

Fatherly Talks

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Johann Melchizedek Peter

Fatherly Talks 7

Devotional Series 7.01 to 7.24

Johann Melchizedek Peter

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PREFACE

In this series, we touch on praise and worship relating to the presence of God as we humble ourselves. In reaching out to God, there is a need to work out what God has worked into us. The process of this outworking can sometimes result in self-effort especially if we are not bringing forth what God has sown within. As we patiently humble ourselves allowing God to build into us, forming and making us His workmanship, in the fullness of time we can bring forth fruit which God has sown in us.

We can lay hold only upon that which Christ has laid hold of us (Philippians 3:12). Thus, learning balance, learning humility and staying in the position of praise and worship is the theme in series seven.

May God continue to bring His fullness of presence within you.

Johann Melchizedek Peter

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Fatherly Talk 7.01

A Balanced Life in Spirit, Soul and Body

Dearly Beloved

The history of Christianity has shown the extremes of belief systems. Before the Reformation, monks and saints tortured themselves hoping to 'earn' salvation. Some monks' garments were designed with rough material for the purpose of 'disciplining' the body to achieve spirituality. Martin Luther himself was said to have climbed the 'Sacred Steps' on his knees to relief his conscience when he heard a thunderous voice in his heart which declared that 'the just shall live by faith'.

On the other hand, we have swung in the opposite direction with modern Christianity emphasizing on wealth and health as a natural 'right' to all who walked with God. St Francis of Assisi counted it a privilege to be married to poverty, but modern Christianity espouses marriage to prosperity. Mystics have shunned society to seek spirituality, while modern Christians seek success in society. There are those who fast constantly and occasionally damage their own bodies in extreme fasting while others do not even see the necessity to fast, thinking Jesus has already done everything. Christians are so prone to extreme practices without consultation with God and the written word, without balance and skills in fasting or in celebration feasting.

What can we say to Christians who neglect the body in pursuit of spiritual dimensions, while others neglect the spiritual in pursuit of natural success? The correct answer is that we must have a balance of spirit, soul and body as it is God who created us as tripartite beings.

All three dimensions are to be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

In the Old Testament, there were seven feasts which incorporated both fasting and feasting. The Passover consisted of fasting from leaven bread, eating only unleavened bread during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (7-day feast from 15th day of 1st religious month) which immediately followed the Passover (14th day of 1st month). And on the morning after the 7th Sabbath (49 days), exactly on the 15th day, they celebrated the Feast of Pentecost. On the 1st day of the 7th month, the Feast of Trumpets celebrated the 1st of 10 days of Days of Awe where conversations revolved around blessings, atonement, forgiveness and striving to be a better person, culminating in the holiest day of the year, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The 15th day of the month was the Feast of Tabernacles. Within the six celebration feasts was the most holy day, observed by a solemn fast. God instituted both feasting and fasting into the Jewish feasts.

Besides the most important fast of Yom Kippur, the Jewish yearly calendar has periods of fasting:

- *Ta'anit Bechorim* (the Fast of the Firstborn observed by firstborn males), observed on the day before Passover.
- *Tzom Tammuz* (Fast of the 17th of Tammuz or Fast of the 4th Month), when Israel sinned in the wilderness through the golden calf which Moses smashed.
- *Tishah B'Av* (9th of Av or Fast of the 5th Month). Some fast on the 1st day of Av as well. 9th of Av is the 2nd most important fast in Judaism (after Yom Kippur) with some customs of eating a boiled egg sprinkled with ashes on the eve of the fast.

- *Tzom Gedaliah* (the fast right after Rosh Hashanah or fast of seventh month) commemorating the ending of life of Gedaliah by misguided zealots).
- *Asarah B'Tevet* (10th of Tevet or fast of the 10th month) commemorating the fall of Jerusalem. In the state of Israel this fast includes prayer recitals to unknown deceased.
- *Ta'anit Esther* (the fast of Esther on the day before Purim).

Judaism incorporates the practice of both feasting and fasting throughout their calendar year.

In the book of Acts, the early church practiced both feasting and fasting. It incorporated the Passover into a Christian feast celebration (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 5:8; 10:27). At the same time, they fast when they prayed over leaders and appointed them into ministry (Acts 14:23). Couples fast together to seek God (1 Corinthians 7:5). The apostle Paul spoke about fasting often (2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:27). The church of Antioch fasted regularly when they prayed and ministered to the Lord (Acts 13:2) and fasted again before sending Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. No one can deny that it is the will of God for the church to both learn to celebrate in feasting and rejoicing, and in fasting and prayers. Our Lord Jesus recognized that when He was physically present, the disciples feasted more often than they fasted, but in between this time of His First Coming and Second Coming, there is the necessity to seek Him in fasting and prayers (Luke 5:34-35). The conclusion is that all Christians must learn to fast and to rejoice and feast. Both have their place in the exercise of faith.

To those who are fasting and praying excessively, remember that fasting should be spiritually energized from the spirit and not just an outward religious performance. Paul spoke about the vain outward observation of refraining from meat or drink or false humility which

is seeking false merit from God like the proud Pharisee of a parable of Jesus (Colossians 2:16-18, 22; Luke 18:12). When fasting is performed in strife and arguments without true humility and repentance, it is completely unacceptable to God (Isaiah 58:3-5). However, when it is done with a true heart of humility, it is powerful and breaks bondages and yokes, bringing light and health, righteousness and glory (Isaiah 58:6-8).

When feasting is done excessively, it leads to licentiousness and gluttony ending in poverty (Proverbs 23:20-21). Those who constantly desire feasting and drinking and go from one feast to the next, their god is their belly and their end destruction (Philippians 3:19). A good son keeps the law, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father (Proverbs 28:7). The Cretans in Paul's time were ineffective spiritually because they were liars, evil brutes and gluttons (Titus 1:12). The kingdom of God is not just eating and drinking but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

The key to life in the kingdom of God is a balanced life with proportionate attention given to all three dimensions of spirit, soul and body. The primary portion is, of course, the spirit man and then to the development and maturing of the soul, without neglecting the physical discipline of the body for bodily exercise has some measure of profit, though little (1 Timothy 4:8). Spend most of your time in spiritual exercises, which include fasting and prayers. Then spend time every day training in the Word of God, meditating, contemplating and studying the Scriptures. Finally, spend some time taking care of the temple of the Holy Spirit, your physical body. Take good quality food, exercise your physical body, keep it clean and fit for the Lord Jesus to dwell within you.

Those who have never fasted, you should learn to fast as it helps you reach the optimum quantum of spiritual growth. To those who have

never learned to relax and just enjoy this created world that God has blessed us with (though not as perfect as it could have been without sin), it is still a place to repose, reflect and consider all the creation of God and His attributes (Romans 1:20). Even Jesus learned to have His customary places of prayer and waiting on the Lord. Finally, let your soul grow by studying the Scriptures and absorbing the principles of God's Word, which speaks about all laws of spirit, all laws of soul and all laws of the natural world. God created humans to function well and have perfect health in all three worlds; the spiritual world, the world of soul thought and emotions and the physical world around us. Be balanced, be fully spirit, renewed in soul, and healthy in body. His power and strength be upon each of you, spirit, soul and body.

Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.02

The Secret to Fasting

Dearly Beloved

When most devout people fast and pray, they do not understand the essence or fundamentals of fasting. The general population always view fasting as a method to receive something from God. This indeed occurs and the Bible records many incidents of the Israelites fasting in times of trouble and receiving their answers. It is even enshrined into their temple worship, that each time things are not working out for them (heavens shut, no rain or blessing, suffering from locusts or destruction, or suffering from pestilences, famines or sicknesses) that they should fast and pray (the word 'humble' implies fasting), turn from their wicked ways, then God will hear them and heal them (2 Chronicles 7:14). This is called the desperado approach to God. When in trouble, then seek God desperately.

Although God did give them a desperado approach, this is NOT a method that gets the results and answers an individual want. David repented, fasted and prayed for seven days for the life of his child through Bathsheba, and the child still died (2 Samuel 12:15-23). During the numbering of Israel after judgment was pronounced, David fasted and prayed with all the elders of Israel, but the judgment of God on Israel still fell for three days slaying seventy thousand men (2 Samuel 24:15). In the New Testament, the Jews held regular fasts but never received any blessings or breakthroughs because their hearts were not right in the sight of God (Matthew 6:16; 9:14; Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33; 18:12). God rejects the fasting of unrighteous people whose hearts are not right in the sight of God and whose actions and intentions are evil (Isaiah 58:3-4).

On the other hand, God demonstrates great breakthroughs to those who understood how to fast correctly and blesses those who sincerely and with all their hearts seek the Lord in many ways. Moses fasted for the Israelites including Aaron whom God wanted to kill, and he received answers from God (Deuteronomy 9:18-29). Without his intercession and fasting, Aaron and all of Israel would have been destroyed leaving only Moses, Joshua, Caleb and their families. Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, with all the Israelites, fasted and prayed and saw the Lord's hand helping them (Ezra 8:21-23; Nehemiah 1:4; Esther 4:3, 16). Jehoshaphat saw the Lord's great deliverance through fasting and prayers (2 Chronicles 20:3). Daniel saw angels accelerated by God through his fasting and prayer, receiving both blessings, deliverances and revelations (Daniel 1:8-17; 6:18; 9:3, 21). Even the fasting of a normally evil man like Ahab garnered God's attention (1 Kings 21:27-28). Cornelius through regular fasting and alms established a memorial before God (Acts 10:2-4, 30-31). It was a practice for devout people who loved God to serve God with fasting and prayers (Luke 2:37; 5:35; Acts 13:1-3; 2 Corinthians 6:5).

If the Bible contains stories of the ineffectiveness of fasting and at the same time the great effectiveness of fasting, there must be a proper way to fast and an improper way to fast. Jesus Himself condemned the fasting of the Pharisees (Matthew 6:16). The question is 'Are you fasting like a Pharisee?' or 'Are you truly fasting like the true Bible men and women of God?' Most Christians who resort to fasting and prayers or who have regular times of fasting and prayer have no idea how to make their fasting effective. Most don't even know there are various types of fast such as fasting without meats, full fasting, long fasts, short fasts, etc. Fasting is seldom taught in the modern church because most leaders no longer practice fasting although the New Testament church and even our Lord Jesus Himself advocates fasting (Matthew 6: 17-18; 9:15; 17:21; Mark 2:20; 9:29; Luke 5:35; Acts 13:2-3;

14:23; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:27). Their false view that since our Lord Jesus has completed everything there is to do in the atonement relieve us from the practice of fasting is just an excuse of theologising their way out of a discipline devout Christian life. The apostle Paul has never advocated that the message of the complete and utter atonement of Jesus for us produce a life of feasting without fasting, of laziness without discipline or of mental Christianity without physical corresponding actions of faith in the practice of true Christianity.

Then what is the secret of true fasting? The secret is in three parts: fasting essentially is a surrender to God and to God's Will; fasting is the forsaking of all distractions (and many voices of the world) to truly and only hear the voice of God; and then finally, fasting is to receive from God whatever He determines for us to receive in our seeking of Him.

The first part involves a complete surrender of our heart, our lives, our motives. All our selfishness and selfish ways must die in order to achieve this surrender. This involves humbling ourselves before God and repentance and acknowledgement of sin where God's Holy Spirit is convicting us of sin. Sometimes it involves recompense to others for sins that rob others or a request of forgiveness where we have hurt others. Daniel fasted and repented for all the sins of Israel in a personal sense (he uses the phrase 'we') and received a breakthrough and blessing from God (Daniel 9:3-5). David speaks of repentance and humbling of the soul through fasting (Psalm 69:10). Sometimes, once in their lives, an evil man like Ahab sincerely regrets what he did and seeks God's forgiveness and God hears (1 Kings 21:27). Those who fast in pride like the Pharisees in their hypocrisy are merely just going on a diet and have no spiritual effect in their regular fasting. In order to tap on these first secret to fasting, ask yourself the following

questions: Are you truly humbling yourselves in fasting or just trying to get your own way? Are you seeking your own will or are you truly seeking God's Will? Are you filled with humility, repentance and forgiveness or are you filled with pride?

Only when you have truly surrendered your heart, your desires, your motivations, and all your will to God, dying to self, have you truly begun to enter into the true correct place of serving God with fasting and prayers.

The second part secret of fasting is to shut yourselves out from hearing all the voices of the world and truly only hear God. For this reason, fasting is always accompanied by prayers or spending time with God. We can do this spiritually even though sometimes our natural lives are busy. There is a quietness of the heart and spirit when one truly fasts and pray. Eating for survival is essentially a distraction that came about after the fall and sin of man. Mankind never needed to eat to live, we eat for pleasure and impartations and not for survival before sin came into the world. This will be restored perfectly when the kingdom of God is established on the earth and all things are brought under the domain of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fasting is essentially seeking to hear God. To do that, one has to take time out from the 'busyness' of this world and of our daily lives, in order to give time to God. Although it is with a purpose to hear God, this second reason CANNOT become the first. For it is impossible to truly hear God without FIRST being surrendered a thousand percent to God. Only after the FIRST part of surrendering our heart and lives to God is achieved, then one can seek to hear God. Those like Anna and Simeon practiced a life of fasting and prayers. Thus, they were blessed with the ability and the accuracy of hearing God and being at the right time and the right place (Luke 2:25-38). Cornelius was not fasting and giving alms in order to hear God, he was doing it as a part of his daily

routine and life, because of his love and devotion towards God, whom he has yet to know (Acts 10:2, 22, 31). He must have been greatly surprised when God sent an angel to speak with him. The church in Antioch were not fasting primarily to hear God. They were fasting out of their love, devotion and worship of God. They ministered to the Lord and fasted and prayed (Acts 13:1-3). They must have been pleasantly surprised when the Holy Spirit chose to speak to them during one of such times.

We should never try to get God to speak to you. Just enjoy His presence and enjoy being with Him, spending quality time to love Him and surrender to Him, as all His creation should. And at God's own time and choosing, let Him speak to you and your heart.

The final and third secret of fasting is to be open to receive whatever God wants you to receive. Although this part seems easy, it requires an openness to God. Most people limit God in their thoughts, minds and hearts. Thus, God cannot reveal to them more than their faith can receive. Those who seek God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him diligently (Hebrews 11:6). Let us NOT be like Zechariah who could NOT believe when God finally wanted to answer his prayers, thus being struck dumb for nine months (Luke 1:20). Rather let us BE like Mary who said to the Lord, 'Let it be unto me according to YOUR WORD!' (Luke 1:38). She FIRST SURRENDERED herself to the Lord – Behold the maidservant of the Lord! This is like saying, 'Here I am! Send me.' (Isaiah 6:8) or like saying 'Speak, Lord, for YOUR servant hears You' (I Samuel 3:8-10). Mary SURRENDERED to the Lord utterly and wholly FIRST. Then she YIELDED to GOD'S WILL and GOD'S WORD. Her cry of 'Let it be unto me according to YOUR WORD' must become the cry of the Bride of Christ today. It is the same cry of our Lord Jesus, when He became our Bridegroom, crying out three times with much agony

'Not My Will, but YOURS BE DONE!' (Luke 22:42). To those who believe, there is no limit to what God can do, will do and especially anointed to do. To the tiny faith of believing a word of knowledge, God blessed Nathaniel with seeing angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man (John 1:49-50). To those who love God and wait upon Him, God promises to give those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor enter into the heart of man, the things which He has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:8-9). God will always ACT for those who wait upon Him in fasting and prayers (Isaiah 64:4).

Seek God constantly and regularly in fasting and prayers, as our Lord Jesus requires us to do, during the time between His First Coming and His Second Coming (Matthew 9:15; Mark 2:20; Luke 5:35). Always first SURRENDER all our hearts, minds and lives to the WILL OF GOD. Secondly, BE STILL and KNOW GOD. Just BE IN HIS PRESENCE. Just ENJOY HIS PRESENCE. BE in UNION with the PERSON OF GOD. Then let God speak into your heart and life. Thirdly, BE OPEN to ANYTHING and EVERYTHING that God has for us. We are His Creation. Whatever free choice we have, is best fulfilled and achieved in BEING and DOING whatever He has made us to be. We CANNOT become what we were NOT created to be. We can ONLY BECOME ALL that HE WANTS us and CREATED us to be, nothing more and nothing less. And our greatest joy and enjoyment in being, in existing and in the exercise of free choice and pleasure will reach its highest level, for we exist in Him. He is the I AM, we are the EXISTENCE in the I AM.

Fatherly Talk 7.03

The Secret to Answered Prayers

Dearly Beloved

Every Christian has prayed countless prayers but not every prayer has been answered. Sometimes we pray for the wrong things, and it is the mercy of God that He did not answer (His answer was 'No'). Instead, He changes our hearts and attitude to understand our own sinful imperfect nature that needs to grow (James 3:3). At other times, we pray and God does answer but He does not answer exactly according to what we ask. He answers the intention of our requests using His own method and at a timing of His perfection and not ours. Then there are the times when He answers according to what we prayed and gives abundantly above what we asked and prayed. As we mature from being spiritual babies to spiritual fatherhood (and motherhood), we learn to pray more successfully and effectively as we understand and know the mind of God. The question is whether it is possible to learn the mind of God so thoroughly that we know exactly how and when to pray, and become like our Lord Jesus, having 100 percent success in all our prayers? Obviously, if Jesus can pray successfully, so can we. Which begat the second question, how and in what manner can we pray effectively? Through the years of walking closely with God, I have come to understand that there are principles that could help every Christian pray successfully and have the same results as our Lord Jesus did.

The Bible is filled with men and women of God who prayed successfully; Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Elijah, Elisha, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, Isaiah, Peter, Paul, etc. The hallmark of each of them was their close walk with God and their ability to bring their

walk with God to effect and change circumstances around them. The power of prayer shows forth that men and women of destiny can change all circumstances around them. Rather than being victims of fate and circumstances, these reach into the heights of God and change things around them. All these men and women know that not all things are to be changed but they do discern what can be changed and successfully changed them. We need the same wisdom to know which circumstances are to remain untouched as destiny flows through them, and which must and can be changed to conform to God's direction and special predestination.

The first and foremost area before one prays is to discern the wisdom and the will of God concerning the matter at hand. If it lies within the flow of God's Will, then it must remain untouched even if suffering is involved. If it contradicts the flow of God's Will, then it is important that a man or woman of God be present to change the tide of events. Discerning the Will of God is the first thing that must be done before any prayer is made. Those who pray alongside God's Will will always have all their prayers answered.

When God asked Solomon what he wanted, he asked for wisdom to govern God's people and God granted his request and bless him with other things which he did not ask for (2 Chronicles 1:7-12). God is unlimited in resources and He is more than willing to answer our requests, as long as we do not break His commandments and pray alongside His perfect Will for our lives. God told David that he should not have sinned against Him. If David had lacked anything else in all that God had already given him, he had to ask and God would have given him much more! (2 Samuel 12:8). God is so invested in His perfect Will that He would shower abundant blessings and grace beyond our understanding if we seek and pursue, ask and pray in accordance to His perfect Will. The reason why God answered Moses

when He asked for mercy for the Israelites, who through their disobedience nearly destroyed themselves, was because it was the perfect Will of God that His people enter into the land of Canaan (Deuteronomy 9:19-20, 25-30). Moses invoked on the covenant that God had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Deuteronomy 9:27-29). When Jehoshaphat was surrounded by the Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites, he fasted, prayed and reminded God of His covenant with Abraham, God's friend forever (2 Chronicles 20:7).

In order to pray along with God's perfect Will, we also need to pray according to understanding the nature and attributes of God. God will not answer a prayer made that is against His very nature and being. When the prayer glorifies God and His Son, Jesus, we can ask whatever we want in all areas and God will do it (John 14:13-14).

When His Word abides in us, transforming and changing us to know and understand God's nature, we can ask whatever we desire and it will be done for us (John 15:7). The epistle of James spoke of not receiving because of wrong desires and lusts, implying that right desires and benevolent love will bring answers to prayers (James 4:1-6). He commended all who seek God to pray righteously for the prayers of a righteous man avails much (James 5:16). Jesus Himself encouraged us to ask from the Father that our joy may be full (John 16:23-24).

The second key lesson to learn in effective prayer that brings results and answers from God, is persistent and constant prayer with faith unwavering. Most people give up too easily when they do not see the immediate answers to their prayers. If truly what is prayed for is in line with God's Will and vitally important to the individual or to the whole community, wouldn't it make sense that one should pray until one prevails? Only when one cannot live without the answer to a prayer that is completely in line with God's Will, then only will one

be willing to pray non-stop until the object of prayer is answered. Our Lord Jesus Himself commended persistent prayer (Luke 18:1-8).

Elijah demonstrated persistent prayer when he prayed for the rain to start again after a drought of three years and six months (1 Kings 18:41-44) James credited that Elijah had also prayed persistently for the rain to stop, so he was involved in a tremendous amount of prayers both to stop and to start the rain (James 5:16-18). He was not just a prophet. He was a man powerful in persistent and consistent prayer. Moses prayed for forty days and forty nights for God to forgive Israel's transgressions, a sin which would have wiped out the whole nation including his brother Aaron (Deuteronomy 9:25-29).

Many times, God answers prayers in His own time and by His own way, many humans would have given up, except those who persistently believe and never give up. Abraham was promised a child of his own when he was in his seventies but the answer only came when he was ninety-nine years of age (Genesis 15:2-6; 17:1, 21). At other times, a good person might pray and forgotten about the prayers but God still remembers.

The archangel Gabriel told Zechariah that God had heard his prayers for a child (Luke 1:13). The apostle Paul persistently desired to go to Rome to preach the gospel. He indicated his desire in the epistle to the Romans, saying that he would like to visit them on his way to Spain (Romans 15:24, 25). He never got to Spain until he had suffered imprisonment in Jerusalem and was taken in a ship as a prisoner for trial in Rome (Acts 27:1). This would not have resulted if he had not persistently and consistently asked to be tried in Rome throughout his trials (Acts 25:10-12, 21; 26: 32). When he finally ended in Rome, he was free to minister to the Christians there (Acts 28:16, 30-31). Paul did not expect that his desire and prayers to go to Rome would have taken so many years and also in a method (imprisonment) which he

had never planned. Nevertheless, the prayers and desire of Paul to go to Rome was answered and fulfilled.

We must never give up on prayers that are perfectly in line with God's Will, especially if our destinies are dependent on a positive answer from God. Our minds must be open to God doing it in His time and by His own method of choice. We are to rest on the fact that having done all, we just stand in faith and allow God to show His might and power (Philippians 4:6-7; Ephesians 6:18).

The third principle in successful prayers is to bring one main area of prayer at a time. We all have many prayers but it is important to concentrate on praying the biggest burden first. We can pray for many different items throughout the many months and years but we only pray and concentrate on one item at a time. Each item must be prayed 'through' before beginning another item. Since some prayers might take years to manifest, the key is to pray until victory and joy each time the prayer item comes as a burden to us. Such burdens are called 'prayer burdens'. We can only pray through them one at a time.

Paul spoke of the daily concern and burdens he carried for the church (2 Corinthians 11:28). There is no doubt that he prayed through each of them as he recorded this in his epistles to every church. To the Ephesians, he said he never ceased to give thanks and make mention of them in prayers (Ephesians 1:15-16). To the Philippians, he thanked God for every remembrance of them and always in every prayer made request for them (Philippians 1:3-4). To the Galatians, he travailed and agonized for them like a mother giving birth (Galatians 4:19). For the Colossians, Paul prayed always for them that they be filled with the knowledge of His Will (Colossians 1:9). He exhorted them to continue earnestly in prayers for God to open a door (Colossians 4:2-4). To the Romans, he spoke about a groaning and travailing in prayers (Romans 8:23).

Prayers are a fulltime work and Epaphras was a man of prayers and laboured fervently in intercessions (Colossians 4:12). The apostles indicated that they needed to prioritize their work in the Word and prayers above that of helping and serving the widows (Acts 6:2-4). This did not diminish the ministry to widows and to the poor but it declared that the ministry of the Word and of prayers must NOT be affected or interrupted by any other ministry, whether it be good works, or charitable works. Take away prayers and all our works are suddenly without the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit. It takes continual, consistent and persistent prayers to release the true spiritual works of life and of God. The ministry of prayers must be prioritized above all other ministries for it is in prayers and fasting that we build a flow of God's anointing upon every thing that we do.

Those who short circuit their need for prayers and simply do good works will find that good works alone are insufficient to bring about true revival. True revival learns the art of complete and total dedication to the Lord in prayers and in fasting. A great number of breakthroughs in the Bible came from men and nations coming together in prayers over just one major item that is important to the nation; whether it be deliverance of the nation, a pleading of mercy to cover sin or a need for souls. Under Jehoshaphat, the whole nation prayed for one main item - deliverance from the hand of their enemies surrounding them (2 Chronicles 20:2-4). David fasted for seven days for his first child's life from Bathsheba. Though he failed, God blessed the second child that came through Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:16-18, 24). David learned to pray for one thing at a time and gave himself to do so for seven days. His lack of success was rewarded by God in his second child through Bathsheba. No prayers will go wasted. All the energies released humbly and sincerely will become clouds that bring showers of blessing. Our Lord Jesus said the same prayers three times in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:38, 42-44; Luke 22:44). Throughout His

life, Jesus must have prayed hundreds, possibly thousands and millions of prayers, but He always prayed with full concentration on the one item that burdened Him, until He has prayed through.

All prayer burdens come from the Lord. They come from the Holy Spirit who prays through us. When we realize that no human can successfully pray by themselves and acknowledge that it is indeed the Holy Spirit praying through us that brought answers, we would spend less time on our own fleshly energy and more time yielding to the energizing of the Holy Spirit within us. It is indeed only the Holy Spirit who can pray and intercede through us for we know not what to pray as we ought, only the Holy Spirit knows exactly what to pray for (Romans 8:26-27). Prevailing prayers are born of the Spirit and not of the will of man or of the flesh. What is born of the Spirit is spirit, what is born of the flesh is flesh. Only when we enter the true rest of the Spirit can we become mighty in the exploits of God in the Spirit. We must cease from our own works and let the Holy Spirit in us and through us do the mighty works of God (Hebrews 4:10). When we learn to pray one item at a time, carrying one prayer burden at a time, we learn to pray with all the unity of the spirit, soul and body yielding to the perfect prayers that the Holy Spirit prays through us. Such full concentration of 100 percent of the energies of our spirit, soul and body can only be achieved when we carry one burden of prayer at a time. When we build a brick house, we build it one brick at a time and not try to carry all the bricks at the same time. For when we do, there are no hands left to properly link one brick at a time to its placement in the house, nor any hands to take the cement to join one brick to the next brick.

In conclusion, the secret to successful prayers that brings answers from God are:

1. Always only pray things that are part of the perfect Will of God.
2. Never give up or give in to doubts but be persistent and consistent no matter how long it takes to pray through.
3. Concentrate on praying one item at a time.

In doing the above, one will enter into the dimension of seeing mighty breakthroughs in answered prayers. There is nothing sweeter than to have God answer prayers that have been released to His Throne Room. His loving kindness is indeed better than life. Enter into the fullness of joy of answered prayers (John 16:24).

Fatherly Talk 7.04

The Secret to a Joyful Happy Life

Dearly Beloved

Joy and happiness are something which everyone wants to have, yet it is not something every body has. Why is the pursuit of joy and happiness so elusive for many? Why can't people be happy with their lives? Everyone has an internal picture of what they must have, where they will be or what they will be doing to be happy and joyful. When things do not line up to this picture or when the direction they are moving forwards is not towards this internal picture, there is a major disruption to the joy and peace that they could have experienced. This internal picture of what constitutes joy and happiness is ever changing as a person grows up into adulthood and even when reaching adulthood. It keeps changing as one's desire and aspirations of what is possible increases to higher heights.

Who made this internal picture? Why is there a need to even be an internal picture of what would make one happy and joyful? Unfortunately, this internal picture can be produced by outward circumstances:

- Inspirations of unrealized parental dreams
- Jealousy of what others have which is absent from one's own life
- Unfulfilled desires and dreams of one's imagination fired by readings
- Knowledge or dreams from historical indulgences or futuristic hopes.

It is time to examine this picture. Is this internal picture produced by all our hopes, dreams and aspiration from God, from the enemy or from environment around us? The distractions of the seed that is sown among thorns are hopes, pleasures and desires for the things of this life that can rob one of joy and happiness; and worse, even one's destiny in God. The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things choke the word of God and the word of life from us (Mark 4:18). We are warned not to be tempted by the desires for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). Our Lord Jesus Himself was tempted by the devil with all the kingdoms of the world and their glory (Matthew 4:8, 9). Abraham was tempted by the king of Sodom but refused even a shoe lace or a thread, lest the enemy boasts that they had made Abraham rich (Genesis 14:23). James told the rich not to focus on their gold and silver which are corroded but to live their lives righteous before God (James 5:1-5). Our Lord Jesus told us not to lay up treasures on earth but to lay up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). The apostle Paul exhorted us not to be conformed to the world but to be renewed by the renewal of our mind (Romans 12:2).

The first and simple key to joy and happiness is to be freed from the desires for all the things of this world and this life. Anyone still relying on anything on earth or anything in this life for their joy and happiness will constantly be faced with all the cares of life and things which accompany worldly possessions. Any happiness obtained by the acquirement of worldly goods, positions or pleasures will be temporal and never truly satisfying. There is nothing wrong to have appropriate goals and accountability to live on this earth with all of God's blessings. Just never ever have your joy and happiness dependent on anything that is visible. Let it be always and directly from the invisible realm, from the heavens above, from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many will struggle to let go of everything in this life, just like the rich young man struggled to leave everything behind to become a disciple of our Lord Jesus. In the end, he had too much investments in this physical world to let it go, and went sadly away (Mark 10:22). He lived on for earthly years but must have died a sad man. What a wasted life? What a lost opportunity to exchange all that he had for the greatest pearl of life, our Lord Jesus? Just as we have been crucified with Christ, we must also be crucified to the world. The apostle Paul brought up with the best education and with the greatest opportunity more than most people to become rich, prosperous and powerful gave everything up to pursue the knowledge of Christ (Philippians 3:7). He counted all that he had as rubbish compared to the gaining of Christ (Philippians 3:8). He also said that as far as he was concerned, the world has been crucified to him (Galatians 6:14). Indeed, those in Christ must have crucified the flesh with its passions and its desires (Galatians 2:20; 5:24). When we give up something we pursue, we need to replace it with something else. We need to replace our zeal and desire for the things of this life with the zeal and desire for the kingdom of God. In seeking the kingdom of God FIRST, we will gain all things that we every need in this life to live out our destiny (Matthew 6:33). After giving up all of the visible things of this life, we need to replace our internal picture of happiness and joy with a better picture. It is a picture of the glorified Christ in all His splendour and love.

I have found that it is not possible to have this new picture of Christ in our hearts until we are deeply touched by the greatness of Christ's love for us personally and also by deeply falling in love with Christ. Like the woman who washed Jesus feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair, or like the woman who poured forth the best perfume on our Lord Jesus, we need to be deeply affected, touched, moved, changed, transformed by the greatness of Christ's love for us.

Our Lord Jesus declared that “she loved much!” (Luke 7:47). And on the perfume, He said that wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what the woman had done shall be told as a memorial to her (Matthew 26:13). Why this memorial? What is the story? It is a story of deep, sacrificial, unrestrained love for our Lord Jesus demonstrated by these women. Can our Lord Jesus declare of us, His modern disciples, that we “loved much?” This is very rare amongst humans who loved God that God even prepares something special for those who love Him back (1 Corinthians 2:9). What is the greatest gift that we can give back to our Lord Jesus and to the Father, who has given us the best of the best? Nothing in heaven or on earth could compare with what God has done for us in His love. The greatest gift that we can give back to God, freely of our own choice and will, is an undivided passionate, deep, unwavering first love towards our Father God and our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to love Him so deeply, we need to appreciate how deeply and unconditionally He has loved us; for we love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:9-11). Read the gospel stories over and over again. Can you see how much He loved us? Can you feel the depths of His love? Are you not touched by His sufferings for our sin? Are you not moved by His sacrifice on the cross for us? Allow yourself to be touched, moved, affected and finally transformed by the revelation of the greatness and depth of His love. And then you will find that same love to give back to our Creator, our Redeemer, our Saviour. When we are deeply and passionately in love with our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father God, He will be everything that makes us happy and joyful!

The second most important key to the fullness of joy and happiness is to be deeply and passionately in love with our Father God and our Lord Jesus Christ. When we are in love with God, He will be the first thought every morning and our last thought at night. Nothing can touch nor destroy this joy and happiness for it is founded and

built upon the invisible and the unmoveable. He will become the centre of the revolution of our life. He will be in our heart, in our emotions, in our thoughts, in our goals, in our desire day and night. Oh, to be in such a place would be the happiest, the most joyful moment of life! Do not let your love for God become cold because of lawlessness which abounds around you (Matthew 24:12). Rather be daily renewed and transformed by the fresh love of God every day. God's love is new every morning, fresh every day. God's love and compassions fail not, they are new every morning, great is His faithfulness every day (Lamentations 3:22, 23).

By making Jesus the centre of our lives and the source of our joy and happiness, our joy and happiness becomes more steadfast and more constant than the sun that rises every morning. For everything around us will be shaken until that which cannot be shaken remains (Hebrews 12:27). The only constant we have in our lives is the love of God for us and our love towards Him. Yes, indeed, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37). And you don't have to be persuaded by me, rather be persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39). And the side effect of this daily source of joy and happiness is that ALL things will work together for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). Let us give God the best gift, the one thing He cannot force upon us, the free will love for God, the first love towards God, the gift of our heartfelt love to God. This love we return towards Him is so precious, pure and holy that He chooses to bring us into a place of special specials, that which no ear has heard, nor eye seen, nor enter into the heart of man (1 Corinthians 2:9).

The third important key to joy and happiness is to be connected with the real joy and happiness of and from our Lord Jesus Himself.

We are not just to have our own joy and happiness. We are to have the actual ever flowing joy and happiness of the Resurrected Christ who has finished all His redemption work for us. It is not just our joy. It is His Joy! Can you feel the heart of our Lord Jesus? Can you feel His emotions of such peace, such joy and such love that no words can be expressed, but only to be experienced? Our Lord Jesus said that His Joy will REMAIN IN US and OUR JOY will be FULL (John 15:11). It is His Joy and not just our own joy. Many people forget that the expression 'the joy of the Lord is our strength' emphasizes on the JOY OF THE LORD and not our own joy (Nehemiah 8:10). It is not just an exhortation to rejoice but it is an exhortation to HAVE the JOY OF the Lord! And our Lord Jesus also said that NO ONE will take the joy that He gave us (John 16:22). This is indeed the joy and happiness that is permanent, eternal and everlasting. Heaven and earth may change but this joy and happiness will NEVER change for it is HIS JOY in us forever more.

Moreover, in the presence of God is FULLNESS OF JOY (Psalm 16:11). This verse is tied to the path of life which He will show us. The path that God wants His people to walk in, to travel in while sojourning on the earth, is a path filled with His presence which is His FULLNESS OF JOY. We are to have this joy right here and now for the same presence of God is released in the redemption of Christ in His kingdom. For the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and JOY (Romans 14:17). When this life is over, we enter into His throne and into the new heavens and new earth. It will be even more exponential joy for each of us, for He will say to us who are faithful, ENTER INTO THE JOY OF THE LORD (Matthew 25:21, 23). We will be presented faultless, before the presence of His glory with EXCEEDING JOY (Jude 24). Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.05

Good Daily Habits

Dearly Beloved

Jesus had a good habit of spending time with the Father God in the early hours of the morning and also many nights of all-night prayers with God in the mountains (Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 6:12; John 6:15; Hebrews 5:7). Jesus lived a life of prayer. Devout people develop habits of prayers which please God and bring great blessings. Even those who have not fully known God yet, like Cornelius brought forth blessings upon himself and his very large family (Acts 10:1-4, 44-45). It is a promise of God that those who seek Him must believe that He exists and that He is a REWARDER of those who seek Him DILIGENTLY (Hebrews 11:6). Physical habits of prayers come from mental habits of thought. A disciplined life comes from a disciplined mind. The place to create good habits starts with examining habits of thoughts.

The true battle field everyday as we live as heavenly people in a sinful earthly world, is to keep our mind and thoughts pure in the sight of God. Paul acknowledged this mental place of warfare between God and the devil (2 Corinthians 10:3-6). We are to bring ALL our thoughts to the obedience of Christ! Physical habits flow naturally when we have a good mental habit of thoughts and it becomes the mental fortress that guards our hearts and minds every day through God's Word flowing into our hearts and minds (Hebrews 8:10; 10:16). It is not just pure mental energy but it is yielding to the mind of Christ within us. We do have the mind of Christ given to us when we were born again (1 Corinthians 2:16). Be renewed by the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which is according to God's nature,

having been created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:22, 23 LKJV translation). The spiritual mind within us can dominate the soul mind every morning when we get up. There are good habits which we can develop. But first develop good mental habits every day when you get up.

There are three daily mental habits which we must develop in order to live heavenly lives while on earth. They are simple: look upwards, look inwards then look outwards. Most people when they get up in the morning or before they sleep late at night, consider the things of this life immediately. That is completely wrong and a bad mental habit that must be broken.

The first thing to do every morning when you wake up is to mentally begin to look into the heavens and see our Lord Jesus seated on the Throne at the Right Hand of God. Visualise if you can't see this. It is important to start the day seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-6). It is in the heavenly places that all the spiritual blessings have been given in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). We all know that every day when God is our Shepherd, we will see the goodness and mercy of our Lord (Psalm 23:6). The goodness and mercy of God that follows us every day in our lives are conditioned upon us seeing and knowing the Lord as our Shepherd, where His rod and His staff comfort us. King David spoke of seeing the Lord always before his face (Acts 2:25; Psalm 16:8). Humans have lost the ability to see God every day due to sin. In restoring us, our Lord Jesus enables us to see God every day in the eyes of our heart (2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 4:6). Let the eyes of your heart and the eyes of your mind look up and see God every morning as the first mental habit when you wake up (and when you sleep). It is a command and admonishment for us to every day set our mind on things above and not on things of the earth (Colossians 3:1-2).

As clearly as you can, see our Lord Jesus at the Right Hand of God, form that image in your heart and mind strongly in your imagination and hold it as long as you can as your first conscious thought every morning (and every night). After much training, this will be your default conscious thought when you wake up in the morning or when you sleep at night. All things in this life are to be directed from heaven. We are not to DO the works of God but to WALK in the works that God has prepared for us (Ephesians 2:10). The things that you are to do every day, were created and prepared by God for you to fulfil them by flowing into them. They have been created or shall be created. This natural earthly life is to bring forth that which is created in the spiritual by God. Thus, you must tap upon the Source of all creative power, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ, Almighty God and Creator of all life, the Word by which all things which are made were made (John 1:1-3). Enjoy this experience of looking upwards to where Christ is seated on the Throne. Bask in that divine light and presence, let it fill you, envelope you, surround you and embrace you. It is greater than the morning sun that shines outside your window. Let this consciousness of Jesus seated on the Throne fill your heart and mind. Let Him be the focus of all your thoughts, worship and singing. After much practice, this vision will be very easy to recall 24 hours any time any day.

Secondly, after you have enjoyed being at the Throne Room for minutes or for hours, with the light still shining upon you, begin to look within you. Can you see the same light reflected upon your inside? Can you see that same image formed on your inside, in your spirit and in your soul? Let the fullness of that image WITHIN you also begin to shine out through you (2 Corinthians 3:18). Christ is being formed within us every day until we are exactly like Him, this is our predestination (Romans 8:29-30). Christ is living within us (Ephesians 3:17). Now begin to feel all of that energy of Christ within

you flowing through every single part of your body. Like a wave within you, like a whirlwind within you, like a flowing fountain of life within you, this energy of Christ within you pumps into your blood vessels and every cell within your body. Christ within you, the hope of glory shines brighter than the sun within you (Colossians 1:27). Your spirit is alive with the Holy Spirit and with Christ within you. You are more powerful than a nuclear power station for all the energy of the Creator, the *Logos*, is within you. Meditate on this as you look inside you, inside your spirit, where Christ dwells within you, the temple of God. After you have spent minutes or hours in this, you will be tapping on not just natural energy for your daily life but upon the Spirit of Life who now flows within your physical body. The Holy Spirit gives God's eternal life into your physical body (Romans 8:11).

Thirdly, after enjoying the spiritual electric flow of God's divine life flowing into your spirit, soul and body, you will begin to look outwards at all that God wants you to do for the day, or all that has been planned or scheduled for you. You will feel like your spirit is at rest, your soul is alert and your body is moving in motion like being controlled by a higher energy or force. And all of the things you need to do in this life, is just a little bit more of what you add daily to your quota of things to do by the power of the Holy Spirit. Do not worry about tomorrow but just go about and do what you need to do today, knowing that day by day, the mountain that stands before you being chipped away and being moved by the invisible power of God. Just do what is sufficient for that day, leave the things of tomorrow for tomorrow (Matthew 6:34). Whatever things you need to schedule for the future do so without any worry. Life is to live one day at a time. Don't forget to enjoy the journey while being focussed on your goals. Each day is a day to be enjoyed to the fullest. And learn to pull away from the things of this life, knowing that a lot of things will not be finished in one day. Take time to enjoy the day, enjoy the love you can

give to all around you, the blessings and presence of God you can bring to the atmosphere of the place you live in. Whatever you do, do it all in the name of our Lord Jesus to the glory of God (Colossians 3:17).

These three mental habits must be practiced everyday until they become your default mode: look upwards, look inwards and then look outwards. Christ seated on the Throne, Christ within you, then living the Christ life. Everything begins and ends with Christ. We live, we breathe, we think, we feel, we enjoy, we pleasure only through Christ and Him alone. When these three simple mental habits become yours, you will enjoy what Paul says, it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me (Galatians 2:20). And without much effort or natural force, you are being transformed daily by this Christ consciousness in your daily life. Moreover, these mental habits will begin to produce physical habits. There will be times when you are so conscious of Christ at the Throne room that you want to find a place to be alone with Him and just worship Him. This begins your devotional habit without even trying to make it a habit. Instead of feeling the effort, you feel the pleasure and the drawing of Christ within you. There is no effort when you enjoy what you are doing. And true Christianity is to live by the energy of grace within us and not by the outward energy of the flesh. Enjoy the presence of Christ in your daily lives as you practice this three mental habits.

In summary, developing a devotional life requires:

- ✓ Good mental habits produce good physical habits
- ✓ Every day look upwards, see Jesus seated on the Throne
- ✓ Then look inwards, see Christ in you the hope of glory
- ✓ Finally, look outwards, through the eyes of Christ and fulfil your daily works which God has prepared for you to walk in

Fatherly Talk 7.06

The Melchizedek Generation – Perfection of Praise

Dearly Beloved

In Genesis 14, Abraham encountered Melchizedek the Priest for the first time. Melchizedek was a cherub who was once Adam's guardian archangel and had permission from God to continue in the form of a man, after Adam's death at the age of 930 years old, until he passed on the anointing to Abraham. Melchizedek was without father or mother and without genealogy because he was not a human being, but only took on the form of a human (as angels are able to) to complete the ministry of Adam (Hebrews 7:3). He was not Shem, as assumed by most scholars, and in visions his look was sharper and more angular (he had sharp nose and chin, slightly shorter than Shem who had rounder nose and fuller chin) and very different from Shem. On the day of the encounter with Abraham, Melchizedek, who had open visions, saw in visions the meeting and took bread and wine to meet Abraham. Archangel Uriel who was with Abraham also appeared as a man on that day. Abraham, with about twenty of his servants, saw just two men who were like priests. No burnt sacrifice was given but rather tithes from Abraham which included garments, gold and food. After receiving tithes from Abraham, Melchizedek blessed him and laid hands on him. On that day, Abraham received an anointing from God and had gifts imparted upon him. Abraham was visibly changed and transformed, and all that took place in his encounters with God and the covenant he made with God flowed forth from this impartation.

The first thing that Abraham was aware of was the need of a son to inherit all his blessings. God made a covenant with him by which

Abraham released his faith for a child of his own, which points prophetically also to our Lord Jesus (Genesis 15:4-18). When Isaac was old enough, God brought Abraham into a prophetic act of being willing to sacrifice his son and provided a ram for them. In releasing this prophetic act which points to God giving our Lord Jesus as a sin offering for us, a completion of the encounter with Melchizedek took place, the possession of the gates of the enemies by Abraham's descendants (Genesis 22:17-18).

The Melchizedek blessing involves three areas:

1. The blessing of tithes and offerings from Abraham and his seed (The tithe was instituted in Abraham's time as a blessing covenant, and in Moses' time became part of the temple worship of holiness – Leviticus 27:30; Hebrews 7:5-9).
2. The establishment of victory and vanquishing of the enemy under our feet. Abraham had just experienced his first war victory in rescuing his nephew, Lot, when Archangel Uriel told him to prepare himself to meet up with Melchizedek to bring all his tithes and offerings (Genesis 14:14-20). The place of meeting was specially revealed to Abraham. The blessing of Melchizedek over Abraham specially mentioned that God has delivered his enemies into Abraham's hands (Genesis 14:20). Generations later, David, another mighty king warrior in the Lord, understood what this blessing involved and sang of triumphing over his enemies as the Melchizedek blessing, the priesthood of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4-5). The enemies of God under the feet was a special blessing of Abraham that King David invoked upon (Psalm 110:1-2). This became a prophetic fulfilment when our Lord Jesus triumphed over our last enemy, death himself, in His resurrection from the dead (Hebrews 1:13).

In His resurrection, Christ Jesus took on the priesthood of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:5-6).

3. The establishment of praise and worship as the method to release the victory of Christ into our personal lives. Upon His resurrection, Christ made all the enemies of God His footstool and seeks to bring many sons to share the same glory (Hebrews 1:13; 2:10). Through oneness with Christ in worship this victory is now experienced and continued perpetually in His Name (Hebrews 2:10-13).

It is ONLY in the continuance of praise and worship in Jesus that we experience the total and perfect victory that Christ has bought for us by His precious blood and by the power of His resurrection. Thus we are taught to continually offer to God the sacrifice of praise and worship as an offering (Hebrews 13:15). The book of Psalms prophesy of a time when praise and worship become the very instrument for the defeat of the enemy (Psalm 149:6-9). With the high praises of God in our mouth and the sword of the Spirit in our hand, we bind the enemies of God with chains and fetters and execute judgment on the forces of darkness.

For those of us in the New Testament, we need to understand that it is a lot of work to perform all the daily temple animal sacrifices. Whether the priests felt like it or not, there was always the daily grind of sacrifices to do from early morning to evening. It involved the daily killing and cutting of animals and this increased when there were festivals and the yearly feasts which required very specific and special ceremonial preparations. Feelings do not determine what is to be done daily but rather religious love and devotion to the commandments of God. In that light, all Christians in the New Testament should be grateful that we no longer need animal sacrifices but still there are daily sacrifices to be made to God each day, and

special occasions of meetings that God ordained to be carried out. We should treat the lifting up of our hands that worship, that flows as the fruit of our lips, be as the daily morning and evening sacrifice to God (Psalm 141:2).

The New Testament is full of exhortations to give thanks and to praise and worship our God continually (Philippians 4:6; Colossians 2:7; 4:2; Revelation 7:12). Paul himself was always giving thanks to God and exhorts us to do so continually (2 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 1:16; 5:4, 20; Colossians 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 3:9; 5:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Timothy 2:1; Hebrews 13:15; Revelation 4:9; 11:17). It was the apostle Paul who exhorted that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all men (1 Timothy 2:1). And he exhorted that in everything give thanks for this is the Will of God in all situations in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18). We also have the example of King Jehoshaphat whose mighty singers brought a victory for all of Israel through their worship and praise without a single arrow being fired or a single sword swung against the enemy (2 Chronicles 20:20-22).

Note that Jehoshaphat faced an enemy that was great in multitude and who were physically stronger than his kingdom (2 Chronicles 20:2). They admitted that they had no power against this great multitude (2 Chronicles 20:12). The exhortation to them from God was that:

1. The battle was not theirs but the Lord's (2 Chronicles 20:15).
2. They did NOT need to fight in this battle but just position themselves, stand and see the salvation of the Lord (2 Chronicles 20:17).
3. They were to believe the Lord, believe His prophets and they will be established and prosper (2 Chronicles 20:20).

4. They were to appoint singers to sing to the Lord and praise the beauty of holiness, saying, "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever" (2 Chronicles 20:21).

They sang the same song as the dedication of the temple, which was 'For He is good, for His mercy endures forever', when the glory cloud came (2 Chronicles 5:13). God caused thousands upon thousands of the enemies to be killed.

The greatest weapon of the New Testament believers is the power of thanksgiving, praise and worship. By the same mouth that confess our Lord Jesus being Lord and Saviour and the same heart that believe, we are all born again (Romans 10:8-10). By the same power of faith in our Lord Jesus and in the power of the spoken word, we move mountains (Mark 11:22-24). By the same power of praise and worship, the fruit of our lips, we release the power of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus (Hebrews 13:15). The power of the spoken word is what defeats the enemy (Ephesians 6:17 sword of the Spirit, word of God is rhema of God, the spoken word of God). Whoever believes in God will not be put to shame, for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek for whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, delivered, blessed and triumphed (Romans 10:11-13). We need to open our mouth and filled it with thanksgiving and praises to the Lord every day.

Our Lord Jesus foresaw this New Testament era when He said the 'hour' will come when they shall worship God in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23-24). It is the 'last hour' and the glorious church of God is called upon to rise as a people powerful in thanksgiving, praise and worship (1 John 2:18). We are living stones being built up into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood (of Melchizedek) to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to our Lord Jesus (1 Peter 2:5). This is not just something we do in our strength. It has to be done through

being completely one with our Lord Jesus, and then through Him and in Him giving glory to our God the Father. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all ONE (Hebrews 2:11). And our calling is that we will yield in this oneness with our Lord Jesus such that our Lord Jesus literally sing praises to the Father through us (Hebrews 2:12). Then God will release a glory that the world and the Universe has never ever seen before. The glory of God revealed to Christ from the foundation of the world! (John 17:24). It is this glory of inheritance which God worked in Christ in resurrection power, which He now uses to put all things under His feet, and gave Christ to be the head of the church, His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:23).

It is out of our new born again spirits that God has perfected praise (Matthew 21:16). This is the hour when God pours out His Spirit upon all flesh and gives all the ability to praise and worship Him perfect in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:1-4, 11; 1 Corinthians 14:2, 14-15). We are growing into a holy temple, being built together to be a habitation of God, where continual daily praises flow forth day and night (Ephesians 2:21-22). Like the four living creatures who do not rest day and night, always praising and worshipping the Lord, our new born spirits are birth to give continual twenty-four-hour praises and worship to our Heavenly Father (Revelation 4:8; 7:15). The highest, deepest, greatest worship will be that which rises from the glorious bride of our Lord Jesus, the Melchizedek generation, who defeats all the enemies of God, even death, through the power of praise and worship in the beauty of holiness. Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.07

Abiding in Christ

Dearly Beloved

Our Lord Jesus commanded that we abide in Him, saying that unless we, the branch abide in Him, we cannot bear fruit (John 15:4). The word 'abide' comes from the Greek word *meno* which means 'to stay, to remain' as in abiding or staying in a house. In other words, Christ must be our home and we are the home of God, or more accurately, the temple of God. Jesus spoke of Him and the Father coming to us and making a home with us (John 14:23). A home is our centre of gravity from which all our lives revolve around, we go forth and then always return to our home. God is our home and our home is God's. The practice of the presence of God in our daily lives is the key to bearing fruit which pleases God.

Ever since the creation of mankind, God has always desired to dwell together with us. The presence of God in the garden was something Adam and Eve looked forward to, but upon the fall into sin, it became something they ran away from (Genesis 2:8). Since then God has always wanted to dwell with mankind; the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon were only temporary dwelling places for God. In Christ Jesus, God wanted again to make mankind into a habitation of God (Ephesians 2:22; 3:19). Individually, we are also the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). The greater the realization that we are the temple of God, the more we will live in the holiness of God. Knowing this truth is basic to all Christians but we want to consider two points: does the presence of God in us increase when we are conscious of Christ as oppose to when we are not conscious of the presence of God in us? In other words, when we meditate upon us

abiding in Christ and Christ in us, does it increase the actual power and spirit of that abiding? Or is that abiding subconsciously, that is whether we are conscious or not conscious of it, remain the same unaffected by our consciousness of it? Put it simply, does the thinking of Christ (of Him in us and we in Him) change the dynamics of God's presence, as opposed to not thinking of Him?

This simple question needs to be answered. Firstly, we need to consider what we mean by being conscious of Christ's presence. Are there different levels of consciousness? Apparently, there are subconscious and conscious mind. Some even included a super conscious state beyond the subconscious mind. To add complication to this simple question, are the various states of consciousness spiritual versus soul or the other various mental states? These questions have always been in many Christian's minds and for many, they have not been resolved.

In many Christian teachings, the subconscious mind is equivalent to the spiritual consciousness. E. W. Kenyon was one of the authors who identified the subconscious mind as equal to the spiritual consciousness. Other teachers, like myself, identify the spiritual consciousness as separate from the subconscious mind. My understanding is that there are various states of the soul consciousness as identified in EEG: Delta (0-4Hz), Theta (above 4-8 Hz), Alpha (above 8-12 Hz), Beta (above 12-40) and Gamma (above 40 Hz). These are states of brain waves which link with our soul consciousness. To me, spiritual consciousness is beyond these states of mind, although at the level of dream states or relaxation states, many people tap upon the visual mind, which in turn is linked to the dimension of the spiritual realm. There is a difference between a soul vision dream versus a spiritual vision dream. Moreover, when the Holy Spirit works, even at the Beta and Gamma state, a person can

still receive operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in prophecy, gifts of knowledge and wisdom and the gifts of healing and miracles. Thus, the spiritual consciousness is at a totally different level and is not limited to any brain wave states of the mind. In fact, at the levels of Beta and Gamma, the states of Delta, Theta and Alpha are operating in the background. These lower waves are hidden in the higher frequencies but become more detectable when a person sleep.

The best philosophy for understanding states of consciousness is to first acknowledge that we are tripartite in nature: we have three levels of consciousness of spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). All three consciousness operates when the spirit, soul and body are all healthy. Within each of these three dimensions are different levels of consciousness. Thus, the body level has all the 5 brain waves, as well as the autonomous nervous system which subconsciously keeps the heart beating and various bodily functions going without requiring any conscious mental effort. The soul has its various soul qualities in the sense of various balances like thinking, feeling, etc. The thinking of the soul consciousness can flow between thoughts that are heavy and thoughts that are light, between feelings that are pleasurable to feelings that are heavenly. In the spiritual consciousness, there can be the awareness of the stirrings of the Holy Spirit within the spirit, the flowing of revelation from the mind of Christ within or the flow of *agape* love consciousness from the Father. Due to the lack of understanding of the three dimensions of spirit, soul and body, many Christians cannot differentiate the spiritual consciousness from the soul consciousness or the brain wave consciousness of the body. To help this understanding, just remember that there is a “see-saw” movement between the spiritual and the physical with the soul as the “watcher.” After mankind lost the ability to see spiritual things openly, it is only when a human being is dying (or body consciousness grows weaker) that they begin to see more in the spiritual.

Contrarywise, increase consciousness of the body and its appetites reduces consciousness of the spiritual dimension, which is why fasting and prayer helps. There are exceptions, of course, where some people are born with open visions while others through various experiences become more open to the spiritual realm. The most important is to know that spiritual consciousness can occur in all EEG states of brain waves because it is totally of a different dimension.

Defining spiritual consciousness as completely unaffected by soul or body consciousness, means that in whatever level of soul or body consciousness, the spiritual consciousness with training can be highly developed. The apostle Paul was actively preaching when he operated a gift of miracles seeing faith in the lame man and commanding the lame man to stand up on his feet (Acts 14:9). The Scripture states that Paul was observing him intently, so his soul consciousness and his body consciousness was fully operational when he operated a gift of the Holy Spirit. He was not in some meditative subconscious soul or body state to tap on the workings of the Holy Spirit. Nor was David when he went to war to fight under the anointing of the Holy Spirit against the enemies of Israel (2 Samuel 5:24; Psalm 18:29, 34; 144:1). When the Holy Spirit works, He is not limited by any conscious state of mind or body, all He needs is a spirit open to Him to work through. There is still the requirement of spiritual consciousness.

If spiritual consciousness is a different dimension from soul consciousness or body consciousness, what exactly is spiritual consciousness? By simple definition, spiritual consciousness is a consciousness of the spiritual realm, just as physical consciousness is consciousness of the physical realm. God is a Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Angels are spiritual beings although they can appear in the natural (Hebrews

1:14). Spiritual consciousness is consciousness of the spiritual realm and all that exists in that spiritual realm: angels, God, etc. This includes the consciousness of the spirit of other humans. One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is discerning of spirits, which is the gift to see, discern and know what is going on in the spiritual dimension (1 Corinthians 12:10).

Having separated spiritual consciousness completely from soul consciousness, it will help all Christians to know that whatever they feel or know of God's presence might be just their soul reaction or physical reaction to God's presence and not their spiritual sensing. The good soul and physical feelings of God's presence should not be mistaken as the signals or evidences of God's presence because God's presence may or may not have a physical or soul component. God can cause His spiritual presence to have a side effect on soul and body, but He can also show forth His presence without an effect upon the soul and physical dimension. So, do not mistaken your own experiential feeling of God's presence to be God's presence. It takes training to sense God's presence purely from the spiritual dimension. For example, the Bible says when we pray in the tongues, our spirit pray and we are encouraged to both pray in the spirit and to pray in the understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15). For many Christians, when they pray in tongues, they might not feel anything, yet the Bible says that they are edifying themselves spiritually. This demonstrates the spiritual dimension is totally different in "feeling" or "sensation" from the soul and the physical realm.

How then does one grow in true spiritual consciousness? The key is to use things and material that is born or created in that realm. Thus, when Jesus asked us to abide in Him and let His presence abide in us, He emphasized on loving Him and keeping His Word *logos* (John 14:23-24). He also noted that His disciples are cleansed (purified) by

the word *logos* which He has spoken before He commanded that we abide in Him (John 15:5). Then He emphasized on His Word *rhema* abiding in us and we in Him (John 15:7). Since all His words are spirit and they are life, His command to allow His Word to fill us, clean us, saturate us, is a command to spend time on things that originate in the spiritual realm (John 6:63). Spending time praying in the Spirit (even if there are no soul or body feelings) and spending time in the word of God (spiritual materials) are the keys to increase spiritual consciousness and true spiritual abiding in Christ. It is only when these take place that we will bear much fruit.

Finally, we answer the question whether being spiritually conscious of Christ would make a difference to the effect of His presence in us. The answer should be obvious at this juncture. Increasing spiritual consciousness will have a positive and miraculous effect and impact upon our daily lives. Not being conscious spiritually will lead to deafness or deadness in the Spirit. The exhortation is that he who has an ear (a spiritual ear) to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches (Revelation chapters 3 and 4). It is possible to hear (physically) and not hear (spiritually) (Acts 28:26-27). We should no longer just know Christ in the flesh but to know Him spiritually (2 Corinthians 5:16). We are exhorted to meditate on those things which are true, noble, just, pure, lovely of good report, having virtue and is praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8). The word *meno* implies abiding, staying and remaining. Which part of us should remain, abide, or stay? Our thoughts, our soul and our consciousness. The training of our thoughts to abide upon Christ is the key to the practice of the presence of God daily. This spiritual consciousness of Christ can be increased until it invades into our soul consciousness and our physical consciousness. Spiritual consciousness is a feeling beyond feeling, a thought beyond thought. One might develop spiritual consciousness without one iota of soul or body feelings. What man

knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? (1 Corinthians 2:11).

I hope through this small devotion, each of you understands that what you deem to be the presence of God in your life might have been merely your own "feeling" of His presence, for His presence is beyond feeling and beyond thought. Don't be satisfied with the soul consciousness of His presence nor of the physical consciousness of His presence. Go further, go deeper and explore the true spiritual consciousness of God's presence in your life. For Jesus says, 'Lo, I am with you always even until the end of the age' (Matthew 28:20). And where two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is in the midst of us (Matthew 18:20). The presence of God and of Jesus is everywhere and it is up to us to be conscious of this presence that He has blessed us with every day of our lives.

Fatherly Talk 7.08

The Power of Thoughts

Dear Beloved

In recent science experiments, Biophysicist Joe Kirschvink and his team at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in Pasadena used electroencephalography (EEG) to record brain activity from electrodes on the scalp to search for some response to changes in a highly controlled magnetic field equal in strength to Earth's (March 18th 2019, eNeuro). In the experiment, each of the 34 participants sat quietly in a dark aluminium box (a Faraday cage) that shielded them from electromagnetic noise such as radio waves. By changing the flow of electric current through coils lining the box, the researchers created a magnetic field that sloped steeply downward, like Earth's own field at the midlatitudes of the Northern Hemisphere. Then they rotated the field to mimic a person turned their head. In a third of participants, the rotating field elicited a marked drop in the alpha wave frequency (8-13 Hz). This experiment is yet to be replicated and confirmed by peers but the argument is whether this effect on one third of the participants is "detectable" mentally by humans in a conscious or subconscious way or a mere natural effect of cellular response to magnetic fluctuations due to magnetite being present in cells, as in certain bacteria that harbours magnetite crystals in their cells.

A variety of species—bacteria, snails, frogs, lobsters—seem to detect Earth's magnetic field, and some animals, such as migratory birds, rely on it for navigation. But testing for the sense in humans has been tricky. Experiments in the 1970s that asked blindfolded participants to point in a cardinal direction after being spun around or led far from

home yielded inconsistent results. In an EEG study with a different design, published in 2002, other researchers failed to find any brain response to a changing field. The observation of the dip in alpha waves by Kirschvink and his team was only present when the magnetic field was oriented downwards and in an anticlockwise direction. Whether the effects of brain wave changes amount to a magnetoreception “sense” is another area to be further researched.

A psychologist, Dr Gary E. Schwartz did many scientific experimental measurements to ascertain human consciousness and proposes the possibility of synchronicity, our body’s response to healing consciousness and love, and believes in the abilities of the human mind to “see” the invisible and to be conscious of natural electromagnetic waves. Synchronicity is the coincidences of thinking of a person and the same person calls you or dreaming of something and seeing it happen soon. Without a biblical base, we have many people who are using scientific measurement tools that measure heart rates, brain waves, etc. to ascertain different levels of consciousness.

What does the Bible say? The Bible records that our Lord Jesus can read our thoughts. Jesus knew the thoughts of the scribes who were thinking within themselves (Matthew 9:3-4). The phrase ‘Jesus knew their thoughts’ occurred several times in the Bible (Matthew 12:25; Luke 5:22; 6:8; 11:17). For those who do not know the salvation of our Lord Jesus’ atonement but live their lives according to their conscience, the Bible says their thoughts either accuse them or excuse them (Romans 2:15). Our thought life is very important as it proceeds from our innermost character and being. The word of God is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of our heart (Hebrews 4:12). Daily spiritual warfare is taking all our thoughts into captivity and obedience to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-6). The failure of Ananias and Sapphira was that they thoughtfully agreed together to deceive about

the price paid for their land (Acts 5:4). And Simon the magician thought he could purchase the gift of God with money (Acts 8:20). Wrong thoughts can come from the enemy (Satan, fallen angels and demons). Good thoughts can come from God (John 14:26). The act of remembering the things of the Lord is a thought process inspired by the Holy Spirit.

From the Bible it seems that:

1. Thoughts can come from God, ourselves or the enemy (Psalm 139:17; Proverb 12:5; Matthew 15:19; 16:23)
2. All thoughts are transmitted, and it can be perceived by Jesus, angels, and humans who are sensitive to such (Matthew 12:25; Luke 5:22; Matthew 1:20; Acts 8:20)
3. Thoughts, like sound, can create noisy or pleasant musical ambience (2 Corinthians 10:5; Psalm 139:17; Isaiah 55:9-10)
4. Thoughts can reach a point of spiritual conception creating a future reality (Genesis 6:5; 1 Chronicles 29:18).

We humans live in a world of thoughts and sensory perceptions. Unaware that the very essence of our thoughts is continuously creating our future realities. This is not done merely through human works that proceed from our ideas and concepts, but also through the pure power of the energy of thoughts that touch the spiritual substances of creative materials. Whether they be energized by the enemy, which God then has to destroy (Genesis 6:5) or they can come forth through the process of visualisation and energising by the Holy Spirit (Genesis 15:1-6; Romans 4:16-22). Our daily thoughts contribute to the total thought energies of the planet earth. When the total sum of human thoughts released in various forms on the earth tilt towards the positive, the whole world moves in that direction. Conversely, if

the total sum of human thoughts tilt towards evil, the planet earth moves towards evil. All energy cannot be destroyed, it needs to go somewhere. The total sum of human thoughts has a direct impact on the earth's tilt and direction towards God or towards evil. Not all human thoughts are equal; some are weak, and some are stronger. It depends on the strength of a human spirit and on the spiritual energies that support or inspire the thoughts conceived in the heart of the human being.

The best thoughts are the thoughts of our creator God and Father of all, through our Lord Jesus, the Word of God. Since our thoughts are lower than God's thoughts, it is best that we receive God's thoughts and let them be assimilated and flow as our new thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9). The thoughts of humans are futile (Psalm 94:11). We are like a ripe field which God has implanted His Word and Seed. We must allow His word, His thoughts, to germinate within us and flow forth through our spirits, our souls and our imagination. God has been concerned with the total sum of human thoughts since before Noah's flood and He is still concern for the total sum of human thoughts and imagination today (Genesis 6:5). He has sent His Holy Spirit to pour forth His visions, dreams, revelations – the sum total of His Will and plan for mankind – that we may receive into the fertile ground of our beings and birth forth new spiritually inspired and energized thoughts that begin to create the new future of the earth: both the near future and the final future of this planet.

The minds of humans are the loins of creation (1 Peter 1:13). We are the ground that God has sown the seed of His Word (Mark 4:20). The human race has been gifted with the capacity to reproduce both natural and spiritual. Angels do not marry, nor do they reproduce (Matthew 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:35). Humans have been given the ability to reproduce (Genesis 1:27-28). Together with the animal

and plant world which they are in charge, the resonance of reproduction is released throughout the domain of humans as Adam named the animals. Even when fallen angels wanted to reproduce illegally and against the Will of God, they had to use the females of humans (Genesis 6:1-4). This ability to reproduce is not just a physical quality of mankind. Mankind was gifted with the ability to reproduce in the soul and spirit dimension. The spirit and soul of man is like a fertile ground from which new things come forth. When mankind fell and required food for sustenance, even fallen mankind has created millions of types of cooked food but angels for millennia still eat manna, a food once shared with mankind during post-Exodus of Israel (Psalm 78:23-25). Our Lord Jesus recognized that the human heart is a field in which God sowed His Word looking for a harvest (Mark 4:13-20). Even for evil, human hearts have regurgitated all manner of evil (Mark 7:21-23). Thus, the interest of Satan and his cohorts to recruit mankind into his domain.

When our Lord Jesus came in human form, He also birth forth a new creation, of which He is the first born (Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5). The only other being who can create and bring forth something new is God Himself. When God made man in His image, it was this ability that God had gifted to mankind (Genesis 1:26-28). It is not just because God made man humanoid looking, for even angels are humanoid looking but they can't reproduce. The image is not just the physical looks of two hands, two legs, two eyes, one nose and one mouth in a humanoid looking figure. It is the ability to be like God in His creative ability! Knowing the power of creation gifted and inherent in the human race, we must treasure and guard this ability and use it only to birth forth things that are in line with the Word of God. In Christ we have become heirs and joint heirs of Christ, a position not given to the angels or other spirit beings (Romans 8:17). As the book of Hebrews says, "For to which of the angels did He ever say: 'You are

My Son, today I have begotten You' or 'I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a son.' (Hebrews 1:5). God has not put the world to come in subjection to angels but rather to mankind in Jesus (Hebrews 2:5-8). Thus, our Lord Jesus became the Captain and Author of our salvation to bring us into His glory as sons of God, and the whole creation looks forward to manifestations of the sons of God (Hebrews 2:10; Romans 8:19-21).

Our Lord Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to sow into us His dreams, His visions, His word and His thoughts. Let us be the fruitful ground that brings forth fruit of all that God has seeded into us. Let our thoughts be that of God's thoughts, heavenly thoughts that will bring forth heaven on earth – the kingdom of God on earth in these days of the ten toes. We are His creation who keeps on creating here on earth and in new heavens and new earth. Treasure every thought that proceeds from the mind of Christ, for we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). And the world and all creation have yet to see, what God has in store for those who love God and are called according to His purpose (1 Corinthians 1:9; Romans 8:28). Be blessed and be fruitful as a branch in our Lord Jesus, the New Vine (John 15:1-7).

Fatherly Talk 7.09

God Answers Prayers

Dearly Beloved

The history of the Bible shows the creation of mankind, the fall of mankind, and the process of individual or groups of humans learning to call on to God who answers prayers as they pray according to God's Will. In His mercy, God teaches and shows fallen man how to pray successfully according to His attributes and His principles that He reveals to them. God's answers to prayers are the stories of the Bible that has inspired generations of mankind through six thousand years of recorded biblical history to continue to have faith in the God who redeems them and continues to bring them to the place of restoration of all things.

In the New Testament, the heights of God's joy and delight in answering prayers is expressed by our Lord Jesus in the following verses:

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, he who seeks finds and to him who knocks it will be opened (Matthew 7:7-8).

If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes (Mark 9:23).

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them (Mark 11:24)

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it (John 14:13-14).

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you (John 15:16).

And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full (John 16:23-24).

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:15-16).

With so many verses and so many examples of answered prayers in the Bible, every believer should have confidence that God always answers prayers. God's answers to prayers may be in the following categories:

1. Immediate answers to prayers like Elijah's prayers for God to set fire to the sacrifice he prepared. (1 Kings 18:36-38)
2. Answers to prayers that were not really made as an official prayer like Abraham asking God to bless Ishmael. (Genesis 17:18-20)

3. Delayed answers to forgotten prayers like Zechariah's prayer for a child. (Luke 1:13)
4. God answers 'No' like Moses request to go into the land of Canaan. (Deuteronomy 3:23-28)

There are many other categories but for this devotional talk it is sufficient to cover these four categories. Learning that God answers prayers and the various ways He answers, accepting His answers are a part of walking the humble road of total dependence on God for everything in this life.

Category 1: Prayers with immediate answers

Prayers which are immediately answered usually have a background to them. In the case of Elijah asking for God to consume the sacrifice with fire, Elijah has already successfully brought forth a three year and six-month drought through long years of intercession and prayers (James 5:16-17). As it came to the time to end the drought, Elijah issued a challenge to the false prophets of Baal to prove that their god is real. The false prophets failed miserably with much mocking from Elijah (1 Kings 18:27-29). Elijah seemed to have heard instructions as to what exactly to do, for he built an altar of twelve stones according to the twelve tribes of Israel, to whom the word of the Lord has come, saying, 'Israel shall be your name' (1 Kings 18:31). He also pronounced the name of the Lord as he built the altar (1 Kings 18:32). He then made a trench with which he commanded water to be filled three times until the whole trench was filled and overflowing with water (1 Kings 18:32). Finally, the timing was about the time of the evening offering, which Israel would have offered daily in the temple of Solomon (1 Kings 18:36). In his prayers, he called upon the covenant of Abraham which Israel has with God, asking that God

made Himself known that He is indeed the God of Israel and that Elijah was his servant (1 Kings 18:36). And most important of all, he said that he had done all these things at God's Word (1 Kings 18:36). Within an instant, fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, vaporizing all the water in the trench while consuming the burnt offering.

Prayers that are answered immediately have a working background of obedience to God's commandments and instructions. Obedience to these many little commands places one in the position of the finale of an official prayer with an instant answer. Another example is Jesus raising Lazarus up from the dead. Four days before the resurrection, Jesus already knew that Lazarus would die of sickness and be raised up from the dead (John 11:1-4). He told His disciples that He was going to wake Lazarus up, which for Him meant that He was going to raise him from the dead (John 11:11). In His word to Martha and Mary, He spoke of resurrection of which they did not fully understand (John 11:23-25, 39-40). And then Jesus made a very simple prayer, saying, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." Then with a loud voice, He commanded Lazarus to arise from the dead (John 11:41-44).

There is always a lot of preparation behind prayers that seem to be answered instantly. The principles behind immediate answers to prayer are:

- a. Be obedient to many little commandments from God that sets the scenario for the official prayer of faith.
- b. Observe the instruction of God as to when is the time to release the official prayer of faith in public with instant answer.

- c. Its main objective is to establish God's covenant and God's Will in both the life of the servant of God and the surrounding circumstances.
- d. It serves as the authentication of God and of His servant.

Category 2: Prayers that were not really prayers but words spoken from the mouth in conversation

Abraham was not officially asking for something specific for Ishmael but was reacting to the word of God that he would have another child of his own through Sarah. His immediate reaction was to bless the current son that he had through Hagar (Genesis 17:18). He was in laughter and unbelief that Sarah could have a child at the age of ninety years old. Much to his surprise, God answered and said that He has heard Abraham and will bless Ishmael and make him fruitful even to him begetting twelve princes and becoming a great nation (Genesis 17:20). We are to watch the words of our mouth all the time for we might be blessed or cursed when we unwittingly utter something which we cannot take back, especially when God answers Amen to it.

I believe Rachel died because Jacob unknowingly cursed her to death by saying whoever have the idols of Laban should die (Genesis 31:32). The Israelites condemned themselves to death when they wished that they die in the wilderness (Numbers 14:1-2, 28). On the other hand, a casual conversation and request to the Lord about the number of righteous people needed to save the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, reduced it to ten for the cities to be saved (Genesis 18:23-33). So is the casual sentence by Jesus to the fig tree that 'Let no one eat fruit from you ever again' became an instant curse (Mark 11:14, 20).

Peter's utterance of asking Jesus to command him to come to Him on the water was immediately granted, much to his surprise and the surprise of all the other disciples (Matthew 14:27-29). He most likely did not start thinking too much about everything but was reacting to the circumstances of seeing Jesus walked on the water for the first time, of which all those in the boat were frightened thinking they had seen a ghost. There was no place to think about the consequences nor of the amount of energy required to create such a miracle. He just suddenly made the request on the spur of the moment. And Jesus immediately granted His request. As he walked on the water, his mind must have caught up and he realized the impossibility of everything, doubts arose as he saw the wind and waves, which caused him to begin sinking (Matthew 14:29-30). But through it all, he had a blessing that none of the other disciples had, an opportunity to walk on water like Jesus.

It is important to guard our words in all circumstances, for by our words we are justified and by our words we are condemned (Matthew 12:36-37). The true perfect spiritual person has control of their tongue (James 3:2). **The key in this category is to always observe a positive and biblical outlook in life, never speaking words that are against the bible or against ourselves and others in a negative way.** As this becomes our default nature, then sometimes when opportunities come and special presence of God is manifest, we will still be able to automatically react in the right manner and receive from the fruit of our lips the positive and wonderful blessings of God (Proverb 18:20; Isaiah 57:19; Hebrews 13:15). Our Father God and Jesus is hearing all our conversations twenty-four hours a day, whether alone or surrounded by people. A lot of unintended prayers are being prayed by people who did not know that God was listening to their every word. Watch your tongue and let only blessings flow forth.

Category 3: Delayed answers to forgotten prayers

It must have been long, long ago when they were newly married that Zachariah and Elizabeth prayed for a child. Through their long marriage and many years of servitude to God, they remained childless into their senior years. All the prayers of their youth were forgotten by them, but not by God. Archangel Gabriel was sent to them to announce the good news that it was now time for them to have a child, and that this child was going to be special (Luke 1:13-17). Zachariah regarded his situation as impossible and when he said that his wife was well advanced in years, probably meant that she has surpassed her menopause (Luke 1:18). Yet through all the physical impossibilities, God wrought a great miracle. But Zachariah had to be shut up for the duration of the pregnancy. In the end when John the Baptist was born, great was the joy of Zachariah and Elizabeth.

Abraham must have been very satisfied with Ishmael and probably thought that he was God's promise child through his own loins (Genesis 15:1-4). There was no sign that he was still seeking another child when God appeared to him at the age of ninety-nine and told him that he will have a child through Sarah. Both he and Sarah did not believe at first, laughing at the impossibility (Genesis 17:17; 18:11-12). Abraham very quickly overcame his initial shock and disbelief and followed God's commandment and circumcised himself and all his household (Genesis 17:24-27). He must have been very surprised when God said that He will establish His covenant with Abraham with Isaac whom Sarah will bear for him (Genesis 17:21-22).

When it is time for a forgotten prayer to be answered, God always imposes the conditions upon it which we must be obedient. For Zachariah, he was struck dumb throughout the pregnancy before John was born. For Abraham, he had to be circumcised and to follow the Lord.

There is always a right time for God to answer and we must be patient and let God do it in the fullness of time. We summarise the principles below:

- a. Surrender to God when you have prayed a prayer, remove the time element as faith transcends time.
- b. Every prayer has its own set of time to be answered by God, wait patiently.
- c. When the fullness of time comes, there are sometimes conditions that must be met. Learn to obey carefully all the conditions and commandments given.
- d. Flow into the fullness of the answered prayers. Many times, the longer it takes for the answer to come, the more glorious it is when the answer comes, even to the point of changing the entire dispensation and time continuum.

Category 4: When God answers 'No'

Moses must have been very disappointed when God forbade him to enter the promise land and told him not to pray and ask any more (Deuteronomy 3:26-27). He pleaded to God many times but to no avail. God told him not to speak of it anymore. When God cannot answer a prayer, He always seeks to reward us and comfort us with something close or better. With Moses, God asked him to go to the top of Mount Pisgah where he could see the promise land in all directions (Deuteronomy 3:27). God might have even given an amplification of the things he saw, as God said 'I have caused you to see with your eyes' (Deuteronomy 34:4). On top of that, God Himself personally buried Moses and later resurrected his body early, an exception which the devil protested (Deuteronomy 34:5-6; Jude 1:9).

David prayed with all his might and strength for the child he had with Bathsheba. He fasted one whole week for the life of the child (2 Samuel 12:16-17). But God was not moved and took the child home as it was the judgment that must take place for David's sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:14). Despite this punishment upon David, God forgave him and gave him another son through Bathsheba. God especially loved this child and anointed this child from young (2 Samuel 12:24-25). The child was named by God as 'beloved by the Lord.' This was the child that God chose to continue the throne of David, and whom God chose to build His temple.

Whenever God says 'No,' He always has something better than what we ask. God understands all our desires, inclinations and limitations. Thus, when our hearts are clean and pure and we seek God and ask as according to His Will, even when it is not an accurate prayer or something which God can grant, He will always still reward and bless us with something better than we could have ever conceived or asked. Learn to trust that God knows far better than we do what we need and what we require. This is the trust that David learned through the many years of walking with God, such that when he made a mistake in numbering the Israelites, David chose to fall into the hands of God rather than into the hands of man (2 Samuel 24:14). In the end, God used this incident to reveal where to build His temple, but David was to build an altar of the Lord there first (2 Samuel 24:25).

We should always trust in the goodness and mercy of our Father God. He created us and knows what is best for us. Learn the secrets of prayer and be a mighty man or woman of prayer. In its finality, prayer is total surrender and dependence on God. It is utter trust, complete faith, true dependence on our invisible God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Like our Lord Jesus said, our Father Himself delights in answering all our prayers that we pray in Jesus Name.

Fatherly Talk 7.10

Learning to be Courageous

Dearly Beloved

The human soul experiences discouragement and depression as a part of human frailty and it takes spiritual growth and renewal of the soul to be immune to such emotions by being spiritually filled with courage from our Lord Jesus. There are many varied reasons why discouragement comes. Some examples are:

1. Physical and emotional exhaustion

The people of Israel had gone through several rebellions, seen a lot of death, were cursed to remain in the wilderness for forty years and their physical wanderings exhausted them; their soul became discouraged (Numbers 21:4).

2. Seeing others settled while your life is unsettled

Moses spoke to the tribe of Gad and Reuben who wanted to settle in the East side of the Jordan that they do not discourage their brethren to continue (Numbers 32:7). The solution was found in the tribes who settled sending their armies to fight alongside and help the other tribes settle in the West of the Jordan (Numbers 32:16-33).

3. Experiencing the loss of loved ones and material loss

David's men were at their lowest point in Ziklag when they returned from battle and found all their families captured and their homes burnt to the ground, they cried until they had no more strength to cry (1 Samuel 30:1-6). They even talk of stoning David for they were grieved for their sons and daughters.

4. Being opposed, ridiculed and tormented by the enemy

For forty days and nights, Goliath ridiculed and cursed the Israelites every morning and every evening (1 Samuel 17:4-16). The people became filled with fear and were broken and discouraged (1 Samuel 17:10). When Ezra gathered the people to rebuild Jerusalem, the enemies of Israel in the land sought to cause trouble, hired counsellors and frustrate their purposes in order to discourage them from continuing (Ezra 4:4).

5. Big shoes to fill

Taking over from Moses was not easy for he has accomplished much. Joshua was continually reminded by God and the people of God to be of good courage (Joshua 1:6-7, 9, 18). When one has lived in the shadow of a person of great accomplishments, and is supposed to take over the leadership, it can be a daunting and challenging task. Even Elisha knew that it would take some time to gain the respect of the school of prophets (2 Kings 2:14-18).

6. Overwhelmed with sorrow

On the last night before Jesus was betrayed and crucified, He spoke of peace, love, joy and being of good courage, knowing what His disciples were feeling and going to be tested (John 16:33). The disciples were overwhelmed with sorrow at His parting words and Jesus knew that they will experience sorrow at His crucifixion especially if they don't have faith in His resurrection (John 16:20-22).

There are many more reasons why discouragement and depression can come on human souls and it is important that one should not make any major decision that changes one's destiny in a time of discouragement, depression, sorrow or anger. Good decisions should

be made when the mind is clear, the emotions are calm and the spirit is prayed through into the presence of God, sometimes with fasting, prayers and worship. For those who have yet to find God to be their solace and comfort for all their discouragement, because of the invisibility of God to them, perhaps they should seek and spend time with a trusted friend or brethren who can provide a loving, peaceful atmosphere for them to recover and get back their courage to continue living life to the fullest boldly.

The cure for discouragement is based on understanding the true hidden causes of such discouragements and depression. Some of them are as follows:

1. Have a fresh vision and dream

The inability to see the fulfilment of a vision and dream can cause discouragement. Without a vision, the people perish (Proverb 29:18). This should be understandable. For example, how can a car move forward if you can't see what is in front? No one can move forward in life if they can't see what is ahead. We humans are made to follow visions and dreams. The most important thing is to make sure that the vision and dream is from God and part of God's destiny in our life. That is why God gave His Holy Spirit who pours forth dreams and visions into our lives (Acts 2:17). If you are discouraged or depressed, your dream or vision might have just been shattered or taken away. It is time to recuperate and have a new vision and dream imparted by God, in His presence.

2. Let God hold your hand through mountains and valleys

Life will always have its mountains and valleys. Thankfully, God has promised that as we hold the Shepherd's hand, there will be green pastures and still waters even though we go

through the valley of the shadow of death (with His hand holding us) (Psalm 23). If we persevere, there will always be goodness and mercy and a table spread for us. The secret to going through a difficult terrain or a monotonous path is to just take one day at a time. Jesus said that we should live one day at a time for each day's evil (or battles) is sufficient for the day (Matthew 6:34). Even you win your battles one day at a time, you will win the war.

3. Know that you are never alone

Even though physically we seem to be alone in this life, we are always surrounded by angels (especially our guardian angels assigned to be with us throughout our lives on earth) and Jesus promised to be with us until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20). Angels are assigned to every child born on earth and they continue to minister to us even unto our adult lives (Matthew 18:10; Acts 12:15; 27:23). Draw encouragement from the Spiritual dimension for God is a Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

4. Have a new mental and emotional outlook in life

There is a choice between being a pessimist or an optimist in this life. Many pessimists think that it is better to be so, for they are prepared for the hard knocks and difficulties of life. Yes, there are optimists who have no idea how to face the hard, cruel realities of life. But we must consider that God has a positive outlook on everything that is why He is always full of joy. Similarly, the angels can see the true reality and outcome that in God all things will be fulfilled and have a positive ending. Yes, there are hard times in life like what Naomi suffered together with Ruth (Ruth 2:3-22). Naomi herself said that her life is hard

and bitter, but it was only chapter two of their lives. Chapter four ends with great joy and celebration for the child of Boaz and Ruth became the grandfather of David (Ruth 4:22). The sorrows of Israel under Pharaoh birth forth the victories of Israel under Moses, such that they cross the Red Sea singing praises to God (Exodus 1:11-14; 15:1-20). Our habits of thinking and approach to life can be changed and renewed by thinking like Jesus, having the mind of Christ (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:5). At first it might be difficult as the fallen mind defaults to negative thinking but through time a new habit of thought arises, as all the old strongholds are broken, and we view the world with new mind-emotion glasses provided by the Lord Jesus.

At the end of the day, we are all to conform to Jesus in our spirit, soul and body (Romans 8:29-30). Did you know that Jesus was never ever discouraged for even a nano second? It is prophesied by Isaiah that our Lord Jesus will not fail nor be discouraged (Isaiah 42:4). Jesus had a victorious mindset and that same mindset has been given to us in Christ Jesus. A negative mind, a depressed mind, a depressed soul, a discouraged mind is a type of soul sickness that we must recognize. Just as there are sicknesses of the body, there are sicknesses of the soul and mind. We must realize that it is NOT normal to be sick, neither mentally nor physically. It should NOT be normal to be discouraged or depressed. Our norm should be being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in our hearts to the Lord (Ephesians 5:18-20).

The secrets to staying positive, filled with good courage and boldness from the Lord is to always give all our lives in perfect surrender to God and never take it back. Perfect surrender, perfect submission brings perfect peace. Having surrendered to God 100%, we then allow

Jesus to live through us and in us. How do you think the apostle Paul overcome persecutions and tribulations such that he was beaten three times with rods, whipped thirty-nine times five times, suffered shipwreck, hunger, thirst, oppositions everywhere he went? Paul declared that it is no longer he who lives but Christ lives in him, and the life he now lives, he lives through Christ who gave Himself for him (Galatians 2:20). Against all manner of setbacks and opposition, he triumphed through Christ who strengthens him. He recognized that it is truly not him living anymore but it was the grace of God that helped him become everything that he was supposed to become (1 Corinthians 15:10). Acknowledging that we are nothing and that we can do nothing without Christ is the first step to eradicate discouragement and depression from our lives (John 15:5). From then onwards, all our lives are Christ living in us, and our consciousness is only that of daily surrender and welcoming (praising) Christ into our lives.

By doing so, we become as Christ is, Lion of Judah, Bright and Morning Star, All-conquering King, seated at the Right Hand of God. Hallelujah, all the courage of Christ is within us, all His peace, love and joy, all His energy and abundant life flows within our spirit, soul and body. Without Him we can do nothing but with Him in us, nothing shall be impossible to us. Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.11

Praising God 24 hours

Dearly Beloved

We all know that heaven is always filled with twenty-four hours praise and worship (if time is measured as such, although in heaven there is no measurement of time). From Moses' visions of the presence of God where trumpets sound and glory reside to the Isaiah's visions where the seraphim say, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts" (Exodus 19:16-20; Isaiah 6:1-3). From Daniel's visions of the worship at the Throne of the Ancient of Days to the visions of the four living creatures where John the apostle observed the worship that continuously take place at the Throne room in various forms and by various entities including the 24 elders and the 144,000 with special songs which no one can sing, worship has always been the heartbeat and the life of heaven flowing forth to all God's creation (Daniel 7:9-10; Revelation 4:6-8; 5:8-14; 7:9-12; 11:15-19; 14:1-4). Heaven is always filled with all manner of worship and various types of worship take place as the glory and victory of God marches forward in earth's time sphere.

One of the prime goals of our Lord Jesus's redemption is to bring about a time when men will worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23). The whole Old Testament revolves around two places of worship: The Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon. Prior to these, it was around the burnt altar from Noah to Abraham time. Worship is the lifeblood of all relationships with God and the highest expression of what we can give to God. We cannot really give God anything for everything was created by Him and He owns them. Even our tithes are not truly giving to Him for He owns everything, and we can only

bring them to where He tells us to do so. Technically, we bring our tithes and not give our tithes. Whether we bring it or not constitutes robbery to God. God claims ownership of tithes whether we bring it to Him or not. Those who have a heart to acknowledge that are prospered by God like Jacob who covenant to bring tithes to God at Bethel (Genesis 28:22). But the greatest gift we can give God is our love and our worship. For God cannot force any freewill creature to love Him or worship Him. Thus, when we truly love and worship God with all our heart, it is the greatest gift that we can give to God.

The Bible has also shown us that when worship of God is practiced, the worshippers received tremendous and overwhelming blessings from God. We saw this in King Jehoshaphat's deliverance from the Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites, and in Daniel's deliverance from the lions (2 Chronicles 20:20-23; Daniel 6:10-28). A life of true worship is a life truly blessed by God. Many people will only worship when things go wrong and they need God but blessed is the man who truly worships God at all times, in season and out of season. I believe that the New Testament believers must excel the Old Testament in true worship and in longer worship. Both in quality and in quantity, we must excel in worship for our Lord Jesus has opened the door into the second veil where we have true access to our God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, Israel reached its highest point and true greatness with God with the establishment of twenty-four-hour worship by King David. During the time of the kings, whenever the temple worship was neglected or forgotten, Israel began to lose its favour and come under domination by godless people. The church of our Lord Jesus Christ will reach its true fullness when we establish twenty-four-hour worship in our lives and in the corporate life of the church. Indeed, Jesus arose as firstborn from the dead that He might sing praises to God our Father through us (Hebrews 2:12).

As we await the resources of God and growth in numbers to establish twenty-four-hour worship, we must learn to practice twenty-four-hour worship in our personal lives first. The first place to start is to have a heart of worship. A heart of worship acknowledges that all life was created to worship God. As long as we have life, we will worship our God. David was a worshipper of God and he knew that God won't let him die (until his life was complete) for he sang that the dead cannot worship God (Psalm 88:10; 115:17). As one who was after God's heart, he wanted to continue living, no matter what threats of death or defeat challenged him, for he knew that God loved worship and praises and God wanted him to continue living so he can worship God. No matter what circumstances he faced, God would not let him die. It is like God had enough preachers, pastors, prophets, apostles, kings, business people, professionals and farmers but God was always short of true worshippers, so God would prolong their lives to fullness as He did not want the earth to be lacking in worshippers.

Before we fulfil our destiny to be whatever God wants us to be, we must first be a worshipper of God. The call to be a true worshipper of God to me is the highest calling on the earth. It is a calling that is birth from freewill love and desire to be with God whereas callings are predestined before we are born. Jesus has paid the price for all to become true worshippers in spirit and in truth, but He cannot force us to become one. We must choose freely of our own accord to be a lover and worshipper of God.

I believe that one of the reasons why the baptism in the Spirit results in tongues is that it is a gift that enables us to worship God in the spirit (1 Corinthians 14:14-15). The evidence is in the book of Acts.

The five incidents of baptism in the Spirit seem to point to an increased ability to worship God through tongues:

Acts chapter 2 120 disciples

Acts chapter 8 Disciples in Samaria
Although tongues not mentioned but there seemed to be outward visible evidence discernible

Acts chapter 9 Apostle Paul receiving the baptism in the Spirit through Ananias.
Though tongues not mentioned, we know that Paul spoke in tongues in Corinthians

Acts chapter 10 Cornelius and his household

Acts chapter 19 The disciples at Ephesus.

Three incidences resulted in tongues and prophesy and magnification of God (Acts 2:4, 11; 10:44-46; 19:6).

In Acts chapter 9, Paul received the baptism in the Spirit without tongues being mentioned. Paul acknowledged that he spoke in tongues more than the Corinthians and said speaking in tongues speak the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 14:2, 18). Paul said that he could sing in the spirit and sing with the understanding through tongues (1 Corinthians 14:14-15).

In Acts chapter 8, Simon the former magician saw or heard something visible enough for him to acknowledge that the baptism in the Spirit was transacted (Acts 8:17-18).

As three of the reception of the baptism in the Spirit in the book of Acts shows evidence of tongues, and the fourth of Paul in Acts chapter 9 shows forth that he did speak in tongues, it is likely that in Acts chapter 8, the out evidence was also tongues. Moreover, the

measurement for the reception of the baptism in the Spirit is in Acts chapter 2 which is speaking in tongues. And in case some think that it should also include wind and fire, which were special manifestations, the case of Acts chapter 10 in Cornelius and his household only had them speak in tongues (without fire or wind) which Peter acknowledged to have 'received the Holy Spirit just as we have' (Acts 10:47). Biblical evidence thus points to the receiving of the baptism of the Spirit is with speaking in tongues.

Why should the baptism of the Holy Spirit be with speaking in tongues, which magnify God and His mysteries? I believe it is given in order to take the church, the bride of Christ into a higher and deeper dimension of worship that the people of God in the Old Testament did not receive or achieve. It is the beginning of what Jesus predicted that the hour will come when men shall worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23). Apostle Paul considered worship and singing in the spirit as singing in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:14-15). On top of this, when the Bible advocates being filled with the Spirit, the outward evidence of this is psalm, hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in our heart (Ephesians 5:18-19). Only those who have sung in the spirit in tongues will know what spiritual songs are truly like. Being filled with the Word of Christ also results in the same thing: psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16). Everything leads to and ends with the worship of God in spirit and in truth.

For those who have not been baptized in the Spirit, be baptized according to the standard of the Bible and worship God in spirit and in truth. For those who already received the baptism in the Spirit, practice what you have received and worship God in spirit and in truth. For those who need guidance, join with others who do worship in spirit and in truth. It is the most glorious experience you could enter into. We teach people to pray in the spirit, now we must go further

and teach people to worship in the spirit. Test this out, worship in the spirit for an hour and see what happens in your life. There will be a sweetness of heaven always abiding twenty-four-hours in you. Let the same Spirit of worship from the very Throne of God fill you until your life is a life of complete worship unto God. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.12

The Importance of Pergamos

Dearly Beloved

Many people wondered why and what is the significance of Pergamos glory on 9 February 2012. I have also asked the same question at the beginning of this end time revival. It is easy for humans to formulate their own opinion and state their personal 'revealed reasons' but it is indisputable when it is revealed in the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures. Without sharing the various visions and downloads from the Holy Spirit (the *rhema* received), we first approach this from the academic and biblical point of view. The following are Scriptural reasonings (like the way the apostle Paul reasoned in the synagogues during his missionary journeys) that everyone who loves the Bible needs to contend with:

Why was Pergamos referred to as 'where Satan's throne is' and 'where Satan dwells'?

This could easily have been Rome, where the centre of all Roman Empire power dwells, one of the other corrupt churches in Revelation or even somewhere remote on planet earth like the Bermuda Triangle or the Devil's Sea. There is no other such place referred to in the whole Bible. Moreover, isn't the devil a fallen angel, a spirit being, who dwells only in the spiritual dimension as the god of this world or the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). Isn't the domain of fallen angels at the plane of spiritual wickedness in heavenly places? (Ephesians 6:12). Why does the devil need a physical domain to express as 'his throne'? The same question can be asked as to why God needs the Tabernacle of Moses or the Temple of Solomon? Obviously, the answer in the Bible on God's side is for the closer and

more integrated link between what God wants to do on earth and His people. The same reverse reasoning can be said of the devil as he also requires humans to surrender their freewill to him in obeisance, in order to fulfil his evil agenda on the planet earth.

David's kingdom and Solomon's Temple came about around the 10th Century BC. The physical manifestation of the temple brought Israel to its zenith and after Solomon, every king was measured based on David and on what they did in the worship of God in the temple. Meanwhile in the north, the Neo-Assyrian Empire was rising and began to affect the Northern Kingdom of Israel and also the Southern kingdom under David's descendants.

Secular history (Wikipedia) records the rise of Tiglath-Peleser III as below:

"Assyrian power in the Near East greatly increased as the result of Tiglath-Pileser's military reforms and of his campaigns of conquest. Upon ascending the throne, he claimed (in Annal 9, which dates to 745 BCE, his first regnal year) to have annexed Babylonia, from "Dur-(Kuri)galzu, Sippar of Shamash, ... the cities [of Ba]bylonia up to the Uqnu river [by the shore of the Lo]wer [Sea]" (which referred to the Persian Gulf), and subsequently placed his eunuch over them as governor. Also in his first year of reign he defeated the powerful kingdom of Urartu (Armenia), whose hegemony under the rulership of Sarduri II had extended to Asia Minor, northern Mesopotamia, western Iran and Syria; there he found unrivalled horses for his war-chariots. He also defeated the Medes before making war on and conquering the Neo-Hittites, Syria and Phoenicia. He took Arpad in 740 BCE after three years of siege, annexed it as a province (over which he placed one of his eunuchs as governors), and subjected Hamath to tribute. Assyrian inscriptions record in 740 BCE, the fifth year of his reign, a victory over Azariah (Uzziah), king of Judah, whose achievements appear in 2 Chronicles 26. He also subjugated Damascus, the Arabs under Queen Zabibe, Menahem of Israel and Sam'al's

king Azriyau, who all paid him tribute. In 737 and 736 BCE he turned his attention again to Iran, conquering the Medes and Persians and occupying a large part of Iran. According to the royal inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser many of the inhabitants were enslaved and deported to other parts of the Assyrian empire, as commonly done by his predecessors. At sieges, captives were slaughtered, and their bodies raised on stakes and displayed before the city.

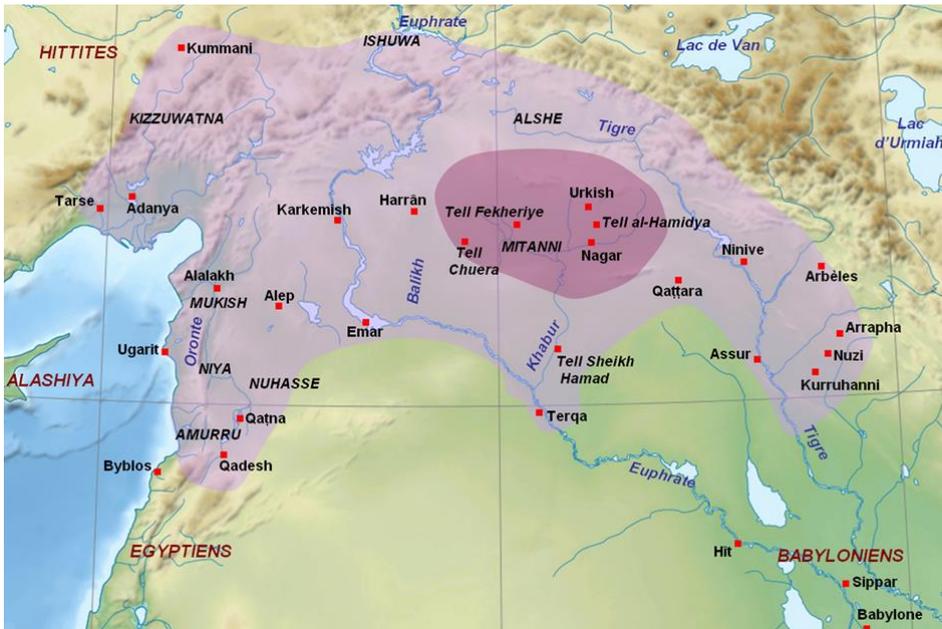
In October 729 BCE, Tiglath-Pileser assumed total control of Babylon, capturing the Babylonian king Nabu-mukin-zeri (ABC 1 Col.1:21) and having himself crowned as "King Pulu of Babylon."

Biblical records describe how Tiglath-Pileser III exacted 1,000 talents of silver as tribute from King Menahem of the Kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 15:19) and later defeated his successor Pekah (2 Kings 15:29).

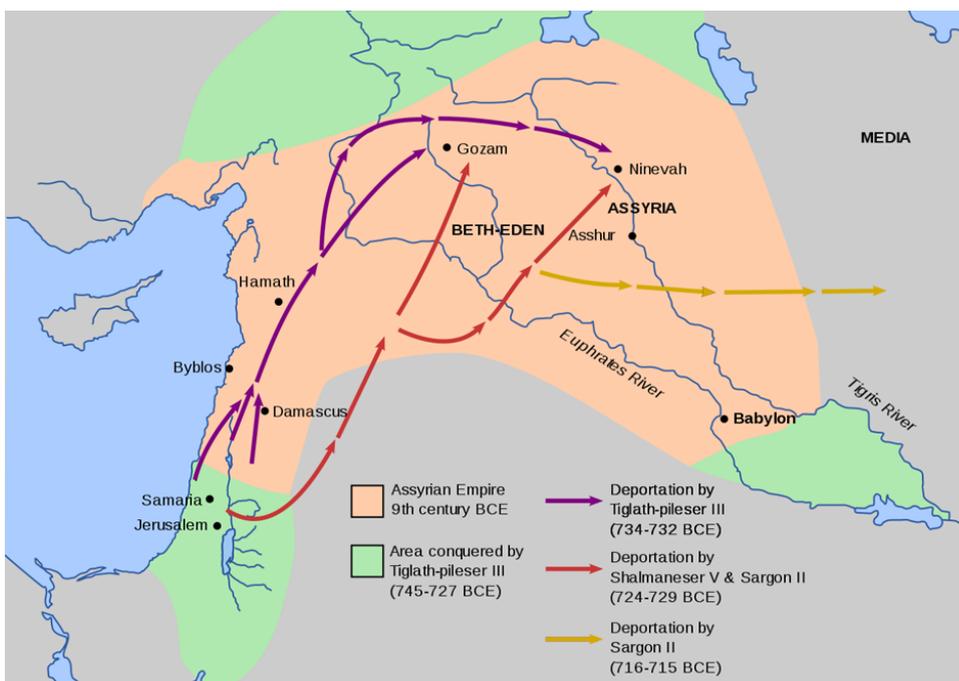
Pekah had allied with Rezin, king of the Arameans against Ahaz (known to the Assyrians as Yahu-khazi), of the Kingdom of Judah, who responded by appealing for the Assyrian monarch's help with the Temple gold and silver. Tiglath-Pileser answered swiftly. He first marched his army down the eastern Mediterranean coast, taking coastal cities all the way to Egypt. This cut off his enemies' access to the sea. Once this was achieved, he returned to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, destroyed their army, and deported the Reubenites, Gadites, and the people of Manasseh to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the Gozan river (1 Chron 5:26). He then installed an Israelite puppet king, Hoshea, (732–723 BCE) in the place of Pekah. He concluded this extensive campaign by marching north and west, ravaging Aramaea, seizing Damascus, executing Rezin, and deporting the survivors to Kir (2 Kings 16:9)."

The dispersion of the Northern Israelites by the Assyrian Empire

The Neo-Assyrian Empire was responsible for the complete removal of Northern Israel and is a type of Anti-Christ capturing the apostate church. The Neo-Assyrian Empire covered the area of Pergamos under the sphere of its influence:



The extend of Neo-Assyrian Empire before the rise of Babylonian Empire



Dispersion of the Northern Israelites by the Assyrian Empire

The control of Pergamos was under the Neo-Assyrian Empire which dominated the regions of Phrygia and Lydia, before the Medo-Persian Empire took it. During the Greek Empire period, Pergamon became a major cultural centre of the Greek world and the Acropolis was constructed. With it the Great altar at Pergamos was built. Why does the Bible refer to this place as the seat of Satan and Satan's throne when there were other temples to Zeus constructed in Athens and Cyrene? It is not just the physical altar but the spiritual forces that had been working in these areas. Primarily its impact on Israel and on the early church. The powers that existed then were responsible for the ten lost tribes of Israel when they were removed and much persecution against Christianity such that the book of Revelation records the death of Antipas the martyr (Revelation 2:11). Pergamos church was not the most persecuted church (that title goes to the church of Smyrna), but it is known as the compromising church. For nearly three thousand years since the scattering of the Northern Tribes of Israel, the enemy has symbolically ruled here.

Could the reference of Pergamos being the throne of Satan or where Satan dwells be merely a spiritual symbolism and not factual?

Of course, anyone can just interpret the Bible spiritually as an allegory and not interpret it literally. Many scholars have tried that with stories of Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, Moses miracles, etc. The problem with interpreting something as mere allegory and not true is that very soon, the entire bible becomes no more factual as story after story is taken to be mere stories and not historical fact. The general principle is to always interpret things as factual. The seven churches of Revelation were actual historical churches. There are no grounds for viewing them as pure allegory. Yet the mention of them as being representative of ALL churches is astounding as none of them, except Ephesus, was well known in the New Testament. But what we know

of the New Testament churches could be due to the emphasis on Pauline revelation and the missionary journeys of Paul. John the Apostle was prominent in the church of Smyrna and there are interesting accounts of the stories of John being the trainer of Bishop Antipas at Pergamos and Bishop Polycarp in Smyrna. A literal interpretation of the Bible and the seven churches of Revelation would imply that Pergamos is indeed the manifest ruling place of Satan, though we do not have much understanding of this until this end time revival. All Seven churches were planted by Paul from Ephesus and they were chosen by Jesus to represent the whole church in its character and eschatological reference.

The conclusion to this question is that, it is more Scriptural and proper to interpret the Bible literally even if we do not understand all of it. This applies to many puzzling Scriptures like the Genesis account of angels cohabiting with humans producing giants. If we believe, it explains a lot of the source of human mythologies of giants and humans. On this wise, we have chosen to interpret the words of Jesus to the Seven churches of Revelation literally. If our Lord Jesus said that Pergamos was the throne of Satan and where Satan dwells, who are we to contradict our Lord Jesus (Revelation 2:13)?

From spiritual visions, it seems that the location of the Seven churches dates back to the geographical space when Pangea existed and it was an important location of dimensions of access to heaven, even dating back to pre-Adamic earth. We know that there are also locations of fallen angels trap at the Euphrates that so happen to be located where it is today at Euphrates in modern maps (Revelation 9:14). Additionally, from God's point of view where the future to Him has already occurred and is past tense, God knew that He would release His glory upon the earth via Pergamos (9 February 2012). The devil sensing some things had sought to prevent that but to no avail. Just

like Mount Moriah was an important place in Abraham's time because of its future location of the temple of Solomon (Genesis 22:2; 2 Chronicles 3:1), Pergamos has always been predestined as the place where the kingdom of God, the Stone which came and struck the feet of the statute of Nebuchadnezzar, touched the earth (Daniel 2:34, 44). It is located geographically at an important place where all the world empires had tread through to conquer the world. Only God knows all the reasons why such a small insignificant place in the eyes of man, would be chosen as the place where the glory of God comes down. We can only accept the bible as fact and flow forth with God's commandments.

Just as God planned for the manifestation of His glory to always come upon a pre-designated place by predestination, He has planned that Pergamos, where the Spirit of Glory is represented, be the place for the end time move. Jerusalem was a special place that came into prominence during David's reign. Jesus commanded to wait in Jerusalem until the Spirit of God has empowered God's people (Acts 1:8). Similarly, Pergamos is a special place in these end times and it is God who ordained that the kingdom of God's glory should shine forth from here.

Visions were received on the Seven churches and we include them here. To all those who believe, it will bring blessing:

The Seven churches trip in 2012 was done to release the beginning of this end time move. The archangel Uriel took charge of the whole itinerary when we were there and there was a vision of the angel of Ephesus battling spiritual forces. The angels in Ephesus were dressed in battle armour and a dream was given – the angel of Ephesus coming in with an olive branch and saying, “I am the angel of Ephesus and we have been expecting you. Sanctify yourself; you are doing the work of the Lord of Hosts. You will proclaim Jehovah Shalom to this town. The peace of God will triumph over this place. The Lord will bring life back to the desolate places. Come, let us go!” Prayers and proclamation was made on 31st January 2012. In Smyrna (Izmir), the archangel Uriel met with the angel of Smyrna and they seem to be acquainted with each other as they have worked together in the angelic realm. The angel of Smyrna said that they have been waiting for centuries for God to raise a prophetic ministry to work with angels in order to fulfil God’s end time prophecies. The angel of Smyrna also had warlike features and aura like archangel Uriel and was also dressed in battle gear. The angel of Smyrna radiates the love of Christ and had a sense of compassion and gentleness that makes one filled with God’s tender love. A group of angels was there with the angel of Smyrna at the place of prayer and proclamation on 2nd February 2012 with the following words proclaimed:

Thus says the Lord God. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life; no one goes to the Father except through Him. But he who believes Jesus Christ is the only way to God the Father, he will live because Christ died and rose up again by the power of God the Father. He who believes in Jesus Christ shall know the truth, and the truth will give him liberty from all fears.

Thus says the Lord. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. (Matthew 5:11)

Thus says the Lord. Blessed are you when men hate you and ostracize you, and casts insults at you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. (Luke 6:22)

Each time David raised His arms to pray, the angels would all cry out together, "Blessed be the name of the Son of God, Jesus Christ; He is the first and the last; who was dead, and has come to life!" (Rev 2:8).

In Pergamos (Bergama), a three day fast was required (6th-8th Feb). For most of us, we were already on the last few days of 40 day fast. The angels in Pergamos were seeking a breakthrough over the spirits and principalities of the air for nearly 3000 years!! The victory will be for the whole body of Christ. The angel of Pergamos showed groups of angels at the base and at the mid-point of the mountain, groups surrounding the whole mountain. We only saw one side from where we stood but was told it is all around the mountain. Each of the fast days was spent in spiritual warfare and fasting. The angels did their spiritual warfare through worship and with swords drawn. There were groups of angels blowing trumpets, groups who wave flags and banners, groups with hands raised and worshipping and also groups with sword pointing up at the top of the mountain. And they were all proclaiming, "The Lord reigns! Blessed be the name of the Lord! Alleluia! The Lord reigns, let all the earth rejoice!" All the angels including the ones accompanying us also had drawn swords and proclaimed together. The following Scriptures were also proclaimed, Ps 47:8, "God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne!" Ps 11:4, "The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven. The angel of Pergamos was just stationed above the mountain in the air with his sword drawn. And his sword was a flaming sword with a fire!

There were huge dark clouds over the mountain during the fast but on Feb 9th, the day of proclamation, the sky was clear for miles as far as the eye can see, with a bright light that shone over the mountain like a star. Countless angels and the main archangels, no longer attired in battle gear but in

shining garments, were there. There was a great joy and radiance amongst all the angels and it was a victory walk. Groups of angels were playing all sorts of musical instruments all over the mountain; there was a heavenly music all around the mountain in the midst of the sound of strong wind. And there were sentinels all spaced out round the mountain and standing with torches. In the distant hills groups of angels standing with torches! Then something like a small army formed up, there was like 3 regiments of troops formed up, each with a commander and in front of these 3 regiments stood their captain, all in battle array and full armour. The captain came and introduced himself, "Greetings, I am the angel of Thyatira. We are here to celebrate the victory of the Lord God Almighty! We are all expecting you to come and prophesy and proclaim. Rest well and we will see you soon." And then the angel of Thyatira went back to his angels and they all flew away. They flew back to Thyatira (Akhisar). What a sight! All the angels flying together! What a sight! Then the angel of Pergamos brought us to different places in the site to proclaim and prophesy and to anoint. The following Scriptures and proclamation were done:

There was an olive tree in the open space. Genesis 8:11-17, about the dove that Noah sent out and it return with a fresh olive leaf in its beak---"and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth." Thus says the Lord, this olive tree shall be a sign that the Church of God will abound on the earth in the knowledge of God, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth. Genesis 8:17.

Isaiah chapters 12, 13 and 25 were read and prophesied. Isaiah 13 (read on the 3rd day of prayer and fasting). Thus says the Lord, "Lift up a banner on the high mountain, raise your voice to them...The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like that of many people! A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The Lord musters the army for battle....The Lord and His weapons of indignation, to destroy the whole land...Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place, in the wrath of

the Lord of hosts and in the day of His anger...And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah...Her time is near to come, and her days will not be prolonged."

Isaiah 25. Thus says the Lord God, "O Lord, You are God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things...For You have made a city a ruin, a fortified city a ruin, a palace of foreigners to be a city no more; it will never be rebuilt...And in this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces...And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people...And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, the rebuke of His people He will take away from the earth; for the Lord has spoken. And it will be said in that day: Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation. For on this mountain the hand of the Lord will rest and Moab shall be trampled down under Him..."

A Vision of the lake of fire was given. The lake of fire and fallen angels being thrown into this the lake of fire and they were crying out for mercy from the Lord; and the beast bound up and thrown into the lake of fire and he was shouting with defiance as he was thrown into the fire. At this place the wind was howling and it sounded like voices crying out for mercy.

Thus says the Lord God. (Micah 4:6-7) In that day, says the Lord, I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast and those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation; so the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on, even forever.

The victory of Pergamos was great and all coordinated by the Holy Spirit with all angels and men involved yielding to the Holy Spirit and receiving instructions from God our Father, Almighty God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is under the Archangel Uriel's instructions that we will be going to the Seven churches again in February 2020. We will have an all-night prayer on February 9 (Melchizedek Day) which is the 40th day of our fast. God is doing extraordinary things in these end times. There are those who believe and those who don't. There are those who are filled with thankfulness and worship while others mocked. In every generation, God has always raised a voice that speaks the Will of God. Let those who have ears hear, what the Spirit of God is saying in these last hour. From 9 February 2012, Satan has been dethroned at Pergamos and God's glory and Victory has been proclaimed. The kingdom of God has struck the earth and now is growing into a mountain of glory.

Fatherly Talk 7.13

The Seven Spirits of God

Dearly Beloved

From the very beginning of their introduction, the seven Spirits have always been a mystery to Bible scholars. This concept was introduced by John the Apostle in the book of Revelation (Revelation 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). The early church fathers have always associated with the sevenfold qualities of Jesus in (Isaiah 11:1-3). Modern scholars follow the same general approach. None of us were able to deduce that the seven Spirits were linked to the seven churches, although there are hints in the Scriptures themselves. When this end time move progress, God started to reveal the seven Spirits that were before the Throne of God have been descending since the early days of the creation of the Universe at the fall of Lucifer towards the earth. It took them many millions of years (if time could be measured in those immeasurable ancient times) to descend from seventh heaven towards the first heaven. By the time they reached third heaven, they took on shapes and forms like the angels (who are spirits – Hebrews 1:7). They have come to join themselves with the temple and habitation of God on the earth, which is us the Bride, New Jerusalem.

My first response was to examine the Scriptures to see if this is true. A close examination of the seven churches of Revelation show forth that these angels of the seven churches were not ordinary angels, they were stars in the Right Hand of Jesus. They were also the seven lamps of fire burning before the Throne of God relating to the seven golden lampstands around Jesus, which are the seven churches (Revelation 1:20; 4:5). Then we have the seven horns and seven eyes which again are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth (Revelation 5:6).

Our analysis is as follows:

1. The seven horns, seven eyes are on the Lamb, which is Jesus. This implies that all seven Spirits flow forth through Him and reveal Him.
2. They are the seven stars upon Jesus Right hand. Stars have always represented angels in some references (Job 38:7; Mark 13:25 of fallen angels, also Revelation 6:13). The seven stars in Jesus' hand relating to the seven lampstands around Jesus is as the seven angels relating to the church.
3. The seven lamps burning before the Throne and the seven golden lampstands before Jesus is a picture like angels appear before the Father on behalf of their charges on earth (Revelation 18:10). The relationship between the burning lamps and the golden lampstands is as the relationship between seven angels and the seven churches.

Upon seeing the relationship of the seven Spirits as the seven angels, now revealed in the Scriptures and by revelation, I realized that there must be something special in this arrangement as such has never been revealed before (especially the Holy Spirit flowing as the seven Spirits) until the book of Revelation was written. On further examination, I also realized that the phrase 'to the angel of... ' could actually be translated as 'to, in, or by the angel of... ' Why did the translators choose to 'to the angel of the church' rather than 'by the angel of the church?' The message to John to the seven churches was not just from our Lord Jesus but also 'from the seven Spirits who are before the Throne' (Revelation 1:4). The message was to be sent to the seven churches and not sent to the seven angels of the seven churches (Revelation 1:11). The correct translation for each church is 'by the angel of the church... write' and not 'to the angel of the church.' Each

of the message to the seven churches was from our Lord Jesus and from the seven Spirits and given by the angels of the seven churches. As the seven Spirits are now manifest as the seven angels of the seven churches, they have a special manifestation of the Spirit of Peace, Love, Glory, Power, Life, Wisdom and Mercy as in the order of the churches mentioned in Revelation chapter 2 and 3 (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea). And just as they are a part and being of the Lamb of God (seven horns, seven eyes), they now must be part and being of His church, the Bride of Christ. The seven Spirits must merge into each of the members of Jesus' church until they become our horns and eyes as it is with Jesus, so it must be with us.

The seven Spirits were without shape and form until they reached about the third heaven. Since their forms as angels are taken on by design and expression to manifest attributes, a description of what they manifest as would be enlightened.

Firstly, we note that the seven churches form an arrow head pointing upwards slightly left in geography as is shown below:



Pergamos is like the arrow head, which pierces the darkness with the glory of God. On 9 February 2012, the glory of God came down ushering the beginning of this end time move (we described it in Fatherly Talk 7.12). We have yet to understand fully the implication of this glory of God coming down but know that it relates to the birthing of the male Child (Jesus the Firstborn from the dead in His resurrection – Acts 13:33-34; Isaiah 66:7, 8; Revelation 12:1-5) as prophesied in Isaiah 66, which is followed by Zion giving birth to the children (sons of glory Romans 8:19-22). As Pergamos glory is released we are exhorted to ‘drink deeply and be delighted with the abundance of her glory’ (Isaiah 66:11). God extends peace (Ephesus) to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream (flowing forth from Pergamos, Smyrna, representing glory and love) (Isaiah 66:12) resulting in the renewal of youth (Isaiah 66:14 bones flourish like grass). This glory from Pergamos will grow into a mountain of glory such that all nations and tongues shall come and see and declare God’s glory (Isaiah 66:18, 19).

Some vision descriptions of the seven Spirits who appear as seven angels of Revelation.

Angel of Ephesus is younger looking. Smaller in size about 7 feet (height of Adam as a man)

Angel of Sardis is like ancient of days about is 10 feet tall. Movement very little. Has a beard.

Angel of Thyatira is broadest, stout, strongest looking, about 9 feet tall. Very active. He has a moustache and a broad face. He is like one of the generals under Archangel Uriel, Hakararael in authority and outlook.

Angel of Philadelphia look thoughtful, communicated a lot. Around 8 feet tall. Has a beard.

Angel of Pergamos is the brightest, almost 9 feet tall. Confident and secure.

Angel of Laodicea is the most soft-spoken. Around 8 feet plus.

Angel of Smyrna is about 8 feet plus in height close to nine. Is more feminine-looking in nature. Does not talk much.

Always at rest are angel of Laodicea, angel of Ephesus and angel of Smyrna (mercy, peace, love).

They showed many things, but more will be revealed. In appearance of elderliness (although there is no such thing as age) amongst them looks like Sardis, followed by Philadelphia, Smyrna, then the rest, with the youngest as Ephesus.

Remembering that there is no such thing as age in heaven, and as the forms taken by the seven Spirits were taken by purposeful design, their 'appeared form' itself contains a message. Life appearing as the oldest, tells us that the expression of the attribute of the life of God was one of the first attributes shown, followed by wisdom then love. Peace appearing as the youngest is showing forth that this attribute is a newer attribute being revealed to the Universe. Each of the seven Spirits are manifesting a specific attribute of God and Jesus that we must assimilate. The messages to the seven churches are 'in and by' the individual seven Spirits and each message contains keys in which they can merge with us more fully.

Colours	Churches	Anointing	7 Spirits	Tabernacle	Jesus
Greenish	Ephesus	Peace	Counsel (etsah)	Brazen Altar	Lamb of God Power of the Blood
Bluish, Reddish, White	Smyrna	Love	Lord (Yahweh)	Laver	Jesus the Word Power of the Word
Yellowish Golden, White	Pergamos	Glory	Knowledge (da'ath - seeable)	Incense Altar	Jesus the High Priest Power of Prayer and Praise
Golden Orange	Thyatira	Power	Might (gburah)	Candlestick	Jesus the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit Power of the Holy Spirit
Reddish	Sardis	Life	Understanding (binah)	Table of Showbread	Jesus the King of kings and Lord of lords Power of the Name of Jesus
Bluish	Philadelphia	Wisdom	Wisdom (Chokmah)	Mercy Seat	Jesus the Fullness of God Power of the Presence of God
Purplish White	Laodicea	Mercy	Fear of the Lord (Yirah)	Mercy Seat	

The above table helps us quantify our progression through all the attributes of the seven Spirits. Also, the messages by each of the angel of the seven churches to us contain gems of truth which will help us in our merging with the seven Spirits until we are exactly as our Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God.

May each of us grow into the fullness of all the seven Spirits of God.

Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.14

Memorials to God

Dearly Beloved

Every human who is noble desires to leave a legacy or good works that endures after their time on earth is completed. While there are good noble works and charities that endure in the natural, the greatest memorials are spiritual memorials built through first love towards our God and Father. Sometimes those who build great spiritual memorials do so without purposefully attempting to build memorials; while others seek to do so and fail miserably. Cornelius was not seeking to build such memorials but was only interested in living his life righteously with a God whom he loved but did not personally know (Acts 10:1-2). I believe that he was purely concerned with helping the poor and living a righteous life. As a centurion who must have trained in rigorous discipline, he was always praying regularly at the ninth hour (around 3pm). After many years of this regular discipline of prayer at a certain time of the day, an angel appeared to him and called him by name (Acts 10:3). He was informed by the angel that his prayers and alms have come up for a memorial before God (Acts 10:4). He probably never had a vision in his life before and was greatly afraid at what he saw. What God wanted to do was to bring him further in his understanding of God, salvation and a personal relationship with God. God had mercy and compassion upon him, seeing that he was faithful to whatever level of knowledge of God that he had. From God's perspective, he was one who deserved to be especially brought into the personal knowledge of all that Christ has done.

In the meantime, in the world of Peter the apostle, God was preparing him to be ready to bring the gospel to Cornelius the Gentile. Even eating or fraternising with the Gentiles was frowned upon by the Jewish people. How much more going into their unkosher houses and fellowshiping with them. To God, all these are just human things which have no relevance in the cosmic scale of what He is about to do through Christ Jesus. God sent Peter a vision of unclean animals which by interpretation was the three Gentiles coming to see him and bring him to Cornelius house (Acts 10:9-16). Visions are always allegorically and sometimes parts of it make no natural sense. For example, the part about killing and eating has nothing to do with killing and eating. Rather, it had to do with fellowship which involves eating and drinking. The Holy Spirit did say to Peter after the vision that three men were seeking to see him and that he must go with them (Acts 10:19). At the reception in Cornelius' house, Peter said that it was unlawful for a Jewish man to keep company with or to go to another, especially those from the unclean Gentile world (Acts 10:28). Despite the conflict with his own upbringing and culture, Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius. The Holy Spirit did not wait for permission from men but went ahead and gave Cornelius and his household the born-again experience and baptized him and his household in the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-46). After their water baptism, Peter was asked to stay a few days with them (Acts 10:48).

God took an unwilling apostle, crossed cultural barriers, sent His angel, gave instruction through visions and spoke directly by His Spirit in order to bring about the fullness of revelation to a humble righteous man whose only desire is to help the poor and live a righteous man. But in God's sight, he was a man who had built a mighty spiritual memorial to Him despite his lack of knowledge in the fuller revelations of God! It is important to be amongst those who build memorials that God loves.

During His ministry days on earth, our Lord Jesus declared that the anointing of Him with costly spikenard by Mary in the house of Simon the leper at Bethany was to be a memorial that will be told wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world (Matthew 26:11-13; Mark 14:9; John 12:1-7). Mary did it out of pure love and appreciation for Jesus. She was not looking for recognition or consciously wanting a memorial of her ministry towards Jesus. It must have been a great sacrifice to purchase this amount of costly oil and she was not ashamed to be ridiculed by others when she wept and washed Jesus feet with her tears of love and her hair. As always, God knows the sacrifice and cost of all that we bring to Him. It was such that differentiated Cain and Abel, who brought the best of his flock (Genesis 4:4). David the king also knew never to worship God with anything that costs him nothing (1 Chronicles 21:24).

There are certain times when God wants us to remember special events that are of great significance both natural, spiritual and prophetically, God institutes it as a memorial. The beginning of the Exodus was marked as a memorial in the history of the Israelites (Exodus 12:14). The keeping of the feast of unleavened bread was to be a memorial kept between their eyes (Exodus 13:9). The defeat of Amalekites as Moses held his hands high was to be recounted to Joshua and written as a memorial (Exodus 17:14). The breastplate that the high priest Aaron wore bearing the names of the sons of Israel were as a memorial before the Lord continually (Exodus 28:29). There is a memorial portion of the grain offering to be burnt as a sweet aroma to the Lord (Leviticus 2:9). The first crossing of the Jordan was marked with twelve memorial stones taken to build a memorial for the children of Israel (Joshua 4:7).

Our God does mark special events, timings and things done as special moments to be remembered and celebrated. But even more powerful

are spiritual memorials that are ordained and sanctified by the Lord Himself. In each of our lives, we are to become living sacrifices to God bringing Him praise and worship in our own unique way. There are obvious principles and keys that make something a memorial before His presence. They are:

1. Things that are done sacrificially out of pure love for God.
2. Things that celebrate and commemorate special acts of God that He did for us.
3. Things that are done to help us remember to keep loving God and worship God continually.
4. Things that are done by God that marked the acts of God done to keep His promise towards us.
5. Things that are done in a regular and consistent manner that fulfils God's Will on the earth.
6. Things that are done to give ourselves regularly to the Lord in prayers, praises or worship.
7. Things that are done without any other motivation except to love God and to love others whom God loves.

Part of the process of building spiritual memorials is spending a regular time with God daily as an expression of our love and adoration to God and being like God in helping others. Cornelius had a regular discipline time to seek God every day at 3pm in giving of alms and prayers. Others like him are Daniel who prayed three times a day facing towards Jerusalem. Daniel knelt down three times a day and gave thanks to God, a custom he developed ever since his youth (Daniel 6:10). David declared that he praised God seven times a day (Psalms 119:164). It is indeed the person who meditates day and night on God's word that becomes like a tree planted by the rivers of water, bear fruit in its season and whose leaves do not wither (Psalm 1:2-3).

At other times, a consciousness of what God has done, the majesty and greatness of an event and the demarcation point seared into our memories is what help delineate an event of God into a lasting memorial. It is easy to become callous towards the things of God and the holiness of God when we have it as a constant experience. Never ever take the things of God for granted. To do so would be unappreciative of what God has done and become hardened to the presence and the holiness of God. People like Eli and his sons had taken for granted the positions they had and the holiness of the work that God had sanctified them to do (1 Samuel 2:27-36). Others like Korah began to overstep the boundary of what God wanted them to do, assuming positions that God did not give them (Numbers 16:8-11). They all perished for taking God for granted. The sin of Esau was his lack of appreciation for his firstborn status and he traded it for a bowl of red bean soup (Genesis 25:34). Judas Iscariot did not worship our Lord Jesus, nor did he fear Him, but he took our Lord for granted and treated our Lord Jesus as a normal human whom he can manipulate and used politics to secure himself a place with the Jews. In the end, his demise was equal to that of the antichrist. By the time, he tried to repent, he still regarded Jesus as just an innocent man (Matthew 27:4). One of the things that caused the rebellion at the end of the thousand years of Millennium was a type of lethargy or taking for granted what they had during the thousand years. The Lord Jesus reigned in the Millennium and yet they were not satisfied and wanted to join the devil in going against the Lord (Revelation 20:8). What more could they not have? What else could they have wanted? Being resurrected from death and serving God a thousand years as priests was insufficient for them (Revelation 20:6).

These roads to backsliding and sin are to be avoided:

1. Taking the things of God for granted.
2. Taking God for granted.
3. Taking the positions from God and the servants and the people of God for granted.
4. Taking our lives for granted.
5. Taking our gifts and blessings from God for granted.
6. Taking others for granted.
7. The lack of gratefulness and thankfulness towards God and towards others.

The only cure for such things:

1. Live a life of thanksgiving and praise every day.
2. Remain humble and worship God on your knees.
3. Fast often and humble yourself before God.
4. Know that you are nothing and you can do nothing without Jesus.
5. Be always childlike.
6. Be always learning and growing.
7. Be a worshipper of God.

Let us rise and become memorials to God. Let our lives be the essence of which God would be well-pleased. The one sentence that we all must aspire towards is for God to say that He is 'well-pleased with us.' Let everything be done always through Jesus living through us. There is nothing that we have that is of value except for Jesus and Jesus alone. Live Jesus, breathe Jesus, be conscious of Jesus living through us day and night. In Jesus Name. Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.15

Tapping on the Flow of Prosperity

Dearly Beloved

As we head towards the end of the first seven years of this end time revival and move into the second seven years of famine, the Lord is increasing the prosperity and breakthroughs in each of your lives, both personally and corporately. Many of you sought to tap on this triple wave of the years 2018, 2019 and 2020. For future readers of this talk, this principle applies to all prosperity and any other waves. As we are in the middle of this triple wave, I would like to point to some principles and strategies of tapping onto this flow so that each of you can be ready for the years of famine.

1. The flow of righteousness

The peak of the wave is the crest of the wave which is the highest mid-point with the most energy supporting it, so the midpoint is 1.5 years in a three-year wave. We have just past the crest of this three-year wave and should surf on its waves to the next level of prosperity. This wave is built upon the energy of righteousness, especially those of us who have been walking faithfully, doing righteous deeds, practicing a disciplined devotional life with our God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing God, He would have put each of you through various tests of righteousness to see what is in your heart. God tested Abraham by allowing him to be offered prosperity via the king of Sodom which Abraham refused (Genesis 14:21, 22). Then God proclaimed Himself as Abraham's exceedingly great reward and God made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15:1, 18, 19). God favours the righteous and has pleasure in their

prosperity (Psalm 35:27-28). Righteousness and prosperity are tightly linked in the Bible (Jeremiah 23:5-6). Daniel warned Nebuchadnezzar that he needed to break off his sins by being righteous, showing mercy to the poor that God might lengthen his prosperity (Daniel 4:27). It is important to guard against greed, live righteously in the sight of God in both small and big things, so that God can bless you with abundant prosperity. The test usually comes before the reward. Just before your greatest moment of prosperity might be a critical moment of test to see what is in your heart.

2. The flow of thoughts and ideas

Every financial problem is just an idea problem. There is always a way to solve every financial crisis if we are willing to pray and receive God's wisdom. The solution might involve making decisions that we are unwilling to make because of fear. Wisdom is always the producer of riches, honour; yes, enduring riches and righteousness (Proverb 8:18). It is wisdom that enables the prosperity and reign of kings, rulers, princes, nobles and judges (Proverb 8:14-16). Those who love wisdom will inherit wealth and have their treasuries filled (Proverb 8:21). Anyone who has spent abundant time with God in prayers and worship will notice a flow of ideas that come to them supernaturally. This can come in the morning, noon or night. Or even at times of relaxation. Write down all these ideas that God give and pray over them. These thoughts and ideas that come from God will lead you to favour, prosperity and growth. Tap upon these ideas and they will lead you to make decisions that will increase abundantly the flow of prosperity to you.

3. Hear and Do, not just Hear

At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord Jesus spoke of a wise man contrasted to a foolish man. The wise man built his house upon the rock whilst the foolish man built on sand and we know which house fell when the floods and rains came (Matthew 7:24-27). In the parable, both the wise and the foolish were active but the invisible factor was the ground underneath their houses. The foolish man was inactive as he heard and did not do, but the wise man heard and did! It is the action that makes something we hear from God into concrete rock. Hearing and hearing alone without action does not lead one to true knowledge. True knowledge comes from within and not from without.

All the four types of ground in the parable of the sower received the same seed!! It was how each responded to the word that determined their ability to reproduce (Mark 4: 14-20). Same word, different soil, different circumstances and different results. God can give us similar ideas but planted into different types of hearts and minds, brewed through differing circumstances, produce different results. As James advised in his epistle, faith without works is dead (James 2:17). Perhaps many good people of God received the faith of God in their hearts but because they lack action, they have no results, as everything exists only in their minds and no concrete action was ever taken. The biblical Joseph might have been a dreamer, but he was also a man of action. In the end, we are not rewarded based on our ideas or dreams but on our works that we do through God (1 Corinthians 3:13-15). Is there anything that God has spoken to you in your heart and mind, and God is still waiting for you to action? Having considered and prayed

through all things, it is time to take action to bring blessings into your life.

4. Be bold, overcome your fears

It is the time to possess the kingdom as decreed by the Ancient of Days, especially in these days of the ten toes (Daniel 2: 44; 7:21-22). We are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, and the only fear allowed is the fear of God (Hebrews 12:28). Those who fear are not worthy to fight God's battles. Those who are fearful and fainthearted are told to leave God's army before the battle begins (Deuteronomy 20:8). God would rather have fewer people than to have a multitude of fearful ones. Everyone born into this sinful earth have fears in their lives as a result of sin nature. The first place to conquer anything is to conquer the fear in our own lives. Out of twelve spies sent to spy the land of Canaan, ten have fears and only two, Caleb and Joshua, had conquered their fear of giants (Numbers 14:6-9). Out of thirty-two thousand people gathered together under Gideon, twenty-two were sent back because they were afraid, leaving only ten thousand (Judges 7:3). In both accounts, those who are fearful were higher in percentage: 83% of twelve leaders were fearful and more than two-thirds of soldiers (68.75%) gathered were fearful. How many fearful Christians are there today? I am certain they are in the majority, but we must change that to 100% bold followers of Christ, maturing into the perfect church, the bride of Christ. There is no place in God's army for the fearful in Bible times; there is still no place in God's end time army in our modern times. It is OK to feel fear, but it is NOT OK to give in to fear. God constantly exhort His leaders and His people NOT be afraid. In a similar vein, we exhort each believer to rise

up, be bold, conquer your fears and go forth and extend the kingdom of God's influence.

5. Know the seasons, use seasoned methods

There are only four seasons a year: spring, summer, autumn and winter. There are only four seasons of fruiting the word: resisting doubts that steal the word, growing roots in time of tribulation, rejecting worldliness to bear fruit, and abundant fruitfulness thirty, sixty and a hundredfold (Mark 4:14-20). There is a time of sowing and time of harvest. Different instruments and different strategies need to be used according to the season. In the season of sowing, patience is required. In the season of reaping, speed and efficiency is required lest the harvest is spoiled. We are in the season of harvest as we hit the crest of the three-year prosperity, speed and efficiency is important. Strike while the iron is hot so that you can forge a sword for times of famine. When we get the season mixed up, planting in summer and trying to harvest in winter, we will suffer starvation. Adapt tools and methods to the season of our times. Like David, use only tools and methods that you have tested and forged through the seasons of your life (1 Samuel 17:39). Do not use untested methods in your life even if others were able to use them. David cannot use Saul's armour, nor can you use another man's armour. Use ONLY the methods and principles that you have worked out successfully in your life. What may work for someone else might not work for you. Look into your own life, how you conquered your bears and lions. Then, no matter how ridiculous you look, like David going out with sticks and stones, take your proven strategy into the battlefield. With God's help, your slingshot and stone will pierce the head of the giants you face. When there is no battle,

you may train and learn other methods and strategies, but in the heat of battle, only use proven and tested methodologies.

6. Listen to God-sent people, relationship opens doors

God does not just send angels into our lives and ideas into our heart and head. God sends people into our lives! Many people are looking for their next vision or angels and fail to develop proper relationships with those around them. Many are listening to their own hearts and minds but are not listening to the people whom God sent into their lives. Then when failure or disaster strikes, they wonder why God never helped them. Help does not always come in the form of angels or visions from heaven, even though we need both to grow in God.

Help sometimes come from the butler who was sent to prison to be cared by Joseph (Genesis 40:14; 41:9-14). The enemy also sends people to hinder you like Mrs Potiphar, Sanballat or Haman (Genesis 39:19-20; Nehemiah 4:1; Esther 3:6). May God open your eyes to know who is sent by God and who is sent by the enemy. Naaman would have died of leprosy if not for him listening to the words of a servant girl. In Israel he nearly lost his one chance to be healed, if not for the words of his servants (2 Kings 5:3, 13). He had already formed in his own mind, the method he will be healed, i.e. the prophet will come and wave his hand over him and heal him (2 Kings 5:11). So many people in their pride have already formed the opinion of how God should work in their lives, thus missing the biggest blessing of their lives! In the worst times of David and his mighty men's lives at Ziklag, their success rest upon the directions of a little Egyptian slave boy given up to die (1 Samuel 30:11-16).

All God's methods will need humility and meekness to listen to the people God sent into our lives; no matter who they are - a servant, a child or an insignificant slave. Are you really listening to God? Are you listening to the people God sent into your life or are you resisting their words? They might be the key to your future, maybe not now but months or years later. He who has an ear hears what the Spirit has to say, no matter what instrument God uses, be it direct visions, dreams, angels, inner voice, thoughts, promptings of the heart or even the voices of people God sent across our lives.

7. Be a Giver, be abundantly generous

Our Father God is a generous and abundant giving God. The nature of God has always been of mercy and benevolence. It is the devil, stingy and miserly, who steals, kills and destroy while Jesus always gives abundantly (John 10:10). Before you deserve prosperity, check your own nature. Are you a stingy person or a generous person? Would God give abundant prosperity to those whose nature are not synchronous with His nature? Would God release abundant prosperity on those who sting like the devil? There is nothing wrong in being a good steward, but a good steward is NOT the same as a stingy steward. A good tree will bear good fruit, but a bad tree CANNOT bear good fruit (Matthew 7:17-20). Our Father God gives sunshine and rain to both the just and the unjust, all out of the generosity of our God (Matthew 5:45). A life of giving is a life of sowing, always having abundant harvests. If we don't turn on the tap for water to flow, how can more water flow? If we don't start a life of generous giving with whatever we have, whether little or much, how can more prosperity flow into our lives? The only answer to selfishness is generosity in selfless giving and helping others

besides just ourselves. Why should God help our selfish nature by giving more to a selfish person? To such, maybe less prosperity is better until the person learns that life is MORE than food and clothing (Matthew 6:25). Life is about loving people, helping people, caring for others, being like Jesus and being like God. We start this with whatever little we have. Being faithful to little, God will bring even more prosperity to flow not just TO US but THROUGH US unto others. This is the most powerful way in which the flow of prosperity can move, through us unto others. Don't look at the worldly people who seem to be prosperous now because all those will be taken from them in the end times. Do not serve mammon but lay your treasures up in heaven, start a life of giving now, release an unending cycle of giving that flows through your lives, for this is indeed the only satisfying way to live life on earth.

Take your spiritual surfboards and boldly swim to the waves of prosperity that God is creating in these end times to bless those who are His. Isaiah 60 will be fulfilled in fullness in our lifetimes. The Lord prosper you in all your spirit, soul and body in Jesus Name. Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.16

The Obed-Edom Effect

Dearly Beloved

This story comes from 1 Chronicles chapter 13 and 2 Samuel chapter 6 when David wanted to bring the Ark of God into Jerusalem. They invented a cart pulled by oxen to transport the Ark contradictory to the biblical requirements of the Ark being carried by the priests. An accident resulted with the death of Uzzah who tried to steady the Ark as it stumbled. David experienced anger and fear when it occurred (2 Samuel 6:8-9). He must have felt angry at God that his gestures of adulation and celebration was not rewarded by God's mercy and compassion. God is NOT obligated to respect our breaking of His laws even if our intentions are noble. After his anger subsided, he felt a fear of the Lord who is greater than him in every way. Not wanting to move the Ark any further, David took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom. While it remained in Obed-Edom's house for three months, Obed-Edom prospered in every way (2 Samuel 6:11). The Bible did not describe the details of this prosperity but in visions, we saw that Obed-Edom's household became fruitful. Many children were conceived, and all his flocks also conceived. All his fruit trees bore fruit out of season and none of his family or his flock was sick. All his produce was better than others and his flock were the best fatted calf in all the land. Nothing changed in what Obed-Edom did, the only difference was that the Ark was in his household. This is the power of the presence of God inherent in the Ark of Covenant.

Are you labouring and not producing fruit? Are you working many avenues to get ahead, and nothing seems to work? Are you barely making it in life? The answer is God's presence in your life. As long

as God is present, everything will work out well if you do not contradict God's written word. We need to point out very clearly that David contradicted God's written word on how to transport the Ark. Nothing he did would help prevent disasters from taking place. In spite God's presence was clearly visible upon the Ark, it did not benefit David as he did not follow the written word and guidelines of Ark transportation. So, before bringing the presence of God into our lives, we must first examine that we are NOT contradicting God's written word. God honours His Word, our respect for His presence and, the person who honours His written and spoken word. Having covered this essential point, let us now go forth to increase the presence of God in our lives.

Biblical figures like Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, our Lord Jesus and the apostles were blessed because of the presence of God in their lives and not just because of their works alone. Each of them tapped upon the presence of God in their lives and learned to live in that presence. The Hebrew word for 'presence' *paniym* is derived from the word 'Face of God.' This implies living our lives right before His eyes, being aware of His constant eyes watching us. Indeed, the Bible says that the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9).

These are the keys to living in the presence of God to bring forth the Obed-Edom effect:

1. Awareness of the Lord's ever watching eyes

When Joseph was tempted to sin with Mrs Potiphar, he said 'how can he do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' (Genesis 39:9). He has an acute awareness of God at all time. Similarly, Abraham said to the king of Sodom that he did not

want him to be able to say that he had made Abraham rich (Genesis 14:23). We must always be aware of the eyes of the Lord roaming to and fro, watching our hearts, our motives and our actions. We must also be aware of Him hearing everything we say and do. This is the fear of God, a respect that all the earth and Universe is before His presence and we live always in His universal presence in all and through all. For the Lord to truly judge every human being on earth on Judgment Day, there is a record kept of every word spoken, every thought we think and every action we do. We will have to give account for every word we speak and every action we do on earth (Matthew 12:36-37; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10). Paul makes it his aim, whether present or absent to always be well pleasing to the Lord.

2. Obedience to God's Word

The presence of God in the Ark did not work for David because he was not obedient to the written word instructions on carrying the Ark. God said He will not hide anything from Abraham for He knows him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him (Genesis 18:17-19). The rejection of King Saul was due to his lack of obedience to God's spoken word in killing all the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15:3, 9-11). God specifically said that he 'has not performed My commandments.'

God promises His heavenly presence will be available to anyone on earth who trembles at His word (implies obedience to His word) (Isaiah 66:1-2). God will put His rest upon those who obey His word.

3. The closeness of our heart to God is greater than all physical distances

Although what we intend to do is no excuse for wrong methods or justification for every action, motivation and intentions is everything to God. God has sought for one who is after His heart and He found David (1 Samuel 13:14). God is and always has been searching for people after His own heart. In Samuel, He found someone who will do according to what is in His heart and in His mind (1 Samuel 2:35). God is not interested in outward worship when the heart is not sincerely into worship (Mark 7:6). The church is to become the greatest temple built by God embodying His full presence (Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:21-22). For this purpose, God requires that His word be sharper than a two-edged sword applied to the cleansing and purification of all the thoughts and intents of each believer in Christ (Hebrews 4:12). God has always desired a pure heart that can see Him in all His fullness (Matthew 5:8). It is not physical distance that separates us from God, but the distance of our heart from the heart of God. The way into the presence of God is through having the same heartbeat as the heartbeat of our Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ. The righteousness of faith does not ask of the distance between earth and heaven nor of the earth and hell but acknowledges that God is in our heart and in the word of faith in our mouth (Romans 10:6-8).

4. Thanksgiving, praise and worship is the air of heaven

We enter into His gates with thanksgiving and enter into His courts with praise (Psalm 100:4). Thanksgiving and praise have always been the requirement to contain the presence of God in the heavens. Even in the Tabernacle of Moses, the smoke of incense symbolising praise and worship was what kept the high

priest safe when he entered into the holy of holies once a year (Leviticus 16:13). This cloud of incense is the covering of praise needed to shield us from the overwhelming power of God's presence. David declared that God dwelled in the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3). The degree of God's presence manifest is always directly proportional to the comparative degree of praise and worship present. Any higher degree of manifestation of presence without the covering of praise will be destructive. In God's mercy, He tailors His manifested presence to the same level of praise and worship in our lives.

5. The highest form of praise and worship will be manifested in the end time church.

The apostle declared that we are all living stones, being built up into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus (1 Peter 2:5). A new tongue is given unto the New Testament church to enable us to reach the heights of praise and worship beyond our understanding (Acts 2:4, 11; 1 Corinthians 14:2, 14-15). Our Lord Jesus predicted that such a time will come when we will worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). In visions of the end times, we saw that the finale of the church is the last week of full-on worship offered to God non-stop which culminate in the Rapture as all the church is captured into His holy presence physically and spiritually. The pattern of praise and worship as warfare seen in Jehoshaphat's time is the normal way warfare is waged in the heavenlies. I have never seen an archangel of God having to cross swords with the enemy. All they do is praise and worship and the energies of God's presence around them destroys the enemies.

The presence of God that fills God's people and brings the Obed-Edom effect is obtained through the indwelling of God's presence in them. Just the mere presence of God is enough to destroy the enemy and bring forth all that is needed upon the earth and the heavens above.

The presence of God can

- cause creative growth in a dead piece of wood, causing it to put forth leaves, flowers and fruits as in Aaron's rod (Numbers 17:1-8). The ripe almonds were all ready to be eaten.
- cause the cloud of glory that manifested the tangible presence of God (Exodus 40:34-35; 2 Chronicles 5:13-14).
- bring side effects of wind, earthquake and fire although these are merely side effects and not the actual presence of God (1 Kings 19:11-12).
- be around God's people like a hedge or wall of fire in which the enemy cannot trespass (Job 1:10; Zechariah 2:5).
- prosper a person or nation such that they will be the head and not the tail, concentrating all the wealth of the world for their use (Genesis 26:13; 39:3, 23; Joshua 1:7; Psalm 1:3; Isaiah 60:1, 5).
- transfigure and transform our bodies (Mark 9:1-7; 2 Corinthians 3:18).
- bring us into the true rest in God (Exodus 33:14; Hebrews 4:10).
- bring us into the experience of true fullness of joy in the Lord (Psalm 16:11).
- destroy all the enemies of God in one breath (2 Thessalonians 1:9)

Above all these things, we in the end time church have the privilege of manifesting the powers of the age to come, bringing the leaves of the Tree of Life in New Jerusalem to heal all the nations. The presence of God in our lives will increase beyond the levels of the Ark of Covenant, surpassing all the manifestations of the Bible as the church is predestined to bear the fullness of the presence of the Godhead through our Lord Jesus Christ. The ultimate purpose and existence of the church is to be God's holy temple for all His creation. This presence begins with Jesus within us and grows until we are perfectly one with Jesus and with the Father, shining with the same divine glory that only God Himself has, perfectly mirroring the fullness of the Godhead within us. Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.17

Growing in Consciousness of God

Dearly Beloved

Every human being needs to meet his Maker. Hopefully not at the end of his or her life when one has to give an account for what was done during one's life. Rather, sought and receive guidance throughout one's life and walk in harmony with the Almighty God, the Giver of All Life. It seems that this is the path chosen for all mankind. The Scripture declared that He is the Light who lights everyone who comes into this world (John 1:9). In Him alone is true life and this life is the light of all men (John 1:4). If God gives each human being sufficient light to live his or her life, why is it that many do not find their way back to Him? This light is in the spirit part of the human and only those who are sensitive to the spirit within them can sense this light that leads them throughout the path of life that they tread. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? (1 Corinthians 2:11). This light is also the light of the conscience which some have seared and hardened to the point of being insensitive to the inner promptings of the spirit man.

The following things can happen to one's conscience so that it is no longer reliable:

1. An evil conscience that needs to be cleansed by the blood of the Lamb (Hebrews 10:22). Note that the conscience needs the blood cleansing and the body needs the washing of water by the Word. Only the Word is the pure water that sets our conscience correctly (Ephesians 5:26). Jesus told His disciples that they were cleansed by the Word that Jesus spoke (John 15:3). An evil conscience is a conscience that supports evil. It testifies within

an evil man that what evil he did is “good.” An evil conscience senses good for bad and senses bad for good, it is totally perverted and need to be cleansed and re-trained by the blood and the Word.

2. A conscience filled with dead works (Hebrews 9:14). A person with this conscience thinks he is serving God with all his life when all he or she produces is works filled with the spirit of death. There is no life in all that they do. A lot of works but all empty, devoid of life, and all burnt up on the judgment day. Paul was such a person who thought that he was serving God by going against the Christians, persecuting and imprisoning them before he was saved at the Damascus road. He called himself the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Paul said that he had served God with his conscience before he was born again, yet he did a lot of harm to those around him, all the while thinking that he was serving God (Acts 22:3-5). He was zealous towards the God of his own imagination. He was sincere but sincerely wrong.

Many Christians serve God with their own dead works rather than from God’s works that He energized through us. There are works energized by the desires and souls of man and there are works that originate from the Holy Spirit within us. The difference is not in its outward form but in its inner energy form. Works that are from God are intrinsically energized by God, whereas works that are merely from man are energized by human energy. The difference is that one is the works of grace (energized by grace) while the other is energized by human factors. The true works of grace are created inside us by our Lord Jesus and they flow forth from us like a river of life, a river of grace, effortlessly (Ephesians 2:8-10). There is some effort, but

it is from the energy of grace within which many times surpasses the energy of ordinary humans (1 Corinthians 15:10). True works of grace are also fulfilled through a state of rest and not a state of turbulence (Hebrews 4:10). Many Christians are walking in dead works and may find themselves naked with all their works that were built upon straw, wood and stubble burnt up in the judgment day (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

3. A weak conscience is that which is still affected by fear (1 Corinthians 8:10-13). Paul's example is of a Christian who is still afraid of idols (fearing that the spirits behind them will cause them harm or evil) and who also feared to eat food offered to idols. He very clearly calls them "weak." To Paul, an idol is nothing, and his consciousness of God is greater than the consciousness of idols or evil spirits behind idols. However, Paul did exhort that we be sensitive to those with a weak conscience, to come down to their level (1 Corinthians 8:9-13). Fear is a contagious negative force which makes people do things they will normally never do. Those who are fearful are not allowed to go to war (Deuteronomy 20:8; Judges 7:3).
4. A seared conscience is that which no longer feel what is right or wrong any longer (1 Timothy 4:2). Those who have such might create new rules, regulations, commandments which have no spiritual value nor ever were instructions from our Lord Jesus (1 Timothy 4:3). They no longer have a sensitivity to how their lives oppress or make another life or lives miserable. Neither are they aware of their own destruction to their own lives. The spirit within them screams for help, they cannot hear or feel anything. There is no concept of right or wrong and everything is just driven by a will going against the natural order of things and of the Will of God. Most of time they have lost the joy, peace and

love in life. The zest of life is gone, and it is all driven by uncontrolled desires to gain control by outward means, where the end justify the means.

When one is finally freed from all the various types of negative conscience above, one can flow with the good conscience or a conscience filled with the life and the light of God.

The Bible describes such conscience as:

1. A good conscience that seeks to do what is right. Paul sincerely tried to have a good conscience before God, though he demonstrated some dead works in his own life (Acts 23:1).
2. A conscience without offence towards God and men. Paul described this in the context of him seeking to obey all the laws of man and of God (Acts 24:16). However, this is not possible without Christ or the Holy Spirit for Paul became a Pharisee and ended up doing the wrong things, like persecuting the church.
3. A conscience that bears witness to right and wrong. This is the conscience that Paul describes in the book of Romans of those who obey the law without having a form of the law (Romans 2:15). There are many people who have no knowledge of God, but they have an inner sense of right and wrong and live by this inner knowledge. Without realising it, they are flowing in the light of life that guides and lights EVERY man who comes into this world.
4. A conscience which is fully sensitive to the Holy Spirit and bears witness of the works and acts of God (Romans 9:1). After Paul was born again, his conscience grew into a sensory organ that helped him to flow exactly in line and in tune with all the Holy Spirit was doing. This conscience is a strong conscience that

bears witness to the WILL of God on earth. Imagine having the ability and power to discern the will of God in every situation. Let your conscience be filled with the Holy Spirit and not just be an instrument of the human spirit.

5. A good conscience that walks in the faith of our Lord Jesus (1 Timothy 1:5, 19). A conscience that senses the love of God, the flow of faith of our Lord Jesus (our Author and Finisher of Faith – Hebrews 12:2). Love, joy and peace sing in this conscience and one who possesses this level of conscience enjoys life to the fullest. In the midst of a storm, this conscience still possesses the peace of God and sails through storms while others are shipwrecked because they have no faith meter, love meter, or joy meter to guide them through life.
6. A pure conscience that knows the deep things of God and can discern the mysteries of God (1 Timothy 3:9). This conscience operates in the depths of the Holy Spirit and instantly knows when a dream, a vision, a tongue, a prophecy, or any other manifestation of the spiritual realm is from God or not from God. It is pure, such that this purity is what Jesus said will see God (Matthew 5:8) and anything not in line with God can be perceived easily as polluted.

The Old Testament has no equivalent word for conscience (although modern Hebrew has adapted it phonetically). The closest in biblical usage is the word 'heart' and its function in knowing the things of God and the ways of God. The book of Psalms speaks of knowing the secrets of the heart (Psalm 44:21), meditate within my heart and spirit makes diligent search (Psalm 77:6), asking God to search and know my heart (Psalm 139:23), etc.

The New Testament word for 'conscience' is *suneidesis*. It is translated as 'conscience' most of the time, but 'consciousness' in Hebrews 10:2 and 1 Corinthians 8:7. The breakdown of the Greek word shows that it is made up of two Greek words: *syn* which means 'together with' and *eido* which means 'to know visually' or 'to see.' Obviously, it is not just a function of knowing and seeing but it is a function of 'knowing and seeing' with another (the *syn* part). This implies something which is always in line with God, our spirit, the Word, the flow of life and light, the Holy Spirit, etc. Our conscience is thus the place where God has placed and fulfilled the Scripture that says He gives light to all men coming into the world (John 1:9).

Our conscience is not just an organ given to us to know what is right or wrong. It might begin that way, but it is a special organ that gives us a 'togetherness' with God, a consciousness of God. The true translation would be 'consciousness' and not just 'conscience.' Our conscience can grow to become an organ that tells us how to exercise our differing and growing levels of faith. Paul pointed to the different levels of faith and understanding of each Christian in 1 Corinthians chapter 8 and Romans chapter 14. Obviously, those who could not stop from fearing idols are weaker in their faith. Those who only observed one day or only eat vegetables in order to please God, Paul classified as weaker in the faith. Everyone needs to grow at their level. You cannot force a baby to take meat when they need milk. Everyone will grow into God and mature, but each in their time and at their own level, with the stronger supporting the weaker. While this is important, we must also encourage all to grow in their conscience and their consciousness of God.

We can grow until we are so filled with the equal consciousness of God as God has given us the capacity. We develop our conscience into a super organ of consciousness of the slightest diversion from the Will

of God, from the Word of God, from the Love of God, from the Faith of God, from the Joy of God, from the Peace of God. Yes, from every attribute and nature of God. Our conscience was made to become the supreme organ of a deep level of consciousness of God.

Let us pursue this growth. All men and women are created equal and given the same chance to grow and become conscious of God and all His Will and Presence. We can be and must become as Christ was. Christ was conscious of God in all His fullness twenty-four hours a day. We can grow to become exactly as Christ was and is. When we become fully conscious of ALL of God, God's fullness becomes our possession and our very nature and DNA. Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.18

Internalizing God's Revelation

Dearly Beloved

God's indwelling presence is one of the most marvellous demonstrations of His awesome power. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us (John 1:14). The mystery of godliness was God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels and preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world and received up in glory (1 Timothy 3:16).

Christ revealed that all the works that He did was the Father dwelling in Him (John 14:9-11). This union that Christ had with the Father is the same union which He wants to establish in us, with Him being in us and doing the works that He did (John 14:12). Since the secret behind all that Jesus said and did was the Father in Him, the secret to all the fullness of God in our lives is learning to let Christ be manifested in fullness in our lives within us and through us.

Of all the lessons learned in Christianity, the lesson of learning to let God and Christ dwell within us in fullness is the most important lesson of all. Knowing that this is the most important lesson and principle taught to His disciples, Jesus repeated it to them on the last night when He was betrayed (John chapters 14 to 16). Within these chapters, He outlined principles and basic things which would bring about this mystery of godliness in our flesh.

To understand this, we outline these three chapters together highlighting this point:

John Chapter 14:

Verse 2 In the Father's House (Greek *oikos* translated 'house') are many places of abiding (Greek *mone*).

Verse 7 Knowing and seeing the Father is through knowing and seeing Jesus.

Verse 9-11 Everything that Jesus said and did was the Father saying and doing through Him.

Verse 12 Everything that we say and do, will be what Jesus says and do because He is in us like the Father in Him.

Verse 15-18 It is through the Holy Spirit abiding in us that Christ abides in us.

Verse 19-21 Only those who love Jesus and keep His commandments will experience this manifestation of Jesus to them.

When asked HOW is Jesus going to manifest to those who love Him and keep His commandments, Jesus speaks about Him and the Father 'abiding' (Greek *mone*) or making their home with the individual.

Verse 23-24 To the person who keeps the Word of Jesus, the Father and Jesus will love him and come to him and make their home (abiding) in him.

Verse 25-27 The Holy Spirit will teach all things and bring to remembrance all things Jesus said and Jesus left His peace with us so that our hearts are never troubled nor afraid.

John Chapter 15:

- Verse 1-5 **Abiding in Jesus as a branch is the key to bearing fruit and even when fruit is borne**, there is a process of pruning so that more fruit can be borne. The branch CANNOT bear fruit unless it ABIDES (Greek *mone*) in the Vine, which is Jesus.
- Verse 6 A branch that does not abide in Jesus is taken away into the fire and burnt.
- Verse 7-8 **Abiding in Jesus and letting His Words abide in us, is the key to bearing much fruit and receiving answered prayers.**
- Verse 9-10 The Father's love for Jesus has been channelled through Jesus to us, and it is a requirement for us to abide in both His commandments and in His love.
- Verse 11-17 Jesus imparted His Joy into us that our joy will be full and commanded us to love on another. He considered us His friends and not just His servants for He revealed to us what He is doing.
- Verse 18-25 We are to be prepared that the world will hate us and persecute us as they persecuted Jesus. Those who hate Jesus also hates the Father.
- Verse 26-27 The Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father will bear witness of Jesus as we, too, will bear witness of Jesus.

John Chapter 16:

- Verse 1-4 All that is done against Christ and us will be because they do not know the Father.
- Verse 6-11 The Holy Spirit can come only because Jesus has left this world and sent Him to us; and He will convict the world of sin because they do not believe in Jesus, give us the conviction of righteousness because Jesus (and us in Him) is now with the Father, and judged Satan because he has been judged and cast out (John 12:31).
- Verse 23-24 The Father Himself will give to us and we are encouraged to ask that our Father may give that our joy will be full.

The two principles that stand out in the last recorded sermon of Jesus before He was crucified are Abiding in His Word and Abiding in His Love, both relate to Abiding in Him and Abiding in the Father. His discourse speaks of abiding in His love with the requirement to obey His commandment to love one another. Abiding in His Word would imply abiding in both His Spoken Word and in His Written Word (Living Word). These are the great principles to abiding in Jesus and in the Father.

Some examples of the abiding of God (Father, Jesus or Holy Spirit) within us are when Peter confessed that Jesus was Christ the Son of the Living God. As he answered and confessed Christ boldly, Jesus saw that incident as the Father in Heaven revealing this to Peter (Matthew 16:17). This process of internalized revelation was the Rock in which Jesus was going to build His church. And those who yield to this process receive a blessing in their lives as Peter did when he

yielded to this revelation within him. Paul received revelations within himself through the working of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:1-7). He specifically mentioned the revelation was IN him (Galatians 1:16). No matter how many visions we see or even if we have Jesus physically in front of us like Peter, it is still the internal thought processes that must take place to bring us to the conclusion and acceptance of all revelations from God. Peter walking on water still easily doubted when his thought processes caught up with his instinct of obeying the command of Jesus to walk on water (Matthew 14:31). Despite seeing a glorious angel in front of him, Zacharias still doubted all that was going on and was struck dumb (Luke 1:19-20). The internalizing thought processes after or during an encounter or manifestation, whether spectacular or non-spectacular, internal or external, is what determines the ultimate outcome of all revelations given through the Holy Spirit by our Lord Jesus Christ.

If the internalization of a revelation is done through careful search and comparison with the written word of God (the Bible) and with the spirit and nature of the revelation (whether it is in line with the Spirit of Love and of edification) and whether it glorifies Jesus, then that revelation will pass the test of time, the test of trials and the test of persecution. When a revelation has not been properly internalized or wrongly internalized, the individual will experience doubts, insecurity and destabilizing emotions. The revelation, which could be genuine, will die or be eaten up by the devourer. As such, Jesus spoke in the parable of the sower and the word, that the seed of the word must be received and allowed to grow roots before it can bring forth fruit (Mark 4:3-20).

The internalization of a revelation is through the working of the Holy Spirit upon our minds and hearts. We need to compare Scripture with Scripture, line upon line, and principles with God's nature and

attributes. This process is a process of quiet meditation and contemplation. The Bible contains the records of God's manifestation and appearances to Old Testament and New Testament biblical figures. Thus, the ability to check with the written word of God is a blessing of God and a gift of His grace. Those who are strong in the Word of God have more ability than those with less knowledge of the Word of God in processing revelation. People like Apollos rose to prominence because they were mighty in Scripture (Acts 18:24-25). In a short space of time, he had a strong following amongst the Gentile church (1 Corinthians 3:4-6).

Internalizing the revelations of God, brings the word of God into its full fruition, producing a hundredfold result. Our Lord Jesus wants all His branches to produce abundant fruits.

What are the processes of internalizing a revelation from God?

They involve:

1. Accepting them as divine revelations from God (whether it is from God the Father, Jesus or the Holy Spirit and whether it is via angels, visions, voices, internal thoughts or other means). We DO NOT recommend accepting everything lock, stock, barrel without examination. As all prophecies have to be judged (1 Corinthians 14:29) and no prophecy is of any private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20). Before they are accepted as divine, they must be
 - a. In line with the written word of God.
 - b. In line with the Spirit of the Love of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit.
 - c. In line with previous revelations received by the individual (the new adds more details and more clarity to the old and

never replaces them); though God may change His instructions in accordance to circumstantial response, as He did to delay the entrance to Canaan).

- d. In line with flow of spiritual authority and protocol. Even David had to live through Saul's rebellious reign without usurping his kingship. The apostle Paul took the Gentile question to the established church spiritual authorities in Jerusalem, resulting in the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15). Paul did not make the final decision but the church in Jerusalem made the final decision in consultation with the delegation from Antioch.
 - e. In line with the objectives and visions of our Lord Jesus Himself.
 - f. Result in the glory of Jesus and of the Father.
2. After accepting the revelations is from God, it is important to prepare for a challenge to that particular revelation. Satan will always want to steal the seed sown or persecute to prevent it from taking root (Mark 4:15-17). God's grace disallows the enemy from stealing or persecuting until it has been accepted in the heart. If the two direct frontal attack against the revelation does not work, Satan will try the distraction method, placing thorns growing with the seed of the word (Mark 4:18). When Jesus revealed that He was to die on the cross, Satan used Peter to directly confront Him (Matthew 16:22-23). After receiving abundance of revelations, pride will be tested via rejection or persecution or direct attacks (2 Corinthians 12:7). Outwardly this attack permitted by God seems daunting, but it is also a necessary part of strengthening of the revelation – a stronger internalizing of the revelation.

This internal strengthening is through

- a. The requirement to defend the revelation received through the word of God. It causes a constant re-examination of the revelation received and this strengthens it and causes it to grow deeper roots into the heart and mind.
- b. The value of the revelation increases as the receiver is prepared to pay the ultimate price of self-sacrifice to defend, preserve or endure with the revelation intact. The apostle Paul sacrificed everything to preach the gospel of grace that Gentiles can be saved without becoming Jews. He was misunderstood, persecuted, ostracized, mocked and rejected by the very Jewish people whom he loved and would have died for (Romans 9:1-3; 10:1-3)
- c. With every revelation, there will be a test of humility (2 Corinthians 1:7). This is all part of the internalizing. Every revelation brings about its own fruit, and after the fruiting, there needs to be a pruning (John 15:2). We always need a good pruning after a successful endeavour, a successful mission or a successful harvest. Pride is the centre of all rebellion against God, and humility is the centre of all true union with God. We need to grow in humility until we are one hundred percent humble like Jesus. Remember that Jesus conquered everything through His humility. His humility was what set Jesus apart, and make Him the direct opposite to Satan, the personification of pride. So, for the personification of pride versus the personification of humility, Jesus the embodiment of humility won. If you want to keep winning all the time, grow in greater and greater humility.

3. Finally, when one has discerned the Word and Revelation of God received, passed the test, trials and challenges of the enemy, the Revelation Word is now ready to grow into a bountiful tree in God, producing fruits. Whether it be thirty, sixty or a hundredfold depends on:
 - a. How accurate and detailed we are to the Word of Revelation. Many people are not detailed and specific in what God asked them to do. They might do five things out of ten, so they are obedient but not one hundred percent. During the time of the kings, some kings only obey God in some areas but did not remove the high places, Jehoshaphat repaired the temple and did right in the sight of God but did not remove the high places (2 Kings 12:1-3). It was a command of God to destroy the high places (Deuteronomy 12:2-4). Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places (1 Kings 3:3). Imperfect obedience produces less than perfect results.
 - b. How enduring we are to hold on to a particular revelation without wavering. Abraham held onto the promise of God giving him an heir for over two decades. From the age of seventy-five when he came out from Ur to the age of ninety-nine, he did not waver according to the Bible (Romans 4:20). We saw some wavering when he went into Hagar and thought that Ishmael was the one, and initial unbelief when he was to be a father at one hundred years old but those were discounted by God through his steadfast walk through many long and lonely years. God is compassionate to all varying emotional states as long as the heart is steadfast in Him. David's permissive will to alliance with the Philistines did

not prevent God from working in his life because he loved God even when at his lowest point at Ziklag (1 Samuel 30:6).

Despite his obvious ability to see angels and call down fire from God, Elijah was not dependent on external factors in obeying God but rather on the still small voice of God that he heard in his heart (1 Kings 19:12-13). It is not the loudness of revelations that matter but rather the soft internalization of them that counts. The epistles of Paul which form the major bulk of the Bible were all the musings and the flow of thoughts that go through Paul's heart and mind as he was seeking to solve church problems through his writings and giving the best advice possible in all situations. The internal thought flow of Paul's heart and mind have become part of the New Testament bible today.

The book of Acts continues in our lives, watched and recorded by angels. Whatever is going on in your heart and mind is important, for it is there that the Holy Spirit works, bringing every thought subject to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). God speaks into your heart and mind, even when the most spectacular revelations are occurring. The internal thought flow of the Holy Spirit flowing through our thoughts establish all revelations. For we have the mind of Christ and the Holy Spirit searches the depths of God and works with the depths of our being through our human spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10-14, 16). Right now, God is preparing things to be placed in our hearts, things for those who love Him, things beyond what eye can see, ears can hear and what normal human minds and hearts can conceive (1 Corinthians 2:9). We have the mind of Christ, let that same mind work in you as it did in Christ.

Fatherly Talk 7.19

Migration in the Bible - Part 1

Dearly Beloved

With the upcoming Exodus that helps people move from areas endangered by earthquakes and tsunamis in the year 2029, there is going to be a mass migration of people to refuge zones. There are three main groups of people: Those who migrate pre-Exodus, those who migrate during the Exodus, and those who survived and migrate post-Exodus. Through time, God will reveal more on the destinies of the countries and people. Everyone will have to flow with God's perfect Will for their lives. It is good to examine migration patterns in the Bible so that we can learn and benefit from those who have followed God in moving countries, cities or places.

One of the earliest migrations took place during Noah's time when he had to travel away from the general human population to build the ark which God commanded him (Genesis 6:13). The Bible does not record this physical move, but the size of the Ark required him to move to another place away from the general population. There was a migration that took place after Noah's flood before the Tower of Babel with many families settling into various lands (Genesis 10:31, 32). After the Tower of Babel, humanity was scattered across the whole earth and gave birth to many nations with their various languages and tongues.

The call of Abraham involved a migration from his homeland of Ur (Mesopotamia) into the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1-3). In the promised land, the Lord brought about circumstances where he had to fulfil the literal command to be separated from his family, the last was Lot. When Lot separated from him, the Lord commanded him to

walk through the length and breadth of the land (Genesis 13:14-17). Abraham did so by building altars everywhere he went (Genesis 12:7-9; 13:18). Eventually, Abraham settled in Mamre, north of the historic city of Hebron, where God spoke to him about Isaac (Genesis 13:18; 18:1). There could be many reasons why Abraham chose to settle here, but it was here that God spoke to him at 99 years old and he changed his name from Abram to Abraham. Hebron was a very spiritually significant place for Abraham. His wife Sarah died in Hebron and it was also the place of Abraham's burial (Genesis 23:2, 19; 25:7-10). **Could it be that the geography city which one finally live is linked to one's spiritual experiences and of prophetic future significance?**

Beersheba was Isaac's birth place and his early home (Genesis 21:14, 30-34). Isaac and Abraham travelled from Beersheba towards Mount Moriah, and then returned to live there (Genesis 22:19). Beersheba was Isaac's home when he lived with his parents. After Isaac married, he lived in Beer Laihairai where his two sons, Jacob and Esau, were born. During the famine in Isaac's time, God forbade him from going to Egypt, so he went to live with the Philistines in Gerar (Genesis 26:1-6). It is interesting to note that God specifically told him to dwell in the land and He will bless him (Genesis 26:3). **Could it be possible that sometimes people are in the wrong geographical place (like an allegorical Egypt where God forbade them to go) and God couldn't bless them? In both Abraham's and Isaac lives, they had to be in a specific land (especially during famine) for God to bring about His blessings upon them.**

In the Philistine land, Isaac had to go to various towns before he found peace to prosper. He went through Esek (strife), Sitnah (hatred) and finally settled in Rehoboth (plenty) (Genesis 26:19-22). After his sojourn in the Philistine land, Isaac returned to Beersheba where he built an altar to the Lord (Genesis 26:23-25). He spent most of his life

in Beersheba and towards his last days, he lived in Hebron (Genesis 35:27-29). Analysing Isaac's life, we can see that the city of Beersheba was significant. The geographical place in Beersheba he chose to live in was directed by the Lord. It was also where he had his spiritual experience, built an altar to the Lord and named the city Beersheba (Genesis 26:25, 33).

Jacob, Isaac's son, lived and grew up in Beersheba where he had deceived his brother, Esau, and strife developed between them. He was told to flee to Padan Aram, the city of Haran, where his uncle Laban lived when Esau wanted to kill him (Genesis 28:1-2). On his way there, he slept a night at Bethel, where he met the Lord and received a vision (Genesis 28:10-17). Jacob named the place Bethel and anointed an altar to the Lord from the stone that he had put at his head (Genesis 28:18-22). We should not be surprised that in his future Bethel became the place where he was to live and be blessed by God.

Jacob went to Haran to live with his uncle for 14 years, where he married and had children. His escape from Laban brought him through significant towns, which he renamed: Mizpah where he had a treaty with Laban, Mahanaim where a host of angels comforted him, Peniel where he wrestled all night and had his new name Israel (Genesis 31:49; 32:2, 30). Upon returning and reconciling with his brother Esau, he built a house in Succoth and lived there (Genesis 33:17). He also purchased a piece of land in Shechem and made for himself a dwelling place in the land of Canaan. He built an altar to the Lord in Shechem and called it El Elohe Israel (God, the God of Israel) (Genesis 33:18-20). Troubles came upon his family with the Canaanites in the land. After these troubles, God spoke and told him to go to Bethel to dwell there and build an altar to the Lord (Genesis 35:1). This was when there was a revival in Jacob's family as they removed all the idols from their household and went to live in Bethel

(Genesis 35:2-7). It was in Bethel that God appeared again to Jacob and blessed him, confirming his name as Israel (Genesis 35:9-15).

It seemed obvious that Bethel would be the centre of Jacob's life. But God had to appear to him after much troubles in other cities before he accepted that he was to live in Bethel at least for some time there, with space for his family to grow. Towards the end of his life, when most of his children has grown up, he moved down to Hebron to live (Genesis 37:14). For three generations, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in Hebron towards the end of their lives. Bethel and Hebron were significant cities Jacob lived. **From our analysis so far, it seems that sometimes in line with destinies or spiritual experiences in our lives, God requires us to live in places which He chose for us. It is important to hear God and be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit as to where we should live, especially when our lives belong to Him and all that we do are of prophetic significance to the work of God's Will.**

The story of Joseph is almost like a story of "forced" or "necessitated" migration. Joseph was sold by his brothers and ended up in Egypt the rest of his life (Genesis 37:28). It was through him that God fulfilled the prophecy that He will allow the descendants of Abraham to go into a country that was not theirs and they will be strangers, and they will be afflicted for four generations before He redeemed them (Genesis 15:12-16). The prophecy of a migration of Abraham's descendants into Egypt took place without anyone involved. They were playing a role designed by God to bring about the fulfilment of His spoken word to Abraham. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy (Genesis 46:27). Joseph, led by the Spirit unknowingly, chose the land of Goshen for them to live in (Genesis 45:10; 46:34). This migration was predicted by God and a part

of His plan. The children of Israel had a warm reception and welcome to Egypt but later became oppressed and enslaved by the Egyptians.

All these were part of God's plan in the nursing years of the multiplication of Israel as a people, being readied to be made into a nation in God's fullness of time. Joseph, who was used by God to bring all Israel to migrate to Egypt, believed in the prophecy and asked that his bones be taken out when the Israelites came out of Egypt (Genesis 50:24-26). This part of the story of migration shows that sometimes it is God's perfect Will to be in a place for a period of time, even a few generations. This planet earth is only a temporary home, and each individual and each family must discover where God wants them to live geographically. The choice of place and the timing involved must also be ordained by God and coordinated by God to fulfil His ultimate plan for each city, country and place.

The biggest story of migration in the Bible is, of course, the story of the Exodus. Nearly three million men, women and children came out of Egypt seeking a new country and home to live in. There was also a requirement that it took place in the fullness of time and the place to which they were to settle in be revealed to them. Two elements: where to go and when to go are big considerations for every individual. To the Israelites during the Exodus, God prepared the leadership structure ready to manage this great migration and revealed supernaturally to His people through signs and wonders to unite them in this great move. Such will also be present in the biggest modern Exodus that we will be experiencing in the near future before the year 2029. God took His people through ten tests to prepare them for nationhood (Numbers 14:22). Unfortunately, despite God's manifest presence and supernatural works amongst them, they failed each and every test, except for those like Joshua and Caleb. The Israelites ended up forty years in the wilderness when it was

supposed to be only about a year (the time it took to build the Tabernacle of Moses). **Could it be when we have not learnt the lessons from a particular place, like the Israelites in the wilderness, there could be a delay in the move to the promised land of Canaan?** May this not be so with anyone. May God have mercy and help each one to always move forward spiritually and physically into God's perfect Will for each life.

In the lives of Moses, the leader of the Exodus, we see a pattern which we can learn from. It was definitely God's perfect Will for Moses to be in the wilderness to wait on God for the fullness of time. The circumstances in which he ended up in the wilderness were not pleasant and seemed more out of need and necessity (Exodus 2:11-15). Moses spent 40 years in Egypt, 40 years in the wilderness and then his last 40 years leading God's people. None of us dare to say that all these were not God's will, rather it fitted into the perfect Will of God for Moses. His time in Egypt growing up with the princess as his adopted mother was a part of God's perfect plan for training him. His time in the wilderness was definitely important as part of God's perfect plan to train and prepare Moses for his calling. What we can learn of Moses' migration from Egypt to the wilderness and then back to service of God is that there is a time period for each person to be living in particular circumstances and places for a period of time. Who determines the period of time? God, of course. What is required of each period of time? Lessons on life learned, spiritual lessons acquired, character changes completed, revelation from God received.

While in Egypt, being nursed by his own mother and being privileged to be a prince in Egypt, Moses discovered his calling and destiny (Acts 7:23-25). Moses had already given up the life of a prince when he was visiting his own people, the Israelites (Hebrews 11:24-27). At some point, he must have discovered his special calling and wanted to find

a way to fulfil it. His method was wrong, but his heart must have been right for the Bible to write glowingly of him in the book of Hebrews. Moses took forty years, challenged by a life of luxury, to finally forsake luxury for his calling (Hebrews 11:24-25). This was not an easy decision as it involved giving up a lot of things. In essence, it involved giving up the world to pursue the calling of God. Whatever temptations, trials and challenges God had arranged for him, being brought up in the best of Egypt, he passed the test by saying 'No' to all worldly things and was deemed worthy for God to work out the next stage of his life. **Everyone is born into families, circumstances, towns and countries which present the temptations, trials and challenges which we must endure and still find our true spiritual calling and predestination of why we exist on earth. Far too many get caught up in the busyness of this world and never realized their divine calling and predestination. For those who do, God begins His next stage of training.**

Sometimes in God's next stage of training, it involves a change of fellowship, family, community, city or country. For Abraham, he had to leave home and country. For Moses, he also had to leave home and country. Though the circumstances were not perfect, partly of his own doing, Moses was finally at the place where God could work upon him in the wilderness. All his basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and companionship were met as Moses married into Jethro's household. He had a good job and it provided for him. It looked like his old life was gone forever. Perhaps even his knowledge of his divine calling and destiny might have faded through forty years of wilderness. But God is faithful and will never let us do anything but His perfect Will. Moses' calling was inaugurated in the fullness of time by the appearance of the angel in the burning bush, and thus begin his new last lease of forty years of ministry in the Lord. His forty years in the wilderness was important and necessary. Moses had

become more humble and this character was important in leading the most powerful migrations in the Bible with one of the most powerful demonstrations of God in the Bible. The time in the wilderness was what truly equipped him to be used mightily by God. Imagine a proud Moses straight from 40 years of Egypt into power, without humility of 40 years wilderness. It would have been disastrous. Even after forty years in the wilderness, there were still sparks of anger that were uncalled for and caused Moses to miss entering the land of Canaan. Imagine if those sparks of anger were a regular feature. Overall, the Bible calls Moses the meekest man alive during his generation (Numbers 12:3). It took 40 years of wilderness to give him that important character.

As we end this first part of examining migrations in the Bible, we learn that there is a geographical place for all of us to be in. And sometimes we are called into several geographical places for each season of our lives. We must be faithful to go where God tells us to go. And we must also be faithful to learn what God wants us to learn in each place. Knowing that where we fail to learn and fail the test in each place, the timeline might change for us. But where we succeed by the grace of God, we always walk in God's perfect Will and can show forth His glory through our lives. May God's perfect Will always be done in our lives. Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.20

Migration in the Bible - Part 2

Dearly Beloved

As we consider the Major Exodus that is coming forth in this end time, especially during the period of the second set of seven years, we had looked in the Bible at the migration of Abraham and his descendants into Egypt, followed by the Exodus under Moses. In the New Testament, we noted Jesus also had moved and lived in various places. Some of the places Jesus lived in were decisions made by his parents through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and angels. Jesus was born in Bethlehem and his parents were led by the angels to take Him down to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15). According to secular history, King Herod died a short while after slaying the children in Bethlehem, which means that Jesus' time in Egypt was a few months to a year or so. Several dreams were given to Joseph as to when and where to take Jesus after Egypt (Matthew 2:20, 22-23). Through a series of dreams given to Joseph, Jesus ended having his hometown in Nazareth in the region of Galilee. Since Abraham and Jesus' parents had supernatural leadings in where they lived, it would mean that in our modern world, God still can speak in visions, dreams or other methods where to migrate.

When Jesus began His ministry, He made a conscious choice by the leading of the Holy Spirit to make Capernaum His hometown and centre of His ministry (Matthew 4:13). Jesus who had already been anointed by the Holy Spirit after His baptism, kept His public ministry private and moved to Capernaum after John was in prison. He knew it was time for His public ministry to start and was led by the Holy Spirit to migrate to Capernaum which later became the

centre of His Galilean ministry. Jesus visited Jerusalem a lot and when He was there, stayed in Bethany which was the hometown of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. **Could it be that some ministries or businesses never took off because a person is not sensitive to the Holy Spirit to know which town or city that they should base their ministry or businesses?**

The Apostle Paul was from Tarsus, but he must have been schooled in Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 9:11, 22:3). When no doors opened for him in ministry, Paul went back to his hometown of Tarsus. If Paul was converted in Acts chapter 9 (around AD 35) and went to Tarsus after Acts 9:30, it would be about 3 years (Acts 1:38) after he was born again. Then he was in Tarsus at least seven years before he was called by Barnabas to help the church (Acts 11:25, around AD 45). Acts chapter 9 to Acts chapter 11 is about 10 years period. Paul's decision to be in Jerusalem during his training days must be because he wanted to be under Gamaliel. This might have been his parents' decision and not just his decision. The decision to be in Antioch, where Paul launched three missionary journeys came about through the intermediary of Barnabas who opened a door for him. Paul made decisions on where he was going to stay based on open doors to the ministry and where he could participate in the revival that was going on in the early church in the book of Acts. In the end, the apostle Paul called every place where God called him 'home' as he stayed in many places sometimes six months, sometimes a few years and in Ephesus at least three years (Acts 20:31). Perhaps in our modern times, God might lead people to uproot themselves to flow to where God opens a door for ministry or where they could participate in revival and church life.

Another aspect of migration is migration caused by persecution. We see in the book of Acts that when things became unpleasant in

Jerusalem, many Christians left and were scattered throughout the whole region (Acts 11:19). This was involuntary and although it looked like natural and physical, the Holy Spirit was behind it, causing the gospel to be preached by these travelling Christian migrants. The great persecution scattered the Christians throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1). The apostles did not leave Jerusalem as God protected them and they had their callings to Jerusalem which they had to fulfil. Everyone had to hear God for themselves to stay or to go. For those without a spiritual reason, perhaps natural reason, to remain in Jerusalem, they uprooted themselves to migrate to another region and re-established their homes and families there. The apostles and the common people who were persecuted made different decisions on migration: some stayed while others abandoned Jerusalem. We read later in the epistle of Peter that he was in Babylon, which means that he must have been led by the Spirit to visit these places (1 Peter 5:13). Reasons for migration in the New Testament ranged between natural reasons like famine or persecution to God's divine spiritual call upon a person. All directions as to when and where were planned by God.

Considering all the Old Testament and New Testament accounts of migration, we summarize major principles to pray through when God stirs the heart to prepare for moving to a new place, especially during the coming Exodus.

1. The place to grow up may differ from the place to launch into ministry, business or professional life.

For some people it might be the same place, but for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, our Lord Jesus, Paul and many others the places where they grew up and the places of training or launching were totally different. In fact for Jesus, His hometown would not be the place to launch His ministry for they were too

familiar with Him to accept Him. No matter how anointed He was, they would always see Him as the son of Joseph or just a carpenter (Mark 6:1-6). No matter how much they heard the mighty works of His teachings, they could not see past the natural to recognize that the Messiah had lived in their midst and grew up there. For Abraham, perhaps there were too much idolatries in his father's house or his loyalty and filialness to his father might have hindered him from doing God's work (Genesis 11:31; Joshua 24:2). Even Moses had some problems with sibling rivalry when his older sister Miriam and older brother Aaron saw themselves as equal to him in ministry and looked down on his Ethiopian wife (Numbers 12:1-3). Moses' wife had nothing to do with whether they were equal in prophetic ministry, but the unhappiness of accepting his Ethiopian wife led to spiritual pride and dissension in their family. Joseph would probably never rise to his fullest ability if he was not separated from his older brothers. Though it was painful for him, he grew in his skills and ability under Potiphar and then in prison, he developed the gift of interpretation of dreams (Genesis 39:2; 40:1-23; 41:12). The environment of being nurtured and the environment of entering a new phase can sometimes require two separate geographical places with different challenges.

2. God reveals the exact place to go to enter the next phase.

God was precise in telling Abraham to go into the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1, 7). He was also precise in telling Isaac where not to go and where to go (Genesis 26:2-3). Jeremiah the prophet told the Israelites that they would live a long time in Babylon, so they were to build houses, plant trees, marry and have children (Jeremiah 29:4-6, 28). But the false prophets

opposed him, first saying that Jerusalem would not be conquered and then told the people their sojourn in Babylon was short (Jeremiah 28:1-4). The false prophets claimed that it would only be two years, but Jeremiah told them it would be seventy years (Jeremiah 28:3, 10; 29:10). Such contradiction caused confusion amongst the people but those who listened to Jeremiah prospered in the land of Babylon. When Paul was seeking where to go in his second missionary journey, God eventually told him to go to Macedonia (Acts 16:9-10).

3. The method to go to a place can be unexpected but the yielded vessel will always be in the place of God's perfect Will.

Joseph never expected that he would be sold as a slave in entering the land where he became the chief minister. Paul never expected that he would go to Rome as a prisoner, even though he had indicated his desire to visit the Christians in Rome (Romans 15:23-24). Paul had nurtured a desire to be in Rome for many years before the writing of the epistle to the Romans. Even though he felt like he 'no longer had a place in where he was writing from', he was still successful in his ministry in Corinth. After many years, Paul ended up in Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27:1). Jesus appeared to Paul and told him that he will testify in Rome (Acts 23:11). It took more than two years before Paul as a prisoner could be transported to Rome (Acts 24:27). Jesus told Peter that in his latter years of ministry, he would be taken to a place where he did not want to go (John 21:18). God will always answer every prayer and every desire born of His Spirit, but God may answer not in the way we expect nor in the time we think. Living in His perfect Will is enough no matter where we go and no matter how long it takes. The only safe place in the whole planet is to be in the perfect Will of God.

4. Circumstances or people might be instruments that lead us to go to another place.

It was always God's Will that the gospel be preached in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8). Much time past, nearly ten years, before a persecution arose that literally drove the Christians out of Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). Some preachers considered the persecution arose because the church was disobedient to the command to go forth and preach the gospel, so God allowed persecution to drive them out. Perhaps this might be the case, but we know that even if they had been obedient, persecution would still arise. God allowed Abraham to go to Egypt to live out the famine (Genesis 12:10). Isaac also had to leave his home to go to the land of the Philistines, being forbidden from going into Egypt (Genesis 26:1-3). Ruth had to leave her homeland of Moab in order to be with Naomi to care for her (Ruth 1:16-19). It was her determination that persuaded Naomi to let her follow (Ruth 1:18). Sometimes it is our fierce determination that dissuade people from stopping us from moving on to a new place. For Paul, it was the kindness of Barnabas in seeking him out that opened a door of ministry for him to move from his home town Tarsus to live in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26). Barnabas probably never expected that the man Paul, whom he helped, would be the same person that God linked him with for many years of ministry together (Acts 13:1-2). When Barnabas helped Paul, who would have thought Paul was the key to his future ministry as well.

5. The steadfastness of the individual's heart and life helps a person succeed and prosper where they are planted.

Daniel was taken at a young age to Babylon and his steadfastness in following the Lord righteously opened a door

of favour and grace into the highest courts of the Babylonian empire (Daniel 1:1-6). Exceptional love and righteousness brought forth exceptional favour and grace towards Daniel (Daniel 1:8-16). In addition, Daniel and his friends were gifted with wisdom ten times more than the wise men in the land and he was even given the gift of interpretation of dreams (Daniel 1: 17, 20). Joseph worked hard in the household of Pharaoh and did not stop being righteous when he was wrongly accused and lost everything he gained in Potiphar's house (Genesis 39:2-5, 19-23). The apostle Paul did not waver in his love and commitment to Jesus and the ministry despite going through much suffering and persecution (2 Corinthians 4:8-12; 11: 22-29). There is no substitute for hard work in high pressure circumstances. Those who give up easily will never succeed no matter where they are planted or where they live. In the end, the individual's heart must be sold out to God and give the best to our Master, our Lord Jesus Christ. Those who seek God diligently with faith are those who will ultimately be rewarded (Hebrews 11:6). God watches our lives twenty-four hours and take note of our expressions of love towards Him. Exceptional obedience brings forth exceptional blessings.

As each of you prepare for the coming Exodus, consider these principles and let our Heavenly Father lead and guide you to the town or city to live, to the country He wants you to be a witness in. It is God who opens doors which no man can shut (Revelation 3:8). Prayer can also be made for God to open a door (Colossians 4:2). When God opens a door, there might be Canaanites or adversaries, so open doors still need people of boldness and of great faith to take it (1 Corinthians 16:8-9). Open doors are no use to cowards who dare not take the step of faith. It also takes spiritual discernment to know that God has opened a door and flow into it (2 Corinthians 2:12).

Be blessed in following Jesus through every city, every country and every place He leads you. Where He leads, we will follow. Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.21

Learning to be a Bondservant

Dearly Beloved

Our modern civilization thrives on independence and freedom of life and expressions. Thankfully, slavery is banned and made illegal in our modern society. In Bible times, God permitted slavery to exist because humans have not come to the realization of the equality of all men. Bible language also use slavery or bond-slave as a metaphor in our relationship with God (Romans 6:15-22). The apostle Paul considered himself a bondservant (from *doulos* - slave) of the Lord (Romans 1:1, Philippians 1:1, Titus 1:1). All Christians are to consider ourselves bondservants of our Lord Jesus (Ephesians 6:6; 1 Peter 2:16). Paul even regarded the ministry as being bondservants to the church (2 Corinthians 4:5). Being far in time from the days of slavery, most of us do not have any idea what being a slave or bondservant is like. Thus, cannot bring forth this understanding of servitude towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

A slave basically has completely no rights and everything he has, everything he does, and even everything of his offspring belongs to the master. We were all bought with a price by the blood of Jesus Christ and totally belong to Him (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:22-23). Although we were made kings and priests in our Lord Jesus, we need to understand the concept of being bondservants to Jesus and being subject to all His commandments.

1. A slave does not own his time

One of the saddest parts about modern Christians is their lack of prioritization of our Lord Jesus. He is our Saviour but, in

many lives, not the Lord. Our daily life of 24 hours is subdivided into things we want to do, and then when there is leftover time, we spare some time for our Lord Jesus. Such behaviour is definitely not the behaviour of a bondservant of our Lord Jesus. As bondservants in the Lord, we wake up every morning seeking our Master Jesus, and asking Him what He wants us to do in our daily lives. Our time belongs to Him and we prioritize whatever He wants to do first. This includes spending time at His feet worshipping and listening to Him, discerning what He wants us to do. And even when He has given a task and we complete it, we run straight to sit at His feet and ask Him what else He wants us to do.

Give to our Lord Jesus all our days and lives only for Him. Live each day in His presence. Spending time at the feet of Jesus, is a priority to hear His voice and to listen to Him. We are to be like Elijah as one who learns to stand in the presence of God like the angels, ready to obey His every command (1 Kings 17:1; 18:15; Luke 1:19).

2. A slave and his property all belong to the Master

The apostle Peter stated that as followers and disciples of Jesus, they had left all to follow Jesus (Mark 10:28). Jesus also required the rich young man to sell all that he had and follow Him (Mark 10:21). In spiritual essence, this transfer is done to everyone who has accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour. In practical reality, this is voluntary and when it is done as part of the leading of the Holy Spirit, resulted in a great revival in the book of Acts (Acts 5:32-37). The sharing of material blessings became part of the ministry of the apostle Paul and the churches he planted (2 Corinthians 8:1-4). Paul spoke of an equality that resulted from

the sharing of abundance through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 8:10-15).

In the sermon on the Mount, our Lord Jesus stated that we cannot serve two masters; either we will hate the one and love the other, or else we will be loyal to the one and despise the other (Matthew 6:24). He went on to emphasize that the Gentiles (representative of people without a covenant) seek material things but that we are to seek the kingdom of God first and have all material blessings added to us by our Father God (Matthew 6:32-33). Many Christians are still seeking to tap on the law of sowing and reaping when there is a higher law operating where in surrendering all to Jesus and the gospel, we reap a hundredfold (Mark 10:29-30).

3. A slave is a hundred percent dependent on the Master

The prosperity of the slave is dependent on the generosity and prosperity of the Master. Of course, our Lord Jesus treats us much better than any slave master can, and He also considers us His friends and blesses us with ruling with Him as kings and priests (John 15:14-15; Revelation 1:5-6). The trust that the disciples had on Jesus was absolute and when He sent them out without any money or purse, they obeyed Him (Luke 9:1; 10:4). When He asked them if they lack anything when He sent them out with nothing, they replied that they lacked nothing (Luke 22:35). At another time when He sent them out before His crucifixion, He allowed them to take whatever money they had (Luke 22:36). In the earlier case, Jesus was still popular, and they would be well received by the people they preached to. But in the latter case, Jesus was going to be crucified and His disciples would be hunted and arrested. Our Lord Jesus knew all situations and was practical in all His commandments.

Nevertheless, in both situations, the disciples had to rely on God and on our Lord Jesus one hundred percent.

Throughout the Bible, from Abraham to the saints in the New Testament, it was implicit that those who love God, are called by God, and who serve God, be one hundred percent reliant on God. Like Paul advocated, he who preaches the gospel must live by the gospel. He advocated the right of those who live spiritually to have available material needs and that the labourer is worthy of their wages (1 Corinthians 9:3-14; 1 Timothy 5:17-18). God has also proven Himself in blessing those who left their all for Him, from making Abraham rich, to promoting Joseph, to giving favour to Daniel and in abundantly supplying all of the New Testament saints need. There is a risk to fully dependent on God to the natural man, but considering biblical history and the promises of God, this risk has been mitigated by innumerable case studies of God's blessings upon all who trust in Him.

4. A slave has no spiritual pride in his success but remains humble to the Master

The title 'servant of God' is today exalted so much that it sounds like a mighty and haughty title to lord it over other ordinary men. Our Lord Jesus has emphasized that we must NOT be like the Gentiles who lord over one another (Matthew 20:25). He said that the Gentile world has the arrangement that those who are considered rulers lord it over the rest and their great ones exercise authority over the others (Mark 10:42). Our Lord Jesus is emphatic that we DO NOT lord over one another like the Gentile world; it must NOT be so among Jesus' disciples (Matthew 20:26; Mark 10:43). Instead those who desire to be great or are great in our midst must be a servant (bondservant

or slave) to all (Mark 10:43-44). Whoever desires to be first must be a slave (Matthew 20:27). He gave Himself as our example, that He came to serve and NOT to be served (Mark 10:45). Jesus emphasized that those of us who are considered greatest amongst us, be as one who is youngest and those who have authority to govern be as one who serves (Luke 22:26). He understands that in life, those who sit at the table is considered greater than he who serves, and He stated that He Himself came as One to serve (Luke 22:27).

Jesus has given us a kingdom and that we sit at His table to eat and to drink, and even sit on thrones (Luke 22:29-30). Yet He expects us to be like Him, to serve as He did. He did great signs and wonders because He was always obedient to the Father (John 14:9-14). The only way to do the great works of God and to demonstrate great faith is to learn to be a bondservant to hear and obey all of God's commandments (Luke 17:5-9). And when we have done all things and have impressed the whole world by our witness and our success, we must merely acknowledge that we are just bondservants doing the will of our Master (Luke 17:9-10). The world is waiting to see the works of Jesus and the greater works of Jesus, but the most important thing is to show forth the humility of our Lord Jesus through our own servanthood that replicates the servanthood of our Lord Jesus.

5. The greatest attribute of a slave is absolute humility and obedience to the Master

This world takes after the enemy who emphasizes pride, arrogance, and dominance over each other. Satan showed to Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and its glory under his dominion (Matthew 4:8). He offered it all to Jesus, asking our Lord Jesus to bow down and worship him but Jesus refused

(Matthew 4:9-11). Jesus said that the devil has nothing in him (John 14:30). There is nothing that this world could give to Jesus and He wants us to have the same attribute. Anything that takes the place of God or takes our dependence on God should be utterly refused. Abraham said that he would not take one shoe string or one thread from the king of Sodom, lest the king of Sodom boast that he had made Abraham rich (Genesis 14:23). Apparently, Abraham had lifted up his hand and promised God that he would only be one hundred percent dependent on God to bless and prosper him (Genesis 14:22). God appeared to him immediately after this event to confirm that He, and only He, is Abraham's shield and exceedingly great reward (Genesis 15:1).

Of all the works of Jesus, the greatest achievement of our Lord Jesus is going to the cross, dying for us on the cross and rising from the dead. This was achieved through His obedience and humility; He learned obedience by the things which He suffered (Hebrews 5:8). All the works of Jesus came through His humility and the ultimate work of Jesus was the cross, and it was the finest and highest example of pure humility and obedience. His whole life was an attribute of humility (Philippians 2:3-11). Our Lord Jesus humbled Himself, became obedient to the point of death, the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8). He should inspire humility within us, yet modern Christianity has not been a great example of humility, instead becoming like the arrogance and pride of power like Gentiles (which Jesus told us not to become). We need to once again re-learn the lessons of being a bondservant to achieve the greatness of humility that our Lord Jesus had.

In conclusion, let us all truly learn what is TRUE Christianity and what is FALSE Christianity. Any form or expression of Christianity

that is prideful, selfish, self-serving and lacking all the humility and fruit of Jesus MUST be regarded as false forms of Christianity. They are the very opposite of what our Lord Jesus wants, becoming like the rulers and authorities of Gentiles which Jesus said we MUST NOT be like them. Who is there in our midst who desires greatness? Let them not argue but let them learn pure humility and learn to be bondservants of everyone!

Just before Jesus went to the cross, during the Lord's Supper when Jesus inaugurated the New Covenant, the disciples of Jesus were all arguing and trying to establish who was the greatest among them (Luke 22:24-28). They had argued who was the greatest many times: after He revealed He was about to be betrayed and be crucified (Mark 10:30-37), along the last journey to Jerusalem when James and John wanted positions as the right hand of Jesus (Matthew 20:20-28). It was so easy for the disciples of Jesus to sink to the level of the Gentile world and at critical moments of Jesus life become engross in foolish arguments about greatness. This desire to dominate one another is sin nature and we live in a Gentile world that practices such things. Two thousand years of Christianity has seen these same prideful arrogant spirit creep into the church. At many points of church history, such pride has been displayed in arrogance and we all are ashamed of such displays that does not exemplify our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us in this end time revival understand what the true spirit of Christianity is and learn to be bondservants of our Lord to one another. This is the greatest core of Jesus' attribute and it is important that we master the attribute of being humble like our Lord Jesus and become His bondservants to Jesus and to one another. The greatest among us must be the bondservant of all. Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.22

Remaining Humble While Blessed

Dearly Beloved

There are many important lessons in life. Amongst them are the need for persistence and courage in tough times. It is difficult to remain humble when one is blessed; whether the blessing is wealth, fame or power. I don't know why but I have seen many people survived hard and very tough times and then saw them lose their decency and "niceness" when success finally came to them. Wealth has a deceptive way of making people think they are important when all they have is just money, which counts for nothing in heaven. Heaven counts how we use money for good and not the mere accumulation of money as an achievement. Or others upon becoming famous begin to treat others around them as lesser mortals and over evaluate themselves as being higher class or better than others. And those who achieve power whether militarily or by positions of authority begin to abuse their power instead of using what God gives them for good.

Our Lord Jesus is emphatic that ALL positions of power, wealth or fame came because heaven permits us to have them momentarily during our sojourn on earth. When Pontius Pilate reminded Jesus that he had the power to crucify Him or let Him go, Jesus said that he had no power at all against Jesus unless it had been given to him from above (John 19:11). For exaltation or promotion does not come from the east or west or south but it comes from the Lord; for the Lord is the Judge who puts down one and exalts another (Psalm 75:6, 7). There are some very direct and clear cases of God giving authority and power to individuals and once they have received their power, they acted as if God was not involved in the process and tried to keep

their own power through their own might and method. Jeroboam, who became a king by God's gift, began to take upon himself idolatry and false worship in the Northern kingdom to preserve kingdom but ended up losing everything (1 Kings 11:31; 12:25-33; 14:10). Saul forgot how the Lord made him king and started abusing his authority as a king (1 Samuel 10:17-25; 13:13).

There are individuals who continue to remain humble even when God used them mightily or bring them into positions of power. Daniel was one who immediately acknowledged that it was not his own ability or wisdom which helped to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:30). When God first brought Solomon into power, he was humble and knew that he was incapable of judging God's people and asked God for wisdom (1 Kings 3:7-9). Later in his life, he became more carried away by his power and married foreign wives and worshipped idols (1 Kings 11:4-13). Pride can come so easily when success is present. Even King David had displays of pride when he was king: he was instrumental in murdering Uriah when trying to hide his adultery with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:7-12), he numbered Israel without the Lord's permission (2 Samuel 24:1-3). Of course, those without God are used to showing off their pom and pride all the time. When their pride directly opposes what God is doing, judgment is swift (Acts 12:1-4, 20-24). God always resists the proud and exalts the humble (James 4:6).

Everything contrasts with our Lord Jesus who remains the humblest of all manifestations despite being the very personification of the Godhead to humanity. Jesus is the most powerful being in the whole Universe, the creator of all of heavens and the earth as the Word. Yet, He chose to be born in a manger and came to serve and not to be served. Our Father God supplied everything that Jesus needed on this earth and everything was under His command. Not once did our Lord

Jesus display pride in all His power and success. We must all learn from our Master and Lord Jesus.

What are the keys that can help us to remain humble despite being blessed with success from God?

1. We must always remain childlike and fully dependent on our Father through our successes

When Solomon started his kingship, he considered himself a child and his childlike prayers touched God and brought him wisdom (1 Kings 3:7). When the disciples of Jesus were arguing as to who was the greatest amongst them, Jesus took a little child to Him, set him in their midst and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will be no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me." (Matthew 18:1-5)." Being childlike is not just for humility but it is also the means to enter into the kingdom of God and receive true revelation (Mark 10:15; Luke 10:21). It is also the manner in which perfect praise can come forth (Matthew 21:16). It seems that the more dependent we are upon the Father, the more perfect we become. No matter how young or how old we are now, to God our eternal Father we are all still like little babes and children. We must not let the cunningness of this world, the craftiness of evil present in the world or the habits of adult lives of self-independence affect our relationship with God. Constantly we must remain childlike, humble and pure like little babes and children are before they reach the age of accountability. God looks for the simple pure, honest, undefiled heart of a child within each of us. Always learning, always humble.

2. We must acknowledge all our abilities, skills and gifts that brought us blessedness came from His love and grace towards us.

Nothing that we do should change our pure and simple relationship with the Father. One can easily become proud of an ability that we were born with or that we have acquired. It takes grace to acknowledge all that we are able to do came from God working within us. Paul acknowledged all that he is came from the grace of God working with him (1 Corinthians 15:10). He even considered his earthly education and background all as rubbish before our Lord Jesus (Philippians 3:8). Jesus was Paul's only pursuit and he literally gave up everything for Jesus. He also suffered many, many tribulations and persecutions for our Lord Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:24-29). Yet his love for Jesus, his willingness to exchange all that he had, even giving his entire life, so that he may know Jesus, the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings (Philippians 3:8-10). Our Lord Jesus asked the question, "What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Indeed, what do we want to exchange all of our lives for? What is it that is more valuable than life itself? Our Lord Jesus is our pearl of great price! Without our Lord Jesus all of us are nothing! (John 15:5). We must have this inner consciousness that we are nothing without Jesus and only in Jesus can we be everything God want us to be. Like Job, we must acknowledge that even our highest thoughts, our best oratory, our greatest achievements, all must melt before the presence of our Father God, creator and ruler of the whole Universe who freely gives us of His blessings to enjoy (Job 40:3-5). There is nothing good in us, only that which is of God is good in us, by ourselves we

cannot be good (Mark 10:18). Indeed, there is nothing good in us, only that which is from Him, can be truly good.

3. The pursuit of love for God and towards all men must be the basis behind all our success

It was the love of God that moved God to send His only begotten Son to save us (John 3:16). It was the love of Jesus for us that moved Him to sacrifice and gave His life for us (Romans 6:6-11). When something is done out of pure love, there is no motivation for reward nor for compensation. All the gifts of God – tongues, prophecy, faith, power, etc. – do not benefit until we truly do it all out of the pure motivation of God’s love (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). The love of God propelled the apostle Paul towards the preaching of the gospel in many difficult circumstances and places (2 Corinthians 5:14). The most important thing on the planet earth is love, actions of love, growing in love, creating stories of our love for God and for others.

Many people started their lives well with a desire to love God and to love others, but along the way they exchanged the value of love into gaining money, fame and positions of power. Jesus warned us never to have money as a master (Matthew 6:24). The motivation of love through time becomes replaced in many good lives by the motivation for money, fame or pleasures. This results in emptiness and despair as the true meaning of life becomes replaced by the endless cycle of the pursuit of worldly things that do not last forever. It is good to be always from the beginning to the end, maintain the pursuit of things that last eternally: love, character, attributes of God, heavenly and eternal qualities.

At the end of the day, each of us must ask the questions, “What is life? What is the purpose of life? What do we want to obtain from this life that is heaven worthy?” The daily mortal needs of this life often blind us to the eternal purposes of this life. It takes discipline to focus on the things that are eternal and heavenly each day while we go about with the daily requirements of living out a life that is both spiritually and naturally successful. Some succeed naturally by giving up spiritual success. Others seek to succeed spiritually but do not know how to succeed naturally. We live in both the spiritual and natural world, and we need to succeed on both dimensions. Otherwise, we could have just remained spirits in the heavenly realm and not needed to come to the earth and assume a physical body.

From the Bible perspective, the followings are true:

1. All success in the natural needs a spiritual element of success. This includes even those who do not know God yet. The law of God that says it is success in the spiritual that produces success in the natural (2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Hebrews 11:3; 3 John 1:2).
2. The spiritual and natural success of a person can flow into the next generation that does not deserve nor merit the success. We see many times when a good king passed his success to his son, who turned out to be bad and caused a loss of that same success through time (Solomon inherited his father’s success – 1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12; Hezekiah inherited a ruined kingdom from his father Ahaz and prospered as he became a king attuned to spiritual matters but Manasseh his son, who inherited his success ruined it (2 Chronicles 28:1-8, 27; 29:1-2; 31:20-21; 33:1-2). This is also true of businesses where the first generation obeyed spiritual laws, knowingly or unknowingly, and the second generation who inherits the success can increase it or destroy it.

3. The continuation of all successes must always be rooted in spiritual principles which justify continuation of natural success powered by spiritual success. Joshua took Moses' successful ministry to Israel and continued to build it into greater success of the conquest of Canaan with God establishing him with his very own miracles and success (Joshua 1:1-9; 3:7-8).

To receive success, everyone must be humble in to receive the gift of God's grace. To continue in that success, everyone must remain humble so that the grace of God can increase and multiply. Avoid pride like the plague for it will destroy all inherited success and prevents success. For who can succeed if God is resisting you? And who can fail if God is exalting you? (James 4:6). Let us be on the side of God, for if God is for us, who can be against us (Romans 8:31). And God loves the meek and the humble, for the meek shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5).

Fatherly Talk 7.23

The Test of Job

Dearly Beloved

The test of Job is that we do not love or serve God just because of what God can give us or do for us. Although this test is in the Old Testament, it still applies in the New Testament because the standards of the New Testament are much, much higher. Though the devil no longer occupies the same position as he did before Jesus went to the cross, for all authority and power has been stripped from him at Jesus cross and resurrection, our Father God still deserves a love greater than Job could have given Him. Our Father God has given so much more to us in the New Covenant and our Lord Jesus has revealed so much more to us and done so much more for us than all of the Old Covenant saints.

It is logical to assume that despite all the changes in the victory of Jesus over the devil and his cohorts, and the changes that are wrought for mankind through the sacrifice of Jesus at the cross and His resurrection, and all that has changed in heaven through the blood of the Lamb, God is the same God who requires our love and service for Him in the New Testament to be greater than what the Old Testament requires.

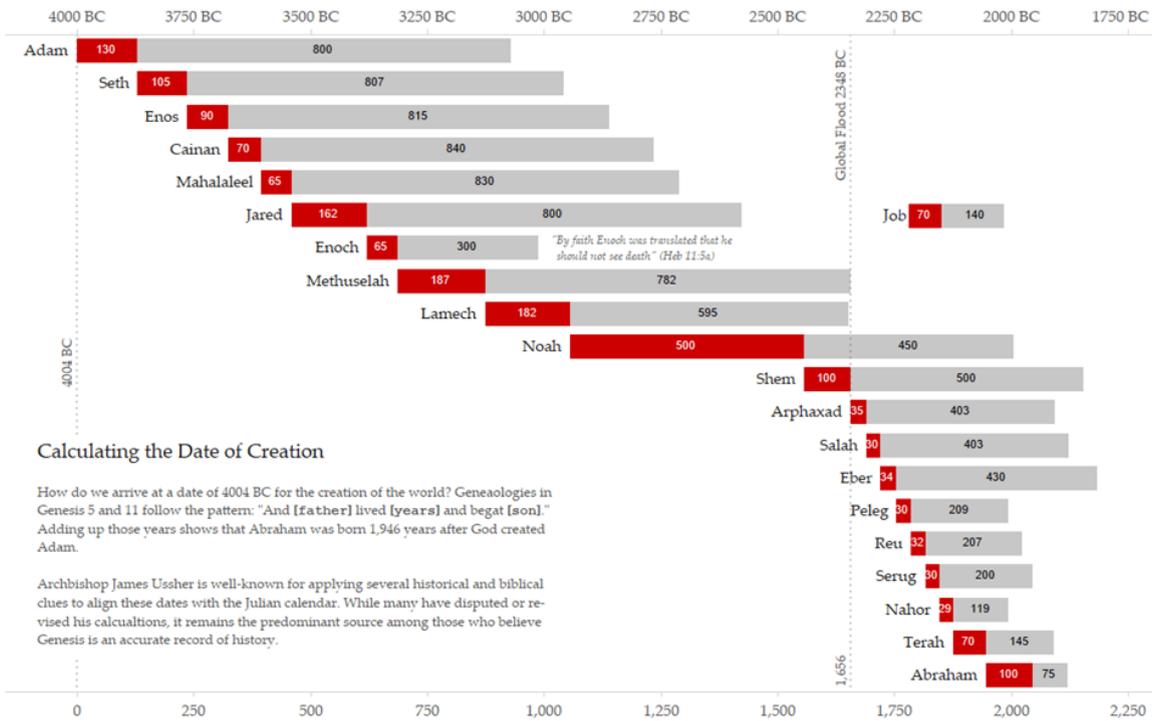
In our present-day culture where Christians live in grace and expect a lot of interventions from God in their personal prosperity and health, can we still find those who will love God outside these benefits? God forbade and it will never occur again with Jesus' sacrifice for us, but should God apply another test of Job to modern Christians, would He still find those who love Him for who He is?

Even in the New Testament, the requirement to be a disciple of Jesus is far above anything in the Old Testament. Are there still many true disciples of our Lord Jesus? Or are most Christians just in for a ticket to heaven and ride on God's benefits? I am sure there are good true disciples of Jesus present today but that number must increase until the whole world feels the might of those who love and follow our Lord Jesus unreservedly.

The three Hebrew young men who chose not to bow to idols at the risk of their own lives are examples of how they love God even if they die. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego believed that God was able to save them from the fiery furnace, but they said that even if God does not deliver them, they will still not bow to idols, choosing instead to love God unto death (Daniel 3:16-18). They received one of the greatest miracles in the Old Testament when God saved them from the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:26-27).

Job lived in the time before Abraham when the world had grown past the flood, the parting of the earth into continents, the Tower of Babel, and where unrighteousness was still increasing before the call of Abraham. Despite the evil present around him, he sought to be upright and walk with God blamelessly (Job 1:1). He had seven sons and three daughters and was one of the richest and greatest man in the East (Job 1:2-3). It was God who pointed out to the devil that there is none like Job in all the earth (Job 1:8). If Job had lived after the days of Peleg and the dividing of the earth, then he would have been a contemporary of Abraham, as shown in the chart below. He could have been around 70 years old when he was tested and then went on to live another 70 years, but this is only an assumption.

Genesis Timeline from Adam to Abraham



(extracted from viz.bible with approximate Job timeline added)

Through two recorded dialogues of the devil with God, Job was brought through various tests to prove the integrity of his love for God (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7). The first test of Job involved removing all of his wealth (7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 oxen, 500 female donkeys). He was probably the wealthiest man in the East. In one day, Job's properties were raided and stolen by the Sabeans, burnt by fire from the sky, raided and stolen by the Chaldeans. All his servants were killed with only three to report what had happened (Job 1:14-17). The suffering and loss of all possessions and assets, reduced to bankruptcy, is a pain only those who have gone through would know. The suffering of poverty, going without food, clothing and shelter is only properly understood when one is in such a position. Many people give up their integrity, their dignity, their morality for food, clothing, shelter and money. Hunger and poverty can drive a person

to extreme methods and many compromises. Only those who hold their integrity and uprightness to the end would rather die than give up their righteousness and obedience to God's laws.

The second test of Job involved his loss of all his loved ones, except his wife. In one day, Job lost all his seven sons and three daughters (Job 1:18, 19). Many people who lost a loved one, a family member, a son or a daughter have never recovered from their grief. Many also gave up their faith in God and their holding on to the laws of righteousness that they live by when they suffer such personal loss. Even Aaron the high priest found it hard to perform when he lost two sons in one day (Leviticus 10:19-20). Job tore his clothes, shaved his head in mourning and grief, fell to the ground in deep anguish, yet he worshipped God (Job 1:20). He declared that all things came from God, all that he had, all that he loved, everything came from God and he did not sin nor charge God with any wrong (Job 1:20-22). How many of us would survive losing ten children in one day and still chose to worship God? It definitely is a sacrifice of worship filled with tears and sorrow, yet of total surrender to God who doesn't always explain what He is doing. It involves complete trust and faith in a good God who will not let those who love Him suffer or be tempted beyond what they are able to. Job's character strength must have been quite strong for God to allow him the sufferance of total bankruptcy and complete loss of all children. No grief or sorrow would have cried enough tears to comfort Job in the natural and in the soul. Yet his spirit was determined to love God, worship God and trust God implicitly.

The third test of Job was when he lost all of his health and suffered one of the most painful ailments: boils from the sole of his feet to the top of his head. It was painful, nauseating, and so unbearable that Job has to take a potsherd (a piece or shard of clay vessel) to scrub himself while he sat in the ashes mourning. And this is some time after he had

already suffered bankruptcy and the loss of all his ten children. The funeral services were well over, the need to rebuild himself financially was impendent on him. He needed all his strength and encouragement to pull through and rebuild himself, yet on top of this came the loss of all his strength and health. No more wealth, no more health! This is the predicament of Job! Would he still love God? Would he still trust God? Would he still serve God?

And just when he was struck in a state where he had no more strength, such that he must have wished to die, the fourth test occurred. God used his wife to encourage him to give up on God and curse God and die (Job 2:9-10). Job was already fighting the battle without, now he must fight the battle within. There is no greater need for a man when he is down to have his own loved ones support him. Job found no one but God. Nowhere do we see anyone encourage him or support him until Elihu the fourth friend turned up. Probably this was the moment to die as Job probably had nothing else to live for in the natural. Yet he chose to live for God, accepting God as a good God in adversity or in prosperity (Job 2:10).

Three of his friends who came to see him saw such great grief in Job that they kept silent for seven days but was just present with him (Job 2:11-13). They truly came to comfort him, wept and cried with him. But in the end, they also became a fifth test of Job when they began to analyse what happened and allude it to Job's integrity and secret sin. Eliphaz implied that God blesses the righteous and if Job was suffering such curses, it was possible that he had been unrighteous (Job 5:2-6). He said that Job was being 'corrected by God' (Job 5:17). Bildad hinted that 'God is judging Job' and he might have sinned against God (Job 8:1-6). According to Bildad, Job's loss of abundance and blessings implied that he was an evildoer (Job 8:6, 20). Zophar told Job to repent for his 'wickedness and sins' (Job 11:1-3, 11-15).

Eliphaz pointed to Job's iniquity and craftiness (Job 15:5). He implied that Job must be a 'wicked man' for the destroyer has taken his health and his prosperity (Job 15:20-21). Bildad chastised Job for thinking that they were stupid and said that Job as a wicked man would indeed die soon and his life be shortened (Job 18:3-7). He implied that Job was a 'wicked man and does not know God like them' (Job 18:21). He also explained that was the reason for Job losing all his children (Job 18:19). Zophar preached a sermon on the wicked man directly pointing to Job as the man he was talking about and a hypocrite whose pride reached the sky (Job 20:5-6). He thoroughly explained all that had happened to Job proved his point; Job was indeed a wicked man whose goods were taken away in the day of God's wrath and whose iniquity was now revealed in heaven (Job 20:27-29). In the heat of the conversation, forgetting all the great suffering Job was going through, Eliphaz directly pointed to the perceived fact that Job had great wickedness and his iniquity was without end (Job 22:5). In the end, a fourth friend, Elihu, turned up and he was upset that Job had justified himself and said that he was righteous in his own eyes (Job 32:1). He was the youngest amongst them and argued the point that no man was righteous in themselves, but we all need a ransom or redeemer, a mediator (Job 33:23-24).

Many of us have been like Job's three friends and added salt to wounded hearts. Though Job was not wrong in regarding he was indeed blameless and upright before God when all the disasters struck, he was arguing from the point of self-righteousness and he did not wilfully sin. He was so grieved that he was cursing himself and his birth, probably wishing to die (Job 3:2-11). When his three friends started implying and accusing him of wickedness and sin as an explanation for the disasters that took place, Job defended himself and argued that this did not occur but in doing so, became self-righteous. When God showed up, Job repented for his self-righteousness and

also interceded for his friends whom God said spoke wrongly about him and accused him wrongly of sin (Job 40:1-3; 42:7-8).

The story of Job points very clearly that all prosperity and all blessings come because of the goodness, mercy and grace of God. Even in our most righteous works and acts, we will never elevate ourselves to the point of 'deserving' God's blessings. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). All of God's blessings come to those who implicitly trust and love God unreservedly. And where God so chooses to withhold for some time, it is to test our hearts to see if we truly love God for who He is and not what He can do for us (Deuteronomy 8:2). Difficulties, delays, temporary setbacks, tough times are but moments for us to prove to God our pure and sincere love for God. Even times of hunger, thirst and lack of needs did not stop Paul from loving God and serving God (2 Corinthians 11:27). He had this beautiful revelation that God always prepare something special for those who love God (1 Corinthians 2:9). The love and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ should make all of us more steadfast in our love for our Lord Jesus and our Father God. Even if, but would never happen, our God stops all answers to prayers and never lift a finger to help us or bless us, all that Jesus has done on the cross for us should be enough to win our absolute love and devotion towards God unconditionally. God loves us unconditionally and we should also love God unconditionally. This is the perfection of Creator and creation. Let us all go beyond the test of Job and pass through this earth with flying colours giving our absolute unconditional love for God every moment and every day of our lives. Amen.

Fatherly Talk 7.24

Conceiving in Faith

Dearly Beloved

The process of faith has four processes: Hearing, Conception, Formation, Birthing. Kenneth Hagin in his little booklet, 'How to write your own ticket with God' speaks of four processes: Say it, Do it, Receive it, Tell it. He received it from the story of the woman with the issue of blood who heard and spoke to herself, reached out and touched Jesus, received her healing and finally confessed that she was the one who received her healing (Mark 5:25-34). He also mentioned these four points occurred in the story of David and Goliath, where David kept saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills Goliath and takes away the reproach from Israel?" (1 Samuel 17:26, 30). Then he went out and slayed Goliath and everyone told of his exploits. Hagin mentioned that he received these four points in a spiritual vision from Jesus. These four points contained the principles found in the four processes of faith.

In the process of hearing, we have Scriptures that speak about how true faith is authored by our Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:2). We received the beginning of our faith through hearing God's spoken word (Romans 10:17). All acts of faith are not born of the human will or flesh, but they are energized by the spoken word of God into our individual lives. Man must not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3). It is the spoken word of God that energizes the life of faith that pleases God. In the healing of the lame man on the way to prayer, while everyone looked in wonder at the apostles for the notable miracle done on the lame man who had never walked before, Peter

proclaimed that it was not their own power or godliness that made the man walk but rather it was faith in Jesus Name, the faith that came through Him that has given the man perfect healing (Acts 3:12, 16).

The first and most important thing in the walk of faith is the ability to hear God. Without hearing, there is no faith.

Step One: The Hearing of Faith

For the woman with the issue of blood, her faith began when she heard about our Lord Jesus through the words of many people speaking of Him. She must have heard of His many miracles He did (Mark 5:27). In her own life, she was also desperate for she had spent all her money for a cure and none of them was effective, and she grew worse (Mark 5:25-26). From this case we know that hearing is not necessarily hearing directly from God, but it includes hearing of the works and acts of God upon others and believing that it is possible for our own lives too. Although Jesus did say that My sheep hear My voice, it is obvious that there is a growth from lamb to sheep and lambs have to follow the sheep until they can hear the shepherd's voice (John 10:27). There will always be people on earth in every generation who hear God's voice in their own way and who are obedient to what they hear. Those learning to hear God's voice must learn from those who do and through time learn to hear God's voice for themselves. There is a path of growth from baby lamb to adult sheep. This process includes feeding upon the word of God (John 21:15; 1 Peter 2:2).

Sometimes God speaks but it is not heard. God told Elijah that He had told a widow to feed him, but the widow was ready to die of starvation and apparently never heard God (1 Kings 17:9). For the

woman with the issue of blood, all the wonderful things she heard about Jesus must have awakened a desire to be healed by Jesus and perhaps somewhere in her spirit conscience, she felt that God was speaking to her heart that she was to be healed also by Jesus.

It is possible to hear and seemingly received but not enduring for the lack of roots. The seed planted by the wayside are those who hear but never believe (Luke 8:12). Those on the rock are those who hear and believe for a while but in a time of trial or temptation, fall away because they have no root (Luke 8:13). It is interesting that there are two groups of people who hear but never truly conceive in faith. The first group is easily recognised for they do not believe in the first place. Remember that this lack of faith or unbelief is caused by an individual free choice which they must be responsible for in the day of judgment. The lack of faith or unbelief can be their lack of faith in God's direct speaking to them or their lack of faith in the words of faith proclaimed by the faithful messengers and witnesses of God. In His own hometown, people who had known Jesus physically could not believe that He was the Messiah, the Anointed One (Mark 6:1-6). They could not believe because their natural eyes were opened but their hearts were closed to what God was saying and doing in their midst. Isaiah and the apostle Paul faced this problem when they proclaimed the word of God to the Jews (Acts 28:26-28). The second group of people are also interesting for they "believe for a while."

All belief and faith have to be tested. Those who only believe because it is easy to believe or convenient to believe do not truly have faith. Even our Lord Jesus had to be tested in His own belief that He was and is the Son of God. In two sample recorded temptations, He was asked to prove that He was the Son of God. The devil implied that he might not be by the big word "IF" (Matthew 4:3, 6). At other times, people are afraid to believe because of the fear of being ostracised or

rejected. The parents of the blind man who was healed knew that their son had received a miracle from Jesus but because they feared the Jews, they dared not openly confess their faith in Christ (John 9:22). Beware that it is possible to believe for a while and then fall away. It is truly those who endure in their belief until the end who receive the promises of God (James 5:10-11). It is faith with longsuffering that possesses the promises of God (Hebrews 6:12). The major thing lacking in the Hebrews was the lack of endurance which Paul sought to address (Hebrews 10:32-36).

Step Two: Conception of Faith

Once the word of God has been truly received and a measure of endurance occurred, it enters into the conception stage. At this stage, spiritual nourishment and the spiritual environment of faith are essential to the development of the substance of faith into physical manifestation. It is still possible to abort the process of faith through carelessness and worldliness. Like the seed that is sown amongst thorns, the cares of this life, riches, and pleasures of life cause no fruit at maturity (Luke 8:14). Many people had a good beginning but never received a good ending. Jeroboam's kingdom of ten tribes was gifted through prophecy and established by God's word, with a promise of a lasting dynasty (1 Kings 11:38). Instead his disobedience killed every single male heir in his line (1 Kings 14:10). Saul began well with humility but completely caused God to reject him for all his frequent disobedience (1 Samuel 10:1, 9; 15:11, 23).

Abraham conceived the promise of a child of his own for approximately twenty-five years before God finally gave him a child through Sarah at the age of one hundred years (Genesis 15:6; 17:1; 21:5). He had always believed God from the start of the covenant

relationship and in the process of time thought that it was fulfilled in Ishmael but when God spoke of a child with Sarah, he again believed although he had a brief moment of incredulous laughter (Genesis 17:17-18). At ninety-nine years of age, Abraham now needed two miracles, one for himself and one for Sarah, yet he held strong and did not waver that God was able to do this (Romans 4:19-22). Perhaps he had thought that Ishmael was the promise child for thirteen years. When God appeared and clarified that this was not so but rather his promised son was to be through Sarah, though feeling incredulous for a moment, he immediately obeyed God, circumcised himself with all his household and looked forward to a double miracle from God without wavering. The journey of faith through conception can be long and filled with our own thinking that God is working in a certain way, but it needs to be a humility of faith so that at each point when God corrects our thinking, we immediately flow with the new understanding that God gives.

Ishmael was Sarah's idea and Abraham accepted that this might have been God answering his prayers and keeping the promise given when God made a covenant with him (Genesis 15:4; 16:1-4). For twelve silent years, there was no record of conversations between God and Abraham, perhaps because Abraham thought that God had already answered his prayers through Ishmael. God always answers prayers but not always by the method we choose and certainly not by the works of the flesh. There was no miracle in the birth of Ishmael, it was pure natural arrangement. God also had a fullness of time in bringing forth the fulfilment of His promise to Abraham. Abraham's life seems to be in large cycles of twenty-five years, and it was the completion of a cycle of faith walk (in the land of Canaan for twenty-five years) that God again appeared to him to get him ready for his blessing at the age of one hundred years old. There are also many side blessings of faith, for Abraham was sterile when he conceived Isaac miraculously and

after that remained virile through the resurrection power of God, such that he remarried after the death of Sarah to Keturah and had six children with her (Genesis 25:1-2).

Conception involves continually doing all the commandments of God. Moses took one year to build a Tabernacle for God. He had to ensure that everything that was done in accordance to the visions that he had seen of the details of the tabernacle. Conception and the third step of formation are related as one is getting impregnated by the seed of faith and the other is being watchful throughout the pregnancy until it reaches full term.

Step Three: Formation in Faith

All things in the natural are formed and shaped by things in the Spirit (Hebrews 11:3). Faith is the substance (*hupostasis*) that comes from God's Word, authored by our Lord Jesus (Hebrews 11:1; 12:2). Worlds were framed (formed) by the word of God (Hebrews 11:3). The word 'frame' comes from the Greek word *katartizo* which means 'to perfect, to fit or frame, to complete, to join together.' This implies a process of time and a 'layering process' where the spiritual mould is being cast to create something in the natural dimension. All natural dimensions exist based on the spiritual dimension for the spiritual is eternal while the natural is temporal (2 Corinthians 4:18). When we are impregnated by the seed of faith from our Lord Jesus, layer upon layer is being built in the spiritual dimension as we continue steadfast in faith through the corridors of time. Like a baby in the womb there is a fullness of time for the birth into the natural world of a spiritual creation.

Just like Moses took one year, with the help of all the anointed artisans and resources from the nation of Israel, to build the tabernacle, the

process of faith needs a time process to form in the spiritual what is to be birth in the natural. Towards the end of Exodus, the redundancy of the phrase 'as the Lord had commanded Moses' served as the song of faith for all who wanted to walk in faith (Exodus 40:1-33). From beginning to the end, the process of faith involves continually hearkening to the voice of God and obeying each detail command until God is pleased. It is only when God says it is finished that it is truly finished. How do we know the process is complete? It is when God is well-pleased! (Hebrews 11:2, 5, 6). We must continually be well-pleasing to our God. Our Lord Jesus lived thirty years on earth in a life well-pleasing to God, before God declared that He is well-pleased and obtained the anointing of the Holy Spirit as the Messiah sent by God (Matthew 3:17). Well-pleasing to God means that God takes pleasure in us. Jesus was God's beloved in whom He is well-pleased (Matthew 12:18). God kept declaring how well-pleased He was with our Lord Jesus, even at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5).

Jesus declared that it is the Father's good pleasure to give us His kingdom (Luke 12:32). The process of faith is to bring pleasure to God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not just merely creating things in the natural from spiritual substances. It is important to please God and the soul that draws back from the walk of faith will displease God (Hebrews 10:38). We must walk in the process of faith until we obtain a good testimony before our God (Hebrews 11:2). It is remarkable that we as God's creation and tiny little creatures, could give such pleasure through our Lord Jesus to God our Father. The Father's soul is filled with joy when we walk by faith and it is the ONLY way to please God (Hebrews 11:6). There needs to be diligence in the walk of faith in order to please God.

Step Four: Birthing in Faith

The finale of the walk of faith is in the manifestation into the natural all that is done in the spiritual. We have many men and women of faith before us who have shown us the way. Elijah prayed for a long time until he pleased God so much that God agreed to stop the rain according to his prayers (James 5:17). He never gave up and never relented in his zeal for God. It took many years of fervent, dedicated and diligent prayers as he wept to see idolatry all over Israel. Finally, God gave him authority over the weather, and he stood before Ahab and declared that there will be no rain, except at his word (1 Kings 17:1). 'At Elijah's word!' What audacity, what boldness, what authority! The manifestation of Elijah's word was so powerful that there was no rain nor dew for three years and six months. Oh, there is great power when the manifestation of faith is finally birth! But long and lonely are the hours, days, weeks, months and years spent in prayer with God. Everyone rejoices in the manifestation, but few want to pay the price of walking in faith, pleasing God for many years. Israel cried out that Yahweh is indeed the true God when Elijah confronted the false prophets with fire from God, but not many of them continued steadfast in God when they had the chance to reject idolatry and follow God with all their heart.

Nevertheless, it is the call to those who want to go all the way with God to be truly pioneers of the acts of faith from the spiritual world. For such will be those whom God raised in this end time of His bride and church, who will be well-pleasing to God and do mighty exploits.