6] He created the environment for energy that would later be used to transmit words.

The first chapter of Genesis says that in the beginning, the Spirit of God hovered in the formless, empty darkness. Then something

changed. He spoke. Nothing happened until He spoke. Because He spoke creative words, the heavens and earth came into being. Nine times, He spoke them, and then Scripture says, “And it was so.” Light was created first, and without this radiant energy traveling at 186,281 miles per second, carrying God’s next words, nothing else could be created.

God formed everything by first speaking, “Let there be.” His words created the “being.” When God created man last, His words were different, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness . . .” (Gen. 1:26). It took the Trinity to make man’s three parts—spirit, soul and body. Unlike other creatures that can make sound, man has the ability to speak words originating in his heart and mind—like God. [He also has a soul that is void without choosing God and His ways.]

Have we become aware of the awesomeness of this yet? No wonder Jesus said, “But I tell you that men will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every careless word they have spoken” (Matt. 12:36). Lindy Michaelis knew she was created in the image of God. She knew she had creative word power. With this awesome ability to influence and create comes great responsibility.

God has given us the responsibility of wisely directing our words. We are seated in the body of Christ—at the right hand of the Father in heavenly places. Jesus gave us the keys to the kingdom of heaven (see Matt. 16:19); those keys are “how we use words.” We must take this very seriously. Our words are capsules of creative or destructive energy. They are not vapor that dissipates into thin air, never to be seen again. We see their results in our spouse, our children and our friends. They are matter; they are *transmitted* and *felt*.

The following “B-E-A-R Facts of Faith” and corresponding principles give us a guide in how to wisely command and control our words. Keep in mind they are the bare facts of faith, not necessarily the only way to pray. Jesus outlines the bare facts of *prayer* in Matthew, Chapter 6. Yet, He asks us, “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on

the earth?” Faith involves action and must be mixed with prayer, and exercised to become strong. It is always a good fight.

Whatever the outcome of our “good fight of faith” (see 1 Tim. 6:12), we can trust it is God’s plan for us, but only when we have fought it. Fight it and you will witness Jehovah-Shalom entering your world.

B - Believing The Word – Believing Comes Before Seeing

Beth Moore, author of *Believing God*, asks, “Do you believe God or do you merely believe *in* Him? Do you take God at His Word, believing what He has told us, or do you just believe in His existence and the salvation He offers?”^[7] Some Christians believe parts of His Word have passed away and cannot be believed for today. However, God says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away” (Matt. 24:35), and Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.” Miracles seen in the Bible are the same for us today, if we believe. Jesus even tells us that if we believe, He will do greater miracles through us than He did while on earth (see John 14:12). Even He could do no mighty works because of unbelief in His hometown (see Matt. 13:58).

Before God spoke, “Let there be light,” He saw in His mind what He wanted the formless dark earth and water to be. He believed it would happen. The story of Lazarus drives home this point. After Jesus asked for the stone to be rolled away from Lazarus’ tomb, Martha, the sister of the dead man said, “By this time there is a bad odor, for he has been dead four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” (John 11:39-40). Believing comes before seeing.

E - Expecting from the Word – Having Eyes on the Circumstances and on the Word at the Same Time is Impossible

After we believe God has our answer, our hearts are filled with expectation. Until we expect to see something happen, we will not know when the answer comes.

Webster's dictionary says, "Expect implies a high degree of certainty and usually involves the idea of preparing or envisioning."^[8] It also implies hope, for "if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it" (Rom. 8:25). The Greek word for "wait eagerly" in this verse means to expect, and to look for, which includes two elements: hope and patience. Once we have made a decision to believe a promise discovered in God's Word, whether it is protection from a storm or an enemy, salvation for a friend or loved one, or to pay a bill, we have hope. From that point on, we enter into "earnest expectation" with patience, which from the Greek, implies "turning the head away from any distracting influence."^[9]

When Jehoshaphat was king of Judah, Moab and Ammon came to make war. Surrounded on all sides by a vast army, the Israelites came together to seek the Lord. The king encouraged the people, saying to the Lord, "For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you" (2 Chron. 20:12).

Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Janaziel, son of Zechariah, who said,

"This is what the Lord says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow march down against them . . . You will not have to fight in this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you. O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.'"—2 Chronicles 20:15-17

Keeping our eyes on the Lord means keeping our eyes in His Word. When we look at His Word, we are looking to Jesus who is the "Word made flesh."^[10] Chapter one of this book established that the angel of

the Lord who spoke to Hagar was Jesus. The first chapter of John says Jesus was the second person of the Trinity who spoke into existence everything that was made. “In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men” (John 1:1-4).

The bottom line is this: when our eyes are not in the Word, we are not looking to Jesus. When we are not expecting from the Word, we are focused on the problem, or the circumstances, allowing fear, doubt and worry to overtake us. We cannot keep our eyes focused on the problematic situation and on the Lord at the same time. The word from our mouth, working in conjunction with His Word, opens the door for Him to fight those battles.

“Earnest expectation” that “turns the head from any distraction” assumes that once we have made a quality decision to trust God concerning a situation, we can expect opposition, harassment, trials and challenges. Words contradicting what we believe *will* come. That’s when we have to fix our heart and keep on believing, saying out loud, “[I] will have no fear of bad news; [my] heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord” (Ps. 112:7).

We can lay our requests before God each morning (see Ps. 5:3), but unless we expect something to happen, it’s unlikely we will see the result from exercising our faith.

A - Asking from the Word – Praying the Scripture, not the Problem

The book of James tells us what to do when we have a problem. After we begin to believe God’s Word has a solution for every situation and embrace hopeful expectation for the answer, we need wisdom such as Jehoshaphat received through Janaziel. James 1:5 says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without

finding fault, and it will be given to him.” Furthermore, he says, “You do not have, because you do not ask God” (James 4:2).

Jehoshaphat did this very thing. Alarmed, he resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for himself and all Judah. He praised the Lord, recounting the covenant promise to Abraham and God’s deliverances in the past. He put his faith in God’s ability, rather than his own, to take care of things in the present. He then spoke positive, believing words, “You will hear us and save us” (2 Chron. 20:9). He did not belabor the problem. God already knew it, and he knows ours, too.

Asking from the Word means praying the Scripture. His Word is His will. His Word contains the answer to any problem we could have. The more we take our words from God’s Word, the more we are looking to Jesus who fights for us. For God says, “. . . I am alert and active, watching over My word to perform it” (Jer. 1:12 Amplified). Jesus himself defeated Satan during his forty days of temptation with Scripture. He tells us, “The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life” (John 6:63).

Seeking God’s wisdom, and asking from His Word, involves hard work much like digging for hidden treasure, such as picking up acorns one by one like bears should naturally do. Furthermore, having God’s revealed wisdom and then doing something about it is a matter of life and death—to our marriages, children, cities and nation.

As we put voice to Scripture in the midst of our situation, the entrance of His Word gives light (see Ps. 119:130). When Chanté and her mother spoke Scripture over Kim, words of Light actually expelled the darkness from her.

R - Receiving from the Word – Confessing the Word and Living the Word

We can receive answers to prayer through believing, expecting and then asking through Scripture. The “R” of our faith-bear is reserved for the critical battles. It requires a more disciplined knowledge of faith to overcome the most trying circumstances. Therefore, it is wise

to choose our battles carefully, and know what is truly important and worth fighting for.

Without the “R” there might be no answer to prayer. We could pray, believe, expect, and ask, but unless we are willing to receive, there could be no victory. This is where many Christians miss out on the joy of their salvation, because this is the hardest part.

Receiving from the Lord involves two aspects: a deeper knowledge of what faith is and how it works with words of praise with positive actions. Receiving from the Lord requires us to understand “faith without works is dead” (James 2:20 KJV). The mature Christian knows that “works” are tied to our words, because positive words spring forth positive actions based on what we believe from the Word.

One thing Jesus said about believing is puzzling: “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24). We all want to receive, but what does it mean, to “believe that you receive?” The verse previous to this one gives us our first clue: “I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.” So, we know receiving has to do with what we truly believe and, therefore, speak.

Our next clue is found in 1 John 5:14-15. This Amplified translation says it plainly: *know* that God has “granted us as our present possessions the requests made of Him” when it’s in agreement with His plans for us. This is what faith is, and what the B-E-A-R Facts of Faith are all about. Faith is further defined in Hebrews:

Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title-deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and conviction of their reality—faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses. —Hebrews 11:1
AMP

By faith, we already have the title-deed to what we have requested from the Lord. Faith is “perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses.”^[11] If we can claim for ourselves what we want to see happen, knowing God has already granted (past tense) what we have asked for as our present possessions, then would we not have already received? Almost, but not quite. With this knowledge, our words are still the key.

Hosea tells us, “Take words with you and return to the Lord” (Hosea 14:2). Then, God says, “I will create the fruit of the lips”^[12]—what our words say. The Amplified translation explains how God uses His own faith-filled words: “God . . . who gives life to the dead and speaks of the nonexistent things that [He has foretold and promised] as if they [already] existed” (Rom. 4:17). So, does not our creative power with God lie in speaking of the nonexistent things as if they already existed and then acting that way?



JEHOSHAPHAT AND HIS people had to put the R on B-E-A-. Early the next morning after they sought the Lord, Jehoshaphat spoke words that *perceived as real fact what was not yet revealed to his senses*. He told them, “Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld . . .” 2 Chron. 20:20). Because of what he believed, expected and asked of God, he appointed singers to praise the Lord as they went out at the head of the army—a work of faith. His actions were bold. Though still fearful, the people began to sing and praise (a positive action). The Lord sent ambushes against their enemies; no one escaped. Most were destroyed by each other.

Praise puts the R on B-E-A-. When we praise the Lord, no matter how we feel, we are receiving the past tense of what God said He would do. In different words, praise claims our requests. Until we have a thankful heart toward God, we will never receive His best. Without

the R, there is no enduring faith, and without faith, we cannot please God—there is no “mama bear” who is caring and fighting for her cubs. With God-given faith we have His knowledge that brings light in all situations. Without God-given faith, we are blind.

Children Not Covered with God’s Word by a Godly Parent Are Open to Evil

Kim’s mother was a spiritually blind woman who chose to be that way. Her Christian relatives witnessed to her, but she chose darkness instead. Her destructive words devastated Kim. She spent the rest of her life fighting influences from evil spirits. Young Kim believed everything her mother taught her.

As an adult, she finally came to see why the occult—divination, sorcery, interpreting omens, casting spells, consulting mediums for guidance—is detestable to God (see Deut. 18:10-12). It deceives the person into thinking he or she is in control and keeps that person from looking to God—to hear His voice from His Word and to learn His plan for his or her life.

The devil is after our children! With an ungodly mother spouting careless, loveless words, he will get them. Kim’s mother’s words turned her over to evil influences. One of the paranormal games Kim’s family played involved a coffee table. The object was to witness paranormal power derived from (evil) spirits. The game *worked* only when Kim, as a child, was in the room. One time the table literally walked on two legs, chasing her out. She had visions of people from the past; before someone could finish a question, she could answer it. The enemy was so far into Kim’s head, in imaginings and falsehoods that it took her years to get out of it.

Children not covered with God’s Word by a Godly mother B-E-A-R fighting for them are open to evil people. They become open target! Not only was Kim raped when she was nine, but while growing up, she was repeatedly molested by strangers. When she was about eleven years old, while riding on a cable car in San Francisco, a man in his six-

ties inappropriately touched her. Her dad was standing beside her and did nothing—blinded to everything. As soon as the man left, Kim sat down in front of her dad, terrified, too ashamed and embarrassed to say anything. This happened in grocery stores and on streets, until one day, she came to the point of knowing she had the power to say, “No!”

A few years before she accepted Christ, twenty-six-year old Kim bent over the meat counter. Her three-year old daughter was sitting beside her in the grocery cart. Once again, a strange man approached her. She stepped back and jabbed him in the ribs, demanding, “Get your hands off of me!” Kim was just starting to realize she could make a choice and not allow evil to control her life.



HAVE WE GIVEN OUR CHILDREN back to God as Abraham did—knowing our own physical presence and ability cannot protect them? Everything we think we own came from God and must be given back to Him. He always blesses us when we are obedient to Him.

If this story about Kim as a child does not help us visualize what praying God’s Word over our children does, nothing will. God loves them so much more than we possibly can, but He will not override the choices we make from our heart, that are evidenced by our words.

His Word, spoken through us, puts an invisible “shield”^[13] (see 2 Sam. 22:31) around our children, and opens our eyes as parents to be wise in our behavior and words toward them.

Imagine for our children the opposite of what happened to Kim—God’s spoken Word bringing light to the mind of a struggling child of any age (see Prov. 16:24). Imagine God giving visions and dreams of wisdom or the future to your child; imagine them hearing His voice (see Joel 2:28-29).^[14] His Word holds the victory to those who are faithful day by day. He commands His angels to guard our chil-

dren in all their ways (see Ps. 91:11). When we are faithful, keeping our eyes on Jesus the Word, we have no need to fear—ever!

Sally Jadlow is a faithful “Grandma B-E-A-R.” She reads her Bible and claims the Scripture every day for her family, city, and nation. She thought about her prayer the morning when she received a phone call that her five-year old grandson had been run over by a car driven by a fifteen-year-old boy. When Sally arrived at the hospital, the only visible sign from the accident were tire marks from the child’s left hip to his right shoulder—no broken bones. He said, “Two tires ran over me, Grandma.”

The child’s mother, who witnessed her son’s limp body being thrown from behind the car, saw a stranger kneeling beside the boy as medics worked on him. As he cried out in pain, the stranger prayed all the louder. When the Life-Flight helicopter took off, the mother turned to thank the man wearing the baseball cap, but he was gone. Miraculously, there were no internal injuries and within four days, Sally’s grandson was running in the yard.^[15]



THERE ARE TWO SIDES to the prayer of faith: the soft, cuddly-bear side and the hard, authoritative, commanding, fighting-mama bear side. Just like faith and fear are two sides of the same coin, so are the soft and hard B-E-A-R sides of prayer—flipped as needed. The soft side is the calm side, though not necessarily easy: believing, expecting, asking and receiving from the Word in quiet trust (see Isa. 30:15).

The hard side comes when we see our naive and innocent child assaulted by the enemy, not resisting, not fighting, not aware, and we must face our fears and fight for them. As a mama bear swats anyone who bothers her cubs, we must also fight for our children and family. Jesus says, “The kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it” (Matt. 11:12). Psalm 75:10 talks about the

wicked and the righteous having horns to fight with, “I will cut off the horns of all the wicked, but the horns of the righteous will be lifted up.”

Another translation gives a different insight: “I will cut off the strength of evil men,’ says the Lord, ‘and increase the power of good men in their place” (TLB). Wow, what a promise! The power of our words will be increased when we take our fighting stand. Will we believe it, expect it, ask for it, and receive it with our words?

A true story is told of a son who ran away and did not return for years. One day, his father pulled to the side of the road, got out and hollered his son’s name as loud as he could to the north, south, east and west; then, “Come home!” In a couple days, the son was home. When the son was asked what brought him home, he said, “I thought I could hear you calling my name.”

Our Mama and Papa B-E-A-R word-weapon is stronger and more far reaching than any bear claw. “For the word of the Lord is living and active, Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

Two unnamed mothers directed Scripture into the spirits of their children (a great distance away) who were in crisis mode. The mothers spoke, “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought [of our child] to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5) Although that adult son and daughter did not know how desperate their situation was, within days, each realized their danger because of a dream in the night, and a sudden shift in circumstances. They saw the light.

Awaken, fighting bears! Hibernation is over and will never come again. Fight for your cubs. Fight for your family. Let every creature know you mean business! The hard-fighting B-E-A-R prayer might go:

The Sovereign Lord, Jehovah Shalom, has given me an instructed tongue to know the word that sustains my husband and my children. I set my face like flint and know I shall not be put to shame. All my sons

and daughters, including my husband, will be taught by the Lord himself and great shall be the peace and undisturbed composure of my family. They shall flourish like palm trees; they will grow like cedars of Lebanon. You are their shield because they take refuge in You. I shall not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune.

You, O Lord create the fruit of my lips—what my words say—day in and day out. I thank you that you keep me in perfect peace because my heart is steadfast and fixed. I will have no fear when bad news comes. Your Word is my Rock. I trust in You forever, for without faith, I know I will not stand at all. In Jesus Name, I direct these words to the heart and spirit of my husband and to my children. In faith, I call into existence what is not yet revealed to my senses.

I praise you that each family member is filled with your Holy Spirit with Your royal red blood flowing through their veins. When you look at them, you see Jesus. Their hearts are God-willed, not self-willed. They are making choices based on Your Word and are facing each situation head-on in Your Wisdom—running from nothing. No matter what the circumstances show, I will stand firm, believing, expecting, asking and receiving that Jehovah-Shalom has arrived, in Jesus name. Amen



My Story: Learning About Faith



After one year at ETSU in Commerce, Texas, a job opened up in Carthage, Texas, Dean of Special Services at Panola Junior College. Jim welcomed this job to pay our mounting debt, so we moved. He worked all day, planned and supervised classes at night, and drove back the 150 miles to Commerce on Saturdays to complete two courses he lacked for his degree. Thus, began our adventure of learning what faith was all about.

Jim became a walking zombie, drained of all zeal for living. Since returning from Vietnam, he'd had no downtime: marriage three weeks after returning home, then children, school, and now more school with a very demanding job. He excelled at every challenge, coaching football while a student and seeing them go to bowl games. He started a wrestling program after he started teaching, and took them to state. But now, he had nothing left to give.

Fear got my attention. I became honest with myself and asked the Lord, "What does our future hold?" Immediately, I could see if things continued as they were, I would be a single mother.

My Psalm One Man of Faith

For the first time, I began to diligently pray. I made a firm, quality, conscious choice to pray every day for my husband, even if he was the only person I ever prayed for. A devotional in the book, *God Calling*, compiled by A. J. Russell, spoke loud and clear to me. It said that when Jesus called His disciples, he had known them for a period of time. Then, one day as He walked along the seashore, He said, "Come, follow Me." The Holy Spirit revealed to me that to follow Jesus, to be his

disciple, meant being disciplined—*disciple* being the root word of “discipline.” After asking God for wisdom (James 1:5) in how to pray, I was led to read the first Psalm. I knew this is what I needed to pray. I praised and thanked God every day for my Psalm-One man. I told Jim, “I’ve given you to the Lord. It’s up to Him to help you now.”

At the same time, the words from Evelyn Christenson’s book, *Lord Change Me*, rang in my head, “Lord, don’t change my husband, don’t change my children, Lord, change me.” Reluctantly, I added that to my prayer.

Whenever there was bad news to bear, I turned my head to washing dishes or folding clothes. Through my tears, I repeated back to God, these memorized Words, claiming Psalm 1:1-3 from the Amplified version of the Bible:

Blessed—happy, fortunate, prosperous and enviable—is the man (my Jim) who walks and lives not in the counsel of the ungodly [following their advice, their plans and purposes], nor stands [submissive and inactive] in the path where sinners walk, not sits down [to relax and rest] where the scornful [and the mockers] gather. But his delight and desire are in the law of the Lord, and on His law—the precepts, the instructions, the teachings of God—he habitually meditates (ponders and studies) by day and by night. And he shall be like a tree firmly planted [and tended] by the streams of water, ready to bring forth his fruit in its season; his leaf also shall not fade or wither, and everything he does shall prosper [and come to maturity].

As I praised the Lord every day for my Psalm-One Man, “a strong tree planted by the water bearing fruit in his season,” Mark 11:23-24 came alive to me, that I would “receive” whatever I “said,” whether it was negative or positive. I realized I’d better make sure what I said day in and day out was in agreement with what I believed God for.

I meditated on James 1:6. It says, “But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will re-

ceive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.” My priority in life became to trust God to “guard my mouth,” (Ps. 141:3) while replacing *my* words with Psalm 1.

In a matter of weeks, Jim came home one Saturday, excited and enthusiastic about God’s Word, actually preaching to *me*. I could hardly believe the change I was witnessing before my eyes of what God was doing, and so quickly. It seems the real estate agent who found the rental home for us had given him some teaching tapes. He listened to them as he traveled to and from Commerce on Saturdays.

“I’ve tried to change you for ten years, and now it’s up to the Lord.” Jim said to me.

Oh really? He commented he had already noticed that I was somehow different. He didn’t know about my prayer or of the dream the Lord had given me.

The dream was one of those loving disciplines from a heavenly Father that sears the soul without hurting, and you cannot tell anyone. It was one of those hiding-in-the-heart-kind of things. Before completely waking one morning, I saw an egg with a soft center. The word *WORDS!*— like heat from all sides—kept hitting the egg until the yolk was hard. Then I saw a hand, God’s hand, envelop that egg. God impressed upon me these words, “I can work the impossible. I can take that egg and make it soft again. I can make out of it whatever *I* want. I can make scrambled eggs, poached, over-easy, or put it with something else to make a tempting dessert.”

I thought, *I didn’t know my words were causing Jim’s heart to harden against me*, but they were. I’m a pretty laid-back person, but I found my words did not have to be loud or angry to be destructive. Again, God revealed to me that His Word is an attitude book, not just a book of commandments to live by. It’s a book of Love.

Faith is Not Feeling

I found that God’s love in us loves as He loves, unconditionally. Jesus gives us love we don’t deserve and have not earned, because He be-

lieves and trusts His Father for the best in us. Likewise, He requires the same of us—to believe for the best in others, especially our mate. The Holy Spirit revealed to me if I truly believed to receive my husband as the Psalm-One Man, I had to treat him as though he were *already* that man, “perceiving as real fact what was not yet revealed to my senses” (Heb. 11:1 Amplified). In other words, faith is not *feeling*. My actions had to back up what I was receiving from the Lord.

By faith, I began to see Jesus in Jim. I began to direct my actions toward him as though they were toward Jesus. The words from the Bible “as unto the Lord,” grew in meaning for me.

Only then, did things change—the *feeling* arrived later.

Jim and I discovered that the mystery that brought unity and communication into our marriage and changed it so drastically is grounded in *faith*. The transformation we were experiencing came from a “mutual submission,” which we later found in the Bible: “*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit [respect] to your husbands as to the Lord Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*” (Eph. 5:21, 22, 25 emphasis added).

We found when we prayed about something before talking to each other, we connected. Getting God in the triangle of our relationship brought agreement. If we didn’t agree on a matter, we learned God probably was not in it, and we saved the decision until we agreed—or threw it out. For the first time in ten years, we began to seek the Lord together and to come before Him with our needs for our family and future.

One evening, as we were seated on the couch, Jim prayed, “Lord, I wish I could have just one year to study your Word.” My eyes shot open while he finished praying, and I thought, *Oh no, Lord! What’s going to happen now?*



THE B-E-A-R FACTS OF FAITH



Bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2 NASB

B - BELIEVING THE WORD – “Believing Comes Before Seeing”

John 11:39-40 “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been dead four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you **believe** you would **see** the glory of God?”

E – EXPECTING FROM THE WORD – “Having Eyes on the Circumstances and on the

Word at the Same Time is Impossible”

2 Chronicles 20:12 “. . . we do not know what to do, but our **eyes are upon You.**”

Proverbs 4:20-23 “My son . . . listen closely to my **words**. Do not let them out of your **sight**: keep them within your **heart**; for they are life to those who find them . . .”

Psalm 5:3 “In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in **expectation.**”

A – ASKING FROM THE WORD – “Taking the Answer to God, Not the Problem”

James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should **ask** of God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”

James 4:2 “You do not have, because you do not **ask** God.”

R – RECEIVING FROM THE WORD – “Confessing and Living the Word”

Mark 11:23 “. . . and **does not doubt in his heart**, but **believes** that what he **says** will happen, it will be done for him.”

1 John 5:14-15 “And this is the confidence which we have in Him: that if we **ask** anything (make any request) **according to His will** (in agreement with His own plan) He listens to and hears us. And if (since) we positively know that He listens to us in whatever we **ask**, we also know [with settled and absolute knowledge] that we have [granted us **as our present possessions**] the requests made of Him (Amplified).”

Romans 4:17 “God . . . gives life to the dead and speaks of the **nonexistent things** that [He has foretold and promised] **as if they [already] existed** (Amplified).”



CHAPTER 8

God is Jehovah-Rohi

[The Lord My Shepherd]



Then he [Jacob] blessed Joseph and said, “May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the Angel who has delivered me from all harm—may he bless these boys.” —Genesis 48:15

A BRAHAM WAS A SHEPHERD. His son Isaac was a shepherd. Isaac’s son Jacob was a shepherd. In this passage, Jacob’s dying words to his grandsons referred to the Angel of the Lord, who protected him, as his shepherd. Yet, he and his descendants wound up in Egypt for 400 years (see Chapter 4).

Why would a shepherd lead his followers into bondage? How could this be God’s will? To answer these questions, we will look at why Jacob needed guidance from his Shepherd, then at sheep to see why we, like sheep, still need a shepherd today, who leads in and out of bondage.

Jacob needed guidance after he was forced to leave home to escape his brother’s wrath. Isaac favored Jacob’s twin brother Esau, while their mother Rebekah favored Jacob. This favoritism caused division in the family. Jacob deceived Esau into selling his birthright, and then, with Rebekah’s help, deceived his father into giving him the blessing belonging to firstborn Esau. When Esau found out and threatened Jacob’s life, Isaac and Rebekah both commanded Jacob not to marry the local

Canaanite women as Esau had done, but to flee to Haran to the house of his Uncle Laban, Rebekah's brother.

At a certain place on his trip, Jacob slept with a rock for his pillow. He dreamed of a stairway from earth to heaven and angels ascending and descending upon it. At the top he saw the Lord, who spoke to him:

I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.—Genesis 28:13-15

The Lord reassured Jacob of his guidance and confirmed to him the same blessings He gave to Abraham and Isaac. Plus, he promised to someday lead him back home.

Jacob's first order of business was to find a Godly wife. When he arrived in Haran, the first person he met was his wife-to-be.

"We're from Haran," some local shepherds told Jacob.

"Do you know Laban? He's my uncle?"

"Yes, we know him, and here comes Rachel, his daughter."

When Rachel, a shepherdess, brought her sheep for water, Jacob kissed her and wept out loud. He told Rachel his story, and she ran to tell her father. Laban accepted Jacob as his own flesh and blood.

Jacob excelled as a shepherd as he worked seven years for Rachel's hand in marriage. On the wedding night, Laban switched the older sister Leah for Rachel, so Jacob worked another seven years to pay for Rachel. However, Laban did allow Jacob to take Rachel in marriage at the beginning of those seven years.

Between Leah and her maid and Rachel and her maid, Jacob became the father of twelve sons and one daughter. Rachel was the mother of the two youngest—Joseph and Benjamin. After Joseph was born, Jacob knew it was time to take his large family and return home. Laban did not want to let them go. He knew God was blessing him because of Jacob. He tried to outwit Jacob from increasing his flocks, which he hoped would keep him from leaving. Instead, the Lord guided Jacob with wisdom so that his flocks prospered greater in strength and number than Laban's livestock.

When Laban's attitude changed toward Jacob, the Lord told him, "Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you."

Jacob was more than ready to leave. After the twenty years Jacob worked for wages, Laban had changed them ten times, and unless God had been with Jacob, he would have been emptyhanded now. Fearful that Laban would steal his daughters and grandchildren, Jacob took his family and animals and escaped at night.

Laban pursued Jacob and his family, but the Lord, in a dream, warned him not to say anything good or bad to Jacob. The two men made a covenant and set up a pillar and a heap of stones to signify that neither would cross over to do harm to the other. Laban kissed his daughters and grandchildren and said his goodbyes. And Jacob returned home to Isaac and a surprisingly tearful reunion with his brother Esau. Later, Isaac died at 180 years of age, and Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin.

However . . . Jacob favored Rachel's sons. Out of his brother's jealousy, seventeen-year-old Joseph was sold into slavery. Despite being a slave, at the age of thirty, Joseph became a ruler in Egypt. This was in fulfillment of a dream God had given him that placed him in a position to be the deliverer of his people. He organized the storage of grain for seven years and distributed it for the next seven years of famine. God prepared him to do this through another dream.

Because of the famine, Jacob sent his sons to Egypt for grain. They had to go through Joseph to buy food, but they did not recognize him; however, Joseph knew them and eventually revealed himself. After a very emotional reunion with his brothers, Joseph called for his father and brothers to come to Egypt, with all the families, sheep and other livestock. Convinced Joseph was still alive and wanted to see him, Jacob agreed to go to Egypt. But he must have been apprehensive.

“Jacob, Jacob,” God spoke to Jacob in a vision at night. “Here I am,” he replied.

“I am God, the God of your father,” he said, “Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph’s own hand will close your eyes” (Gen. 46:2-4).

Joseph’s whole family found favor with the Pharaoh and, because they were shepherds, he gave them the best of the land in Goshen where they could feed their flocks. Jacob’s dying words (see Gen. 48:15) of blessing to Joseph’s sons reveal that Jehovah-Rohi had been his shepherd, guiding him and delivering him from all harm. Jacob prophesied to his son Judah that from his line would come the Lion of Judah—Jesus Christ (see Rev. 5:5). Before he died, Jacob knew God was birthing a nation to whom the Messiah—the true spiritual Deliverer— would be born.

Jacob knew God fully as his Shepherd only after his reunion with Joseph, when his life was almost at its end. Therefore, it is imperative we learn about sheep and shepherding—that we, like sheep, are guided by our Shepherd. Only then will we gain the full comforting impact of Jehovah-Rohi’s guiding influence in our life’s journey, hopefully, long before our own life on this earth is ended.

REASONS SHEEP NEED A SHEPHERD

Sheep Are Not Very Smart – They can eat the wrong food (poisonous plants), and drink bad water. “Their flock mentality makes herding easy at times, and at other times, nearly impossible. When one rest-

less sheep moves, the whole flock can move. When one old ewe sinks to the ground to chew her cud, the others follow.”^[16] On July 7, 2005, 450 sheep in Turkey jumped to their death because one sheep leapt over a cliff. The Turkish shepherds, who had left the herd to graze while they had breakfast, watched as nearly 1,500 other sheep followed. Those who jumped last were saved as the pile rose higher and higher and the fall grew more cushioned. The estimated loss to the shepherds who owned the sheep was \$100,000.^[17]

Like sheep, we require a shepherd. “You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign Lord” (Ezek. 34:31). God himself tells us that as people we are mere sheep. How can we, in comparison to Almighty God ever think we do not need a shepherd every minute of every day? We are His property, and very valuable to Him. He tells us, “. . . I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

Sheep Require 24-Hour Supervision – The shepherd can have no other vocation. He is responsible for his flock’s total welfare—their food, water, health, and safety. “Sleeping with one eye open and both ears open, he listens for the bleats, the bells, and the dogs that would warn of any danger or restlessness among his flock”^[18]

One eight-year old boy (a precious lamb) did not know these words that describe God: omnipresent (present in all places at all times), omniscient (knowing all things), or omnipotent (having unlimited power or authority). But speaking of our Lord (our Shepherd), he explained them beautifully as he wrote:

His dad (God) appreciated everything he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn’t have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important. You can pray anytime you

want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time. You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God.

Sheep Are Defenseless – They are unable to protect themselves. They have no claws, no horns or sharp teeth, and are usually weighted down with thick wool. They are easy prey, helpless and timid creatures, especially the little lambs.

A man was visiting a Scottish shepherd's ranch. His host met him at the railroad station, and on the long drive out to the ranch the visitor noticed the old shepherd was heavy of heart. The man said, "You seem so downcast. What is wrong?" Tears welled up in the old shepherd's eyes.

"Well, I lost sixty-five of my best lambs last night. Wolves got in." "And how many sheep did they kill besides?"

The shepherd looked surprised. "Sheep? Don't you know that a wolf will never take an old sheep so long as he can get a lamb?"^[19]

This story confirms the thief is after our children, as Kim's story revealed to us earlier. This story also reveals how much our Shepherd cares for us. When possible, sheep are kept in a pen at night. A visitor to the Holy Land found a sheep pen. He said to the shepherd guide, "There must not be any wild animals around here at all because I notice that on your sheep pen there's no gate."

The shepherd replied, "That opening is my bedroom where I sleep at night."^[20]

Jesus says, "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved . . . I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:9, 11). Jesus further explains that when the wolf attacks, a hired hand will run away because he cares nothing for the sheep. The reason: he does not own them.

When Jesus laid down His life for the sheep, He did it for all mankind. He owns all the sheep of his pasture. Jesus is the *only* eternal

gate to heaven—He was the only legal sacrifice for sin! Those who never choose to accept what Jesus did for them are stolen from Him by the evil wolf, or false prophets. Jesus says, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10). He is the only one who cares enough to be with us when we, in our defenselessness, need Him.

Sheep Follow – A pastor and his wife went to Palestine. They were told the story of two Bedouin shepherds who crossed paths, each with their own flock of sheep. Hundreds of unbranded sheep collided together. It seemed hopeless to get them separated. After much confusion, each shepherd went a distance down the road in two separate directions, turned and called his sheep. Instantly, they polarized as each headed toward the voice of its shepherd. They knew that voice.^[21] “They will never follow a stranger; In fact they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice” (John 10:5).

Sheep *follow* a good shepherd; they cannot be *driven*. Ezekiel 34 is a whole chapter in the Bible dedicated to what God thinks about shepherds who *use* sheep for food rather than feeding the sheep. In the Old Testament, God says he will hold them accountable and will remove them from tending the flock and He will look after them himself (see Ezek. 34:10-11). In the New Testament, Jesus says, “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me” (John 10: 27).

Sheep follow the Good Shepherd because He knows them. A shepherdess on television was challenged to name each one of her sheep. With the clock ticking, “She had to think hard sometimes, and yet she recognized each sheep and named its name: Daisy, Sally, etc. To the viewer all the sheep seemed identical with no obvious identifying characteristics. Their faces were perhaps different in very slight ways that only the shepherd had come to know. Or maybe it was their behavior. Anyway, she named each of them as individuals.”^[22]

“I know them,” says the Good Shepherd.

Sheep Stray – Vegetation on the Highlands of Scotland can be pretty scarce. Yet, on a little cliff, about ten or twelve feet below, one can find a grassy ledge—grass that has not yet been eaten. The smell of that lush grass may lure a sheep to jump, landing on all fours. Once the sheep has indulged himself, his bleating can be heard as he tries unsuccessfully to return to higher ground.

The shepherd does not rush right over to rescue the sheep. He lets it stay down there. He has to wait until all the grass is eaten and the sheep grows thirsty and weak from hunger, until it cannot stand on its own. He knows if he lowers himself over the ledge to get it before then, the sheep will jump to its death.^[23] The shepherd knows the sheep will run from a stranger, and that the sheep does not yet *know* him. If it had, it would not have wandered so far.

Unfortunately, “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way” (Isa. 53:6). We make hasty decisions without consulting our Shepherd guide and then get on the wrong path, even dangerous cliffs and ledges. We get distracted by the notion the grass is greener on the other side, looking to our own way, rather than seeking the Shepherd’s way.

“I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays” (Ezek. 34:16). David records the same message in his twenty-third Psalm, “He makes me lie down in green pastures” (vs. 2). There are times when He has to make us lie down in order to get our attention, so He *can* rescue us and restore our souls.

Kay Arthur tells a story in her book, *The Peace & Power of Knowing God’s Name*, of a young man in Mexico listening to her teaching about Jehovah-Rohi. He knew the Lord, but had trouble wandering, getting distracted by one thing or another, walking away from the Lord. Kay explained how a shepherd could be forced to break the leg of a lamb that would not learn his lesson not to stray. Thus, the shepherd bound

up the injury, and carried the lamb in his arms, talking to it and singing to it, until the lamb *knew* him.

The young man hobbled into class a couple days later with a broken leg and a grin on his face. When Kay asked him what happened he said, “It was the shepherd. He broke my leg.”^[24] The young man probably broke his leg when performing a reckless stunt of his own choosing. Nevertheless, he perceived his wound as a loving, caring act by the Good Shepherd, because of the Word he had heard, knowing it was for his own good.

We must understand the big picture. We are in a training program, to not stray, to learn to follow Jesus on this earth where satan preys like a wolf on those who choose not to follow. For big and little lambs, the “bread of adversity” (see Isa. 30:20) is the only thing that usually brings the desired result.

It is during these times that “He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young” (Isa. 40:11). And we are forced to “*Be still*, and know that [He] is God” (Ps. 46:10 emphasis added). Then, hopefully we will learn to never stray again.

Sheep are Totally Dependent upon the Shepherd – There are times in a sheep’s life when it can become “cast.” Webster defines cast as “something that results as a result of chance.”^[25]

“Often when a sheep is heavy with lamb and heavy with wool, it will lie down on uneven ground and then roll over on its back into a shallow recess. When it does, it’s like a beetle, unable to rise or roll over by itself. On its back, the gases will gather, the limbs will stiffen and it won’t be long before it will die.”^[26] If the shepherd does not find the sheep at just the right moment, to rub it’s legs and body back to life, the sheep will die.

The shepherd David writes, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” (Ps. 42:11 KJV). Cast is translated “to despair.” “Eating is difficult.

Sleep is impossible. Unrestrained anger is followed by consuming guilt. Confusion prevails. God is nowhere. Life is over. Unless someone intervenes, we will attempt to turn that feeling into reality.”^[27] That Someone who intervenes is Jesus who leaves the ninety-nine to rescue the one who needs Him at that point in time (see Matt. 18: 12-14).

When we, like a cast sheep, have experienced the Shepherd’s touch, we can say with the apostle Paul, “And we *know* that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

Sheep are Creatures of Habit – Phillip Keller grew up in East Africa where he made his livelihood as a sheep owner and sheep rancher. In his classic book, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, he describes the way of sheep, “If left to themselves they will follow the same trails until they become ruts; graze the same hills until they turn to desert wastes; pollute their own ground until it is corrupt with disease and parasites. Many of the world’s finest sheep ranges have been ruined beyond repair by over-grazing, poor management and indifferent or ignorant sheep owners.”^[28]

“Because of the behavior of sheep and their preference for certain favored spots, these well-worn areas become quickly infested with parasites of all kinds. In a short time, a whole flock can thus become infected with worms, nematodes and scab. The final upshot is that both

land and owner are ruined while the sheep become thin, wasted and sickly.”^[29] Therefore:

Sheep Must Be Kept On the Move – Sheep cannot be allowed to stay on the same ground too long. Keller says, “There must be a pre-determined plan of action, a deliberate, planned rotation from one grazing ground to another in line with right and proper principles of sound management No other single aspect of the ranch operations commanded more of my careful attention than this moving of the sheep. It

literally dominated all my decisions The success I enjoyed in sheep ranching must be attributed to this care in managing my flock.”^[30]

The moving of the sheep can be from every day to every week. Depending upon the lay of the land, some shepherds set up a base camp and fan out from it in wide circles in a clover leaf pattern, covering new pasture every day. That allows them to return to camp at night.^[31] Other shepherds may need to lead their flocks through valleys in order to get to the high country.

“The annual trek through the valley is the only way for the sheep to escape the barren, dry ground that has been parched by the summer sun or abused by overgrazing. The valley is the only way of escape from the relentless heat of the lowlands.”^[32] The valley is a place of danger and fear to the sheep. They are most vulnerable here to their predators, but the valley grows the richest, most nourishing grass beside clear water streams. It is the only way to those who choose to follow the Shepherd to the high country.

“The Lord is my shepherd” (Ps. 23:1). He *is*. He can do no less than to guide. It is who He is.

“He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake” (Ps. 23:3). Paths of righteousness are always *on the move*, “having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will” (Eph. 1:11). This plan is his best plan for our lives that we have to choose to follow to the high country. Other paths are always available that take little effort to follow.

If we are following Jehovah-Rohi and not straying, we will be growing spiritually. “On the move” is mentally and spiritually, not necessarily physically—but many times, that too. He is the Good Shepherd. He leads only in good ways that lead to good outcomes even though it may not seem that way at the time. His ways bring glory to only Him (not us) in the final analysis.

It is in the valley that my Shepherd “leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me” (Ps. 23: 2-4). Every threat becomes only a fearful shadow of the real thing, and the threat of death never becomes a reality before its time.



JACOB'S DESCENDANTS, living in the lush land of Goshen, did not understand that the valley is the only way to the high country. After exactly 430 years, over ten generations, they most likely lost sight of the big picture, and some probably did not even know of God's promise to Jacob, that He guided them to Egypt and would guide them back home. Meanwhile, their journey meant bondage before getting back.

The new pharaoh grew fearful of the Israelites because, despite their bondage, they were growing in greater numbers than the Egyptians. He did not know about Joseph who was now deceased. He ordered the slaughter of all baby boys. Moses' mother hid him in a basket in the river Nile, saving his life when he was a baby. The daughter of Pharaoh found him and raised him as her own. When Moses learned he was an Israelite and ran from Egypt, after killing the Egyptian, he learned shepherding from his father-in-law in the backside of the desert.

After one oppressive pharaoh died and another took his place, the Israelites groaned in their slavery, crying for help. “God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob” (Exod. 3:7). God saw their affliction and heard their misery.

Meanwhile, Moses saw the burning bush and turned aside to see the sight. God spoke to him, “I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey . . .” (Exod. 3:8).

In other words, God could have said to Moses, “I will do this through you, my shepherd. As their Great Shepherd, Jehovah-Rohi, I have had it all prearranged. I had a plan from the very beginning for your life and theirs. I see your future purposes and designs. I told Jacob to go with his sons to Egypt. If I’d allowed them to stay in Canaan, their descendants would have intermarried with the idolatrous people then in the land. I’ve had to have a pure nation, one with unity of purpose and one strong enough to take possession of the high country I am now bringing you to. And from this nation will be born The Deliverer, My Son.”

This is the background to the greatest deliverance in all history. It is also the background to the saddest mass suicide of all time—when the older generation of approximately six-hundred thousand men (not counting women and children)^[33] chose to die in the wilderness (see Exod. 12:36). They witnessed God open the Red Sea for them to walk over on dry land. Yet, they refused to believe God would help them take possession of His best plan for their lives. They chose to go in circles, retracing their familiar steps around the same mountain for forty years, rather than reaching forth into the unknown. The Good Shepherd knew them, but they chose to not *know* Him. Only Joshua and Caleb *knew* their God when they came to the Jordan River’s edge, as they shepherded the younger generation across.

How did they get across? When they finally got to Jordan what did they do? Joshua records his words of faith, “Come near; listen to the words of the Lord your God . . . Hereby you shall *know* that the living God is among you, and that He will surely drive out from before you the Canaanites . . .” (Josh. 3:9-10 Amplified, emphasis added).

They stopped. For three whole days, they prepared themselves for a holy purpose. They listened to God’s Word. When they came to the brink of the waters . . . they stood still. Surely Joshua reminded the people not to depend upon how they felt, but on God’s promise to bring them in. He reminded them how God continually led them in

the wilderness: God's presence was visibly with them in a cloud by day that shielded them from the hot sun and in a pillar of fire by night to show the way. Joshua demonstrated lessons in faith, and that they could depend upon the Lord to be with them now as He had been in the past—twenty-four hours a day.

And now, he would teach them how to follow the Lord, and that they could depend upon the Shepherd, Jehovah-Rohi, to guide them continually through fears of the unknown. He taught them to trust God to do His work through them to take possession of the Promised Land—His best plan for their lives—given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and now, to us.



CHAPTER 9

Because He is Jehovah-Rohi, I Am Guided



Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. After three days, the officers went throughout the camp, giving orders to the people. When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about a thousand yards between you and the ark; do not go near it.—Joshua 3:1-4

JOSHUA AND THE SECOND generation of the children of Israel finally came to the time of crossing the Jordan River to possess the land God had given them. In order to do so, they still had a vital lesson to learn. As we have seen, their parent's choice to follow their own ways resulted in their own death. Now that Moses was dead, Joshua's challenge was to teach them a whole new way—how to follow the Lord in paths of righteousness (see Ps. 23:3). What was he going to do?

Joshua and the Israelites could be compared to the “cast sheep.” They were at a critical time where they were unable to survive without the help of their Shepherd. They desperately needed a miracle to get across the river at flood stage. If they had been able to do this in their

own strength, the previous generation would have done it. Likewise, in our lifetime, we have many rivers to cross that require a God-sized miracle.

Only through experience, do we learn to hear the Shepherd's voice more distinctly and to follow His will as He goes before us (see John 10:4). Three lights show the way: His Word, the Holy Spirit's nudging in our heart which includes counsel of Godly Christian friends, and circumstances. These can be easily remembered as three harbor lights. For our purposes, the ship is our life, and the harbor lights are three specific guiding points we must be aware of for every decision we make. If we, as pilot of our own ship, disregard these lights our ship will crash.

Lighthouses, or harbor lights, are landmarks for sailors, serving as big street signs for the ocean, and all are different, depending upon what their harbor is like. The lighthouse purpose is to keep boats and ships from running ashore or crashing into rocks. Each one has its own distinct signature light, allowing the ship's pilot to pinpoint where he is on the map by the particular signature lights.

Before we look at the harbor lights, we need to understand what it takes to be a maritime pilot, because that is who we are. He is "a person who is qualified to assist the master of a ship to navigate when entering or leaving a port. He guides the vessel through traffic, rocks, reefs, shoals and narrow channels to its destination."^[34]

"The first step to becoming a pilot is to first be a professional mariner with drive and determination. There is no direct path. There are no 'pilot' schools or any training system that takes a totally unfamiliar person off the street and turns them into a maritime pilot."^[35] The only way to learn is by gaining knowledge through experience—having been placed in a situation of *need to know*. In Oregon, only individuals who have hands-on knowledge of currents, tides, soundings, bearings and distances of shoals, rocks, bars, points of landings, lights and

fog signals are allowed to direct large vessels on certain waters of the state.^[36]

The next requirement of a pilot is to trust in the captain (our master, Jehovah-Rohi) completely. Kathleen's father had been a pilot. She was flooded with memories when she entered a ship. The captain welcomed her, and then turned his attention to the pilot. She said, "Their immediate trust in each other was evident. The captain is always in charge of his ship . . . A trusting relationship is critical to a successful docking."^[37]

The final attributes of a good pilot are summarized by what Kathleen says of her father. "I learned much from his lifestyle: patience, a matching love of water, respect for weather, and listening skills. Dad was never in a hurry . . . the pilot's work is never routine."^[38]

Following Jesus is never routine when we are willing to risk all we have to follow. A disciple of Jesus Christ must leave behind old familiar ways, the ruts going around the same old mountain, pulling up anchor and embarking into the unknown, uncharted waters. The only way to know which way to go is to listen to the master captain's voice. He promises us, "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it" (Isa. 30:21). "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you" (Isa: 43:2).

The value of pilots is realized when they judge an approach correctly, anticipate accurately and react effectively. One particular harbor has three lighthouses that guide to a safe docking in a narrow channel. The lining up of these three harbor lights, over time, reveals God's will and our Shepherd's guidance:

HARBOR LIGHT #1: THE WORD – 80%

The Lord spoke to Joshua. He initiated the conversation, as He always does. Joshua listened, as he always did:

Be strong and courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.—Joshua 1: 7-8

God can do whatever He wants to do—by speaking as He did in the Old Testament, or sending an angel to give encouragement or instructions; however, the main way He speaks is to “cause our thoughts to become agreeable to His will” (Prov. 16:3 Amplified). Of course, this is when we have committed and trusted our works wholly to Him. His voice comes to our minds, as a still, small voice.

The problem lies in deciphering other voices. One is the loud voice of “self.” Another is the demanding, urgent voice of the Evil One. The only way to discern which voice we are hearing is by searching whether it contradicts Scripture and waiting to see if the other lights line up, giving us freedom to act on the intuition or impression we *think* we have heard from God.

It has been said that God speaks from His Word to us in our everyday need for guidance at the rate of 80%, 10% by the counsel of the Holy Spirit and Godly counselors, and 10% through circumstances. Experience proves this true.

Many times, though, problems of knowing God’s will lie in not knowing what the Bible says. The ideal would be to read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. It is also not always wise to take a Scripture out of context, by pulling one out that speaks to our need.^[39] However this is a way God speaks to us today.

The Bible is “God’s effort to reveal Himself to humanity.”^[40] Jesus is alive, and He can get His Word and will to us however He desires, especially if we are seriously seeking and asking Him to speak to us. Even

Billy Graham says he can open his Bible anywhere and God will show him something.



THE LORD SPOKE CLEARLY to Marlene from the pages of her Bible. She was writing a book, and was halfway through. She kept procrastinating until she was discouraged, doubting her ability to write it. Satan taunted her, “And what makes you think you can find a publisher if you get it finished?”

One spring day, she sat down beside a stream, “God please speak to me,” she prayed. The wind blew the pages of her Bible to 2 Corinthians 8:10-11: “I want to suggest that you finish what you started to do Let your enthusiastic idea at the start be equaled by your realistic action now.”^[41]

What happened to Marlene is the *quicken*ing of the Word. Webster’s dictionary defines it as, “to cause to burn more intensely; to cause to be enlivened; to come to life.” When we are using the B-E-A-R Facts of Faith, B-elieving God will speak, E-xpecting Him to speak, A-sking in faith that He will, we will R-eceive His word to us. Remember, Jesus tells us, “The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life” (John 6:63).



WHEN IT WAS TIME TO cross the river, Joshua and all the Israelites rose early in the morning, and “set out from Shittim, and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over” (Josh. 1:1). What were they going to do? “Joshua said to the Israelites, ‘Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God’” (Josh. 3:9).

Rising early with the Lord comes before getting to the river’s edge. Lodging there with Him comes before passing over. Removing ourselves from past endeavors has to come before arriving somewhere bet-

ter. The only way to get there is by scheduling God's Word as number one priority in our day; thus, our life.

After three days, Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you" (Josh. 3:5). Consecrate means "to devote irrevocably to the worship of God by a solemn ceremony."^[42] It is hearing the Word of the Lord that brings this devotion and commitment to obey—leaving all self interest to follow Him. With consecration brings a cleansing from the Word where our heart's desire is to ask and, "See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:24).

HARBOR LIGHT #2: HOLY SPIRIT AND OTHER COUNSELORS - 10%

Nothing can take the place of getting into God's Word ourselves. But what if we are new to the Bible and have little experience in testing inner impressions against Scripture? This is when it is helpful to know Godly Christians who live the Word. If we know someone like this, we need to ask them to be our spiritual mentor. The Word tells us, "Where no counsel is, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Prov. 11:14 KJV).

The first counselor we have is the Holy Spirit in our heart. The question is, "What does our heart tell us?" The Psalmist writes, "I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel . . ." (Ps. 73:23-24). "Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors" (Ps. 119:24). Again, we see the Word as our main counselor. When the Holy Spirit works in conjunction with the Word, they bring peace to our heart, and we know we are on the right track.

Still, there is a need for other counselors. Even mature Christians continually need confirmation from others in Christ's one body to help solidify decisions of guidance. The Bible tells us we should seek confirmation in order to let every matter be established by the testimony of two or more witnesses (see Matt. 18:16). God honors these requests for confirmation to make a wise decision. This is all a part of *asking* God

for His wisdom in the matter and then not second-guessing it when He gives it; yet, we are not to test God.

Both Matthew and Luke record Jesus' words to not put the Lord to a foolish test (see Matt. 4:7 and Luke 4:12). This can be likened to asking God to cause a blue car to drive by next if we should do such and such, or like the lady who altered her drive to work to avoid passing her favorite bakery. She accidentally forgot one morning, approached the bakery and prayed, "Lord, it's up to you . . . if you want me to have any of those delicious goodies, create a parking place for me directly in front of the bakery." Sure enough, on the eighth time around the block, there it was!

Marlene waited for God's voice of confirmation. She had her first harbor light—God's Word. But, her initial attempts at finding a publisher failed and she found it hard to finish her task. Well-meaning friends only discouraged her more. Next, a leader at a writer's retreat which she had not planned to attend, said, "God chose you. As you abide in him, your life will bring forth fruit." Marlene knew in her heart God was speaking directly to her through this speaker. She was challenged to make a goal of completing her book in one year, which she did.

Followers of Christ can be God's vessel to bring His word to us. For those at the river's edge, the officers, God's messengers, relayed the words of guidance to the people. After the three days were complete, they went into all the Israelite's camps and commanded them, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it" (Josh. 3:3). The ark of the covenant contained the Ten Commandments on the tablets God gave Moses and the people, and it represented His presence. In the wilderness, the people followed the cloud that went before them. Now, they were to follow His Word.

"Keep a distance of about a thousand yards between you and the ark; do not go near it," (Josh. 3:4) the officers told the people. They had

to wait still longer until they could visibly see the ark before taking one step. If they got too close and touched the ark, they would die. We have to be ever so careful not to be hasty. Running ahead of God can be fatal. It is a serious matter. If He is not in a situation, we can lose everything: finances, friends, family, and freedom. Haste truly does make waste (see Prov. 21:5).

This point of *haste* cannot be overemphasized. This is what God personally explained to Joshua, Chapter 1:3-4 (see beginning of chapter). Satan is constantly attempting to side-track us from our divine destiny by distracting us with “things” on the right and left-hand sides. These temptations of hasty major purchases such as a new house, a new car, more of this and more of that—time-consuming “toys” take our minds away from pursuing God’s purpose for our lives. Major changes in life are always necessary, but only with prayer, patience, and rational research processes do they bring peace.

Wise King Solomon gives God’s wisdom, “The plans of the mind and *orderly thinking* belong to man, but from the Lord comes the [wise] answer of the tongue” (Prov. 16:1 Amplified, emphasis mine).

Satan uses three areas to tempt us: the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, then he says, “You deserve it. Do it now!”

This *do it now* urgency is no less than being pursued by the Egyptians who pursued the Israelites crossing on the dry ground of the Red Sea. This is why Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matt. 6:13).

HARBOR LIGHT #3: CIRCUMSTANCES – 10%

By the time we get to this last harbor lighthouse, we have an assurance in our heart of what we *think* God is telling us, especially if we have researched the details. We know if an opportunity does not present itself, it was not God speaking in the first place. It may have been a selfish ambition or a desire from a wrong motive. In these cases, closed doors are good. Proverbs tells us that “in his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps” (Prov 16:9)—or is in

control of the circumstances. With experience, we find we don't have to be afraid to try to open doors of opportunity, because one thing we can be sure of—a door will not open that is not right for us—when we are earnestly seeking God's will.

Marlene finished her book, queried forty-one publishers and spent a ton on postage. Not one bought her book. But she had God's Word on it. She had a piece of the rock to stand on, and she *knew* it was His calling and His will that her story be told and published. Finally, and unexpectedly after six years, a publishing house gave her a contract. She had heard about a new publisher, and then God brought the editor to her local writer's conference. The circumstances finally lined up with the other two lights—in God's timing, not her own. And with the promotion of the book, she realized that any time sooner she would not have been able to deal as well publicly with the sensitive nature of her life story.

In the fullness of time, the Israelites obeyed and broke camp to cross the Jordan. The priests carrying the ark went ahead of them. As soon as they reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, an act of faith, the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap while the water flowing down to the sea was completely cut off. "So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground" (Josh. 3: 16-17).

All the people had to do was to obey and follow the ark—not hurrying or losing focus—not getting distracted by threatening "things" on the right or left-hand sides. God did the rest—like slipping a hand in a glove. God is the hand; we are the glove. The hand just moved into the glove. The people of the second generation learned how to allow God to work *through* them.

Have you ever seen a firefly at night moving slowly along an ever-green branch? Until it takes the next step along the sprig, the green sec-

tion underneath cannot be seen. The bright yellow light of the firefly is much like God's Word is to us, for "it is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path" (Ps. 119:105). Amanda and Mark's story shows how we cannot know God's guidance until we start taking steps and persist in trusting God with the results.



AMANDA AND MARK NEEDED a lot of guidance in how to make children a part of their marriage. In the very beginning of their search for adoption agencies, a friend asked, "Do you think an international adoption would be the way to go?" Deciding it would be too expensive, they tried a private attorney. Up-front fees were less expensive, and they heard it was easier; however, after two failed adoptions and eighteen months, they were discouraged and gave up that idea. Next, they tried foster parenting classes. After the first class, Mark was not interested.

Amanda kept a journal, recording God's encouraging words to her, along with her disappointments. The main Scripture that kept them going was Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

Their thoughts went back to the international adoption idea. They learned it was possible to adopt two children at one time through an agency near them. They checked out references and received positive feedback. They could have two children within one year. "By this time, we just knew that God was directing us this way. People wondered why we didn't adopt in America. We prayed through the whole process that God would guide us and we just had faith that He was."^[43]

After paperwork and home visits were completed and flight dates arranged to a Russian orphanage, discouraging problems still loomed. Their scheduled flight in April was cancelled. They had to wait and wait some more. Finally, another date in June. Mark made a determination,

“We will not come home without two children.” By faith, they prepared a nursery.

In a city northeast of Moscow, the couple was given a picture of three-year-old Alexey. The minute Amanda saw his picture she knew he was their child. He had Mark’s furrowed brow and a little frown on his face. But, the biggest part was his name. “During the recent Olympics there had been a Russian ice skater named Alexey. I thought it was the most beautiful name and I went around the house saying, ‘I’m going to name my baby Alexey.’”



THE NEXT DAY, THE MINISTRY of Education called to say they had another child for them to consider—an infant by their standards. He was two years old, with soft blue eyes, with the same name *Alexey*. With no reservations, they knew God had given them their family. When circumstances lined up, with confirmations, they did so quickly.

God not only guided them to their children, but he provided for them. Adoption tax credits made the adoptions affordable. A few years later they went back for a beautiful three-year-old girl named Annalyse, making their family complete.

Choices and decisions of a lesser degree that we make every day are made so much easier with the three harbor lights in mind. Anita had a friend who was threatening her husband with divorce after learning of his infidelity. They had a two-month-old baby boy. She knew she needed to share God’s love with Sally, which she had never done. Her heart pounded and tears came to her eyes every time she thought about it. God’s Word was very clear she should go and share (see Matt. 28:19-20). She knew she had the Holy Spirit’s witness in her heart, so she asked for confirmation, “Lord, if you want me to go to Sally and tell her about how I became a Christian and that You can save her marriage, please let her call me first; then, I’ll know you are leading me, without a doubt.”

Within hours, the phone rang, “Hello Anita, this is Sally.” The final harbor light of *circumstances* lined up. Anita was obedient, and through her fear, trusted God to give her the words to share. That was the last time Anita had contact with Sally, but she learned that she chose to stay with her husband. They accepted the Lord as their Savior, moved from town, changed jobs, got into the Church, and reared nine children.

As the pilot of a ship trusts in the captain, we can trust our Shepherd to lead us. He is the one who qualifies us, and says, “I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them” (Isa.42:16).

When we follow Jehovah-Rohi, we gain experiential knowledge we will have no other way. “Surely goodness and love will follow [us] all the days of [our] lives, and [we] will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Ps. 23:6).



Our Story of Learning Guidance



Our hearts were in turmoil. There was no peace for either of us in our present situation even though Jim was making good money. I worked during income tax season and was able to stay home with our two preschool children. We were renting a nice house with eighty pine trees in the yard, but we were miserable. We had absolutely no idea what to do. All we knew is that something had to change.

A minister mentioned something that caught our attention, “God has a plan for your life. That plan is demonstrated in the Bible as the Promised Land to the children of Israel.” We started to read our Bible with this in mind. *How do we find God’s plan for our lives?*

Jim and I discussed, “What is truth? What really matters?” The Holy Spirit brought to our remembrance a verse of Scripture we had learned in Sunday school as children. Jesus told his disciples, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me” (John 14:6).

“If Jesus is the only truth and life, then why aren’t we following Him?” we said.

Together, we repented before God for not making Him first in our lives (even though we were going to church) and decided to find that Promised Land plan that God laid out for us before the very foundation of the world (see Eph. 1:4).

We had heard the story of the escape from Egypt and the deliverance through Moses and the wilderness journey but reading it for our personal guidance brought no comparison. We realized we were as much in bondage as Jacob’s offspring in Egypt. We searched the

Scriptures to see how they got there. We were shocked to find Genesis 46:2-3, “I am God . . . Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there, I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again . . .”

We were amazed that God told Jacob to go to Egypt where bondage was the plan—so He could get them out of it, and then get the glory for doing so. We realized it was not a mistake for us to be where we were—in bondage—and that God was with us and hearing our groaning as much as He heard the Israelites (see Exod. 6:5). We had felt the \$10,000 debt we made for ourselves was something we had to deal with in our own strength—and the job, too; but, now, we knew God *wanted* to deliver us, His way, and that was His job—deliverance.

We both felt Jesus tugging at our hearts with these words, “Now are you willing to relinquish all and follow me?”

The Lord continued to show us that He had met His disciples before the time He asked them this question. It was as though, He was still walking along the seashore saying, “Come, follow me.”

Our answer could be nothing other than yes. It was no different than when some of Jesus’ disciples turned back from following him, “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the twelve.

“Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God’” (John 6:67-68).

It was time to act on our faith and to take a stand. Having God’s Word on it, I could confidently tell Jim, “I think you ought to resign. If so, I will never second-guess your decision.” Feeling he could always find work, he put in his notice.

We read all the book of Deuteronomy; then, reread it again. The day after the job notice was up, August 1, 1978, when we had been in Carthage eleven months, God quickened Deuteronomy 1:3 to us, “In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month,” after the children of Israel had been in the wilderness.

Verse 6 also popped out at us, “You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance into the hill country . . .” “How do we do that?” I asked Jim.

Jim found it first. We did not know the children of Israel had to cross *two* rivers. All that was in our minds was the Red Sea, with Moses (Charlton Heston) holding out his rod so the people could cross over on dry land. But, they had to cross the Jordan River, too! The book of Joshua brought more light to our path, confirming our way, to stand still and hear the words of the Lord.

“Sit still” is what we did, with the encouragement of two Godly women we could talk to. Other well-meaning friends said, “If you think you want to work for the Lord, why don’t you go to seminary?” We knew this could not be God’s plan because we were already in debt with school. This only caused us to search more Scripture to discover that Jesus’ disciples did not need seminary to be used by Him. Even the apostle Paul, after meeting Jesus, did not consult any man, but went immediately into Arabia to seek the Lord and later returned to Damascus when he began his ministry (see Gal. 1:15-17).

Jim and I were flooded with peace as we camped at the river’s edge, listening to the words of the Lord; that is, until the three days turned into three months, and we came down to the last \$3.00 to our name.



CHAPTER 10

God is El Shaddai

[The All Sufficient One]



When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.”—Genesis 17:1-2

THE BEST WAY TO UNDERSTAND who El Shaddai is, is to consider Francy’s story. A few weeks after the birth of her second child, she left both children with her husband Scott while she escaped to the hairdresser. Returning later than planned, she found her house in total uproar. Both children were crying. Since the baby had not yet learned to take a bottle, Scott was unable to meet the needs of his infant child. Within minutes, peace ruled as Francy nursed the baby, and Scott was able to console his two-year old.

This is the concept God was teaching Abraham in Genesis 17:1-2—His all-sufficiency is everything we could ever need—“able” to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. As our parent, He blesses us as both our mother and our father. As a nursing mother is able to completely meet the physical and emotional needs of her child, God is able to care for, and console, us above all we can ask, think or dream of—the essence of El Shaddai.

The Hebrew name for God, “El Shaddai,” appears as “God Almighty” seven times in the Old Testament until the time of Moses. Almighty means *Shaddai*. The “El” of El Shaddai (and of El Roi and Elohim) means *mighty*, whereas some scholars say that El Shaddai means the Powerful One, or the Mighty One. “Rabbis believed the term meant the ‘One who is self-sufficient.’”^[44] The root word comes from *shadah*, to *shed*, to *pour out*. “I am that God who *pours out blessings*, who gives them *richly, abundantly, continually*.”^[45]

As you can see, scholars differ on the meaning of the root word of El Shaddai, which is no mistake, because He is all things. Kay Arthur in her book, *The Peace & Power of Knowing God’s Name*, leans toward the definition set forth by Andrew Jukes in *The Names of God*, explaining that the Hebrew word *shad* refers to “the breast,” or more exactly, a “woman’s breast.”^[46]

The Hebrew word for *blessing* means God’s favor, benefits, happiness and peace.^[47] What are these blessings poured out for us that we can expect from our Heavenly Father, El Shaddai? What are the conditions to receiving them, and who can receive them? The blessings are: increase, fruitfulness, promise of a homeland, deliverance from bondage, and protection. Let us review how Scripture relates each of these to El Shaddai.

THE BLESSINGS OF EL SHADDAI

Increase – Remember, God’s confirmation of the covenant blessing God made to Abraham was nine months before Isaac was born. El Shaddai reassured him that he truly would increase his numbers through a child from his wife Sari. Abram meant “a high or exalted father;” whereas, God changed his name to Abraham (see Gen. 17:5), meaning “a father of a multitude.”^[48]

Increase for Abraham was not only in numbers of descendants, but in influence and leadership. His faithfulness, trust and obedience to God influenced the whole world, like water spilling over a barrel cov-

ering the earth. Who is not familiar with the reputation of Abraham and of his faith which claimed a new nation? Especially since the war in Iraq, we see the descendants of Ishmael claiming him as their father also.



CHRISTMAS WAS ALWAYS a sad time for Denise and her husband Joe, because they had no children. Finally, able to give it over to God one Christmas, Denise prayed, “Lord, if You want me to be a career woman and not have kids, I’ll accept that. If You want me to be a mother, it’ll have to happen soon. If You want us to adopt a child, You’ll have to drop one in my lap because we can’t afford one. If You’re not going to give me a child, then You’ll have to take away the desire.” In seeking God’s will, Denise was to find He was willing for increase.

Fruitfulness – Before Jacob left for his Uncle Laban, Isaac passed on the blessing to him, “May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples” (Gen. 28:3). In turn, Jacob blessed his son Joseph with these words, “Joseph is a fruitful vine . . . because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below, blessings of the breast and womb” (Gen. 49:22, 25).

Fruitfulness in every way is the promise of El Shaddai. Abram had to wait until he was ninety-nine years old, and Sari until she was ninety, to receive the child of promise, but it *did* happen. And, at the fulfillment of the promise came a name change for them both. [God told Abraham in Genesis 17:15 to call Sari, Sarah.]



LESS THAN ONE MONTH after Denise’s prayer, at an uncle’s funeral dinner, Joe’s mother approached him and Denise and said, “An unwed couple from within the family is expecting their sixth child and

wants to give it up for adoption. They want to know if you want it. They want to keep it within the family.”

Denise’s heart leapt at those words, but they were almost like gossip, not a fact. The baby was to arrive in only two months, so they called the expecting man’s father. A meeting was planned with the parents. The couple did want to give the baby up for adoption.

The adoption cost only \$1,000 for lawyer fees, but it was a fortune to Denise and Joe; however, just as a mother cares for her child, El Shaddai met their needs. Co-workers and friends gave of their best, and for the last remaining amount, Joe liquidated some assets. After a Bible study and sharing time, a friend named Patty donated her valuable social-service expertise for the background check for the adopting parents.

Denise had only two months to prepare for the baby. One particular day, with an unusual feeling of urgency, Denise shopped for her final baby supplies. The next day, the baby was born—one month earlier than expected.

After arriving at the hospital the night before, Denise and Joe heard the mother might be changing her mind. They prayed all night long in great anguish. The next morning, a beautiful baby girl was born, with one major complication, *metopic crainiosynostosis*, where the sutures of the cranium are closed rather than open to allow for growth of the child’s brain.

In the final outcome, the baby belonged to Denise and Joe. Surgery corrected the defect before the baby was six months old. Her forehead had appeared triangular when looking from the top, but now she was normal, and the pressure on the brain was alleviated. The \$100,000 hospital costs and surgery for the baby was paid with insurance from Denise’s job and financial aid. Meanwhile, two weeks after the adoption, Joe was laid-off from his job.

Promise of a homeland—purpose and heaven – Isaac also blessed Jacob with these words, “May he [God Almighty] give you and your

descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien, the land God gave to Abraham” (Gen. 28:4). With this promise, Jacob knew he would someday return from his Uncle Laban to claim possession of God’s purpose for his life. We know now that he became the father of twelve sons who would personally possess the land of Canaan that would become known as Israel. In fact, God changed Jacob’s name to Israel. [This is only one of many times the Israelites left their homeland to later reclaim it.]



DENISE AND JOE HAD been trusting God for their future and life purpose. Jeremiah 29:11 meant much to them, “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

After Joe’s ten-year managerial job ended, he struggled to find something that utilized his skills and desires. In four years he had four jobs. Denise kept encouraging him and together they kept standing on the promise that the Lord is able to restore the years the locusts have eaten (see Joel 2:25). Seeking the Lord’s direction and purpose, they felt God shepherding them to move, but not knowing where.

The Promised Land of Canaan symbolizes heaven. The word *crossing*, as of crossing the Jordan River (see Josh. 4:1), is the Hebrew word *âbâr*, which means “to pass over . . . to go beyond . . . to depart . . . to impregnate . . . going beyond a certain physical point.”^[49] It also symbolizes entry into our destiny purpose and God’s best for our lives here on earth—going beyond our present state, possessing all God has for us.

Deliverance from bondage – Jumping from Jacob’s story to the story of Moses, we learn that in obedience to The Almighty, Moses returned to Egypt where he tried to persuade Pharaoh to free the people. To Moses, El Shaddai reveals himself as The Powerful One, the Mighty

One, and changes, or replaces, his *own* name to “Jehovah,” [Chapter 22 of this book explains this in-depth name of God] with the same self-sufficiency as El Shaddai. The fullness of time had arrived for Jehovah also, because now, through Abraham and his descendant’s obedience and influence—Moses and the children of Israel (Jacob)—He obtains greater influence upon the earth. With increase in influence, comes a name change. The Lord, meaning Jehovah, said to Moses,

“I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the Lord, I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.”—Exodus 6:2-4

He remembered His covenant—the *blood*.

The Almighty promises deliverance from bondage—spiritually and physically on this earth. That is His job, His purpose, and His desire. But, the deliverance of the children of Israel did not manifest until the most important last plague occurred. The Lord, through Moses, instructed them to sprinkle blood over the doorposts of their houses—from a sacrificial lamb. The blood protected them from judgment that Passover night when the death angel took the life of the firstborn sons of Egypt, including Pharaoh’s son. All this pointed to Jesus, our sacrificial Lamb, and the deliverance from sin, death, and bondage we have through his blood.



DENISE AND JOE FELT they were in *limbo land*, much like when the children of Israel traveled around the same mountain, getting nowhere. She went back to work after six weeks at home with the ba-

by—while Joe was still on unemployment. In the evenings, she took over baby care, fell into bed at 11:00 p.m., and awoke at 5:30 a.m. to care for baby again.

During this time Joe made a number of trips to Texas to take a test to get on the railroad, driving his only mode of transportation, his motorcycle. He passed the test three times, but could not get hired. Unemployment ran out. He was offered another dead-end job. He and Denise finally had enough; it was time to take a leap of faith.

Friends in Texas offered Joe a place to stay, so Denise pushed him out the door and stayed behind to sell the house. After only eight days, Joe was hired on temporarily with Northwest Pipe Company—with great pay and benefits. After two and one-half months and permanently hired, he rented an apartment and went back for Denise and the baby. They left town on a Sunday; the house sold on Monday. This time they were driving a pickup truck that a friend traded him for his motorcycle. Proceeds from the sale of their house paid their debt. The best part: Denise was now able to stay at home with their year-old daughter.

Protection – One of the most comforting verses in the whole Bible comes from Psalm 91:1, “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.” This shadow can be equated to the shadow the Lord gave the children of Israel in the cloud by day to give them shade to protect them from the hot sun of the desert. It can also be thought of as the protecting wings of a mother hen as she shelters her chicks from the storm. Referring to Chapter 5 of this book, the shadow is the protecting red umbrella dipped in the blood of the Lamb over our heads. Psalm 91:1 is one of the forty-eight times where *the Almighty* (El Shaddai) appears in the Old Testament. He is our Protector.



MANY STORIES OF GOD’S protection can be told, but for Joe, it was with his motorcycle. On one of the trips to Texas, Joe’s motorcycle

had mechanical problems. It just so happened to be in a place where a mechanic was able to help him. All Joe had to do was buy the part, and the man told him how to put it on, saving Joe labor costs, and he safely made his time deadline while being protected on the interstate highways—carried by El Shaddai.

CONDITIONS TO BEING BLESSED

God Almighty gives two very important conditions to being blessed in Genesis, chapter 17:

to trust and to be blameless.

Trust: “I am God Almighty, *walk* before me” (Gen. 17:1 emphasis added). The Amplified version says, “. . . live habitually before Me.”

The bottom line of walking before the Lord means trusting in Him. Jeremiah 17:7 says, “Blessed is the man *who trusts* in the Lord, whose confidence is in him” (emphasis added). (See also Prov. 16:20; Ps. 84:12). The psalmist also says, “Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who *walk* in his ways” (Ps. 128:1 emphasis added). If we are following Jesus as our Shepherd, we are walking before him—in His presence. Walking blameless adds another dimension.

Be Blameless: “. . . and be blameless” (Gen. 17:1)

The Hebrew word for blameless is *Tâmîym*: the divine standard for man to obtain. It means “entire (literally, figuratively, or morally) whole, complete . . . upright in one’s conduct, especially toward God, innocent, simple, honest, sincere, secure, integrity.”^[50] The Amplified Bible gives an interesting amplification: blameless, *whole-hearted, complete*. Remember Joshua and Caleb, who followed the Lord *wholeheartedly*, were the only ones left of the original generation coming out of Egypt and are now leading the children of Israel into the Promised Land. It all comes down to facing our life honestly before the Lord one day at a time.

The psalmist again gives a great summary of what it takes to be a blessed child of God: “Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who

walk according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart” (Ps. 119:1).

God’s ways are higher than our ways, therefore, we may see times when His blessings of health or family are taken away, and we cannot figure out *why*. We see ourselves as blameless and completely trusting in the Lord. Chapter 14 of this book examines this life situation in detail.

As important as these two conditions are to being blessed, there is another condition that we absolutely cannot ignore! And, it’s the very first condition God laid down. When the Lord called Abram to leave his father’s household and go to the land that He would show him, He finished His blessing to Abram with these words: “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse” (Gen. 12:3).

We know God is referring to “Israel,” the nation of the Jewish people, Abraham’s descendants through Isaac—the child of a promise fulfilled—and Jacob whose name is changed to “Israel.”

WHO SHALL RECEIVE THESE BLESSINGS?

“... between me and you” (Gen. 17:2)

God is talking directly to Abraham, of course, and the *me* here is El Shaddai. He is also talking directly to you and me. Galatians 3:29 tells us so, “And if you belong to Christ (are in Him, Who is Abraham’s Seed), then you are Abraham’s offspring and (spiritual) heirs according to promise” (Amplified). We are Abraham’s spiritual offspring because we belong to Christ and are a child of the only One and True God. These promises and every promise in the whole Bible belong to us, and have already been given to us.

These blessings come only to those who dare to look for and receive what the Almighty has given, men like Jabez who cried out to God, “Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.’ And God granted his request” (1 Chron. 4:10).F

Bruce Wilkinson, in his book, *The Prayer of Jabez for Teens*, says, “I’ve met so many

Christians who think that such an idea is wrong. They assume that they'll seem greedy or immature if they ask God for too many blessings. But that's not what Jabez believed. Somewhere in his bones he knew something that most of us miss. He was convinced that God loved him and wanted to *really* bless him and that He could because He had unlimited power and resources. That kind of trust in his heavenly Father made it natural for Jabez to pray exactly the kind of request God wants to hear.»^[51]

WHAT IF WE ARE NOT SEEING THESE BLESSINGS?

There may be times when we do trust the Lord, and live our lives with integrity, but it seems God's blessings have stopped, or His face is turned away from us. We have unmet needs. What is wrong? If we ask ourselves some questions from Psalm 24, we will usually find our answer:

Who shall go up into the mountain of the Lord? Or *who* shall stand in His holy place? He who has **clean hands and a pure heart**, who has not lifted himself up to **falsehood**, or to what is false, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation [description] of those who seek Him, who inquire of and for Him, and [of necessity] require Him, *who seek Your face*, [O God of] Jacob. Selah [pause, and think of that]!—Psalm 24:3-6 Amplified (emphasis mine)

Are our hands clean and our heart pure? Are we experiencing the consequences of disobedience in Deuteronomy 28, as discussed in Chapter 5 of this book? Is sin causing God's face to be hidden from us? God is talking to Christians, not unbelievers, when He says:

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked

ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered. . . .” —2 Chronicles 7:14-15

It may be hard to identify with “wicked ways,” but if we will come before the Lord honestly and ask Him if there is anything we need to get right with Him, He will certainly answer that prayer. A good one to pray is from Psalm 139:23-24, “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.”

Are we believing something false or speaking deceitfully? *Falsehood* from the Hebrew has a double meaning. One means “taking the Lord’s name in vain” or “using the Lord’s name lightly or without thinking.”^[52] Another means “anything not substantial, is not real, or is worthless”^[53] In other words, has satan fed us a lie we are believing? Are we blaming God for our misfortune? The serpent’s strategy with Eve was to cast doubt on the Word God gave her and Adam. She quit trusting God and accepted the lie—you will not die—and ate the forbidden fruit. Satan’s continual strategy toward Christians is still the same, and then we blame God because things do not work out as we had once hoped.

Another question we need to ask ourselves is: “Am I holding a grudge because of something someone did or said to me, not forgiving; therefore, blaming God?” This is not real and worthless, because God cannot bless it. It is sin.



JACOB KNEW HIS GOD as El Shaddai. From Genesis 27, we learn that after Isaac finished blessing Jacob and he had scarcely left his father’s presence, “his brother Esau came in from hunting. He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him,

‘My father, sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.’”

“Who are you?” Isaac asked.

“I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.”

Isaac trembled violently and said, “Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!”

When Esau heard his father’s words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me—me also, my father!”

But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.”

Esau said, “Isn’t he rightly named Jacob? He has deceived me these two times. He took my birthright and now he’s taken my blessing!” Then he asked, “Haven’t you reserved any blessing for me?”

The only blessing Isaac could give was to tell Esau he would be the servant of his brother Jacob. This is when, because of Esau’s wrath, Jacob fled to the land of his Uncle Laban, where he lived for forty years—fourteen years to earn his two wives, twenty years as a neighboring wage earner, and six years to build his own herds.^[54] Jacob reaped what he had sown, for Laban did everything he could do to deceive Jacob out of wages and flocks. Laban knew God was blessing him because of Jacob, yet begrudged giving his own son-in-law anything. When the time came that the Lord led Jacob to return to his homeland, Laban did not want him to leave, because Laban knew *the blessing* would go with him.

God is in the business of building character

God Almighty is not only in the “business” of blessing and deliverance, but of building character. During these forty years of Jacob’s early life and growing his family, his attitude slowly changed, but it came only through much testing, trial, and submission to his deceiving father-in-law.

When the Lord told Jacob to return to the land of his father, he had a choice to make. He discussed it with his wives, who agreed, because they had seen how their father treated Jacob. However, to go back meant Jacob had to face up to his past and his own deceptive ways. He had to face his brother.

Listen to Jacob's prayer:

“O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,’ I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups. Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. But you said, ‘I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.’” —Genesis 32:9-12

Increase is from God alone

Jacob acknowledges his unworthiness because of his past behavior and that his increase is from God alone, that God's Word is true. He still trusts God to confirm His covenant to him as He did for his forefathers. In faith, he takes that promise back to God, voicing it with the words of his mouth, “but you said.” Jacob is totally at the mercy of El Shaddai. With his large family, many young and older children, large herds and baby animals, he is afraid and helpless—much like a “cast” sheep. He is hemmed in on both sides—Esau out in front and Laban behind, both who have the ability and desire to do him great harm.

Jacob sleeps on it. The next morning, with God's wisdom, Jacob *gives* of his increase to God, by setting aside a gift for Esau: “two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls,

and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys” (Gen. 32: 14-15). He sends them ahead in separate groups to appease Esau, but also as restitution for what he had stolen.

That night Jacob helps his family cross a stream, sends them ahead and is left alone. The angel of the Lord, appearing as a man, wrestles with him all night. Jacob would not let him go at daybreak saying, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” The angel asked him, “What is your name?” “Jacob,” he answered.

Then the angel of the Lord said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men *and have overcome*” (Gen. 32:28 emphasis mine).

In the “valley of decision” (see Joel 3:14) where his Shepherd led him, Jacob wrestles with facing his past, finds healing and comes out a new man. He gains God’s forgiveness and encouragement and is ready to start a whole new life. He is also left with a limp from his struggle that will always remind him of the time he *asked* for blessing from The Almighty and when he *received* it. At this time, he has eleven sons and Benjamin will be born “in the land” giving him twelve sons who will be the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jacob finds that God will fight his battles for him. Laban chased him for seven days, but before overtaking him, God spoke to him in a dream, “Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad” (Gen. 31:24). After Laban arrives, they strike an agreement not to do each other harm, and set up a heap of stones as a reminder. Laban kisses his daughters and grandchildren goodbye and blesses them. Jacob’s decision to take responsibility for his choices changed Laban’s attitude as well.

Next, Jacob meets up with Esau and his four hundred men. Jacob goes ahead of his family and bows down to the ground seven times with Esau in sight. But Esau runs to meet Jacob and embraces him, throws his arms around him, kisses him, and they both weep. Jacob tells Esau,

“To see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favorably” (Gen. 33:10).

El Shaddai carried Jacob and his family as a father carries his son (see Deut. 1:31) back home across the Jordan River. Jacob found that underneath were the everlasting arms (see Deut. 33:27).

As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you . . .” (Isaiah 66:13).



CHAPTER 11

Because He is El Shaddai, I Am Blessed



He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.”—Deuteronomy 8:16-17

But Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.—Deuteronomy 8:18

JOYCE LOVE TELLS A STORY about her grandparents in her devotional, *Memories from the Heart*. After three of her grandparents’ homes burned to the ground, they learned that possessions do not last. Consequently, they hoarded nothing and showered love and blessings on everyone who came to their door. Living by the railroad tracks gave them many opportunities to feed hungry hobos.

While the youngest son, Wilbur, was still home, he and his father went to town for lumber to build a small brooder house for chickens. On the way home an elderly gentleman hitched a ride. He was wearing a dirty, gray shirt and tie that formerly were very nice clothes.

Grandpa stopped and asked, “Wanna ride?”

The stranger climbed into the truck. As Grandpa neared his turn-off, he stopped to let the stranger out. "No," he said, "I would like to ride some more."

This happened again with another turn until they arrived at their house. Grandma was not surprised, as they often provided shelter for strangers. As Grandpa started building the small brooder house, the man said, "There's no need to make such a small house. Let's make a big one. Let's go back to town and get more lumber so we can make a big building."

"I can't afford that. I can't afford anything like that. We'll just go ahead with this small one," said Grandpa.

"Let's build a big one. Instead of ordering 100 chickens, get three to four thousand!"

Grandpa laughed and said, "Naw, we'll just make the little brooder house."

That night, the stranger slept on the porch. The next morning he asked Grandpa who the neighbors were. Grandpa told him.

"How many acres on this place?" Grandpa told him he just rented the forty acres.

"We could build a new house and after we get that brooder house built, we could build whatever else you want. We'll make a ranch out of this," the stranger said.

The stranger went around to the property owners and found they did not want to sell. He said he was surprised because, "Money will usually buy anything you want."

Again, Grandpa laughed at the stranger and tried to ignore him, thinking he was not responsible for his actions and out of his mind. The man kept making ridiculous suggestions and claimed to have a lot of money.

Finally, Grandpa asked the man, "Why are you dressed like that and why were you hitchhiking if you have so much money?"

“Well, I’ll tell you. A few years back I bought a brand-new car and had a wreck. It really messed me up. I said to myself right then that I would never own another car. That was going to be my last one. And the only time I ride is when I get awfully tired. Otherwise, I just walk.” He later told Grandpa he used to own a lot of oil wells and had all the money he needed.

The visitor spent several days at Grandma and Grandpa’s table. Then one morning he quietly left. Later that same day he was struck by a car and killed. A large sum of money was found on his body, and they later heard he was a millionaire!

This story raises many questions. What would have happened if Grandpa had taken him seriously? Wilbur and Grandma believed him. Was the man looking for a home, for love? He received the latter, but what did he do with it? This is a sad story that deserves our attention. If Grandma and Grandpa, as well as the stranger, were being tested, who passed? Did any of them? These questions will be answered as we look at why and how we are blessed. In the process, we will find that *God alone is our only source of supply and security*—not the job, not parents, 401K’s or retirement plans, and not even a millionaire who happens by our door— only El Shaddai.

WHY ARE WE BLESSED?

What is God’s purpose for blessing His people? Deuteronomy 8:16-18, answers this question—*to confirm or establish His covenant*. But what is His covenant? [This question was addressed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5 of Jehovah-Tsidkenu.] In a nut shell, the covenant is God’s promise to Abraham’s seed, passed on to his children, next to his children’s children, and eventually to the nation of Israel. To the nation of Israel, which the Father had prepared to receive His son, He sent His seed—Jesus Christ.

What is God’s purpose for blessing us? This is it: that the whole world may know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the only Way, the Truth and the Life, and that no man can come to the

Father except through Him. When we have this firmly established and settled in our heart and mind, Jesus gives his disciples what is called the Great Commission:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end on the age.—Matthew 28:18-20

HOW DO BLESSINGS COME TO US?

To go into all the world takes many resources. Before looking specifically at how this can be accomplished, we need to review how blessings to establish His covenant come to us. They come in two forms:

In the desert: with one-day-at-a-time manna. “He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you” (Deut. 8:16). Manna was supernatural, miraculous bread from heaven that fell every morning for the children of Israel to gather—only enough for one day. On the sixth day, they were to gather enough for two days so they could rest on the Sabbath. On the Sabbath, none fell. Being disobedient and undisciplined children, some gathered more than they could eat in one day during the week; thus, when hoarding it, they found it rotten the next morning— full of maggots and smelly.

Manna means “whatness,” or “What is it?” because this is what the people said when they saw it. It could be ground or milled, baked or boiled, and tasted like honey wafers. On the sixth night they were to bake and boil it and keep it for the Sabbath. It did not rot this day. El Shaddai provided manna forty years while the first generation of Israel wandered in the desert until they died. In contrast, their children chose to enter the land of El Shaddai’s abundance.

The desert was testing ground. Would the children of Israel follow God—the same God who delivered them from Egypt and met their needs one day at a time, when they did not know what was ahead? Would they be able to praise the one and only true God when times grew tough and real fighting battles erupted in the land? Would they allow themselves to become hardened to difficulties for the Lord’s sake? Could they be trusted with more responsibility? The desert would tell.

In the land: with plenty, prosperity, and a plan to serve others, one day at a time. Prosperity is more than money. It is defined as “to become strong and flourishing”^[55] Its definition is from Deuteronomy 28:1-14, the Biblical definition for blessings: to be above only and not beneath, to be the head and not the tail, able to lend and not borrow, to be at the top, and not at the bottom. These are the desires of El Shaddai for all His children. Should it be so hard for us to believe that the God of the whole universe wants to bless His children even as an earthly father wants to shower on his children good things?

“Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant” (Deut. 8:18). God is saying that after the time of hardship, recall those times when there was no doubt it was God alone who met our needs because we had nothing. He also tells us to guard against ever thinking we have produced any wealth on our own, because it all comes from Him.

Wealth comes from the Hebrew word *chayil*. “The main meanings of this noun, which occurs 244 times in the Heb. O.T., are strength, army, wealth.”^[56] It is also derived from the word *chayl*, additionally meaning “power, valor, military force, virtue, and honesty.”^[57] Chayil refers to the entourage of the queen of Sheba who visited King Solomon, the third king of Israel, David’s son, who built the temple in the land of Israel.

After King David's death, Solomon worshipped the Lord. In that night, God appeared to him and said, "Ask what I shall give you" (2 Chron. 1:7).

Solomon responded, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?" (2 Chron. 1:10).

God said to Solomon,

Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, riches or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king, therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, riches and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have.—2 Chronicles 1:11-12

King Solomon asked for wisdom and God gave him wisdom *and* wealth. It was the queen of Sheba who pronounced how blessed everyone was who heard Solomon's wisdom. Regarding the king's wealth, she exclaimed, "Blessed be the Lord your God who delighted in you, setting you on His throne as king for the Lord your God; because your *God loved Israel establishing them forever*, therefore, He made you king over them *to do justice and righteousness*" (2 Chron. 9:8 emphasis added). She recognized Solomon's true wealth, virtue and honesty, and above all, that the true God was the God of Israel forever. Then, she showered on him even more earthly wealth, which he used to bless the people.

HOW ARE WE TO BLESS OTHERS?

How are we to bless according to the Old Testament:

There are so many ways to bless others, most of which will be discussed in Chapters 16 and 17, when we take the responsibility of being salt. Our purposes here are to address how we can fulfill the Great

Commission to reach our world for Jesus Christ in giving of our resources, whether small or large.

Have you ever spent one day without having to spend money for something? Our ancestors may have lived off the land and were able to do this, but it is unrealistic in today's society. Money drives our world; therefore, what we do with our own money defines our life and reveals *who we are*. God gives us wisdom in how to order our world aright by establishing the *tithe*.

For those living off the land the tithe is defined in Leviticus:

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. If a man redeems any of his tithe, he must add a fifth of the value to it. The entire tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—will be holy to the Lord.—Leviticus 27:30-32

Wage earners can relate more to Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament:

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,” says the Lord of hosts.—Malachi 3:10-11

When we follow God's way of giving, the nine-tenths left is *blessed* because He will rebuke satan from it—the devourer of appliances, cars, money, and possessions. He causes it to s-t-re-t-c-h when we give the tenth off the top to Him. The Bible tells us not to put God to a foolish

test (see Deut. 6:16; Matt. 4:7). This is the only time God *asks* us to test him—to see for ourselves if He will not open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings until they overflow! He tells us to *try* it and see what He will do! This is not a foolish test.

The best definition of the tithe is the *first fruits of all thy income* (see Ex. 23:16, 19). The first fruits were to be brought to the house of the Lord, in other words, off the top, the first check written, not from what is left over. If you have had a garden, especially tomato plants, you know the first ripe tomatoes are the very best, the only unblemished ones worthy to give to God.

King David, Solomon's father, gathered together all the materials (their tithe and more) for the building of the temple—God's house—that Solomon was to construct. In dedication, David prayed an enlightened prayer:

Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things, in your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all . . . But, who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.—1 Chronicles 29:12-14

We are stewards in charge of the Lord's trust: David's prayer shows that we are to be *stewards*—giving back to God what comes from His hand. We are vessels He desires to bless with wealth and honor, not only for our own benefit, but mainly so we can bless others. Stewards are in charge of the Lord's trust. A trust can be defined as “a charge or duty imposed in faith or confidence or as a condition of some relationship; to commit or place in one's care or keeping.”^[58]

God has placed in our care and keeping everything we have. Only if we are faithful with what we have, will the Lord bless us with more. Jesus tells a story about a man going on a journey who entrusted his

property to his servants. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to the other, one talent, “each according to his ability” (Matt. 25:15).

The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.—Matthew 25:16-17

The first two servants were told by their master, upon his return, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

The master told the man who hid his talent, “You wicked, lazy servant! So, you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned, I would have received it back with interest.

“Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance” (Matt.25:28-29). The faithful will see *increase*.

Rob Leacock was a financial controller at Capital Christian Center in Sacramento, California. He counseled many people regarding their money situations. Even though he gave them sound Biblical teaching, most of them did not change their lifestyles. Only those who integrated financial planning with a lifestyle of *total discipleship* [as a condition of their heart relationship with the Lord] realized improvement in their finances.

Leacock says, “Believers who connect prayer and Bible study with the use of their finances save more money, get out of debt and give and serve more in their local church.”^[59] Denise and Joe are good examples of a couple who did this. They learned stewardship through their relationship with the Lord. Without that relationship, they would not

have seen any real blessings and believe they would have been bankrupt a second time. They learned to tithe. Many months it was especially tough to do, but they were obedient. Giving is an act of the will. Giving demonstrates our belief God alone owns it all, and that God alone is our only source of supply.

How are we to bless according to the New Testament?

The tithe is never specifically mentioned. Isn't this interesting? Jesus came to bring a New Covenant, completing the old—not doing away with it. He gives a new principle of giving. He tells us that whatever we do will return to us—in the matter of judging, condemning, forgiving, and giving of our resources,

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.—Luke 6: 37-38

“For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Without abolishing the tithe, Jesus gives a higher principle. The apostle Paul says it another way, “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:6-7).

Giving is like sowing seeds that grow, producing more seed from which to give. “Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of our righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and . . . your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God” (2 Cor. 9:10-11).

A youth group in Arkansas learned that sowing seeds of forgiveness returned in good measure. They worked and saved for two years to go on a mission trip to Cambodia. When the youth director attempted to check with the travel agency to confirm the tickets, worth \$30,000, he discovered the mother and son team were gone. They had taken money from customers for six months after filing bankruptcy and skipped the country.

Radio and television stations found out about the scam and interviewed a couple of the teens. They asked the usual question, “How do you feel about this situation?”

One young man spoke up immediately, “We have forgiven them and are praying for them.”

Donations came flooding in—one for \$5,000 and another for the full \$30,000! Their church turned money away. The biggest lesson the youths learned that summer was that when they gave back to God in obedience to forgive without judging, He returned—pressed down, shaken together and running over. No one can eventually steal from a child of God *who* knows how to give and forgive. It has been said that when we do not forgive, waiting for an apology, we are *forselling*. We are not *giving* anything.

Need money? Give it. Need encouragement? Give it. Need food? Give it. Need clothes? Give some. Need love? Give it. Need a friend? Be one. “When what we have is not enough to meet our need, it becomes our seed.”^[60] But . . .

HOW DO WE MANAGE ABUNDANCE WHEN IT COMES?

We are warned, “You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me’” (Deut. 8:17), but *remember* it is the Lord alone who is our only source of supply to whom we give and from whom we receive, in order to establish His name on the earth. In reality, when we have abundance, we may feel the tithe remains enough to give, if we even do that.

Should we tithe from the gross or the net? Most pastors would say either, but first fruits come off the top, the gross. However, giving from the net is a good place for beginners to start, and then increase from there. God made a promise to the Israelites, “Little by little I will drive them [enemies] out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land” (Exod. 23:30). Little by little, no matter how large or how small our income, this is our promise—to see debts, etc., driven out, leaving more money to give to the Lord’s work in the land.

One pastor challenged his people to give a *double tithe*. Why not make twenty percent a long-range goal? Track what God does. This can easily be done by taking each year’s income tax return, finding the amount of giving on Schedule A—Itemized Deductions—and dividing it by total gross wages. One benefit of tithing on gross wages means never having to worry about paying income taxes. Not only does the higher deduction help, but God’s return on money is a supernatural thing that cannot be explained. Even if we do not itemize deductions, we can take joy in tracking the increase of giving and receiving.

Why not set a reasonable budget to live on and give the rest away? Jesus says, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15). Without a plan, we will be tempted to spend any extra on extravagant living. And without a responsible plan it may not happen at all.

Remember the verse in James 4:2, “You do not have, because you do not ask God.” The very next verse says, “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” God gives us richly all things to enjoy, but it is our motives we must always keep in check, because wealth is so uncertain (see 1Tim. 6:17).

We must take the limitations off what God desires so badly to do through our lives. Stanley Tam’s story shows what He can do. Stanley started out just like most of us—broke. At a young age, he chose to

honor God with his small income. Daily obedience to God's leading brought increase to the point that he legally made God the senior partner in his business—hiring a lawyer to do so. From there, he went from giving 51 percent to giving 90 percent and living on the ten. He founded three businesses: United States Plastics, States Smelting, and Industrial Safety and Tamco. At eighty years of age, he travels twenty-five weeks per year speaking at churches. His inspiring story is in *God Owns My Business*. Every Christian can follow his example—whether a business owner or not.

WHAT IF WE DON'T BLESS OTHERS FROM OUR ABUNDANCE?

From the same passage of Scripture in Luke where Jesus discusses possessions, he tells a story about the rich fool. The ground produced him a very rich crop. He decided to tear down his small barn and to build bigger ones, and he said to himself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy, eat, drink and be merry" (Luke 12:19).

"God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:20-21).

Not rich toward God. The prophet Malachi tells us what that means:

"Return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?' "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How do we rob you?'

"In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me" (Mal. 3:7-9).

Not living rich toward God means not tithing.

Could it not be said this is what the millionaire in our story did? He robbed God by not giving to His loving servants— Grandma and Grandpa—with right motives. God seems to have said, “It is *enough*, today your soul will be required of you. Now, who will get what you have kept to yourself?”

The stranger had prospered in the worldly sense of the word at some time in his life, but he was not a blessed man. Fear, not faith, ruled his life. He hoarded his money and could not even part with a small portion to repay his gracious hosts for the food he ate from their table. It was obvious to him they could use it. And the car he feared to buy is what eventually took his life.

Did Grandma and Grandpa pass the test, or were they just unable to receive from this man as from the Lord? The King James Version of Luke 6:38 says that *men* will give to our bosom. Certainly, God uses other people to bless us. The Apostle Paul’s letter to Timothy answers this question,

Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.—1 Timothy 6:6-10

Is Our Abundance Blessed?

The money from the stranger would have been a *trap* for Grandma and Grandpa if they had accepted it. It was not blessed money from anyone wanting to bless them with it. The man was thinking only of himself. Leaving without reimbursing for gasoline and food proved that. Deuteronomy, Chapter 7, warns the people not to covet silver or

gold from the ungodly because they could be snared by it, “for it is an abomination to the Lord your God” (Deut. 7:25). *Abomination* in Hebrew means “morally disgusting; things which belong to the worship of idols.”^[61] The man loved and worshipped his money believing falsely it could buy *anything*.

Grandma and Grandpa chose against the snare of money and passed the test. Better still, they gave of themselves to those who were unable to return the favor. During the Depression years and every difficult year, Joyce’s grandmother had enough food for everyone who came to her door. This seemed unbelievable since her cabinets barely had anything in them. Like the manna, those who gathered little had enough—it stretched and multiplied. Grandma cherished the jelly she made and rationed it to her family. After it was destroyed in one of the fires, she resolved to never again withhold any food. She learned: when we come to an end of our own means, we will see the provision of the Almighty.

It is not by chance that manna and wealth are used in two sentences one after the other in Deuteronomy 8:16-18. The manna was to test us so it would go well with us in the end—when we gained wealth. Wealth is to be treated the same as we treated manna—not to be hoarded, lest it rot. Moses gave the instructions for manna, Jesus gives the instructions for wealth, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:19-21).

Furthermore, James, the disciple of Jesus, warns those living in the last days, against hoarding wealth and withholding it,

Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver

are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence.—James 5:1-5

Those who are rich toward God, who have placed their security and complete trust in Him alone, are those through whom He will do His work. A harvest of souls will be brought into the kingdom because they will be blessed beyond measure by the Almighty—El Shaddai.



My Story – How I Learned to Give



“Don’t spend those three dollars; keep it for the babysitter tonight,” Jim told me.

“Okay.” A friend was taking me to a women’s meeting the next morning and driving, so I didn’t need gasoline; I thought, *no problem*.

It was October 12, 1978, and our last payroll check had been spent. The last of our savings was gone, too. I totaled the bills: \$252.00! We had expected to have another job by now, but we didn’t. Jim and I prayed over the bills and gave them to the Lord.

The longer I looked at the bills, the more frightened I became. Jim was a picture of peace. Confused and desperate, I decided to take a shower. I didn’t know it would be with my own tears. *Fear* as I had never known enveloped me. I thought about the words of Jesus after he said not to worry about what we shall eat or drink or wear, “Seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt. 6:33). *But Really? How can this possibly be true for a time like this?*

After my shower, I put away the bills, got out my Bible, sat down, and turned to Ephesians 6. It read, “Wherefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

I said, “Lord, we have presented ourselves to you, no strings attached, and nothing has happened yet as we had expected. We’ve done all we know to do in order to obey you, and we will stand.” Immediately, peace flooded my soul. I thought: *this must be the peace that passes all*

understanding that the Bible talks about, (see Phil. 4:7). I began to see that Jesus and His Word truly are one and the same.

The next morning my friend came to pick me up. The meeting was like nothing I had ever attended. The speaker spoke about victory in all our trials and that we will have many Jordan Rivers to cross in our lifetime. At the conclusion, the attendees were asked to give an offering. Small envelopes were on the table for that gift. I thought about the three dollars in my purse and what Jim had said. Then, my thoughts wandered to the widow Jesus observed giving into the temple treasury:

“Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny” (Mark 12:41-42). Jesus told his disciples that she had put in more than all the others. “They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on” (Mark 12:43).

I wondered, *what happened to that poor widow who gave all she had? The Bible doesn't say*. So, without hesitating, I pulled out the three dollars and stuffed it in the envelope. After the meeting, I saw a hand, out of the corner of my eye, put something in my outside purse pocket.

Retreating to the car, heart beating wildly, I opened the envelope. There was \$11.00—a ten dollar bill plus one dollar for the tithe! I was overcome with the feeling I was in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene, who says that whoever believes in Him, streams of living water will flow from within him—a never-ending stream of joy (see John 7:38). I asked my friend if she had put that envelope in my purse. She had not.

Jim gave \$5.00 to our Bible study leaders (to God) that night, leaving \$5.00 for the babysitter and one dollar for us. After the meeting, our leader said, “It’s time we give our tithe to the Lord from the proceeds of these meetings. We do that by giving away one night’s offering.” Then he said it would go to us. We had not told him about our situation, but he said he would call us later with the amount. It was \$254.00—two dollars over our immediate needs we had written down

and taken to the Lord, and one dollar was the tithe returned to us. I thought, *in determining our needs, why hadn't we added in the tithe?*

November 14 came and we were still in Carthage. "You have made your way around this hill country long enough; now turn north" (Deut. 2:3). *But where, Lord? And how do we get across this Jordan?*

A couple verses kept haunting us: "... as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing... the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan..." (Josh. 3:15-17).

It became clear we could not keep our feet on the bank of the river if we were to reach the other side. We gave thirty-days-notice on our house; the neighbors rented it the next day. We got boxes and started packing and withdrew teacher's retirement to help with the move. The check arrived in one week, double the amount we expected. "But where are we going, Lord?"

"Northward," was the answer we received, and then this: "The Lord your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes" (Deut. 1:30). Next, from the Amplified Bible, He quickened Isaiah 40:4, "Every valley shall be lifted and filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked and uneven shall be made straight and level, and the rough places a plain." He would make our way straight— northward. December 13 arrived and we would be loading the moving truck the next day. We still did not know where *straight northward* was.



BEHIND THE SCENES



PART II: LESSONS IN THE WILDERNESS

Chapter 6: God Is Jehovah-Shalom [The LORD Is Peace]

Chapter 7: Because He Is Jehovah-Shalom, I Am Like A B-E-A-

R

My faith was tested beyond any thus far—Matt deployed to Iraq—for the second time. Also, during this year, Hank married Tara, and their daughter was born premature because of a severe case of preeclampsia—March 11, 2006. Kurt also underwent heart surgery that June.

Chapter 8: God Is Jehovah-Rohi [The LORD My Shepherd]

Chapter 9: Because He Is Jehovah-Rohi, I Am Guided

When doing research for this chapter, Jim asked me if God fires cannons to get our attention like the lighthouse attendant. I believe He is doing so with e-mailings put out by the prophets of our land. Will we hear?

Chapter 10: God Is El Shaddai [The All Sufficient One]

Chapter 11: Because He Is El Shaddai, I Am Blessed

Before writing this module and the next one, I asked the Lord what the main difference was between El Shaddai and Jehovah-Jireh since they both refer to God's provision. He answered that prayer by showing me.

*While writing, I bought a new makeup bottle—the kind that is inverted so the top sits on the counter. The old one was sputtering at its last squirt. I ran to town to buy a new one and put it on my make-up counter. The next morning, in trying to get the last drop, I kept squeezing it. **This continued for two more months—a total of 141 days.** It never ran out—until the very day I began the next chapters on Jehovah-Jireh.*

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God's answer to me was this: *El Shaddai's character is to provide our daily necessities as parents do for their children, whereas Jehovah-Jireh is the refining fire that refines our character.*

Just to make sure I was not misconstruing things, I kept track of two more bottles after this. The next one lasted 80 days, the following one 90 days. I apply make-up every day, including weekends, so my tests were consistent.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



I am so thankful and grateful to:

- God Most High, whose ways are always right and just, no matter how long we may have to wait for his promises to be fulfilled. He is always good, trustworthy and faithful.
- The women and men who gave me permission to share their stories—without them this book would not exist. Their transparency reflects their Lord Jesus Christ. (Persons with first names only are not their real names.)
- My Wednesday morning critique group and the support of Christian Writer’s Fellowship.
- Our eldest son, Kurt, my very capable editor, and his wife Davi and Joanna Gauthier who helped with editing. Thank you also to those who have completed this workbook and given their valuable final critique for this second edition.
- My husband, Jim, who supported me always, especially through my bad choices. Thank you for allowing me to share *Our Story*, from Vietnam to retirement, for believing in me for over forty-five years, and for your tried and true patience.
- Our family: former Army Captain Kurt, his wife Davi and son Hugo; our daughter Francy and her husband, Colonel

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Scott Mueller, and their three sons Riley, Cooper, and Brody; former Army Captain Matt Miesner and his wife Shelly, daughters Lydia and Gracie and son Henry; and son Hank and his wife Tara and their three daughters Morgyn, Emmy, and Adeline. Thank you for allowing me to share your stories and for your love, help, patience and support.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



MY HUSBAND JIM AND I have been married almost fifty years—from three weeks after his return from Vietnam. We have four children and nine grandchildren—all who love the Lord and follow Him. Although we have successful relationships within our military family now, that does not mean we have not had many trials. Within our immediate family, we have overcome about ten deployments. At

this writing, our daughter and her family are in S. Korea with the Army. God has been faithful to bring physical and spiritual healing. Our family has overcome, and we continue to fight the good fight of faith.

Ten years into our marriage, we learned that God had a plan and purpose for our life. In a time of extreme stress when we were hungry for a relationship with God, not religion, we decided to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. The Holy Spirit opened our eyes to see we were living in bondage—concerning debt and in our marriage. From there, He brought us out as we trusted Him with our money and possessions. He taught us lessons of faith when we found ourselves without a job for one year. We experienced God in an exciting journey with Jesus that gets more exciting every day.

Years later, I learned that our journey fell into a chronological pattern of God's character names—His powerful Hebrew names. God brought into my life about forty women whose stories also helped to explain each of God's names. *God Who Are You? And Who Am I?* was birthed over seven years out of those relationships in our city-wide Bible study group.

How to Contact Ann:

I love hearing from you! There is no greater joy for me than to learn how God is working in your life. If you are going through the FREE eCourse Bonus¹, you know you can always make comments on my blog site: www.godwhoareyou.org. You can also sign up for my eNewsletter; you can share your story at "Contact Us." Let your testimony encourage someone else. Your words are powerful! Nothing is too small or too short to share—that will help another.

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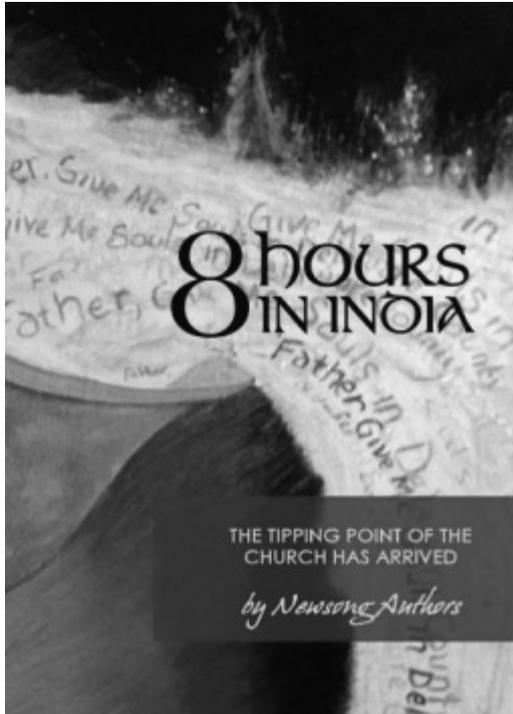
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tipping point is the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point. At that point, *change can happen very quickly*” (Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, First Back Bay, 2002, p.11-12).

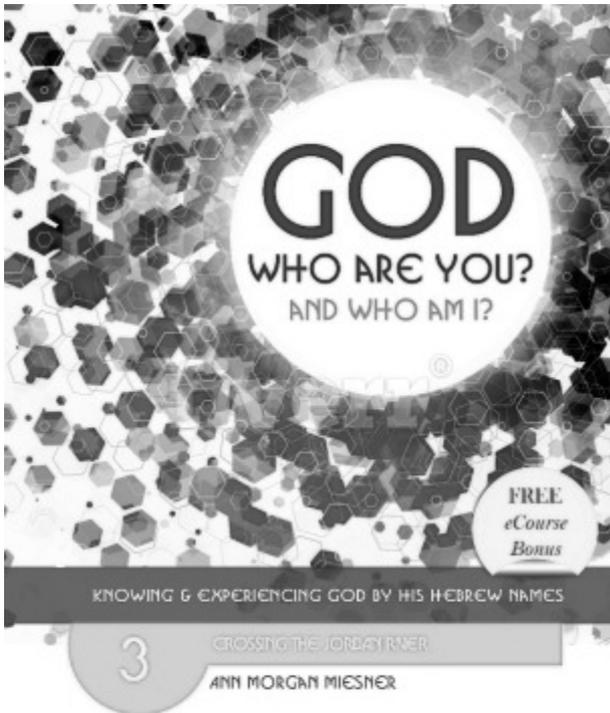
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“I CAME TO A POINT where something had to change. My heart was in need of God more than ever. I began having intimate conversations with God, asking God to help me understand Him, to

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know Him for who He really is. I was asking God, "Do I really know You?"

"I wasn't aware there was a book written by Ann Morgan Miesner, called *GOD Who Are You? AND Who Am I?* One day I met Ann in an amazing time of fellowship and prayer, and she handed me the book.

"I am forever grateful for the way God answered my prayer. I couldn't stop being in awe as I read and studied and began relating to each of God's names and how He worked personally in my life from the very beginning. The book has been a source of insight and inspiration, as well as part of the emotional healing God was taking me through, rebuilding my spirit and vision. I can sincerely say that it is the kind of devotional meant for every woman or man who are truly interested in a deeper understanding of who God is, His nature and heart. I was able to see that God truly hears my prayers and cares enough to have a personal walk with me!

"May this study bless and deepen your search and relationship with the Lord as you learn how magnificent our God is and how He reveals Himself through His Holy names."

--Lisa K., Oklahoma

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Chapter 13: Because God Is Jehovah-Jireh, I Am Free

Chapter 14: God Is Jehovah-Rapha [The Lord Is Healer]

Chapter 15: Because God Is Jehovah-Rapha, I Am Healed

Chapter 16: God Is El Elyon [The God Most High]

Chapter 17: Because God Is El Elyon, I Am Salt





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[1] Spiros Zodiates, Th.D., Executive Editor, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, (AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN 1990) p. 1785.

[2] Sierran Black Bears article from <http://www.nps.gov/seki/bearinfo.htm> (accessed October, 2005).

[3] Ibid.

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[6] See Genesis 1:3.

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[9] DICK MILLS, *The Word Daily Devotional* (Harrison House, Tulsa, OK, 1990), p. 320.

[10] See John 1:14.

[11] See Hebrews 11:1 Amplified.

[12] See Isaiah 57:19 KJV.

[13] There are over fifty Scriptures that tell us God is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

[14] Genesis 18:17 tells of the Lord confiding in his friend, Abraham, what He was about to do. See also Joel 2:28-29, “Your sons and your daughters will prophesy,

your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”

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[26] Baker, *Way of Shepherd*, “He Restores My Soul.”

[27] Ibid.

[28] Phillip Keller, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, (Harper-Collins Publishers, New York, 1970) p. 61.

[29] Ibid., p. 62.

[30] Ibid., p. 63-64.

[31] Ibid., p. 65.

[32] Baker, *Way of Shepherd*, “Even Though I Walk Through The Valley Of The Shadow Of Death . . .”

[33] This is the number who left Egypt. After 40 years, Bible commentaries estimate the total people to be about two million.

[34] http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/BMP/becoming_a_pilot.shtml (accessed April 18, 2006).

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] <http://www.atlanticpilotage.com/main/content/newsarticle03.htm> (accessed April 18, 2006).

[38] Ibid.

[39] Every Christian needs to learn to study and correctly handle the Word of Truth (see 2 Tim. 2:15). For the new student of the Bible, *Halley's Bible Handbook* is a must. It was the first Bible help published (1973) and has been a best seller since. Dr. Halley's goal was to help Christians to not only know about the Bible, but to get to

know the God of the Bible. Anne Graham Lotz teaches one of the best ways to read, study, and apply a passage of

Scripture in order to know what God is speaking to us personally. Her method is outlined in *The Vision of His Glory* workbook of the seven-session, video-driven study of the Book of Revelation—only one of her many studies available.

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[43] Laura Hyer, "Couple Becomes Family," *Fort Scott Tribune*, (November 15, 2002), p. 1-2.

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