

# Capturing God's Heart

## Volumes 11 - 20



"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up,  
just as you have been doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

<http://capturingcourage.org>  
[cyndy@capturingcourage.org](mailto:cyndy@capturingcourage.org)

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>		<b>PAGE</b>
11.	Overwhelmed	2
12.	Women	4
13.	Trusting with Little	7
14.	Relationship	9
15.	Faith	11
16.	Grown Up	14
17.	Prophetic Lives	17
18.	Life	19
19.	The Great Expectation	21
20.	Our Journey	23

---

## Volume Eleven: Overwhelmed

We are all overwhelmed at one time or another. Life has many dynamics to it, and we are often stretched beyond what we think we can do and beyond who we are.

And this is certainly true in ministry, where others are looking to us for answers and solutions and wisdom. In those times we are vulnerable to discouragement.

But I've discovered six principles that have helped to frame the challenges of our days and I want to share them with you.

### **I. LEAD WITH GENEROSITY**

History has shown that those who position themselves to bless others are leaders in the land. A opportunity that is open to any one of us at any time.

**“They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.” 2 Corinthians 8:2**

Generosity comes from the outflow of our relationship with the Lord and is based on who He is rather than our circumstances.

Generosity is a hearts attitude that seeks to bless others. It is a way of being in the world that is a blessing that honors and pours over others.

How might you lead in generosity today?

### **2. CONFESS FEAR**

There are many things to be afraid of and many times we are frightened and shrinking back in fear.

Being afraid and fearful is normal. There are so many verses in the Bible about ‘do not fear’ that we see fear to be a pretty normal problem for all of us in our humanity.

Yet just as many times we find these words, “Do not fear”, and in John we find Jesus saying this,

**“I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.” John 14:27**

The way to access the peace of Jesus Christ is to simply confess our fear, “*God I am afraid.*”

Rather than trying to not be afraid, “I will not be afraid, I will not be afraid, I will not...” which never works by the way (we cannot talk ourselves out of fear), open honesty about our fear secures us in the covering of God and submits our reality to him.

When we are afraid we simply confess, “God I am afraid” and the peace of Christ can takes its place in our lives.

### 3. ONE DAY AT A TIME

We can only live one day at a time, and it is important to discipline our minds and hearts to remain in that 'one day at a time'. In Proverbs we find good advice about staying in today and not living forward into tomorrow with pride,

**“Don’t brag about tomorrow, since you don’t know what the day will bring.”  
Proverbs 27:1**

And in Matthew we find the same kind of advice but this time about worry,

**“So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today” Matthew 6:34**

Both of these verses tell us to simply live in today. The tasks for today are enough for today.

The blessings of today are enough for today. And all we need for today we have today.

The grace for tomorrow we do not have yet, for it is not yet tomorrow.

We simply live in today – One day at a time.

### 4. DO WITH WHAT WE HAVE

While it is easy to think that we need this or must have more of that thing etc, we can in fact move forward with the present reality and resources more than we believe.

While there are certainly times of preparation and waiting on the timing of God, when it comes time to move forward or to stretch into that next thing, we do so regardless of what we think might be missing.

'Doing with what we have' works two ways.

One, we put to rest the reasoning that we cannot do such and such until we have this or that. We simply get on with the work regardless.

And two, we experience today in all its fullness. What we need we have, and what we have we fully utilize. No longer do we live out in the future when such and such will come to be.

Rather we find gratefulness and fulfillment in the here and now.

Doing with what we have is the secret to joy and contentment in the here and now. And we find this truth,

**“And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.” 2 Corinthians 9:8**

## 5. BE POURED OUT

The needs of hearts and souls around us are many. Oftentimes we are insufficient for them, but in the knowledge of God and of who he is, and because we have found him in our own lives, we can follow His lead and give of ourselves.

**“So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.” Ephesians 1:6**

Because of God’s pouring into us, we can pour into others. Much like a healthy stream of water that comes from one place and goes to another, the act of being poured out ensures that there is a flowing spring of the spirit through our beings.

We take in the grace of God and we pour it out to others.

## 6. IT’S NOT OUR WORK

We come to see that as we minister to others that it is not our work. We simply show up, and the Spirit works through us.

We therefore do not need allow overwhelm to stop us, or fear to hold us back. Rather, we can boldly love and speak and minister because it is really the work of God that makes the difference. We simply offer our lives to God’s touch. He does the rest.

**“There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.”  
I Corinthians 12:5-6**

## CONCLUSION:

These six things, 1. Lead in Generosity, 2. Confess Fear, 3. One Day at a Time, 4. Do with What we Have, 5. Be Poured Out, and 6. It’s Not Our Work, provide a framework that gives strength to our days and direction for how we might be in the world.

The influence of our lives has little to do with us, and it has everything to do with God. As we live out of who God is, rather than our circumstances, we will find strength and encouragement in our days. God bless each of you mightily, may you know him a little better today.

---

## Volume Twelve: Women

It is pressing upon me to today take a look at what the Bible says about women. There is much assumed and categorized when it comes to women. Much that is not in line with the heart of God, and while there is not time or space to look at everything we might discuss about women, we will look at a just a couple of thoughts today.

The Bible begins with the creation of the world, (and as John and Stasi Eldredge brought to our attention in their book, Captivating), we see that creation begins with wide swaths. Like a giant brush painting a large picture, a grand work of art, the first strokes lay out the background and the vistas of creation; light and dark, land and sea and sky.

Creation continues with God filling in the details. Plants and trees, animals and birds, fish and creatures of the sea, are added. Then comes mankind. A stunning representation of God himself. Mirroring both male and female God makes mankind.

**“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27**

With mankind we find the finesse and attention to detail a wonderful thing to behold.

Breathed through with the breath of God mankind carries a spirit that is more complex and specialized than any other creature on earth.

And with one final sweep of creative energy, the soaring finale to creation, woman arrives on the scene. She is the glory added right at the end. Like a shining pinnacle of a grand mountain, woman adds the finishing touches to creation. Simply by who she is, woman reflects the glory of God in spectacular wonder.

Women are born and bred to carry the glory of God; to reflect God’s stunning beauty.

Women give testimony of the majesty of our creator.

But Satan was the original one who was most beautiful, something he lost, something that woman gained.

Ever since Satan has hated SHE.

And ever since there has been unprecedented attacks and confounding over women for centuries upon centuries. Over no other people group have the oppressions been so profound and long-lasting.

And the Bible has a few things to say about this. We read first of all in Galatians that there is no male or female in the body of Christ.

**“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28**

Paul had written here a short list of all the ways we discriminate as human beings. At the time of this writing a common way to discriminate was to hate Jews if one was Greek, and to hate Greeks if one was a Jew. Then there was the discrimination around those who are slaves or those who are free, and that we still have to this day in many places, then, into the conversation another discrimination: that of being male or female.

It is no secret that world over, that still today, male babies are considered the better of the species, and that men are superior to women. Even today there are babies aborted because they are female. Even today there are new-born baby girls killed simply because they are female. Even today, we have much prejudice and discrimination in the world over women, simply because they are female.

Yet, "In Christ Jesus there is no male or female, we are all one"

What difference does this verse make to you?

How might this change the way we do life in our families and work places?

In Peter we find this,

**"Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." 1 Peter 3:7**

This verse has been misapplied time and again. We miss that the 'weakness' of women as described here is about the body (the vessel). It is a woman's body that is weaker than a man's body. Having only two layers of muscle where men have three layers of muscle, a woman's body is literally not as physically strong as a man's body.

And therefore Peter gives a few explicit directions.

**1. 'Live with your wives in an understanding way.'** In other words, get it that your wife is not as physically strong as you are. She cannot do as much hard labor as you are capable of.

In terms of how this might play out in life, there are numerous applications depending on culture and circumstances of life. Yet regardless of each scenario, it sounds to me that Peter is saying to men, "Serve your wife. Make life a little easier for her, knowing that she is not as physically capable of hard work as you are."

Peter is also making a case here for being gentle with women. Where two men might literally wrestle or physically fight over a disagreement, Peter is saying to understand that because of the weaker nature of a woman's body, she should never be physically hit or fought with. She is not on-par with a man in this way, she is the physically weaker vessel, and therefore physical violence is not the way to act with her.

Violence has no place in a marriage, if for no other reason than the woman is not as physically strong. Violence is an injustice to women.

**2. 'Showing honor'** The definition of honor is, "To regard or treat with honor, esteem, or respect; to revere; to treat with deference and submission."

I don't know how it is in other parts of the world, but in North America men show honor to women in a number of ways; things like holding open doors for women, giving women the best

places to sit, carrying the heavy things so that women are spared the weight and strain on their bodies.

Within individual cultures, it comes down to a man simply asking the Holy Spirit for direction, “How might I honor my wife today?”

### **3. This is all very important so that, “Your prayers may not be hindered.” I Peter 3:7**

Peter is making a pretty strong case for being understanding and honoring one’s wife, declaring even that if a man does not honor his wife his prayers will go unanswered. That is pretty strong language, and pretty profound consequences.

We all need our prayers answered. Simple as that.

*“God we come before you today simply requesting your mercy. All of us (women included) have been part of the enemies attack over women. We have abused and discredited a most important part of your creation. We have taken for granted the beauty that you have given us in women. We have heaped piles of responsibility and hardship on women. God have mercy on us.*

*Please teach us to honor women. Help us to deeply love and care for the women you have placed in our lives. May we be conduits of your love and respect and honor to women. Thank-you for the women in my life; my Mom, my Sisters, my Aunts and my Wife.”*

How might you honor your wife today?

---

## Volume Thirteen: Trusting with Little

The journey with our God is an interesting one.

We quickly learn that God’s timing is not our timing, and that God’s ways are not our ways.

In fact, there are many times when God simply says ‘No’ or ‘Not this way’. It is at times like this that our motives and heart are tested and tried.

We tend to make Plan A with God. We come up with our best scenario, and then we invite God into it. But Plan A is usually not the best plan. For the first plan we think of is usually the easiest, and with the least amount of risk.

Much like Gideon in the Old Testament, we want surety and guaranteed success.

**“But Lord,” Gideon replied, “how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!” Judges 6:15**

But much like the story of Gideon, God comes along and says, “No you can do with less. For I will be with you.”

**The Lord said to him, “I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man.” Judges 6:16**

And in the process God tests our resolve and our faith.

Do we really believe in him? Do we really trust him? Are we able to walk his way?

Do we really get it that ‘God With Us’ is all that is needed?

**The Lord said to Gideon, “You have too many warriors with you. If I let all of you fight the Midianites, the Israelites will boast to me that they saved themselves by their own strength. Therefore, tell the people, ‘Whoever is timid or afraid may leave this mountain and go home.’” So 22,000 of them went home, leaving only 10,000 who were willing to fight.” Judges 7:2-3**

Or do we insist on our own way, demanding from God our plan and our way?

Fact is, God’s ways are better than our ways. And Plan B is always a better plan. For Plan B comes with much risk, and demands more from us internally.

**“But the Lord told Gideon, “There are still too many! Bring them down to the spring, and I will test them to determine who will go with you and who will not.” When Gideon took his warriors down to the water, the Lord told him, “Divide the men into two groups. In one group put all those who cup water in their hands and lap it up with their tongues like dogs. In the other group put all those who kneel down and drink with their mouths in the stream.” Only 300 of the men drank from their hands. All the others got down on their knees and drank with their mouths in the stream.” Judges 7:4-6**

Our hearts must engage in greater measure with the real plans of God.

Our faith is exercises beyond the normal and beyond what our minds can comprehend, and what makes sense to us.

**“The Lord told Gideon, “With these 300 men I will rescue you and give you victory over the Midianites. Send all the others home.” So Gideon collected the provisions and rams’ horns of the other warriors and sent them home. But he kept the 300 men with him.” Judges 7:7**

God will always decrease our provision until we get it that with him we have everything.

That with him we have all we need. And that with him all things are possible.

It is a tricky balance to be sure. Too easily we begin to trust in the ‘greatness’ of numbers or of those around us, when really, all we are to get is the ability to really trust God himself, and no other.

God will come through for us, but not how we are expecting, and usually not how we would like. But like Gideon we can make a shift in our being, and allow the living God to show up on His terms and in his way.

Then, and only then, will we experience and witness the glory of God.

**“That is the story of how the people of Israel defeated Midian, which never recovered. Throughout the rest of Gideon’s lifetime—about forty years—there was peace in the land.” Judges 8:28**

What are you wrestling through today? Where are you needing a miracle of the Lord?

Perhaps while you are thinking, “We need more.” He is saying, “No, you actually need less.”

And like the Lord told Gideon right at the beginning, “Go with the strength you have.”

**“Then the Lord turned to him and said, ‘Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!’” Judges 6:14**

God shows up through our present circumstances and strength. Our strengths and circumstances are sufficient for the task, because of who God is, not because of who we are. Will you trust him?

---

## Volume Fourteen: Relationship

Living the Christian life is not about formula. It is not about rules or procedures, it is not about right or wrong even. Christianity is about a living relationship with God, with Jesus Christ, and with our Holy Spirit.

**“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” Romans 10:4**

**“But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.” Galatians 5:18**

Living the Christian life is about entering into a relationship with God, growing in that relationship, and finding out what our new friend (God) likes or doesn’t like.

Moving with God we come to find out what offends and what gladdens the heart of God.

For instance we read in Proverbs a few of what offends God and then how he prefers to act.

**“There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run haste to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.” Proverbs 6:16-19**

**“Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in his steadfast love.” Micah 7:18**

We in turn, begin to naturally live out our lives in accordance with God’s standards, because we want to please God, because we have got it that God LOVES us.

**“For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16**

God’s love comes first.

Our desire for God comes next.

Holiness alongside God is next.

Then working for God naturally flows.

To often in our churches and our Christian communities we stress #3 and head right into #4, before we understand or experience #1 or #2.

When we preach Holiness before someone even knows who God is, or of God’s great love, we put the cart before the horse, and the plow before the oxen. We end up hurting others and doing the exact opposite of what God does. For as we read in Micah, God pardons iniquity and covers over transgressions.

The Bible is very clear. Love comes first, and out of love all things flow, and love then wraps it all up.

**“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.”  
1 Peter 4:8**

Holiness that comes out of a pure desire and love for God, is a different product than an attempt at holiness that comes out of a view of God as a harsh and strict taskmaster.

**“For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” Hosea 6:6**

Holiness that comes from our relationship with God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, made possible in the blood of Jesus Christ, is something very different to behold.

This kind of holiness shines and is settled and pure. This kind of holiness is kept by God himself, and is the source of great joy and acts as a profound offering of our lives back to God.

**“For it is God who works in you... that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” Philippians 2:13 & 15**

It is only in love that we are saved, and only in the knowledge of God’s love are we inspired and enabled to live lives unto God.

God initiates love to us  
We respond

God convicts of what diminishes our lives  
We respond

God rescues us from ourselves  
We respond

God keeps us and protects us  
We respond

God gives us work in the Kingdom of God  
We respond

This is a living breathing relationship. God initiates, we respond.

How are you responding today?

And how is God initiating in your life today?

Take time to thank God for that today.

---

## Volume Fifteen: Faith

When we start off in the Christian life we are concerned with the laws of God, of pleasing him and about what is right and wrong.

As we grow we find that things of God and of our lives are not so obvious as we once believed.

There are a lot of unknowns as we live our lives. And as we mature we find that God speaks to all of us in different ways about various things.

While there are many specifics about a lot of things, there is also a lot of room for a relationship with God that is unique to us.

The Law was given by God to create parameters from the outside in, over our lives. They showed the best way to life and godliness, to increase and to prosper in all areas of life.

The law though, couldn't change what is in our hearts. That is why Jesus came, to change us from the inside out. Because of Jesus we are born to freedom, freedom to:

**“Act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8**

The law was not the final solution to our lives. Much like rules we give to children, law only works at us from the outside in. And God has made it very clear that it is not what is outside us that brings sin, but what is inside us.

**“Why then was the law given? It was given alongside the promise to show people their sins. But the law was designed only until the coming of the child who was promised.” Galatians 3:19**

So the law is ineffective for helping us from the inside out. The law was a hedge or protection of sorts, but law will never solve anything.

**“This way of faith is very different from the way of law which says, ‘It is through obeying the law that a person has life. But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing.’ Galatians 3:12-13**

The real solution is Jesus Christ. When Jesus came he does away with the law, because he fulfilled the requirements of the law.

**“Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.” Galatians 3:24-25**

The coming of Jesus Christ became the doing away of the law. Because of Christ we are now dead to the law and alive in Christ.

**“But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts, I will be their God and they will be my people.” Hebrews 8:13**

Alive to Christ, we come to live by the Spirit, from the inside out we have strength and ability to live holy lives, righteous and pleasing to our God.

The Bible is pretty clear that freedom from the laws and freedom to the Spirit is the Gospel message and is the Good News for our lives.

**“But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.” Galatians 5:18**

And yet we may find ourselves adding law back into our lives. We as human beings like rules, because rules tell us what to do and what not to do, as though we are children. But without rules, and in freedom to the Spirit, we are in relationship and we are no longer told what to do, and yet we are responsible.

Are we living for the Spirit?

God wants us to grow into maturity and into relationship with him.

He wants us to look to him and not to the rules. We do not live our Christian lives in relationship with rules or law, rather we walk in relationship with the person of God.

**“For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Romans 14:17**

A living relationship where we live by the Spirit is in us, once we have accepted Jesus as Lord and as the one who covers over our sin. The Spirit convicts us and guides us. And in quite some number of areas, the Spirit guides each of us a bit differently.

**“Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.” Galatians 5:25**

And in this, because we like rules, we tend to take the convictions of the Holy Spirit over us and make them into law or rules for others.

**“For the law was not intended for people who do what is right. It is for people who are lawless and rebellious, who are ungodly and sinful, who consider nothing sacred and defile what is holy.” 1 Timothy 1:9**

Here we see that law is not for those living by the Spirit. But still within our churches and congregations we like to take our relationship with the Spirit, and turn it into law for others. Paul was very angry about this, calling it sin to add law once more to the gospel of Christ.

When we reinstate rule and law in our lives, or over the lives of others, we are putting Christ back onto the cross once more.

**“For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God’s grace.” Galatians 5:4**

When we reinstate rules and law in our congregations, we deny the work of the cross.

**“I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I already tore down.” Galatians 2:18**

The cross came to give us freedom from law. But also freedom to live by the Spirit.

**“My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” Galatians 2:20**

Therefore we do not use our freedom to sin, but to live righteous and in a manner that pleases God.

And we leave room for others to build their own relationships with the Holy Spirit.

**“Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don’t argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. For instance, one person believe it’s all right to eat anything But another believer with a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables. Those who feel free to eat anything must not look down on those who**

**don't. And those who don't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them. Who are you to condemn someone else's servants?" Romans 14:1-4**

As soon as we tell others how to live, adding rule to their life, we take away life in the Spirit. May we never be a people who do this. May we always be a people who give room for God to build relationships with others as he sees fit, and in accordance with each person's faith.

**"Blessed are those who don't feel guilty for doing something they have decided is right. But if you have doubts about whether or not you eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning." Romans 14:22-23**

We are not to be the Holy Spirit in each others lives, rather, we walk alongside each other in grace and room to grow our own convictions.

**"You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, 'Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch!?' Such rules are mere human teaching about things that deteriorate when we use them. These rules may seem wise because they require strong self devotion, pious self-denial, and sever bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires." Colossians 2:20-23**

**"Timothy, guard what God has entrusted to you. Avoid godless, foolish discussions with those who oppose you with their so-called knowledge. Some people have wandered from the faith by following such nonsense. May God's grace be with you all." 1 Timothy 6:20-21**

Rather, walk in a way that puts all law to shame.

**"Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience. Make allowance for each others faults, and forgive anyone who offends you... Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts." Colossians 3:12-15**

---

## Volume Sixteen: Grown Up

There are numerous ways that we gauge the person of Christ. We look at the things of the Spirit and ask things like, "Does this person have an anointing of God?"

What are the fruits of this persons ministry? Are others encouraged and empowered by this person? Is the word of God preached with understanding given by the Holy Spirit?

It is very easy in the church to look only at the anointing of the Spirit, to gauge the maturity of the person. But we perceive that anointing is only one piece of our walk with

God and of our new nature in Christ.

Anointing is only one part of our ministry and influence on this earth. In the church we tend to believe that the anointing of God is an endorsement of our character. But this simply isn't so. What we miss, is that God anoints, because God anoints.

We read in the Old Testament of Samson, who was mightily anointed by God. He had great strength and performed many miraculous events, and yet we also read that he was a womanizer, and lacked a depth of character.

**Read Judges 14-16 for the full story.**

Samson plainly shows us that God anoints because God anoints, not because we are all good and fine.

It is quite possible, after all, to have a profound anointing of God over our ministries, but to be lacking in character, in emotional health, and in leadership ability.

The anointing of God, does not ensure that we have good character, or holiness, or a gracious ability with people. The anointing of God does not mean that we are approved in everything we are doing, the ways we carry on 'church', the means by which we make money, or the doctrine that comes from our pulpits.

The anointing of God comes because of who God is. Not because of who we are.

**“But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvellous grace. Then it pleased him to reveal his Son to me so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus.” Galatians 1:15**

And we read that at the end times when we stand before God, that there will be those who claim to have access to heaven because they did miraculous works. But that God will say to them, 'I never knew you.'

**“On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name. But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’” Matthew 7:22**

Let me suggest that there are four pillars of our inner beings, that hold so to speak, the spiritual works and the anointing of our lives. They are:

- Character Development,
- Emotional Maturity
- Spiritual Freedom
- Leadership Ability

All of these must be looked for and worked towards. None of these happen automatically in our lives.

It is quite possible to know Jesus Christ and to be anointed in the Spirit and to lack in Character Development.

It is quite possible to walk in signs and wonders and to be emotionally immature.  
It is quite possible to preach amazing sermons and have little wisdom or leadership ability.  
And it is quite possible to pray prayers over others, and yet have little spiritual freedom oneself.

The evident anointing of the Spirit does not mean that we are mature and healthy. The evident anointing of the Spirit means that God is gracious and he anoints because he is God.

It is our responsibility to go after health and maturity, to learn how to be good leaders, to increase in character strengths and in integrity and holiness.

**“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” Romans 5:3-5**

While God is the one who anoints, it is up to us to Grow-Up into that anointing.

And we do this by becoming people of character and of integrity. We learn honesty and reject lies and manipulations. We learn to trust God and refuse to ‘make our own way’. We increase in wisdom and come to understand how much we still have to learn.

**“Until the time came to fulfill his dreams, the LORD tested Joseph’s character.”  
Psalm 105:19**

We grow-up by seeking emotional health and maturity. We learn to become responsible for our feelings and for our frustrations. We do not put our emotional needs onto others, expecting others to fix our bad spots. We learn to be gracious through frustration, We get help to deal with our past problems, and we learn to honor our little girl or boy and the hurts and harms that came to us as children.

**“When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.” I Corinthians 13:11**

To grow in Spiritual Freedom we look to the Lord for help with our selfishness, our hatred, our anger, and a host of other things. We also look to the body of Christ. Everything that leads to life and Godliness works out through the Body of Christ. We cannot be free by ourselves. And those who live in a way that excludes others, will never be completely free.

So we learn to ask others to pray for us. We confess our sins to one another. We live authentically and honestly before all peoples. And we allow the deep work of the cross of Christ to circumcise our hearts.

**“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.” James 5:6**

And we enter into specific training and learning about being leaders. We find mentors and those whose lives we want to learn from. We take instruction and correction. We welcome feed-back on how we are doing. And we live a life of learning and seeking more of God and how to be like him as we lead.

**“And Solomon, my son, learn to know the God of your ancestors intimately. Worship and serve him with your whole heart and a willing mind. For the LORD sees every heart and knows every plan and thought. If you seek him, you will find him. But if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.” 1 Chronicles 28:9**

And as we invest in these pillars of our inner being, we become a people who are ready and able to carry the great works of the Lord and the anointing he calls us to. Before these sorts of works of Character, and Emotions, our Spiritual Self and as Leaders, we are not really ready. Although, in the mercy of God, he continues to anoint us and to reveal himself through us. Because of who he is, not because of who we are.

**“And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires. In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God’s promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:4-8**

---

## Volume Seventeen: Prophetic Lives

In Job 9:33 we read, **“If only there were a mediator between us, someone who could bring us together.”**

Job had been talking about the utter lost-ness of his position. That no matter how much he tried, no matter how well he kept the law, no matter how perfect he could manage to live (and he did live an innocent life before God), it didn’t bridge that gap between him and God. We find Job’s heart crying out for a mediator between himself and God.

### **Read all of Job 9.**

What is so amazing is that Job had lost everything a person could possibly lose. His family was completely gone, his business and all of his finances had been completely destroyed and then finally he lost his health as well.

And in the midst of this he desired to draw near to God. He wasn’t rejecting God or angry with God. Rather, he looked to see how he might draw near to God in the very midst of his pain and sorrow.

We see in Job's life a type of prophetic authority that embodied in his life a specific message of God. In his pain he speaks prophetically about a Savior to come. Many, many years later Christ would indeed be that mediator that Job so longed for.

In Job's struggle despite doing everything right, we are privileged to see a message and prophetic work that is stronger than words. This message of our desperate need for a Savior is poured through the very life of Job and was in fact proven-up in his responses in the midst.

Our own lives can also carry prophetic messages, that something of God that shows through and speaks loud and clear of God in some way.

This was the way with many of the prophets of the Old Testament.

In Hosea 1:2 we find Hosea instructed by the Lord to carry out a message of God through his very life.

**Then the Lord said to me, "Go and love your wife again, even though she commits adultery with another lover. This will illustrate that the Lord still loves Israel, even though the people have turned to other gods and love to worship them." Hosea 1:2**

Ezekiel also acted out a message of God. This was his prophetic assignment:

**"Now lie on your left side and place the sins of Israel on yourself. You are to bear their sins for the number of days you lie there on your side. I am requiring you to bear Israel's sin for 390 days – one day for each year of their sin. After that, turn over and lie on your right side for 40 days – one day for each year of Judah's sin." Ezekiel 4:4-6**

These are strange assignments. They don't really make sense and they go against our better judgements. The lesson of Job's life is the same.

Job revealed a heart's automatic response to God in the hardest of times. Even though life became inconceivably broken and devastated he responded authentically and genuinely toward God. And in this he carried a prophetic message. He revealed a part of God that was given to him to reveal.

**This is the same of others throughout scripture. Read about:**

- **Daniel – Daniel chapters 1-9**
- **Esther – the book of Esther**
- **Noah – Genesis 6**

They lived lives in the day to day, the experience of such, that would seem confusing and certainly not of God.

Our lives are often the same. It takes faith to look to God in the difficulties and the unexpected. It takes faith to open up the camera lens on our lives so that we can see the big picture.

**"And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we**

**know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” Romans 5:4-6**

It takes living a life that doesn't always make sense and a courage to find and have this kind of life that carries a unique expression of God.

Walking with the Spirit means that we are open to things beyond ourselves. That we exhibit wisdom in the face of the unaccountable. And that we do not ascribe to Satan what is of God.

**“...but anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. This is a sin with eternal consequences.” Mark 3:29**

When we walk our days in genuine affection for the Lord, when we walk in obedience to the leading of the Spirit and when we worship the Lord regardless of our days, we have a recipe for carrying out that unique prophetic message that is ours to bear.

Thing is, walking with God in an intuitive fashion is a life lived beyond our understanding and beyond what we can make happen.

The prophetic messages of our lives happen when we simply give over our life to him. Total and complete surrender has the Lord's finger in the mix of our days, taking what feels oh so very ordinary to what is completely extraordinary.

Praise be to our Lord and King.

**“Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heaven! Praise him for his mighty works; praise his unequalled greatness! Praise him with a blast of the ram's horn; praise him with the lyre and harp!” Psalm 150**

*“God we ask today for eyes that see your mix in our days. We ask for understanding and wisdom from you. Most of all we ask for courage to walk as you would have us walk, and for patience and understanding and a vision that sees beyond our own experiences. We invite you Jesus into our very lives. We invite you Holy Spirit to refresh us and guide us. Thank-You God.”*

---

## Volume Eighteen: Life

Today is a new day. It is a day of expectation and a holy hush about all that will take place.

There is excitement in heaven over this day and every day. For every single day is a gift.

**“Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!”  
Genesis 1:31**

Life is something to be celebrated, welcomed and fully enjoyed. Like a savory meal or a cool drink on a hot day, like a beautiful flower in the midst of a dull landscape and like the rainbow in the sky after a storm, every single day is to be relished and enjoyed to the full.

Too often in this life we get stuck on all the bad and wrong of the world. We take on a viewpoint of judgment and condemnation. The problem with this is that our own hearts become dirty.

**“So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.”  
Romans 14:10**

When we begin to carry a spirit of condemnation, we ourselves come under judgment, and life loses its flavor and its joy.

But this was never the way it was meant to be. Life is meant to be a joy and a delight.

We find this joy by walking closely with the Lord's heart. By standing tucked into God's heart we find companionship, we find compassion, we find camaraderie and life.

**“Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your hearts desires.” Psalm 37:4**

When we bring him our dirty hearts, when we stand open about our jumbled thoughts, as we are honest about our worries and our fears, the breath of God sweeps into these places within our being bringing light and life.

**“Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!” Psalm 32:2**

Offering our worst to God, he takes all of it and transforms it into something new and fresh. The disappointments of our lives turn into encouragement for others. The heartache of loss and sorrow become reservoirs of living water for others.

**“I trust in you for salvation, O Lord!” Genesis 49:18**

Everything about who we are, about our past life, about our present and as we go forward into our future, all comes together into one mighty act of praise before our God.

God wants to leverage your life for the Kingdom of God. God has made a way for you through Jesus, to enter into the presence of The King and to be welcomed and accepted and loved on.

And the Holy Spirit stands at the ready to help and assist and to enter into the passions laid upon your heart. As Paul in the book of Romans declares,

**“I bring you the Good News so that I might present you as an acceptable offering to God, made holy by the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:16**

Go after God and we find life abundant and magnificent.

Sure we will have sorrow and trouble. A lot of it too. Yet even sorrow and trouble can be taken and offered to God as a sacrifice of praise. In this God is exalted and we find ourselves lifted from the hard places of our hearts.

And as we read of Jehoiachin in 2 Kings we are given a place at the Kings table,

**“He supplied Jehoiachin with new clothes to replace his prison garb and allowed him to dine in the King’s presence for the rest of his life.” 2 Kings 25:29**

*“Thank-You God that you have entered into our life so that we can celebrate living alongside you. May we never reject life. May we never forget how wonderful it is to be alive. Thank-you for life. Teach us this day to see life as you see it. May we have your eyes, your heart, your spirit. We welcome you Jesus. We invite you Holy Spirit. We love you Father God. Reign in us.”*

---

## Volume 19: The Great Expectation

It’s that time of year when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

**“For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6**

It is soon Christmas. We’ve all been getting ready. Shopping. Decorating. Meals with Friends and Families. Expecting.

And what is all this expecting about? Why do we expect at Christmas?

Because Christmas is the story of the one great expectation, the expectation of a baby born over 2000 years ago.

This story of Christ at Christmas is a simple one. It goes like this.

Long ago the world was created out of the loving heart and hand of God the Father. A God who wanted relationship, friendship, partnership with others who could love back, who could understand back, who could relate right back at him. That’s when we came on the scene, made to be friends with God.

But stuff got in the way. Lies. Pride. Selfishness. Fear. Blaming... you know, the kind of stuff that can get between any relationship and mess it up big time.

The thing is, that God is so loving, honoring and good, that anything that smacks of non-love, non-honoring, and non-good offends him very deeply.

Offends in the same way as someone coming into your home and robbing from you, a co-worker spreading false and nasty rumors about you at work, a friend gossiping about you on facebook, or extended family that shares a meal only to be belligerent and rude.

We all have things that are offensive to us. Each one of us have limits on what we will put up with and the kinds of people we will do life with. We each have particular priorities and values that must be respected in order for relationship to happen. And so does God.

Now the 'stuff' that came between God and the first human beings is the same kind of stuff that comes between us and God today. You see, we carry the blood of the generations before us... right back to the beginning of time, we carry offence-blood within us. Meaning, we can never get away from the tendency to pride and selfishness, to fear and blaming, and more. You know what I mean.

We've all got it.

**“And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't.” Romans 7:18**

Not a lot different than having Uncle's genius for mechanical things, or Great Aunt's artistic flair, or Great, Great-Grandma's gifting for... we all carry the blood-genes of those gone before, the stuff we want, and quite often the stuff we don't want as well.

Because we carry this offence-blood in us, God could not and cannot have relationship with us, nor us with Him. Because we carry offence quite naturally, and because God does not, it is plain to see the difficulty towards relationship.

Imagine the person that rubs you the wrong way the most, that is so offensive to you that you cannot eat a meal with him or her, perhaps you would never have that one in your home, perhaps you don't even speak to that one. This is because they are offensive to you in some way... offensiveness has caused a fracture and removed any possibility of real relationship.

Well, with the offence-blood that we all have, we have broken relationship with God. In his goodness, and honor, and purity he simply cannot eat with us, walk with us, or honor us.

And his heart breaks over this. He misses you and I. So he made a plan.

**“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the Lord. ‘They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.’” Jeremiah 29:11**

God decided that he would send a part of himself (the son part) to earth to be born as a baby, to grow into a man, to die in order to give his life-blood in exchange for our offence-blood, (because bad blood must be gotten rid of or we die).

Years and years ago they used leaches to suck out the bad blood from people... yet people died from this medical treatment. We know today that we cannot just get rid of our bad blood without replacing it. And we also know that if our blood needs changing over that we want clean blood, good blood, not the kind that makes us even more sick.

So if we've all got the same offence-blood, how can we help each other, how can we get life-blood into our lives and heart and spirits? We can't, we can't help ourselves, and we can't help each other. But God can. Jesus has the good blood. Kind blood. Gracious blood. Royal blood.

**“And so dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of the blood of Jesus.” Hebrews 10:19**

Christmas is the simple story of Jesus come to earth as a baby, making a way for us to have relationship with God once more. Since He had no offence-blood in him, he could give his life-blood

in exchange for our sick blood... extending to us a chance at a blood transfusion so to speak. The great exchange. A transfusion of the highest order.

**“God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace.” 1 Peter 1:2**

Jesus brought with him fresh blood for our old blood. And all we have to do to get this blood is say, “Sure, that would be great. My bloodline has far too much wrong with it, and though I’ve given it a good shot to make it better, I would be delighted to do this in community with God himself. Jesus, will you take my old dead-offence-blood and give me your new fresh-life-blood. Thank-You.”

And He does, just like that! And the spiritual part of who we are comes to life, we understand things we never understood before, we know deep peace that was previously elusive, we find purposes that were hidden. With fresh blood in our beings our eyes see clearer, our ears hear better, our legs walk stronger, and our hearts are lighter and freer.

**“And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation.” Romans 5:9**

And we find we can walk with God, talk with God, sup with God, and He with us.

This is the story of Christmas. It all started with a little baby boy born in Bethlehem. It is called the Good News Story. It is why we celebrate. Pretty simple to see why.

**“So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends with God.” Romans 5:11**

Expectation that does not disappoint!

---

## Volume Twenty: Our Journey

This journey of walking with God is not always smooth. We experience a lot of hurdles and bumps in the road.

There are times of confusion and disappointment. There are times of frustration and upset.

These are really normal. They are part of our experience as human beings.

Sometimes, especially when we are young in the Lord, we expect God to make everything great.

We think that if we walk with God then everything will go how we want it to go.

But this is rarely the case. Using God in this way simply reveals us as children and God as something we would like to use.

God does not fix everything for us. And the path he has us walk is not always smooth. It is how we learn after all and how we come to rely on him.

**“Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.” Psalm 23:4**

As we walk with God there are a few things we can do to come to greater understanding of God’s leading and guiding of us.

**I. One is to have a bigger perspective than normal.** With God we are able to step back from our own experience and lives and look at things from God’s angle.

**“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts”, says the Lord, “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.” Isaiah 55:8**

How does he see this situation? How might God be leading me through this difficulty?

What might I learn from this?

**“Joyful are those you discipline, Lord, those you teach with your instructions.” Psalm 94:12**

There is not one wasted experience or situation in the Kingdom of God.

Everything is for our benefit and for our development. God is continually growing us and shaping us so that we can reflect Him more accurately and come to understand how much we are loved.

**2. The second thing is to allow options in our thinking.** We need bigger thinking. Life

is not all one way or another. Often the Lord leads us in one way of thinking simply to get us to another spot.

God meets us where we are at and leads us from there. He knows that we cannot make leaps in growth or understanding.

**“Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding” Isaiah 40:28**

And so while we may think that ‘A’ is the answer, he knows that ‘F’ is really the solution. He takes us on journey’s of thought and practice to get us from ‘A’ (our thinking) to ‘F’ (his best solution).

This can be a disheartening journey. Often we don’t really understand where he is taking us.

But that is okay.

**“Instruct the wise, and they will be even wiser. Teach the righteous and they will learn even more.” Proverbs 9:9**

While his leading is not a guarantee of our best wishes, he knows better than us what we need and is intent on getting us there.

God has our best interest at heart.

**“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord, “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:11**

**3. In this process he tests us again and again** by having us lay down our desires. Just like Abraham laying down his son’s life on the altar, we are tested the same.

Though we have good desires and pray for outcomes that will bring glory to God he sets up situations where time after time our motives are tested.

**“Put me on trial, Lord, and cross-examine me. Test my motives and my heart.” Psalm 26:2**

Do we really want prayers answered for Him or for us? Are we looking to the best interest of others, or of ourselves?

God brings hurdles and roadblocks to our lives to test us this way. For he knows that with the wrong motives everything will come to an end.

**“Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, to find out whether or not you would obey his commands.” Deuteronomy 8:2**

Our reasons for praying for this or for going after that must be refined and proven solid.

Only then is He glorified and do our lives have real satisfaction.

Through all of these things, 1) Learning to have bigger perspective, 2) Bigger thinking, and 3) Testing of our Motives, we mature and grow up.

Rather than little children who demand this or that, who cry out ‘But you said!’ we enter into a true partnership with the Lord.

**“God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” 1 Corinthians 1:9**

We are wiser, we think differently, we pray differently, and we act differently. God is in the people development business. God is intent on growing us up into spiritual adults.

We welcome your growth in us Lord. Thank-You.