

Standing on the Word

Craig R. Cordle

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INTRODUCTION

This book is written mainly to Christians to share what I have learned about standing on the Word of God. Even if you do not call yourself a Christian, it is my desire that this information will give you a new appreciation and curiosity about God's Word, the Holy Bible. I have been a born again believer for over 25 years and during this time, I have seen many Christians struggle in their daily lives. Little did they know that they had available to them a wonderful and powerful resource to help them live a victorious life. It is my desire to give back to the body of Christ encouragement and instruction on how we can stand on the Word of God and experience the blessings that God wants us to receive.

I am no great theologian or Biblical scholar. I am a common everyday person who has discovered the awesome truth and power of the Bible and how it can affect our lives. I don't claim to know all the answers to life's problems, but I know where to go to find the solutions. In my hunger in studying God's Word, I have learned and put into practice in my life many outstanding principles that truly work. Every blessing God has promised us is available as we stand on His Word in faith. We must develop our faith and put it into practice in order to live a victorious and overcoming life.

What does it mean when someone says they are "*standing on the Word*?" This phrase is used by many Christians today. In this book, we will explore the meaning behind this phrase and share examples from the Bible where people stood on the Word of God. I will also share some personal testimonies of how standing on the Word has blessed my life. If you put some simple principles into action, you too can experience what God wants for you in this life.

Over the years I have been involved in a number of churches. There is an alarming trend that I see today in Christianity where many believers try to live a Christian life apart from the Word of God. This may sound ridiculous, but I sense that many Christians are grossly ignorant of the Bible. They may have a casual or surface level knowledge of it, but they have not grown spiritually by acquiring a deeper understanding of the Bible. I have experienced churches that are way too legalistic on one hand and then others that are way too lenient or laid back on the other. When people do not grow in their knowledge of the Word they are easily prone to compromise Christian values and accept worldly views.

The Bible is often referred to as "the Bread of Life." It is spiritual food. Just as our bodies need natural food, our spirit needs nourishment and strength that can only come from the Word of God. When a baby is born, they cannot eat a steak, they need milk. That is also true with spiritual things. When a person is first saved, they are said to be born again. The Bible even compares physical growth to spiritual growth by saying, *As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.* (1 Peter 2:2 NKJV) Baby Christians need to learn the basic principles or the fundamental teachings of Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 6:1-3). They can only do that by feeding on the milk of the Word.

After we have been a Christian for a period of time, we should start to feed on something more solid. It would be silly for a grown adult to feed on milk from a bottle. There comes a time in our Christian life that we should start feeding on the "meat" of the Word which means the deeper

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things of God. For example the Bible says, *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.* (Hebrews 5:12) This verse is saying that after we have been Christians for a time, we ought to be able to teach others the deeper things in the Word of God. However, there are some who never grow spiritually and must be reminded again and again of the more basic principles of the Word.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance to know the Word of God and incorporate its teachings into our way of life. It should mold our character, beliefs, morals, values, and influence how we think. If a Christian becomes disconnected from the Bible, then they will be vulnerable to anything the devil throws at them. A minister friend of mine used to say, “Know the Bible for yourself because preachers lie to you.” Now, I’m not saying that preachers deliberately and knowingly lie to people, but not all ministers are grounded solidly in the Word of God. We need to judge what we hear (not judging the person) by how it measures up with the Word of God. The Holy Spirit will open your understanding to the Bible as you allow Him to guide you into all truth.

The Bible is really important in our prayer life. Many Christians pray but they don’t base their prayers on the Word. People pray and ask God for the things they want but have no idea what the will of God is for their lives. It can be possible to pray for something that is contrary to God’s Word. When we pray we should know what scriptures support, or back up what we are praying about. I like to use scripture in my prayers as I talk to God. When we pray scripturally, you can be confident that God will hear and answer your prayer.

When you incorporate the scripture in your prayers you can expect results. Consider the following verse, *so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.* (Isaiah 55:11) God gave His Word to man and we can return it back to Him in the form of our prayers. God had a purpose for the words that He gave us and they will perform a work in our lives. Another version of the Bible renders the previous verse like this, *That's how it is with my words. They don't return to me without doing everything I send them to do.* (Isaiah 55:11 Contemporary English Version) This is a really powerful spiritual truth. This is the motivation for standing on the Word! The Word is alive and powerful and will work in your life.

At the end of each chapter in this book there will be several questions listed for you to think about that will help reinforce what was covered in the chapter. These questions also provide good discussion points if you are using this information in a group Bible study.

CHAPTER 1: The Meaning of “To Stand”

What does it mean to stand on the Word of God? In order to answer this question, we first need to have an understanding of what it means “*to stand*.”

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines “stand” as to stand strong in the face of, to depend on, or to insist on. Several uses of the word stand are,

1. *Stand one's ground* - to maintain one's position
2. *Stand on one's own feet* - to think or act independently
3. *Stand tall* - to exhibit courage, strength, or calm especially in the face of adversity

In putting these definitions together, you can say that *standing on* or *standing for* something means to maintain a strong, unwavering position on something you firmly believe even if you have to suffer the consequences for taking that stand.

I also looked up the word “stand” in the Greek word dictionary section of Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. One of the definitions for *Histemi* (Strong’s # 2476) is to uphold or sustain the authority or force of anything. Let’s apply this definition to something we are familiar with in order to better understand its meaning. One of the responsibilities of the President is to uphold the constitution of the United States. The constitution is the document that establishes the basic principles and laws of our nation. It determines the powers and duties of the government and guarantees certain rights to the people in it. It is the final authority that must be followed by our governmental leaders. It is the President’s job to uphold or support its principles against any opposition.

The Bible represents God’s authority. It is the sacred Book, or collection of books, accepted by the Christian church as uniquely inspired by God, and thus authoritative, providing guidelines for belief and behavior. The Bible documents God’s covenant with the human race. In it are contained many wonderful promises to those who are obedient to the Lord. These covenant blessings are available based on one’s faith.

Covenant Relationship

When we are Born Again, we enter into a covenant relationship with God. Being part of the covenant brings benefits associated with that covenant. God’s benefits include salvation, forgiveness of sins, healing, long life, divine protection and the supplying of all of our needs.

These promised benefits belong to us and God does not withhold something that He has promised in His Word in order to teach you a spiritual lesson unless you have disqualified yourself through disobedience or exhibiting fear, doubt, and unbelief. God may also delay answering our prayer because there is a timing associated to when He will deliver on His promise because it is for our greater benefit. Finally, God is sovereign and can choose to do whatever He knows is best. If God doesn’t give the answer we are looking for in a particular

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situation, we have to accept His decision. What I am trying to say here is that we cannot manipulate God and use Him just to get what we want.

To live in the full blessings of God, you have to dedicate yourself to grow in the knowledge of God's Word and put its principles into practice in your life. Our quest should be to strive for excellence in everything we do, especially in all matters relating to God. The Bible says an excellent spirit was found in Daniel (see Daniel 5:12 KJV). I believe we should also desire to have an excellent spirit. One, who has an excellent spirit, is an extraordinary individual who seeks to achieve great things in God. They surpass others in accomplishment because they are not content to remain as they are! God places many of His blessings outside our comfort zones and then asks us to come and get them. God does not bless you just to be good to you, He blesses you because He is bound or committed to you through a blood covenant.

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Actually there are two ways in which we can define what it means to stand on the Word. First, **it is maintaining a strong, unwavering position that the Bible is absolutely true and thereby agreeing to uphold and support its principles against any opposition.** There are two aspects of this definition that we need to identify. One aspect of this definition is standing on the Word based on *principle*, while the second aspect is standing on the Word as our *defense* against opposition.

When Jesus was tempted of the devil in Matthew Chapter 4, He quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 in His response to the devil by saying, "*It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'*" (Matthew 4:4) The scripture Jesus used as His defense against the devil was a verse saying our lives should be lived based on the principles of the Word of God. The Bible is the moral foundation upon which we must build our lives and that its message is to be defended against those who oppose the plan and purpose of God.

Let's consider an example of how we stand upon the Word of God in principle. Most fundamentalist Christians hold the position that abortion is wrong based on what we find in scripture. These Christians maintain their position regardless of what political pressure they may come under. This is an example of taking a firm stand on an issue. Over the course of history many Christians, such as Stephen in the book of Acts Chapter 7, have been martyred because of their stand of faith in Jesus Christ. These believers refused to renounce their faith in Christ even unto their death. This is the ultimate example of standing on the Word of God.

Besides suffering persecution from your conviction to stand on the Word, we also need to stand against those who would oppose our faith in God. Our main adversary is Satan who opposes everything that God has purposed through Jesus Christ. We also must stand on the Word of God because it is our defense when Satan comes to attack us. The Bible says, *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.* (Ephesians 6:10-13) As a soldier who is fully armored is ready to meet the attack of the enemy, we too must put on the entire armor of God to be able to stand our ground. Later in verse

17 in that portion of scripture we find that the Word of God is called the sword of the Spirit. Just as Jesus used the Word as a weapon in confronting the devil, we can also do the same.

Secondly, **standing on the Word is placing our faith in God and trusting that He will perform what He has promised in His Word.** Based on our covenant relationship with God, we can trust that He will come through on that promise. This definition illustrates our **dependence** on the Word of God. As we become more and more dependent on the Word, we become more independent from the world. Worldly views and pressures will have less of a hold on your life.

One of my favorite scriptures that speaks of God’s benefits belonging to believers says, *Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits- who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.* (Psalm 103:2-5) If you are praying for healing, this is a scripture you can stand on because of God’s promise to heal all your diseases. Another wonderful promise of God’s divine protection that you can rest upon says, *If you make the Most High your dwelling— even the LORD, who is my refuge- then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.* (Psalm 91:9-12) I have stood on these verses for many years in my life and later in this book I will share a personal testimony of how God performed His Word in a dangerous situation that involved my children.

The key to being able to stand on the Word on God is that we must put the Bible into practice in our lives. You start by accepting the Bible as the true Word of God, that it is without error, and is the final authority pertaining to the issues of life. A believer will act on God’s Word by putting the scriptures into practice in their lives. This involves doing something, even if it is only saying something. People have hindered what the Lord can do for them because they are ignorant of His Word. The greatest enemy of our faith is a lack of knowledge of God’s Word. Hosea 4:6 says *My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.* The more we learn His Word and put it into action in our life, the more we will benefit and experience the exceeding abundant life God has for us.

It has been said, if you do not stand for something, then you will fall for anything. As Christians, we need to commit ourselves to standing on God’s Word.

To summarize, standing on the Word of God means to maintain a strong, unwavering position that the Bible is absolutely true and thereby agreeing to uphold and support its principles against any opposition. It also means placing our faith in God and trusting that he will perform what He has promised in His Word. We stand upon the Bible’s principles, rely upon it as our defense against evil, and are dependent upon its promises that God will perform in our lives.

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Questions for Discussion

1. Can you think of examples in your life where you had to make a stand for something?
2. What gave you confidence in taking the stand that you did?
3. What forms of opposition can you think of that would attempt to weaken your stand?
4. Are you willing to suffer the consequences when taking a stand for something you firmly believe in?

Key Points to Remember

When someone is standing on the Word, it implies that they firmly believe that the Bible is the true Word of God and that He will perform what He says. The Bible represents God's authority and it is the guide for how we live our life.

The Word of God is our weapon (the sword of the Spirit) when taking a stand against the devil.

CHAPTER 2: Prepare Your Heart

If you are going to stand for something, it's obvious that you have a strong belief in what you are making a stand for. In order to stand on the Word of God a person has to accept the Bible as the true inspired Word of God. This means that you must believe that God gave the Bible to the human race. It is not a product of men who wrote based on their feelings about God. The Lord Himself gave men of old His words that they recorded. This is called writing under the inspiration of God. These men were not recording their thoughts and opinions, they were recording God's message to all of mankind. The following scriptures described how God gave His Word to us.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16)

For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)

The first verse said that "all scripture is God-breathed." Breathing can be described as air being inhaled and exhaled. When a person speaks, words are formed as air is exhaled. This scripture is literally saying that the prophets received the words that were breathed from the voice of God. Just imagine writing down the words as they are breathed from the mouth of God. This shows that our Bible is not the words of men, but the actual words of God.

The second verse plainly says that the Bible did not originate from man. The Holy Spirit was at work to carry God's Word to those who recorded it. I believe it is safe to say that the Holy Spirit also worked with those who compiled the sacred writings into the 66 books that make up our Bible today.

If we are going to stand on the Word, it is essential that we accept it as the actual Word of God. It is the final authority on the issues of life. If you accept that, then you are ready to prepare your heart to receive the blessings that the Bible promises to you.

The Power behind the One who gave us the Word

Before we talk about preparing your heart to stand on the Word, I think it is important to say a few things about the supernatural aspect of the Bible. If we are going to make a stand on the Word of God, we need to understand how the Bible is perceived in our society today. I believe the secular media is playing a large role in a deliberate attack against the authority and the integrity of the Bible. I also believe that there are spiritual forces behind these attacks, namely Satan and his horde of demonic spirits that is supplying the motivation to carry out these assaults against the Bible.

Many people today are questioning the truth and accuracy of the Bible. Books, movies, television, and the internet are being used to communicate information that gets people to

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question the historical accuracy and validity of the Bible. The DaVinci Code is an example of a movie that portrays a distorted, inaccurate, and blasphemous view of Jesus Christ. Television programs such as The Gospel of Judas and The Real Jesus introduce views that can only be described as heresy. I have seen programming that attempts to use natural events to explain away miracles in the Bible. For example, rather than accepting the biblical account of the parting of the Red Sea as act of God supernaturally overriding the laws of nature, they try to find natural events as tsunamis, earthquakes, droughts, etc. to explain away the miracle.

If we are going to stand on the Word, we have to accept that the Bible in its entirety is the true Word of God. We cannot pick and choose what to believe. The Bible tells us that God actually created the Earth and the universe in six literal days, that Adam and Eve were real people, that Noah built an ark that preserved life on this planet from a global flood, that the walls of Jericho fell down flat, that Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a life without sin, died on the cross and rose from the dead, and it returning to the earth again. These are just a few of the facts that are found in the Bible that are being questioned by skeptics. When people are bombarded with one sided negative information it creates doubts into the authenticity of the Bible. If there is anything in the Bible that is inaccurate or untrue, then how can we believe anything that is in the Bible? The problem is many people do not get to hear the other side of the story before they make up their minds concerning God and the Bible. Many Christians today accept this misinformation which creates doubts that keeps them from experiencing God's best for their lives.

When looking at the Bible one cannot forget the supernatural element of God's Word. If you try to use natural processes to explain miraculous events in the Bible, then you are missing the whole supernatural aspect of God's Word. God does not need to use the normal course of nature in order to accomplish His will. God is the all powerful, all knowing, Creator who can make something out of nothing. God has established the physical laws that govern our universe, but he is not bound by those laws. He can override natural laws by going beyond what we can see and understand because God operates in the supernatural. When people attempt to explain the miracles found in the Bible by forcing them to fit natural process, they are attacking the sovereignty of God. When we speak of God as being sovereign, it means that He is free from external control or influence. God is not dependent on anyone or anything. If it's God's will for something to happen, like Christ being born of a virgin, He can bring it to pass because He is God! This is the truth that many unbelievers do not want to face.

The words that we find written in the Bible are more than words printed on a piece of paper. Again, there is a supernatural power that lies behind the written Word. Jesus said, *The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.* (John 6:63) God's Word is alive! When people begin to understand and believe the written Word of God, it changes their lives.

I must admit that I do not understand everything that is written in the Bible, but I choose to believe what it says. If we are going to stand on the Word of God, we must have faith that the Bible is absolutely true.

Preparing Your Heart

In the King James Version of the Bible there is a phrase, "*prepare your hearts unto the LORD,*" (1 Samuel 7:3) and a similar one, "*prepared thine heart to seek God,*" (2 Chronicles 19:3) that demonstrates an important concept of devoting oneself to seek God and study His Word. The

Bible instructs us to commit ourselves unto the Lord. This is the first step in standing on the Word of God. We need to make a conscious decision that we will commit ourselves to putting God's Word into practice in our lives. Anything you attempt to do will come out better if you are adequately prepared. We need to prepare our hearts by feeding on the Word of God and learning what God has promised to do for His children.

A good starting point in our study is to read Jesus' parable of building a house on a rock. This parable is found in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. I have included them both because they each emphasize points in a different way that is valuable to our study. Let's take a look at each passage.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." (Matthew 7:24-27)

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete." (Luke 6:46-49)

This parable is not comparing a person who is saved with one who is not. The Parable of Building a House on a Rock contrasts believers and how they act on God's Word. In order to understand any parable, you first need to understand what the symbols represent. In this parable, the "house" represents our lives, the "foundation" illustrates our actions or what we do, the "rock" represents the Word of God, and the "sand" is human opinion and the teachings of men, while the "storms" are the troubles in life.

In the parable, each man hears the Lord's words, but only one does what He says. The man whose house collapsed was not at fault because he failed to labor, his failure was in not building on a proper foundation, the Rock. In Matthew's account, we see that a strong storm came and beat against the house. We experience the storms of life that at times can be very severe. How do you react to these storms? Some people lose it and go to pieces, while others remain calm and exhibit an unwavering faith in God. The secret of how you react to the storms of life is dependent upon which foundation you have built your life upon.

In Luke's version of the parable, it says that the man dug down deep to lay his foundation on a rock. It takes effort to dig down deep into the ground, just as it takes effort to dig down deep into God's Word to lay a foundation in your heart. The man's house, who adequately prepared by building a firm foundation on a rock, did not fall or even shake when the violent storm struck. The other man's house fell with a great crash, and its destruction or collapse was complete. Is your life built upon a firm foundation? Have you taken the time and effort to dig deep into God's Word to lay a proper foundation in your heart?

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In order to stand on the Word of God, you first have to get it into your heart. If you take the time to prepare your heart, you will reap the benefits. I'm not saying you have to memorize scripture, but you need to be knowledgeable of God's Word. You will find out as you study, you will memorize more scripture that you realize. When a crisis comes in your life, and they will, you will not panic. What you put into your heart will come out.

I can not emphasize enough the importance of knowing God's Word for yourself. Just as you don't let someone else do your thinking for you, don't just blindly accept what people say about the Bible. I know there are outstanding pastors and teachers and we need to listen to them, but there are also many who do not properly represent what God is saying in His Word. This is why you need to know God's Word for yourself. You have to judge what people are saying as it relates to the Word of God. Notice, I'm not saying you judge the person because we are not to judge others, but we must judge or discern what people are saying based on how it lines up with the Word of God. Our society is on information overload. With the advent of the internet, there is so much information out there about the Bible, for example, you can find all kinds of crazy interpretations of scripture. Some of this information may sound correct at times, but as you weigh it against other scripture, many times the interpretation turns out to be false.

The importance of knowing the Word for yourself is illustrated by the verse which states, *Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.* (2 Timothy 2:15 Amplified) The more you get the Word into your heart, the more prepared you will be to face situations that come up in life.

The Word is a Treasure

I must confess, in my life the Word has become so precious to me. When you gain knowledge from God, you become so much more prepared for what comes around in life. There are times when we have a need that only God can fulfill. If something is precious to you, it becomes a treasure in your heart. The scripture says it this way, *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* (Mathew 6:19-21) This passage talks about the works that we do here on the earth can reap us treasures in heaven. I like the last sentence in those verses. It's saying that your heart will be in the things that you truly treasure. If you hold dear to your heart the Word of God, it will become a treasure to you. Prepare your heart to receive God's Word because it is a treasure of immeasurable value.

In this chapter we have been talking about preparing your heart unto the Lord. Preparing your heart requires studying God's Word and putting its principles into practice. As you study the Bible, it will have a dramatic impact on your life. You will find that it will change the way you think about things and change the way you see yourself. To be effective in standing on the Word of God, you need to see yourself as God sees you. When you are born again you take on a Christian identity. The problem is many believers never gain a full understanding of who they are because of Jesus Christ. In the next chapter I want to address what I call the Christian Identity Crisis and provide you with some scriptural references that will help shape your Christian identity.

Questions for Discussion

1. In your own words, what does it mean to prepare your heart?
2. Is it important to read the Bible on a daily basis? If so, why?
3. How do you react when a storm comes up in your life?
4. Think about what you treasure in life. Where does your relationship with God fit in among your priorities in life?

Key Points to Remember

The Word of God was given to man supernaturally; the books of the Bible were compiled under the supernatural influence of God so that it truly represents His message to the human race. We can place our absolute trust in God that His written Word will come to pass.

Build your life upon the Word of God. Allow it to be the foundation upon which everything in your life rests.

It is essential to study the Bible and allow it to get into our heart. We should look at the Bible as a treasure house full of the knowledge of the Lord.

CHAPTER 3: Christian Identity Crisis

This chapter will address what I call the “Christian Identity Crisis.” I believe in the body of Christ today many believers fall short of what they could achieve for God because they lack an awareness of who they are in Christ. When we are born again, we take on a new identity. We become a child of God and are born into a new family. The problem is many believers still see themselves as they were in their old life (the one before Christ) rather than who they are now because of Jesus Christ. The following scripture will launch us out in gaining a better understanding of what we have become because of what Jesus Christ purchased for us through His death, burial, and resurrection.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)

Wouldn't it be terrible if you forgot what you look like? People who forget who they are have a condition that is called amnesia. The scripture above compares people who do what the Word says to people who do not. Those who listen to the Word but will not put it into practice are like someone who looks into a mirror, but later walks away and forgets what they look like. You could say that they have spiritual amnesia. It's sad to say that there are Christians who look into the mirror (into the Bible) and go away, not knowing who God has made them. It's like your employer calling you into the office giving you a promotion only to walk away and not know what your new position is.

If we are going to stand on the Word, we need to know our new identity as a Christian. We cannot walk away from the mirror and forget who we are. I remember hearing a minister teach years ago that phrases in the New Testament such as *in Christ*, *in Him*, and *In Whom* tell you who you are, what you are, and what you have because of Jesus Christ. Ever since I heard that teaching, when I'm reading and see those phrases, I look for what it is saying about who I am. These scriptures give you your identity. When you are aware of your Christian identity, you can put your faith into action and stand on the Word. See yourself as the Bible describes you!

This brings me to a story that I heard Kenneth Hagin tell on his radio program, Faith Seminar of the Air. This is a true story that took place a number of years ago as told by Charles Hadden Spurgen. He was a pastor of a large church in England. Being a large church, he had a number of assistant pastors who did much of the visitations to members in their homes. One of them told him of an elderly lady that was a member of the church who was bedfast at home, near death, and that he should go and see her.

Spurgen went to see the elderly lady. He made his way to an old shack and found her bedfast, almost in a dying condition. This old woman, in her eighties, was lying on the bed near death.

Standing on the Word

All that was really wrong with her was that she was under nourished because she had nothing to eat and was starving to death. Malnutrition was about to take her life.

Spurgen said while he was there visiting he noticed on the wall of this shack a document, framed, and he went over to read it. He said to the lady, "Is this yours?" "Yes" she said, "you know for a number of years I was a maid, a servant in the household of a family that was part of the nobility in England. Before she died, the last thing she did was to give that to me and I've been so proud of it because she gave it to me. I served the Lady for nearly half a century, so I had it framed and it's been hanging there for ten to twelve years on the wall."

Mr. Spurgen said, "Would you allow me your pastor to take and examine it more closely." "Yes" she said, "just bring it back." He assured her that he would bring it back. He took it reading it because this woman never learned to read.

He took it to the authorities and they said, "We've been looking for that." It was a bequest (to give or leave by will). This lady had left her servant woman a home and money to be cared for, for the rest of her life, but there she was living in a house made out of old wooden boxes in shanty town starving to death. There she had hanging on the wall of her room a document that authorized her to live in a house well kept along with others of dignity and royalty, to be cared for and the money was there gathering interest. It belonged to her. She got it but it did not do her as much good as it would have if she had realized it before.

In a spiritual sense, this is like some of us who think we are living in a one room shanty. There hanging on the wall, and we're proud of it, thank God for the New Covenant, yes sir, we got it lying on the table (the Word of God), a document authorizing us to receive an inheritance but we don't even know what it says. Some of us are like this woman because we have never taken time to read it! We have never taken time to find out WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE ARE, and WHAT WE HAVE through Jesus Christ as stated in His Holy Word.

At this point I will be sharing some scriptures that will tell you who you are, what you are, and what you have because of Jesus Christ. I will give you a passage and provide some comments about it. Allow these scriptures to become real to you and shape your Christian identity. For added emphasis, I put the phrases *in Christ*, *in Him*, and *in Whom* in bold print to help trigger our minds to pay attention to what the verse is saying.

Knowing Who You Are

*You are all sons of God through faith **in Christ** Jesus.* (Galatians 3:26)

In this verse we see the phrase "in Christ." As I said, this should alert us to look closely at what the scripture is saying concerning us. We find out that the Word is telling us that we are all sons of God because we are "in Christ." When this verse uses the word "sons," it's not talking about men only, it talking about all believers, male and female. When you placed your faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, you became a child of God. As you acknowledged Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you were born into a new kingdom called the Kingdom of God. The Bible says, *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.* (Colossians 1:13) As a Christian, you are not a subject of Satan and the kingdom of darkness; you are now in the kingdom of light. We can go on to say that we are a child of God

and adopted into the family of God. He is our King and God is also our Father. Just as you want to do what's right for your children, God wants to do what's right for His children.

You may be aware of the Parable of the Prodigal Son (see Luke 15:11-31). In this parable Jesus spoke of a father's youngest son who wanted his share of the family's estate. The father honored his request and gave him his share and he went off into another country and squandered his wealth on wild living. A severe famine came into the land and he was hired by someone to feed his pigs. As he feed the pigs, even the food he was giving them looked good to him. At that time he came to his senses and realized that he had sinned against his father. Even his father's hired servants had enough food to eat. He determined to go back home to his father and ask that he could be as one of the servants because he was no longer worthy to be called his son. He rehearsed in his mind what we would say when he saw his father.

As he was returning home, the father saw him afar off and was filled with compassion for him. The father ran to meet his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son could barely begin to say what he had planned before his father interrupted him and said to his servants, *'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'* So they began to celebrate. (Luke 15:22-24)

This is a beautiful picture of lost mankind returning to God. The lost son can represent Adam in the Garden of Eden where he sinned and was separated from God. It also can represent a person who is not a Christian and is struggling with life and their sins and feels unworthy to come to God to be accepted to their place in God's family. Finally, this parable can represent someone who is saved but has grown cold in their relationship with God (some call this type of person a backslider). The lost son was hoping that he could just be accepted as a hired servant so his basic needs could be provided. However, to his surprise, the father accepted him with outstretched arms, threw a party for him and celebrated. The father said that his son was dead but is alive again! Spiritually, we were dead in our sins until we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and surrendered our heart and will to Him. We may have thought that we were unworthy to be saved, but God places so much value on our lives that Jesus died for our sins and made a way back to God. The father restored the son to his place in the family. This story reveals to us what the grace of God is all about. Just think, if you are born again, YOU are a son of God! Don't think of yourself as unworthy to be blessed by God. The Word says that you are a son of God. That's who you are! Don't let the enemy make you think that you are anything less.

Let's look at another scripture that tells us who we are in Christ.

*This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise **in Christ** Jesus.* (Ephesians 3:6)

Again, in this verse we see the phrase "in Christ," which should heighten our awareness that God is about to tell us something about our identity. In reading this verse we see that the Gentiles (anyone who is not a Jew) are heirs along with Israel in the promises of God. This was a mystery, or a hidden thing, to the Jews in the Old Testament. The gospel, or the good news, is that all people can take part in the promises of God. Just like the woman in the Charles Spurgeon story, in order to take advantage of this inheritance you have to know about it. You have to know that you are an heir.

The Bible speaks about our inheritance in a number of places in scripture. One scripture says, *giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.* (Colossians 1:12) The Gentiles, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ have been qualified to receive in this inheritance. God also used the apostle Paul to write, *Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.* (Galatians 4:6-8)

Based on the scriptures, we can see that we are no longer slaves, but sons of God and heirs to the inheritance promised by God. It should be obvious that slaves have no right to an inheritance. We were slaves unto sin before we were born again, but now we are sons or children of God. We see that God is our Father and not some Divine Being afar off. The word "Abba" comes from an Aramaic word meaning "father," or "daddy". We should think of God in this personal way, as our Daddy.

Now that we have looked at some scriptures that show us who we are, let look at some verses that tell us what we are because of Jesus Christ.

Knowing What You Are

*Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself **in Christ**, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that **in him** we might become the righteousness of God.* (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

These are some very powerful verses that give us valuable information about ourselves. We could spend a lot of time analyzing this passage but I will point out several things that reveal to us what we are.

First, the scripture says that if anyone is "in Christ," they are a new creation. This is what happens when you are born again. Your body is not made over again. You still have the same body. The new creation involves your spirit. The real you that lives on the inside is your spirit. Your body is just the earthly house that you live in. A person's being consists of spirit, soul (also called your mind or heart), and body. I believe that your soul includes your intellect and emotions that are resident in your spirit. When your body dies, the spirit and soul live on. There will come a time when Jesus returns at His second coming, that a believer's body will be resurrected in a glorified state and reunited with the spirit/soul.

When you become a new creation, the scripture says that *the old has gone, the new has come.* The old that is gone is your sinful past. At the point you are born again, you have no past in a spiritual sense. Just like a new born baby does not have a past. God has forgiven your sin and has forgotten them. Your record is clean! Things that are considered sinful that you once loved now you hate. Things you once hated (praying, reading the Bible, going to church, showing kindness to people, giving of your time and finances to the work of God, etc.) now you love.

This reflects a changed life. In some ways, you are still the same, but in other ways, you are a new creation. Notice again what I said, YOU ARE a new creation.

Even though you become a new creation, this doesn't mean that no more changing needs to happen. As we live for God, we will continue to grow and change. No Christian has fully arrived at a state of perfection. We are all on the road heading in that direction. Scripture says we will not attain this, *until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.* (Ephesians 4:13)

Another thing that we are because we are “in Christ,” is that we have been reconciled to God. The word reconciled means to restore a relationship, or to be brought back together. The Bible puts it this way, *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.* (Isaiah 59:2) If a husband and wife have a quarrel, they may end up not talking to each other. The issue may be so serious that the couple decides to separate. This is a broken relationship. This is what happened to the relationship between God and man because of sin.

The good news is, Jesus Christ came and reconciled the human race back to God. What is really good about this news is the fact that all people have been (past tense) reconciled. Jesus restored the broken relationship that existed between God and mankind. This is the good news that people who are not saved need to hear. When you are born again, you activate, or take personal possession of this restored relationship with God. For example, when you get a new credit card in the mail, you are required to call a phone number in order to “activate” the card. The credit card allows you to make purchases up to your credit limit, but you cannot use it until the card is activated which is a security measure to ensure you have personal possession of the card. Jesus reconciled us back to God and that restored relationship is available to all people, but it must be activated by placing our faith in Jesus Christ and accepting Him into your heart as your personal Lord and Savior (see Romans 8:9-10).

Because you are “in Christ,” you have been reconciled to God. That's who you are! In addition to this, God has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. When we share our faith in Jesus Christ with others, we are working to restore their relationship with God.

In this passage we also find the phrase “in Him.” Because we are “in Him,” *we might become the righteousness of God.* This really is an awesome statement. When we are born again, God imputes (deposits into) the righteousness of Christ to the sinner's account. We will be able to stand before God with the same righteousness as Christ has. We have been justified through the merits of Jesus Christ. Justification means to be declared not guilty as though we never sinned. Another way of analyzing this scripture is to see this righteousness applied to us on a daily basis as part of the sanctification process. Sanctification is an ongoing process of change where the believer becomes more and more like Christ. The main point to be made is you are righteous before God through faith in Jesus Christ. The scripture says it this way, *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.* (Philippians 3:9)

Before going to the next scripture I feel we should take a closer look at the word “righteous.” The dictionary gives definitions for the word “righteous” such as; acting in accord with divine or moral law, being free from guilt or sin, and being morally right. In looking at the Biblical term

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“righteous,” we can define it as having a *right standing* with God. We have this right standing with God because Jesus paid the price for our sin by dying in our place. We can stand before God clothed in Christ’s righteousness. When God looks upon us, He doesn’t see our weaknesses, faults, failures, and sin. God sees us as righteous through the blood of Christ. When you get a grasp of this concept, it will change the way you view yourself. Never think of yourself as worthless and without value, God sees you quite the opposite. When you can see that you have a right standing with God, this is knowing who you are in Christ. You are a righteous person by God’s grace.

Let’s continue on with the next verse.

*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors **through him** who loved us.* (Romans 8:37)

This verse uses the phrase “*through Him*” which is similar to the phrase “*in Him*,” because it reveals what we are because of Christ. As you can see, the scripture says that we are *more than conquerors*. Merriam-Webster defines the word “conquer” as to gain mastery over or win by overcoming obstacles or opposition. God’s Word says you are a winner! However, the Bible doesn’t say you are a conqueror, it says you are *more than* a conqueror.

When God does something for us, He goes outside the box. He doesn’t do the least He can in getting the job done, He goes over and above the call of duty. I believe this principle is seen in the following verse, *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.* (Ephesians 3:20) One of the names of God found in the Old Testament is “El Shaddai” (see Genesis 17:1) which has been translated into English as “Almighty God.” The meaning of the name El Shaddai is “the all Sufficient One.” If God is all sufficient, it means He can do more than is required to meet the needs of a situation. Another interpretation of the name El Shaddai that I have heard which I really like is “the God who is more than enough.” That definition really describes Him. The God who is the all sufficient One and the One who is more than enough is truly the Almighty God. That’s why we are “more than” conquerors and that He is the God who will do “more than” we can imagine. It is an awesome thing to know that I am more than a conqueror.

Let’s look at one more scripture that identifies what we are in Him.

*For he chose us **in him** before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.* (Ephesians 1:4)

This verse is telling us that even before the creation of the World it was God’s will for His people to be holy and blameless in His sight. The Bible is very straightforward in declaring that we must be holy. The Bible says, *for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”* (1 Peter 1:16) Another verse says, *Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.* (Hebrews 12:14)

How can sinful human beings be holy in the sight of God? It’s impossible for a person to be perfect before God based on their own merits. We are holy and blameless before God because we have been made that way because of Jesus Christ. We can stand holy before God because of Jesus’ sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus lived the perfect life without sin and became the sacrifice for sin. He fulfilled God’s plan of the innocent dying for the guilty to make

atonement for sin. It is in our wearing His robe of Righteousness, that we are accounted worthy to stand righteous before God.

There are two ways in which we are holy and blameless before God. One way involves what God did and the second way requires action on our part. These two ways are illustrated by the two scriptures given below.

1. *In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprougeable in his sight.* (Colossians 1:22) As this verse states, we are made holy through the death of Jesus Christ so that we can be presented as holy before God. It's not what we did that makes us holy, it's what Jesus did.

2. *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.* (Titus 2:11-12) This scripture says we are to live godly lives and say "no" to sin. It is not saying that we can make ourselves holy. We are to live godly because we have been made holy through Christ. Another verse that speaks to this says, *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.* (2 Corinthians 7:1)

I believe we first need to gain a better understanding of the word "holy." Most people when they think of the word "holy" think of something that is perfect and without sin. In the case of God this is totally true. If you research the word "holy" from the Hebrew and Greek words that it was translated from in the Bible, you will find that it means - set apart, separate, sacred, and complete. A scripture that I look to that helps me define holiness says, *But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.* (Psalm 4:3) Here in this verse we see that it says "set apart." When the Bible says that we should be holy, it's not saying that we have to be perfect. We are perfect in the sense that we have Christ's righteousness. We can be holy by the way we live. We set ourselves apart by choosing to obey God and separate ourselves from things that are destructive to our relationship with God. As we grow in the knowledge of the Word, we become more like Christ and separate from the world.

Being holy is not obeying a strict set of rules, regulations and restrictions. Holiness is not following some form of dress code. Holiness is a condition of the heart where we desire purity, wholesomeness, goodness, and truth. These are the Christ-like traits that set us apart from the world.

When you are "in Him," you are holy and without blame. That's what you are because of Jesus Christ! Dare to believe you are what the Bible says you are.

Next we will look at some scriptures that tell us what we have because of Jesus Christ. This is by no means and all encompassing list, but these scriptural references will help increase our knowledge in what we have through Christ.

Knowing What You Have

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2)

In this verse the Word reveals to us that because we are in Christ there is no condemnation. The word “condemnation” means blame or guilt. It is translated from the Greek word “Katakrima” meaning damnatory sentence (pronounced wrong or evil). Because we are “in Christ,” we are declared not guilty in God’s divine judicial system. A believer should not feel a sense of guilt and have it hang over their head. When a person is born again, all their sins have been forgiven. Whatever happened in the past is now under the blood of Jesus. Satan and his army of demonic spirits want you to think and feel guilty and unworthy of God’s salvation. The enemy will try and bring up things from your past and remind you how sinful you are. This is where you need to stand on the Word and resist the devil because there is no condemnation since you are in Christ. This freedom from condemnation is what you have because of Jesus Christ!

This does not mean that you will never feel any form of guilt. Even though we are born again and made a new creation, we are still in this physical body and can sin. The Holy Spirit convicts us when we miss God so we can repent. The Bible says, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* (1 John 1:9) What this all means is that we can live our lives without living under a cloud of guilt. Some Christians live their life feeling that God is always mad at them. This is wrong thinking. Accept what the Bible says about what you have because of Jesus Christ. You can live your life free of guilt because Jesus paid the price of your sins for you.

Let’s continue to look at some more scripture that tells us what we have in Christ.

*For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" **in Christ**. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.* (2 Corinthians 1:20)

This verse is saying that all of God’s promises are sure. That means you can depend on God and trust Him that he will follow through on His promises. This is why we can say “yes,” because God will come through on His promises. It doesn’t matter how impossible the situation may be, God is still in control and that He is a God of His Word. Through Christ we can also say “amen,” which means hearty approval as an expression of our faith in God. We have this surety or guarantee because we are in Christ.

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing **in Christ**.* (Ephesians 1:3)

Paul in this passage begins by giving praise to God for the spiritual blessings He has given us. He says that these blessings are in “heavenly realms” and is not referring to blessings that are physical or material. There are some Bible teachers who use this scripture to tell people that these blessings refer to material and even monetary blessings. God does promise to provide for our material needs but that is not the meaning of this passage.

If you read verses 3 through 14 in Ephesians Chapter 1, Paul gives a description of the spiritual blessings that we have in Christ. The spiritual blessings that are given are:

1. We are holy and blameless in His sight (verse 4 – see my earlier comments on the verse)
2. We are adopted as sons and become part of God’s family (verse 5)
3. He has freely given us His glorious grace (verse 6)
4. In Him we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins (verse 7)

5. He makes known to us the mystery of His will (verse 9)
6. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit (verse 13)
7. We have obtained an inheritance (verse 14)

As we can see from the list of spiritual blessings Paul mentions that they are of a higher order than any material or financial blessing that we may receive on the earth. This is what you have because you are in Christ.

This last passage we have looked at talked about spiritual blessings, now we will look at a verse that deals with our physical needs.

*And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches **in Christ Jesus**.* (Philippians 4:19)

God realizes that we have many needs in this life and His Word says that He will supply these needs. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus encouraged people to not worry about their daily needs because he will supply them if they seek the Kingdom of God. Let's look at what Jesus said.

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"

"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:25-34)

If we put God first in our lives, Jesus said that He will provide our daily needs. Worry and fear is the opposite of faith. It's easy to see that worrying shows a lack of faith. We need to place our faith in God and trust that He will provide just as He said.

I believe we need to be careful about what we ask for. The Bible says that he will meet all of our needs, but it doesn't say that He will supply all of our wants. The scriptures do not give us a license to try and use God to lavish on us the things that we want. There are some teachers who say you can believe for fancy cars and large houses because God wants you to be rich. However, why don't we see everyone being blessed in this way? A scripture I often think of when I hear this prosperity gospel is, *Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil.* (Proverbs 15:16) It's better to have a little and still honor the Lord than to be wealthy and forget God or take Him for granted.

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The Bible says that God looks on our heart. He can see the reason why people ask for what they do. Many times people fail to receive from God because they are asking with the wrong motives. Consider the following scripture. *When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.* (James 4:3)

We need to remember that God will meet all our needs because we are in Christ. That's what belongs to us.

The next scripture I'd like to share deals with our prayer life.

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

I like the fact that when we are "in Him," we have confidence. It is this confidence that enables us to know that when we pray, we know God hears us. I have known Christians who pray and hope that God hears them. They never realized that because they are "in Him", they can be assured that God hears their prayers. Doesn't it give you comfort that the God of the universe hears you when you talk to Him.

Verse 15 lets us know that if we know that God hears us, we can also know that He will give us the things that we ask of Him. The word "petition" means "a request." When you pray to God and ask Him for something, it is a petition. If you have confidence that God hears you, that confidence should also carryover to knowing that God will answer your prayer. The Word says that we know that we will have what we asked for. Let me clarify this by saying, we know that God will grant us what we asked for as long as it is in His will. If we ask for something with the wrong motives, it is obviously not in the will of God and it will not be granted. This is why I believe that our prayer requests should be backed up with scripture. Find scriptures that deal with your petition and stand on the Word. God's Word is God's will. If you are praying based on the scriptures, you will be praying in the will of God.

Confidence belongs to us because we are "in Him."

There is one more scripture I would like to share with you in this chapter.

In whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. (Ephesians 3:12)

Here we see the phrase "in whom" which tells us something about our Christian identity. This verse says that we have boldness. This boldness enables us to have access with confidence to God. We can approach God without fear. In the Old Testament, only the high priest could approach God in the Holiest of Holies before the Ark of the Covenant and that only once a year on the Day of Atonement. The high priest had to enter God's presence exactly as prescribed in His Word or they would be struck dead. This would be a fearful thing. Because of Jesus Christ, all believers and not just a certain individual (priest or minister) can approach God. The Bible says; *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* (Hebrews 4:16) Again we see in the Ephesians passage the word "confidence." As a result of our faith in Christ we have the boldness to approach God because of the confidence that we have in His grace and mercy.

Boldness belongs to us because it is stated in His Word.

Final Comments

I have given you just a few of the scriptures that contain the phrases in Christ, in Him, and in Whom. If you take the time to look you will find many more verses like them. In fact, there are numerous scriptures that do not use the phrases we have been studying that also tell you about your Christian identity. I hope in making you aware of the in Christ, in Him, and in Whom references will broaden your spiritual understanding and enlighten you even more to see what the Word says about you. You will be better equipped to stand on the Word when you see yourself as God sees you!

As we assume our Christian identity, we become more and more like Jesus. As we look into the mirror, we should start seeing that we are bearing a resemblance to Christ. The scripture says, *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you feel there is a Christian identity crisis among believers today?
2. What reasons can you give why Christians have not gained an awareness of their new identity?
3. How can not knowing your Christian identity impact your life?
4. Can you identify ways in which you are being transformed more into the image of Christ?

Key Points to Remember

Allow the Word of God to shape your identity. When you become a new creation in Christ and grow in the knowledge of the Word, you will undergo changes that will make you more and more like Christ.

God provides benefits to all who will believe. Accept what the Bible says about you.

You are what the Word of God says you are. Don't allow the distractions of this world and the many voices that are out there cloud your vision of who you are, what you are, and what you have because of Jesus Christ. Maintain your focus on God and His Word.

CHAPTER 4: How to Stand on the Word of God

In this chapter I want to give some guidelines on how to stand on the Word of God. I am speaking from my own experience so other believers may describe it in a different way, but I believe this will be beneficial to you. To put it simply, there are four basic steps or guidelines that apply to effectively standing on the Word. These four steps are:

1. Knowing what the Bible says.
2. Believing what the Bible says
3. Putting into action what the Bible says.
4. Patiently waiting on God to perform His Word

Knowing What the Bible Says

The first step in standing on the Word is you have to know what it says. Every blessing we receive from God is based on our faith because He works on a “faith system.” You have to believe what God says in His Word is true in order for His promises to be realized in our life.

As I mentioned in chapter 1, we can make the statement that the greatest enemy to our faith is a lack of knowledge of God’s Word. An Old Testament passage of scripture puts it this way; *my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.* (Hosea 4:6) A lack of knowledge of the Bible can have a very destructive effect on our lives. A Christian cannot have a healthy relationship with God if they ignore His Word. You may think that this does not apply to New Testament believers because this verse is speaking to priests. The fact is all believers are considered priests in the New Testament church as the scripture says, *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.* (1 Peter 2:9)

Let’s speak a moment about knowing what the Bible says. Any need that we have in life is covered in some fashion in the Bible. If you do your research and study it out, you can find scripture that relates to any situation in life you are going through. God responds to our needs because of the covenant relationship He has with us. The blessings or benefits associated with this covenant are recorded in God’s Word. The problem is many of these benefits are never realized because we do not even though that they exist.

It is essential that we grow in our knowledge of the Bible. The knowledge that we gain comes in two forms. There is *intellectual knowledge* which is facts and information that we learn by reading a book or attending a class. This information is obtained as we receive the information through our five senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch). Another form of knowledge can be called *revelation knowledge*. This is knowledge that is not obtained through our senses, but through our spirit or heart. We may read or hear information and learn it intellectually, but it becomes real to our inner most being (spirit/heart) when it is illuminated to our heart. This is knowing something deep down inside just as if a light bulb was turned on in your spirit.

I have experienced revelation knowledge when reading the Bible. I would be reading along and all of a sudden, a particular verse would seem to jump out of the page at me. At that point I would see something in a totally different light or deeper way. This was the point in time when that scripture registered in my spirit. I initially received the information through my senses, but it didn't become real to me until it registered in my spirit. That is revelation knowledge. It is God's Holy Spirit revealing His truth to you. This is where real Bible faith begins. It is not only knowing something intellectually, but knowing it from your heart. It's hard to describe it in words, but if you have experienced this phenomenon, then you know what I am talking about.

As we feed on the Word of God it will change the way we think and the way we act if we allow it. For example, on the subject of abortion, you may have at one time supported a woman's right to choose. However, the Word of God teaches that life begins at conception. By feeding on the scriptures, you will find that your views will change and come into agreement with God's Word. A person who was once pro-choice will change their view to being pro-life because the Bible has transformed their thinking. Instead of arguing against the Bible, you will find yourself siding with it. This is essential if you desire to stand on the Word. You will firmly support its teachings and believe in its promises. This is what happens when you are born again, as the Bible says, *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!* (2 Corinthians 5:17) The more you know about the Bible will result in a new way of thinking, a new outlook on life, and a new vision for your future.

Begin to stand on the Word by collecting all the scriptural proof you can relating to your area of need. This will educate you in God's benefits that are promised in His Word. As you become aware of what the Bible says, the intellectual knowledge that you gain, through the work of the Holy Spirit, can be taken to another level in the spirit which is revelation knowledge.

As you grow in the knowledge of the Word, you need to believe it and accept it for what it says. Gaining knowledge is how you prepare your heart to receive the blessings of God.

Believing what the Bible Says

The next step in standing on the Word is to believe what you have learned. Knowing what the Bible says is one thing, but you need to believe it in order to experience the benefits associated with it. Just having a casual knowledge of the Bible is not going to lead to a victorious life.

There are several verses of scripture that speak volumes concerning the importance of believing. These passages are as follows.

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." (Mark 10:27)

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

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)

When you link the first two verses together you can see the message that “With God all things are possible and all things are possible to them that believe.” We know that God is all powerful and that He is able to do all things. He created the universe from nothing by just speaking it into existence. God can create something out of nothing. Now on the other hand, when you look at mankind, the Bible is saying that all things are possible to those who believe. Why are all things possible to those who can believe? Because their belief is in a God that can do all things! God’s Word promises His people many wonderful things. When we learn what belongs to us we need to believe that God will bless us as He has promised in His Word. Go for God’s best and don’t accept anything less.

The third verse shows the importance of believing that you will receive what you are asking for. The key is that you must believe that you receive it when you prayed and asked for it. You don’t receive what you are asking for and then believe it. That is not exercising any faith at all. Many Christians pray and hope that maybe God will grant them what they are asking for. That is not what Mark 11:24 is talking about. This verse is very positive in stating that if you believe that what you are praying for is yours at the time you prayed, it will be yours! I need to emphasize however, as long as you are praying in the will of God, you can expect God to fulfill His promise. If you are praying based on the scriptures you can have an assurance that God will grant you what you are asking for.

When we believe our prayer is answered at the time we pray, then we are standing on the Word, and by faith we know that God will come through for us. To have real Bible faith is to accept that God has granted your request at the moment you prayed. The actual manifestation in the physical realm of your answer from God may come later, but it belonged to you when you prayed. God’s answer starts in the spiritual realm before it can appear in the physical realm. The key is you have to truly believe when you pray.

I have given you some scriptures that you can stand on that should help strengthen your faith. Search the Bible for scriptures that speak to the issues that you are going through in your life. The more you read and think about these scriptures, they will build faith in your heart. As I have said, in order to stand on the Word you have to truly believe in what the Bible says.

After you have collected the scriptural proof that speaks to your area of need, make a list of the verses and read them over and over again. This repetition programs God’s Word into your spirit. We have to retrain our mind to think in line with God and not with the world. The Bible says, *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.* (Romans 12:2) God’s Word is God’s will. Many times it will run contrary with what our society believes. As our mind is transformed by the Word of God, we will begin to think as God thinks, and know what God’s will is for our lives.

Putting into Action what the Bible Says

When you receive revelation knowledge, you need to stand firm in your faith and not be swayed by public opinion. People around you may say that you are crazy to believe the Bible, but you don’t go by what people think, you live by the Word of God. As we place our faith in the Word of God, we must also put His Word into action. The Bible says, *What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep*

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warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (James 2:14-17) If you see that a person is hungry, what good does it do if you just tell the person you will be praying for them? If you are a faithful servant of God, you will give that person something to eat. This is showing Christian love. This is putting our faith into action.

We act out our faith by showing kindness to others, ministering out to those who have needs, giving financially and of our time to the work of God, and by putting God first in our lives. Our thought life, our behavior, what we say, all is done in accordance with the Word of God.

One of the ways I have put the Bible into action in my life involves the words that I speak. Our words have a direct impact on what comes our way in life. The Bible says there is a spiritual law concerning our words. A scripture that powerfully demonstrates this says, *The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.* (Proverbs 18:21) Jesus also taught concerning the power of our words by saying, *"I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him."* (Mark 11:23) Our words can be our worst enemy in preventing us from experiencing the blessings of God. As we learn to speak in line with God's Word, we allow Him to pour out His blessings on our lives. Learning to speak in line with God's Word is definitely putting His Word into action.

An example of the importance of your words can be found in the passage where Jesus cursed the fig tree. Jesus had made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, an event many know as Palm Sunday. As Jesus was on His way to the Temple he was hungry. He sees a fig tree but it did not have any fruit on it because it was not the time for it to bear fruit. The Bible says He cursed the fig tree by saying, *"May no one ever eat fruit from you again."* And his disciples heard him say it. (Mark 11:14)

When Jesus made that statement regarding the fig tree nothing appeared to happen. Jesus and His disciples went on their way. The following day the Bible says, *In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"* (Mark 11:20-21)

We can see an important spiritual principle at work in what Jesus did. When Jesus cursed the fig tree there was no immediate effect, but that does not mean nothing happened. Then next day they noticed that the tree was dried up from its roots. The tree began to wither immediately but it started underground with the roots of the tree. God's Word begins its work in the spiritual realm where we cannot see any physical evidence of what's taking place. However, in the course of time we see the actual physical evidence. Jesus was not impatient because the tree did not wither away immediately. Jesus took action when He spoke the Word; He then stood on the Word as He waited for it to come to pass. This is the same pattern that we should follow. The next section addresses what it means to wait on the Lord.

If we believe what the Bible says then it will become evident in our actions. We need to act like God's Word is true.

Patiently Waiting on God to perform His Word

After we have done our part by knowing the Word, believing it, and acting upon it, we must wait upon God to do His part. Waiting is where many Christians today have a problem. Waiting usually carries with it a negative feeling. People do not like to wait! Our culture is built on the idea of instant gratification. People want something and they want it now. We live in a world of fast food, rapid refunds on our tax returns, and get rich quick schemes just to name a few. People want things to be quick and easy.

Even though we want things right away, it doesn't always work out that way. In our society we have to learn to wait. It can be very frustrating at times because it robs us of time that we could be doing something else. Waiting is part of life. There are "waiting rooms," in doctor's offices and hospitals where we have to sit patiently before we can be seen. We wait in lines at banks for a teller, grocery stores to checkout, fast food restaurants to give our order, and theaters to buy tickets. Everyone has spent time waiting for a table at a restaurant, at amusement parks to get on a ride, at traffic lights, stop signs, railroad crossings, and while they are put on hold during a telephone call. It has been said that in a 70 year lifetime, a person spends 3 to 5 years of their time waiting. Waiting is the price we have to pay in order to get something that we need. We are willing to wait because of the benefit that will be received.

If we are willing to wait for the physical things that we need in this life, are we also willing to wait for certain spiritual needs? Our fast food culture way of thinking has carried over into our spiritual life. Christians pray and expect to receive right away. If they don't receive what they want in a short time, they give up on God. The whole idea of standing on the Word implies the need to have patience with God. We need to understand that God does not work based on our timetable. He knows what's best for us and many times we have to exhibit patience on our part as we wait for the right time for God to come through on His promises. This is very evident in the next chapter where we will look at some biblical examples of how people stood on the Word.

A verse from the Bible that comes to mind concerning the subject of waiting says, *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.* (Isaiah 40:31 KJV) The word "wait" here means to look for, to hope, or to expect. The Word is telling us to wait and eagerly look for the Lord to change us for the better. He will renew our strength. Notice how the Bible says God will empower those that wait for Him! If you are not willing to wait and have patience on God to work in your life, then you may miss out altogether on His blessings.

Another scripture that talks about waiting says, *I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.* (Psalm 27:13-14) We can have confidence that the Lord's goodness will be on our life in this world. Note how the verse says, "in the land of the living." This is a reference to our life here and now. If we wait on God, we will see His goodness poured out in this life, not on our life after we go on to heaven.

There are numerous scriptural references that we could use that deal with waiting but I will share one more. *For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.* (Romans 8:24-25) Hope means to desire with expectation of obtainment. Hope looks to the future. This passage is speaking of waiting patiently for the things that we hope for. I believe that waiting on God is a positive thing whereas the world considers waiting as a negative thing. In order to stand on the Word we need to be able to wait on the Lord.

Facing Opposition

Whenever a person makes an effort to get closer to God, you can expect to face opposition. Becoming a Christian doesn't mean that life will be easy and you will not have any problems. In fact, things may seem to get worse rather than get better. This is true because we have a spiritual enemy who is called Satan. He has an army of spiritual beings (called demon or devils) who are at work to keep you from God. The work of the devil is to steal, kill, and destroy. He doesn't want you to be blessed by God or experience success. In fact, I would be concerned if I didn't face any opposition from the enemy because that would mean I was not drawing closer to God.

We have authority over Satan and the powers of darkness. Christians do not have to take everything the devil throws at them. When you learn that you have this authority, it will have a dramatic effect on your life. The enemy doesn't want you to have this knowledge so expect to face opposition anytime you draw near to God.

Consider these passages of scripture that deal with authority. *When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.* (Luke 9:1-2) Here we see Jesus giving His twelve disciples power and authority over demons and sickness. Don't think that He did this only for the twelve. Jesus gave this kind of authority to all believers. In Luke Chapter 10 Jesus gives authority to an additional 72 believers. *After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."* (Luke 10:1, 17-20) This power and authority over the powers of darkness have been passed on to the church. The Bible is telling us that these demonic spirits must submit to us. This is a powerful truth that many Christians today do not grasp.

A lot can be said on the topic of dealing with the devil and that would require a book in itself to address our authority as Christians. I am mentioning it just to alert new Christians so they can be prepared and seek godly counsel from their pastor and other more mature believers to help them deal with opposition they will face. Most of the time the devil uses people to affect us who can even be our own family and friends. The key is to remain faithful to God and trust the His Holy Spirit guide you in your life.

Sharing your Testimonies

A great blessing from standing on the Word is the opportunity to tell others what God has done for you. Your personal testimonies of how God has blessed you can be the greatest tool in winning others to Jesus Christ. When I hear people tell what God has done for them builds up my faith and encourages me.

In the remainder of this book I will share some examples from the Bible of how people stood on the Word of God. I will also share some of my own experiences. When reading these accounts, you will see that they go along with the four guidelines I have covered in this chapter.

Questions for Discussion

1. How important is the Bible to you in your life? Why?
2. What role does “faith” play in being a Christian?
3. Share any revelation knowledge you have received from God’s Word?
4. How have you waited on the Lord?
5. How can you put God’s Word into practice?

Key Points to Remember

The key ingredient for standing on the Word is FAITH. In order to stand on the Word you need to have an understanding of the principles that govern faith. Faith is more than just believing in something, it also requires some form of action on our part. Faith also carries along with it the idea of hope as we eagerly wait on God to do His part.

When we were born again we received authority from God over the forces of darkness. Learn to use this authority wisely and you will overcome many obstacles that come in your way in life.

CHAPTER 5: Bible Examples

In this chapter we will look at how people in the Bible stood on the Word of God. What better examples can we find than those God included in His Word to illustrate what it means to stand on His promises.

When God says something it will absolutely come to pass. God's unchanging Word is what we need to see in these Biblical examples. The Bible records the following statement Joshua made before his death, *"Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed."* (Joshua 23:14) The key to standing on the Word is knowing what God says in the Bible cannot fail to come to pass.

The Flood in the Days of Noah

God revealed to Noah His intentions concerning the earth where He said, *Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.* (Genesis 6:11-13) God gave Noah the dimensions for the ark and went on to say, *I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.* (Genesis 6:17-18)

What do you imagine Noah was thinking after God laid this information on him? God revealed to him that He was going to destroy the earth with the waters of a flood. There are some Bible commentators who will tell you that it never rained on the earth prior to the flood. The scripture used to support this says, *By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.* (Hebrews 11:7a) The "thing" that they had not seen at that time was "rain." They state that the earth was watered by a mist that came up from the ground. The basis for this explanation comes from the verse that says, *"But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground."* (Genesis 2:6) What I want to emphasize here is the fact that God told Noah that there would be a flood on a global scale that would destroy all life. Of course, the world had never seen anything like this.

The only proof that Noah had that there would be a flood was God's Word that it would happen. It was Noah's faith in what God said that led him to build the ark. Faith believes in something without requiring physical proof. The Bible itself provides a definition for the word "faith," where it says, *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.* (Hebrews 11:1). Take note that it means you are certain of something that you cannot see. A disciple of Jesus named Thomas said that he would not believe Jesus rose from the dead, *"Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."* (John 20:25) It does not take any faith to say I have to see it to believe it. Later, Thomas saw the risen Lord and Jesus said to him, *"Because you have*

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seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29) Jesus' statement illustrates that real faith believes without seeing. God honors faith that does not require any measure of physical proof. If we are going to stand on the Word, we must have that kind of real faith.

No doubt Noah would have attempted to warn the world of the coming flood. The Bible describes him as a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5), so you would have to believe that he preached to the world of his day. Noah would have faced mocking and ridicule for building a boat where there was no water for it. He didn't care what people thought of him because he continued his work on the ark. In fact, Noah worked on the construction of the ark for 120 years based on Genesis Chapter 6. God gave the world time to repent while the ark was being built as the scripture states, *Who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water.* (1 Peter 3:20) God is not willing that any should perish and gives people time to get their lives right with Him.

I am saying all this to show an important aspect of standing on the Word. Many times you will receive criticism, ridicule, insults and teasing because you choose to believe God. Remember, you are believing God for something that can not be proven with physical evidence while the world will not believe unless they have some form of physical evidence. Your faith rests solely on what God says, His spoken Word which is written in the Bible. When you do this you are maintaining a strong, unwavering position that the Bible is absolutely true. You don't change your mind because of opposition. Noah was standing on the Word by building the ark even though nobody knew what a worldwide flood was or took what Noah was preaching seriously. This should be an example for us in our day. We also have to make a stand with God when it is not popular with secular society.

Just as God was patient with the world when Noah was building the ark, we also have to be patient as we stand on the Word. You may have a specific need that you have been praying about. Many times we have to wait on God because His timetable is not the same as our timetable. He knows what's best for us and there is a right time for Him to come through with His promise. A verse that I love from the Bible says, *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.* (Isaiah 40:31 KJV) If you build yourself up in the Word and trust in God, He will renew your strength. God will give you patience which is the fruit of His Spirit.

Eventually the flood did come and God followed through with what He told Noah. God brought all the animals and Noah and his family into the ark and God shut the door. It is significant to understand that God shut the door on the ark. The ark was the only way that anyone could survive the destruction from the flood. Jesus is our ark of safety today. The world needs Jesus Christ as their Savior in order to escape the coming final judgment. People try to put off making the decision and commitment to serve Jesus Christ, but there will come a time when the door of opportunity will be shut. God is patient, but we also need to respond to His calling and not put it off.

You may have good intentions to make a decision concerning Christ sometime in your life but you are not ready to do it now. I have a story that I heard Joyce Meyer tell on one of her

television broadcasts that illustrates the danger of putting off this major decision. It goes something like this.

There were three demons that were graduating from demonology school. They all had ample training and now it was graduation day so Satan himself came around to give them a little final exam. He went to the first one and said, "How do you intend to deceive the nations?" The first demon answered, "I'm just going to tell them there is no God." Satan said, "You're not going to get many people, most people even if they choose not to serve God still believe that there is a God. So I'm not very pleased with your plan. I hope this second student here has a better plan than you do."

Satan went to the second student and said, "I hope you have a better plan than he does because he's not going to get many souls for my kingdom. How do you plan to deceive the nations?" The second demon said, "I'm going to tell them there is no hell." Satan said, "You may get a few more than the first one but even you're not going to reap very many souls for the kingdom because if people know that if there is a heaven, there must also be a hell. If there's a good place to go, then there is also a bad place to go."

Unto the third demon Satan said, "I'm really kind of discouraged with this whole thing. I hope that you got a better plan than these other two." The third one said, "Well Satan, I'm just going to tell them that there's NO HURRY, that there's always plenty of time to make this decision to serve God. It's a good thing to do and they ought to do it. I'm just going to suggest that they put it off until another day." Satan said, "Ah-hah, you will reap many souls for my kingdom."

How many people do you think there are in the world today who intend to get saved some day when it's convenient for them? What if the people in Noah's day paid attention to what he was saying? Maybe there were some who just put off taking Noah seriously. As you can see, they missed out on being saved from the flood.

Jesus in His earthly ministry compared the days of His second coming with the days in the time of Noah. Jesus said, *As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.* (Matthew 24:37-39) All Christians should be looking for Christ's second coming. His return is just as sure as when the flood came in Noah's time. The conditions of our times closely resemble the time of Noah. We should be standing on the Word in our anticipation of His coming and warning the world that they need Jesus Christ. When He returns, the unbelieving world will be caught by surprise just as it did in Noah's day. The attack against Christianity by the media is more intense than ever before, making it seemly more unpopular to be a Christian today. We need to stand our ground and continue to have faith in God and in His Word.

Jesus' second coming cannot be proven with physical evidence. We only have God's Word as our evidence. In the New Testament we read, *Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles. First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of*

creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. (2 Peter 3:1-7) Just as there was a worldwide flood, there will be destruction by fire, because the Word of God says so. God's Word is sure and we can stand upon what it says.

The lessons we can learn from Noah are twofold. First, what God says in His Word will surely come to pass. The passage of time does not lessen its certainty. Secondly, we need to continue in the work God has called us to do no matter what other people may say or think.

The Father of Many Nations

The patriarch Abraham gives us a wonderful example of someone who stood on the Word. In Genesis Chapter 12, verses two and three we read the promise God made to Abraham. It said God would make of him a great nation, that He would bless him, make his name great, Abraham would be a blessing to others, and that through of him all the families of the earth will be blessed. This portion of scripture has come to be known as "The Promise." It became the foundation of the Abrahamic Covenant.

In order for God to make him a great nation, Abraham would need to have children. However, there was a problem; Abraham did not have any children. His wife Sarah was barren and she was past the age of having children. Abraham was 75 years of at the time this promise was made. It would be another 25 years before the promised child Isaac would be born through which God would make a great nation of people. Abraham had to stand on God's Word and believe that God would be able to work it out.

During the time leading up to the birth of Isaac, Abraham had to be wondering how God could give him and Sarah a child. There were seemingly two problems, Sarah was unable to have children, and she was past the age of having children since she was 65 at the time the promise was given. There was a time that Abraham and Sarah tried to help God out in getting past these obstacles. The Bible says, *Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar; so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her."* (Genesis 16:1-2) [God later had changed Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah] This shows that Abraham was human by taking the matter into his own hands rather than letting God take care of it. We do the same thing today. As it turned out, Hagar had a son who was named Ishmael, but he was not the promised son. Ishmael has been called the "son of doubt" while Isaac has been called the "son of promise."

Finally the time came for Sarah to give birth to Isaac. He was born 25 years after God called Abraham and gave him "The Promise." What a happy day this must have been for Abraham and Sarah. Abraham was 100 years old, Sarah was 90, and they had a baby just as God said they would.

Years later when Isaac was a teenager, the Bible tells us, *Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."* (Genesis 22:1-2) How would you handle

this request if God said it to you concerning your child? This was truly a test of Abraham's faith in God. I believe many of us would say "no way can I kill my child," but Abraham did not respond in that way. He prepared to make the journey to Moriah and obey what God had told him. What an example of faith and standing on the Word of God. Abraham remembered the promises God gave to him. He knew that Isaac was the promised son and that through Isaac and his descendents the whole world would be blessed.

How could Abraham demonstrate such faith? The Bible gives us the answer where it says, *By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.* (Hebrews 11:17-19) Abraham had the faith to believe God would raise Isaac from the dead if necessary in order to keep His Word. This shows why Abraham is considered a hero of faith and is mentioned in Hebrews Chapter 11 which is called the "faith chapter."

Abraham took Isaac up the mountain where God had led him, bound him and laid him on the altar. As Abraham took his knife and was ready to kill his only son Isaac, the Angel of the Lord called out of heaven and stopped him. The Bible goes on to say;

"Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." (Genesis 22:12-18)

This story is a beautiful illustration of the concept of "substitution." Isaac represented the lost human race. The ram that was caught in the thicket represented Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. The ram took Isaac's place on the altar of sacrifice just as Jesus took our place and died for our sins on the cross. Here we see the innocent dying for the guilty. That is the purpose of a blood sacrifice and the concept of substitution. What if Abraham didn't pass the test of his faith? This is why he is an example of one who stood on the Word of God.

All this background information concerning Abraham was needed in order to look at the following scripture and understand its importance when standing on the Word:

*As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, **just as it had been said to him**, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the*

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promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:17-21)

What proof did Abraham have that he would have a son by Sarah in his old age? What proof did he have that even if he sacrificed Isaac as God had instructed him, that God could raise him from the dead? The proof was not any physical evidence. The proof was the Word that God had spoken to him! Abraham was standing on the promises of God. Even when physical evidence says that your body is too old to have children. Even against all hope when circumstances say that it can not happen, Abraham stood on the Word. We need to be “fully persuaded” that God will do exactly what He says He will do and follow Abraham’s example.

Joseph, the Dreamer

The story of Joseph in the book of Genesis is the setting for the next example of standing on the Word. He was one of the twelve sons of Jacob. However, Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob and this brought about much jealousy and even hatred among the other brothers. What made matters worse; Joseph told his family about two dreams that he had which made his brothers hate him even more. The following passage of scripture describes these dreams.

He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said. Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" (Genesis 37:6-10)

These were not just the silly dreams that we all have at times. These dreams were prophetic dreams from God concerning what was to become of Joseph. God was telling Joseph through these dreams that one day his parents and his brothers would bow down to him. There were two dreams to confirm the fact that Joseph would one day be in some position of authority that even his family would be under him. Of course, this didn’t sit well with the family. At the time, he was the youngest son in the family. How could Joseph rule over his father Jacob and all his brothers? The answer is God will bring it to pass. It wasn’t going to be due to Joseph’s ability or intelligence. It was the will of God for Joseph to be put into that position and God will be the one to make it happen.

God used a dream as the way of communicating His Word to Joseph. God may use spiritual dreams today to speak to us, but the main way God speaks to us is through His written Word, the Bible. The point to be made is, when you have a Word from God, you can be assured that it will come to pass exactly as God said it would. When Joseph had these dreams, he had no idea of all that he would have to go through before he saw these dreams come true. This is why we need to be patient and allow God to work it out.

A lot can be said about the story of Joseph and I will not be going into all the details of his life. One thing I do want to say is that Joseph is a “type” of Christ. A Bible type is like a symbol or metaphor. The Bible uses many symbols and metaphors. Merriam-Webster defines “symbol” as

something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance. A “metaphor” is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. For example, the Bible calls Christ the “Rock.” This doesn’t mean Jesus was a literal rock or stone. It uses the word “Rock” as a metaphor in describing Christ. Joseph symbolically represents Christ as you study into the deeper meaning in his story. The family symbolically represents the Jewish people. Egypt represents sin and the world. We need to know this information in order to get the full impact of the meaning of the fulfillment of Joseph’s dream.

Joseph had to go through many hardships before God’s plan for his life saw its fulfillment. Let me give you a brief summary of what happened to Joseph. Joseph’s brothers’ faked his death to deceive Jacob their father and sold him to a caravan traveling to Egypt. An officer in Pharaoh’s army named Potiphar purchased Joseph to be a slave in his household. Joseph rose to a position of favor with Potiphar only to be cast into prison by him when Potiphar’s wife accused him of trying to molest her (she had tried to seduce Joseph first but he refused and she retaliated by lying on him). While in prison Joseph gained the favor of the guards. Where ever Joseph went God made him to prosper. Even in bad situations God would elevate Joseph to a position of favor. In prison, God gave Joseph the interpretation of the dreams of Pharaoh’s butler and baker (they had offended Pharaoh and he had them cast into prison). These dreams came to pass just as Joseph said where the baker was hanged and the butler was restored to his position with Pharaoh. Joseph asked the butler to remember him so he could be released from prison but the butler forgot him. Two years passed and Pharaoh had two dreams and nobody in Egypt could interpret them. The butler recalled Joseph and had him brought before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams. God gave Joseph the interpretation of Pharaoh’s dreams by revealing that there would be seven years of abundance throughout the land to be followed by seven years of famine that will ravage the land. Two dreams were given Pharaoh with this same interpretation to establish that it was from God.

Joseph instructed Pharaoh that he should choose a wise person to take charge in overseeing a plan to store part of the grain harvest during the years of abundance to be kept for distribution during the seven years of famine.

The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?" Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you." So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." (Genesis 41:37-41)

Here was Pharaoh, the ruler of the most powerful kingdom on the earth making Joseph second in command. God had brought Joseph through all the hardships so he could be in the right place at the right time in order to carry out God’s plan. The seven years of abundance happened just as Joseph said. The seven years of famine came and it affected the land of Canaan where Joseph’s family lived. Jacob sent some of the brothers to Egypt to purchase food. The following passage explains what happened next.

Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the one who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. As soon as

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Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where do you come from?" he asked. "From the land of Canaan," they replied, "to buy food." Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. (Genesis 42:6-8)

Joseph accused his brothers of being spies. In their conversations Joseph realized that there was another younger brother at home that was born after he was sold off into slavery. Joseph put his brothers to a test. *And this is how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. (Genesis 42:15)* Joseph put them in prison and on the third day he made the following statement to them.

On the third day, Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison, while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households. But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die." This they proceeded to do. They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come upon us." (Genesis 42:18-21)

They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was using an interpreter. He turned away from them and began to weep, but then turned back and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes. (Genesis 42:23-24)

It's very touching to see that Joseph had to get away from his brothers and cry because of what he heard them saying. The shortest verse in the Bible says, *Jesus wept.* (John 11:35). Jesus cried because of the Jews' unbelief as He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead. Joseph as a type of Christ wept for his brothers due to their sin in the treatment of him. Finally, the brothers were actually beginning to understand that they were receiving this treatment as a result of their sins against their brother Joseph, but they had no idea of the identity of the Egyptian ruler that they were dealing with.

The brothers returned home and told Jacob what had happened to them in Egypt. A time came when they ran out of food again and needed to return to Egypt for more food. They remembered that they couldn't return without bringing their youngest brother Benjamin. Jacob didn't want to let Benjamin go but he relented. This story is rather lengthy so I will get to the end of the story. When Joseph talked to his brothers, he would get emotional and have to leave the room to compose himself. Finally, the time came that he would reveal himself to his brothers.

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it. Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! (Genesis 45:1-4)

In the story of Joseph we can see God's hand on his life. The dream that God gave to him came to pass just as He said. Jacob and all his sons ended up bowing to Joseph just as God said. God had a plan and purpose for Joseph's life just as He does for you and me. Sometimes we have to

go through things that are not pleasant so that we can be in the place God desires for us. The Bible gives us the reason why God had placed Joseph in Egypt.

And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. (Genesis 45:5-8)

God had sent Joseph to Egypt to preserve life by a great deliverance. Does this purpose sound familiar to what Jesus did? Jesus came to the earth to preserve life by a great deliverance through His death, burial, and resurrection. In the Bible, Egypt is a type, or symbolic of the world and sin. Just as Joseph was sent into Egypt, Jesus was sent into a sinful world to reconcile man back to God.

Throughout all of Joseph's troubles and hardships, he kept his faith in God. Joseph continued to stand on the Word no matter what was happening around him. What if Joseph gave up on God when he was sold into slavery, or thrown into prison? If he did, he would not have been the vehicle by which God would make a great way of deliverance for his people. This should teach us to remain faithful to God no matter what might be happening to us. What we think is bad may turn out to lead to something that is good. A verse from the New Testament illustrates this truth very well.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28) Notice the scripture says "that in all things" God can do a work that is good. Remember, God has a plan and purpose for your life. Stand on God's Word and He will work out all things for your good!

The Good and Bad Report: The 12 Spies

The next example of standing on the Word comes from the book of Numbers Chapters 13 and 14. To set the scene, Moses had led the people out of Egypt. They had made their way across the desert and camped in an area called the wilderness of Paran. The people were on the verge of entering the promise land and the Lord made the following command, *"Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders."* (Numbers 13:2) Moses chose one man from each of the 12 tribes to go and explore the land. Take note of what God said to Moses. God was saying that He was giving the land of Canaan to the Israelites. It was God's plan to fulfill the promise he made to Abraham when He had shown him the land of Canaan and made this statement, *All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.* (Genesis 13:15) Based on God's Word, Canaan belonged to Israel and He was able to establish them in the land.

The men explored the land and returned to Moses to report on what they had seen. *They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan."* (Numbers 13:27-29)

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Joshua and Caleb who were two of the men that explored the land did not agree with the other ten's report. The Bible says, *Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."* (Numbers 13:30-33)

Why did Joshua and Caleb disagree with the bad report about the land? They knew that God said the land belonged to them! They were looking through the eyes of faith. Even though the people living in the land were strong and powerful, God was far more strong and powerful than they were. Where Joshua and Caleb were walking by faith, the other 10 men were walking by sight as evidenced in the scripture where they said "we saw." They thought that Israel would have to defeat the inhabitants of the land by their own might. Joshua and Caleb stood on God's Word and knew that Israel would take the land because of God's might.

Many Christians fall into this same trap today by looking at problems they are facing and trying to deal with them based on their own strength. Little did they know that if they approached their problem based on God's Word, they could overcome it and have the victory.

The people would not listen to Joshua and Caleb, but sided with those that gave the bad report of the land. They rebelled against God by grumbling against Moses and Aaron. They believed God was leading them into the land to have them killed. They felt it would have been better for them if they had never left Egypt. *Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them." But the whole assembly talked about stoning them.* (Numbers 14:6-10)

The words that stand out to me from this scripture are "their protection is gone." In the King James Version it is worded "their defense is departed from them." It didn't matter how strong the people were who inhabited the land. Since God was with Israel, the people had no defense against Him. If only the Israelites could have understood the surety of God's Word, they could have avoided 40 years of wandering in the wilderness because of their unbelief. It's a serious thing to rebel against God and doubt His Word.

Let me also point out that the people wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb because they sided with the Lord. We can expect the same in our day when we make a stand with the Lord. People do not literally stone us, but they can with their words. It's not only the unsaved that will ridicule us, other Christians can also speak against those who make a stand on the Word just as Joshua and Caleb were threatened by their own people.

Joshua and Caleb eventually were able to enter the land of Canaan after the 40 years Israel had to wander in the wilderness. That was Israel's punishment for rebelling against God. The men spent 40 days exploring the land, so in turn, Israel was kept from entering the land for 40 years.

One year for every day the men were in the land. The entire generation that believed the bad report died off in the wilderness and their children were allowed to enter Canaan. Joshua and Caleb were the only ones from that older generation that were allowed to enter Canaan and receive their inheritance.

Caleb was promised a specific part of the land of Canaan to be his inheritance. Moses made the following statement to him because of his faithfulness to God.

"Not a man of this evil generation shall see the good land I swore to give your forefathers, except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and I will give him and his descendants the land he set his feet on, because he followed the LORD wholeheartedly." (Deuteronomy 1:35-36)

Caleb had to stand on this promise for 40 years before it came to pass. Sometimes when we are surrounded by unbelief it can have an effect on when God's promises are fulfilled in our life. The key is to remain faithful to God because He is faithful toward us. The following passage documents Joshua receiving the promise.

Now the men of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, but my brothers who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt with fear. I, however, followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly. So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.'

"Now then, just as the LORD promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the desert. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the LORD promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said." (Joshua 14:6-12)

I believe Caleb is a great example of someone who stood on the Word of God. He had to be patient through all the years until the timing was right for God's Word to be fulfilled. Notice, even though Caleb was 85 years old when he received his inheritance, he was just as strong and vigorous as he was in the day that the promise was made. It would have been easy for him to get discouraged and give up on the promise, but he knew the surety of God's Word. Stand on the Word, remain faithful, and God will come through for you!

I shared this example because I want you to see that when we have God's Word concerning a matter, you can be confident that God will bring it to pass.

The Temptation of Jesus

Jesus gave us a wonderful example of standing on the Word when he was under attack by Satan. When you make a stand on the Word of God, you can expect to face opposition. Jesus was no

exception to this even though He was the Son of God. Let's look at the scripture which records Jesus' encounter with Satan.

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. (Matthew 4:1-11)

In this passage, Jesus was led into the desert after He was baptized by John the Baptist. Satan offered three temptations to Jesus. Each time, Jesus countered Satan with the Word of God. Let's take a closer look at each of them.

The Bible tells us that Jesus had been fasting for forty days. Even though Jesus was God, He was also a human being and was very hungry from not eating for that long of time. Satan came at Jesus when He was in a weakened state physically. This is a tactic of the enemy and he attacks believers today when they are weak. How did Jesus react when the enemy came at Him? Jesus responded by quoting the Word of God. He used the Word of God as His defense. Jesus said, "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." which was a direct quote from Deuteronomy Chapter 8 verse 3. I believe this was more than just Jesus' response to Satan, it also represents the principle that we must live by. Our life needs to be lived based on the Word of God. Notice how it says "every word." We cannot just pick and choose what biblical principles we want to live by. We need to live by the entirety of the Word of God. Jesus also was saying that man needs more than physical food to maintain life, man also needs spiritual food which is the Word of God.

The devil's next temptation was taking Jesus to the highest point of the temple and saying if you're the Son of God, jump off because your angels will catch you. The devil even quoted scripture to Jesus that was found in Psalm 91. Again, Jesus responded by quoting the Word back to the devil telling him not to put God to the test. First of all, we need to realize that the devil knows scripture too. The enemy will use scripture on people today to side track them by misapplying it and using it out of context to deceive. This is why it is so important to have a good understanding of the Bible for yourself in order to catch it when it is used incorrectly.

In the third temptation the devil promised to give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if he would fall down and worship him. The devil has always wanted to be like God and to be worshipped. For a third time, Jesus used the Word to remind him that God is the only one to be worshipped (see Deuteronomy 6:13). Please take note that Jesus didn't carry on a dialogue with the devil. When Jesus talked to the devil, He spoke the Word. This is the example we should follow when dealing with the devil. Never get into a dialogue with the enemy because he is wiser and craftier than we are. He can deceive you and get you totally off the Word. When you have to deal with

the devil, resist him by quoting the Word just like Jesus did and he has got to go. The Bible says, *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* (James 4:7)

The temptation of Jesus that we have read from Matthew Chapter 4 was not the only time He was tempted or tested of the devil. Throughout Christ's earthly ministry He had to confront the devil. The passage we have considered is a very good example of standing on the Word when using it as our defense when we are under spiritual attack.

Questions for Discussion

1. What proof motivated these individuals to have faith in God?
2. How important is it to have patience in waiting on God?
3. Why are there so many obstacles to overcome before obtaining God's promise?
4. How can hardships work to mold our character and prepare us to receive God's blessings?

Key Points to Remember

When your eyes sees a promise that is written in God's Word and you know that it is for you; that is when faith is birthed in your heart and you can stand on that scripture to come to pass in your life.

When you are determined to stand on the Word; time is not a factor, adversity is not a factor, unbelieving people around you is not a factor, unfavorable circumstances are not a factor, giants (obstacles to keep you from obtaining) in the land are not a factor, and even Satan himself is not a factor, in keeping you from the receiving the promises of God as written in His Holy Word.

CHAPTER 6: Norman Williams' Testimony

I want to share with you a wonderful testimony that illustrates the importance of standing on the Word of God in a time of crisis. On March 27, 1977, the worst airline disaster in aviation history occurred on the tiny island of Tenerife in the Canary Islands at the Los Rodeos airport. On a foggy afternoon, two Boeing 747s collided on the ground killing 583 people. A man named Norman Williams was one of the survivors of that tragedy. His testimony illustrates the importance of what it means to stand on the Word of God. I was able to listen to an audio recording where he gave his testimony of what happened on that terrible day. What follows is his story.

Let me start by giving you a little background information on Mr. Williams. Norman was 7 years old when he gave his heart to Christ. At the age of 12, he was baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in other tongues. His mother was an old time Bible reading, prayer believing, Pentecostal lady all her life. She had been living with her son for the past 20 years after the death of Norman's father. Norman explained his family life by saying, "We've been weaned on the Word of God, we've been weaned on prayer, and we've been taught that God's Word means exactly what it says, no ifs ands or buts about it. If God's Word says it, believe it, accept it, apply it, and absorb it in your everyday living, because if God said it, He meant it and He'll never change His mind." You couldn't say it any better concerning what it takes to be able to stand on the Word of God. Little did he know that his upbringing was preparing him for that tragic day in 1977.

Norman made this trip with a business companion. Originally, the man's wife was to travel with him. They had three small boys at home and several months before they were to leave for the trip, the wife decided to stay home with their children. Norman ended up taking the wife's place. They were seated in the center of the plane and no two people seated together survived the crash. Later Norman said that he felt like he was in the center of God's will. He said, "It's a great feeling to know that you were in the center of God's will, even if it involved a plane crash." No doubt, the wife would have perished in the crash as her husband did and it would have left three little boys orphans to grow up without either of their parents. Because of Norman's background growing up in a Bible believing home, he was able to be fortified in the Word. God had Norman take her place on that tragic day and based on his faith, was able to deliver him from sure death.

The day arrived that Norman was to depart on the trip. He and his business associate were to leave Los Angeles, fly to New York, and then across the Atlantic. Before he left the house, his mother got out her Bible and called Norman over to her so they could pray for his safety before he left. They both laid their hands on the Bible and began to pray. As they were praying, Norman's mother began to weep bitterly and he had to finish the prayer. Norman had never seen his mother cry like that, even at the time of the death of his father. Over the years she apparently did her grieving and crying privately where Norman could not see her. She had told him that she did not have any premonition, but felt a heavy burden come on her. At the time, Norman thought it was just the tears of a worried mother, but as it turned out, they were tears of intercession for the 583 people that would later lose their lives on that flight.

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One of the planes involved in the crash was a KLM Royal Dutch Airlines 747 operating as flight KL4805 on behalf of the Holland International Travel Group, carrying 235 passengers and a crew of 14. The second plane that Norman was a passenger on was a Pan Am 747 with 380 passengers on board. The plane was two hours late in leaving Los Angeles and made a five hour flight to New York before departing for the Canary Islands. This 747 was not just any 747. It was the “Clipper Victor,” the first 747 ever built.

As their flight was approaching the Canary Islands, the flight could not land at Los Palmas as scheduled due to a terrorist threat, but was diverted to the island’s other airport - Los Rodeos. This airport was not designed for jumbo jets so there was not much space for these planes to get around. As they flew into the airport, Norman could look out the window and see the 12,000 foot volcano that was called “the peak of hell.” That mountain has lived up to its name because over the course of time six major air disasters have happened at the foot of that mountain claiming approximately 1,000 lives. When they landed, everyone had to stay in the plane. They would be sitting there for four hours beside the very plane that they would later collide with.

There was only one runway at the Los Rodeos airport. Planes would taxi down the runway in a line. When a plane got to the end of the runway, it would turn around and prepare for takeoff. The other planes would have to pull off of the runway onto ramps in order to clear the way for the plane that was ready to take off.

The time finally came when Norman’s plane was told that they could prepare for take off. The pilot became angered when the KLM decided to refuel taking on 21,000 gallons of jet fuel. The added weight of this fuel would play a major part in the collision that would soon take place. Several smaller planes were able to taxi around the KLM and takeoff. The Pan Am made an attempt to get around the KLM but there was not enough room to get by. This was about 4:30 pm local time and a thick fog that came in had greatly reduced visibility at the airport.

Consider the situation, an over-crowded airport with just one runway, no ground radar, and a tower that could not see the planes because of the dense fog. Several minutes after refueling, the KLM and the Pan Am began to taxi down the runway so they could take their turns to takeoff.

The pilot of the Pan Am, who also survived the crash, later said he could see the headlights of the KLM through the dense fog at the end of the runway. He thought the lights were stationary and he continued to taxi down the runway. To the pilot’s horror, he realized the KLM was coming at him traveling at approximately 200 miles per hour. Norman had laid his head down to rest as the plane was going down the runway and was startled as the plane violently jerked to his left and felt a thumping sensation as if the wheels had gone into a ditch. The pilot had pulled off the runway onto the grass in a desperate attempt to get out of the way of the approaching plane. As the KLM was thundering down the runway, it broke through the dense fog and saw the Pan Am in its path. The KLM made a desperate attempt to rise over the Pan Am, but the added weight of the jet fuel it took on was too much for it to clear the other plane. The pilot was able to get the nose over the Pan Am but the landing gear of the KLM came slicing through Norman’s plane and cut it in half. Norman was 8 rows back from where the plane was cut in two.

The front part of the plane fell forward. Most of the survivors came from the front half of the plane, probably because it was closer to the ground and they had a moment of grace without fire. The impact caused the floor of the cockpit to collapse and the crew members fell down into the

first class section. This no doubt saved the crew's lives and afterward the pilot became a committed Christian.

In the middle section of the plane where Norman was seated there were only a few survivors. All passengers died who were seated in the tail section of the plane. They probably died before the flames reached them because an impact of that magnitude causes great suction and vacuum forces to go sweeping through the cabin. The tail end would get the final suction as if you were playing crack the whip. The vacuum sucks the oxygen right out of the lungs and the people died instantly before the fire ever reached them.

Upon impact, all 21,000 gallons of the jet fuel released saturating the plane inside and out. Norman said it came gushing through the section like a gigantic wave. Many people had their clothing drenched with jet fuel and became instant targets for a spark that could reach them. The fire was instantaneous. In the hospital afterward, Norman said that he thought the plane had been bombed and that he never realized that they were hit by another plane. He explained his experience as the sudden appearance of instant explosions and walls of fire.

Norman did not remember loosening his seat belt or standing up. There were people burning to death all around him. He saw their hair burning, clothes burning, and people bleeding terribly from the cuts there were receiving from flying debris. There were many things flying through the air, parts of the plane and parts of bodies. I know this sounds gruesome, but you need to have an understanding of the hopelessness of the situation in order to appreciate the miracle of God's deliverance.

Norman said, "You never forget what you see in a moment like that and certainly, you'll never forget what you hear in a moment like that." He went on to say, "Our vocabulary is not adequate enough to describe the terror, and the horror, and the hell that you experience in moments like that."

One of the things that he heard that shocked him more than anything else was seeing people burning to death cursing. It was Norman's belief that if a person knew that they were going to die, that they would call upon God. To his surprise he found that this was not true. Airline officials listened to the tapes from black box that was recovered from the wreckage of the KLM in hopes of gaining an understanding of what may have caused the crash. They were amazed to find that the last thing recorded was the violent cursing of the KLM pilot as he came roaring down the runway. The very last thing recorded on that tape is the pilot taking the name of the Lord in vain as he crashed into the Pan Am.

This phenomenon bothered Norman and when he was released from the hospital after the crash, he did some research to find out why people cursed while they were dying. In his own words he said he found that, "Men and women in moments of distress and times of crisis are as they have programmed themselves to be in life. As they lived, so shall they die? If they have been cursers in their lifetime, then they will curse as they die." It is an automatic response and they curse without even thinking about it.

As Norman read this information he rejoiced in the Lord because he realized that he had been programmed into God. The first word that came from his lips was, "Jesus," and the Lord was there. Norman thought he was going to die. Everyone around him was dying but at that moment it didn't seem to matter to him. All that mattered to him at the time was the presence of Jesus.

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He knew if he lived, Jesus would be with him. He knew if he died that Jesus would be with him too. Norman's belief was that the most important thing at the time of your death is to sense the presence of Jesus.

The Bible tells us that we should renew our mind. This means that a person needs to retrain their thinking so it will be in line with God's will for their lives. The world forms people's thinking in such a way that they have no awareness of God. The Bible says, *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.* (Romans 12:2) The only way that we can transform our thinking is to learn the Word of God. As we feed on the Word of God, it will be evident in the way we think and in the things we say. When a person renews their mind with the Word, in times of crisis it will come out rather than the cursing. This is why the first word that came from Norman's mouth was "Jesus" and not some curse word.

It's programmed in you to fight for survival in times of disaster. You're not thinking of dying, you are trying to live. In a time of crisis, a person doesn't take the time to reflect on their life and then accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. God gives people many opportunities during their lifetime to give their life to Christ. Unless you have renewed your mind with the Word, God will not be on your mind when you are facing death.

Norman went on to say that 55 people did nothing to try and survive. They just sat in their seats staring ahead like zombies with a glassy stare and died. They remained in their seats in silence until the flames reached them. These people were totally overcome with shock and confusion that they couldn't even react to the situation. He felt that this cannot be the will of God for people to die like that. He quoted a scripture that said, *You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.* (Isaiah 26:3 NKJV) Norman testified by saying, "Even in a disaster like that we can sense and witness the power of God and through the moving of His Holy Spirit, be led into safety." He said that he could almost feel the physical nudging of the Holy Spirit to go this way and don't go that way; to do this and don't do that.

Norman mentions a Pentecostal lady who was on the plane. Her first impulse after the crash was to step out quickly into the isle. As she stepped out, she heard the voice of God speak loudly to her and say, "Get out of the isle!" She stepped back in front of her seat just as a flaming sheet of metal came slicing down the isle way to the very spot where she was standing. As she gazed on that flaming sheet of metal and realized what God had done for her. She became so heavily anointed with the Holy Spirit that all of a sudden she began leaping over the seats like a gazelle out into freedom. This shows how important it is to be in tune with God so that we know His voice.

With people dying all around him, his mind was taken over with the memory of his prayer time with his mother. He could hear her prayer in his mind. At that time, all confusion left and he began to think rationally and clearly. A boldness swept over him and he wanted to live. A calmness and peace settled on him. Even the doctors later said his survival was directly due to his faith.

In that time his mind practically became a computer with the Word of God. Norman said, "Scripture after scripture after scripture began to pour through my mind, and portions of scripture." Scriptures came to him that he learned as a boy in Sunday school and scriptures he learned as an adult. Scriptures he didn't even know that he knew began going through his head.

A verse that came and was so real for him said, *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* (Isaiah 43:2 KJV) He heard this verse a second time. At this point he knew God was speaking to him directly from His Holy Word.

Norman said he started screaming at God and he said, “Father, in the Name of Jesus, I stand on the Word, I stand on the Word Father, I stand on the Word, I stand on the Word!” He said this over and over as he battled his way through the flames. God’s Word became his life.

In order to stand on the Word of God in a moment like that, you have to know what the Word of God says. There’s no time to get out your Bible and start going through the pages and say, what page is it on? You are not expected to memorize the whole Bible, but you must have exposure to God’s promises and the Holy Word if you expect the Holy Spirit to minister to you in your most desperate moments.

Norman looked up and saw the sky through a hole in the roof which was at least 10 foot high. He knew that there was a way out if he could just get there. He said, I remember seeing the holes. I remember going through the hole, but I have no recollection of how I got up to the hole.” A scripture comes to my mind of how God uses angels to minister to His people where it says, *For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.* (Psalm 91:11-12) It is very possible that God’s angels took a hold of him and brought him to the hole in the roof so he could get out of the plane.

Norman went out of the hole in the roof onto the wing, and while the engines were still roaring, he jumped off. Remember, the wing is 30-35 feet off of the ground. This would be like jumping out of a 3 or 4 story window. Again, it is possible that God’s angels helped him to the ground without suffering serious injury. As his feet touched the ground he realized that just seconds before he saw people dying all around him. There he was on the ground, bleeding from the cuts he suffered, the bones in his right foot were practically all broken, but he knew God had kept His Word where He said, *“When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned.”*

In the crash, 114 people were burned beyond recognition and could never be identified. They were buried in one mass grave in West Minister, California. Norman went to the funeral and they had a list of the names of the people who would be buried there. On that list were Norman’s business partner who was seated in the seat in front of him, a mother and daughter who were seated to his left, and friends from Newport Beach, California who were seated in front of him. Everyone around him had died and not one of their remains could ever be identified. Norman did not have a burn on his body, a singed hair, nor have his clothing catch on fire or even have scorched places on his clothes.

It is really amazing that Norman suffered no signs from being inside an inferno. The flames and the heat from the planes that took all those lives had no effect on Norman. Just as amazing, we find a story in the book of Daniel Chapter 3 about three Hebrew men who survived the flames of a fiery furnace. It was during the time of the Babylon captivity, King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold and issued a commandment which said *As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.* (Daniel 3:5) Three Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach,

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and Abednego refused to bow down and worship this image since it violated the second commandment which says *"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand {generations} of those who love me and keep my commandments."* (Exodus 20:4-6)

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego made a stand on the Word of God. King Nebuchadnezzar had the three Hebrews thrown into the fiery furnace because of their disobedience to his commandment. In our Christians lives today we face the same question. Are you going to obey God or obey man? The fire was so hot that it killed the men that threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the flames. *King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished as he looked into the fiery furnace and made this statement "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."* (Daniel 3:25 NKJV) Let me emphasize that this verse says that the men were not hurt.

The Bible goes on to say *Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.* (Daniel 3:26-27) Here we have a biblical example of how God backed His Word as stated in Isaiah where it says *when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* The same thing happened to Norman Williams. God delivered him from a blazing plane and there were no burns on his body, no scorches on his clothes, his hair was not singed, neither was there even the smell of smoke on his clothes. What God did for people mentioned in the Bible, He also does today for people who will stand on His Word!

I wanted to share this story because I believe it is an outstanding illustration of the importance of being able to stand on the Word of God. It can mean the difference between life and death. This is why it is so important for Christians to feed on the Word of God and obtain a greater awareness of the promises that belong to them. Fortify yourself in God's Word so when the time of crisis comes in your life, and they come to us all, you will be able to shift into another gear as Norman did, and allow God to fulfill His Word. Norman didn't allow his emotions to take over and go to pieces. He didn't freeze and sit there in total confusion. He allowed his spirit man that had been built up with the Word of God to take over. He didn't panic and allowed God to make a way of escape.

Questions for Discussion

1. Surely, other Christians on that plane perished in the crash, why do you think Norman Williams was a survivor?
2. What role does faith play when you stand on the Word?
3. How would you explain that scripture can come into your mind that you have never learned?
4. What different types of reactions can people display in a disaster situation? How should a Christian react?

Key Points to Remember

Fortify yourselves with the Word of God. The word “fortify” cannot be emphasized enough. It means to strengthen and secure, to give physical strength, courage, or endurance, and to add mental or moral strength to. Build yourself up in the Word of God because it will pay dividends.

Your computer mind retains more of the Bible that you hear and study than you may realize. The more time you spend in the Bible, the more you will have available to you in a time of crisis.

God will work miracles on your behalf in order to come through on His promises.

CHAPTER 7: Personal Testimonies

In this chapter I want to share some testimonies from my life which I believe help illustrate how to stand on the Word of God. I'm not implying that I am any super Christian because I am not. My purpose here is to show you that everyday people like you and me can have wonderful experiences with God. The Bible records a statement Peter made where he said, *"I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism."* (Acts 10:34) God will bless your life just as much as He would a famous evangelist, preacher, or missionary. God does not play favorites. He honors faith and obedience to His Word. The following five testimonies reflect some awesome blessings God extended to me and my family.

Our Miracle Child

I would like to relate a wonderful blessing God gave to my wife Mary and me. I'm sure we received the answer to our prayer because we believed in the promises contained in the Word of God. This experience taught us both the importance of being able to stand on the Word of God, no matter what the circumstances may be.

The year was 1987 and we had been married for eight years and had no children. Mary and I had been filled with the Spirit for about six years and we were learning a great deal about the subject of faith. We had been trying for over a year to conceive a child and could not. Mary visited her gynecologist and discovered she had an incurable disease called endometriosis. It can be described as a growth in a woman's reproductive system that can cause infertility. Surgery is usually the best treatment for the disease. A date was set for the surgery and in the mean time; we began to exercise what we were learning about faith. We were praying for a healing and that God would give us a child.

Being an avid student of the scriptures, I went to the Word of God to read about the circumstances surrounding how some women had children in the Bible. It was surprising to me to discover the number of women who were barren and ended up having children. Examples of these include Abraham's wife Sarah, Isaac's wife Rebekah, Jacob's wife Rachel and Manoah's barren wife who gave birth to Samson. In reading these miraculous accounts concerning childbirth, I came away with a deeper understanding of the blessings that come with having children. I could see that God did wonderful miracles for people who desired to have children. A Bible verse that came to my mind was, *Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.* (Psalm 37:4). It was truly our desire to have children. We knew that the Word says, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and forever* (Hebrews 13:8). What God did for these people in the past, He could also do for us today.

I remember looking up numerous scriptures in the Bible that promised healing and those that said children were a blessing from the Lord. Mary and I claimed these promises for ourselves as we were determined to act on the scriptures. I made a list of these verses and would read them again and again to get them into my heart. The Bible says, *Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.* (Romans 10:17). As we feed on the Word of God our faith begins to grow. If you are going to receive anything from God, you

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are going to receive it by faith. God rewards our faith as it says in the scripture, *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.* (Hebrews 11:6). I believe that our diligence in seeking God through His Word resulted in the wonderful answer to prayer that was to come.

About one month before Mary's scheduled surgery, she received prayer from one of the ministers at our church. He laid hands on her and prayed that she would be healed. The Bible says that *"they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."* (Mark 16:18). Mary felt something go through her body and we both claimed her healing by faith. There was no physical evidence to base our claim on, we were claiming her healing based on what the Bible said, that is, on all the scriptures that I had listed and were reading again and again. We didn't know if we should cancel the surgery or just go through with it and trust that God would lead us in what to do next. We decided to go through with the surgery and allow God to work out the situation.

On the day of the surgery we arrived early at the hospital. Mary changed her clothes and was in the hospital nightgown. She had been made ready for the surgery and was on the cart ready to be wheeled into the operating room when she asked the nurse if they would take one last blood test to see if she was pregnant. They went along with her request and I'll never forget the look on that nurse's face when she came back to give us the results of the test. "It's positive, it's positive" she said! Jesus at the last moment delivered Mary from the operating table and answered our prayer for a child at the same time. A scripture from the Bible came to my mind and took on a new meaning for me, *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.* (Ephesians 3:20). God had truly done what He promised in His Word. Nine months later our son David was born.

If this was not enough, we desired to have a second child and couldn't conceive again. We had tried for two to three years this time but with no success. We didn't go to the doctor this time but Mary was prayed for again at the church. Guess what? Jesus came through for us again! This time our daughter Rachel was born.

If there is anyone desiring children and are unable to conceive, I can tell you from our experience, God will answer your prayer if you have faith and put your trust in Him! He really will! Stand on His Word because miracles do come true.

Dying Grace

In this testimony I want tell the events surrounding the passing of my father-in-law, William F. Dennehy. If there ever was a man who loved the Word of God, it was Bill. He was a Catholic during most of his life and in his latter years, he was filled with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He read many Christian books and listened to tapes which helped him grow tremendously in his faith in God. He was a wonderful example of someone who could stand on the Word.

Bill and I were, what I call, spiritual buddies. We spent many hours talking about the Bible and how to walk by faith in God's Word. We would discuss many scriptures and run our thoughts past each other concerning the things we were thinking about. Bill always wanted to know everything he could about faith and the Bible.

Bill had some trouble with cancerous growths on his lip. After some time, he eventually had them removed. They were actually a warning sign of things to come. He became very sick and weak in early 1993. He was scheduled to go for surgery to remove part of his intestine. My wife Mary and I went to the house to pray with Bill and my mother-in-law Mary Jane. In our prayer time, the gift of Tongues and Interpretation were manifested. Mary gave the tongues and I interpreted. The main statement I remember from the message was, “*This sickness will not end in death.*” which was taken from John 11:4. We took this to mean that Bill would be healed. We stood on that promise from the Word of God concerning his physical healing; however, as we later would find out, that scripture was not talking about physical healing.

In February, he had surgery at Mt. Carmel West Hospital in Columbus Ohio. When the doctors went in they found his liver 90% full of cancer. They took out part of his intestine and they sewed him up. There was nothing they could do for him. When Bill went home, Hospice personnel began coming to the house. Through the ordeal, Bill held on to his faith that he would be healed. While at home, he told me of some dreams that he had which were really given to him by God to help him prepare for heaven. He told me he saw a wall covered with vines. Over the wall was a beautiful grassy field with young people in it. I believe he knew that God was calling him home, but he was trying to make it as easy as possible for his family. Easter Sunday 1993 was the last family gathering he was part of. He sat in a wheelchair and talked with everybody. A bed was set up in the living room by the piano. Even in his condition, there he was in bed, still listening to his tapes feeding on God’s Word.

On April 12, 1993 I was driving to work. I was not thinking on anything spiritual at the time, but rather thinking on what I had to do for that day. Then all of a sudden the Holy Spirit dropped this into my spirit, “You are going to preach Bill’s funeral.” After that I knew everything I was suppose to say. I did not have to think about what I was going to say, through the Spirit of God it was just implanted into me. To say the least, I was stunned. I had in no way thought about speaking at Bill’s funeral. I was still standing by faith that he would be healed, even though the signs were not good that his healing would take place. I got a note pad out of my briefcase and quickly wrote down what God had given to me while I was still driving my car. I wrote the date on it. That is how I know what day this took place. I kept this to myself until just before Bill passed away. The day before Bill died, Mary called me at work and told me her Dad wanted me to do his funeral. I told her I knew it and proceeded to tell her the experience I had while driving to work that one day.

Bill Dennehy died on April 23, 1993 at 12:40 AM at his home with his family at his side. That last day he started calling for his family. He was lying in his bed in the living room and he finally slipped into a coma. Through the whole ordeal, you never heard Bill complain. When he was in the hospital and later at home, when you started to talk about Jesus and the Bible, he would perk up and his whole countenance would look better. He had turned yellow because of the diseased liver, but when you talked about God’s Word with him, his normal coloring would return. This really had an impact on me and it just proves that God’s Word is life. Just before he died, he came out of the coma. His eyes opened real wide (I believe he saw Jesus coming for him) and his spirit just left. It was such a peaceful way to go and it gave me a greater appreciation for the grace of God.

One thing that bothered me was the statement God gave unto us, “*this sickness will not end in death.*” I felt like there was some sort of unfinished business between Bill and us concerning our stand of faith. I am very respectful in the use of the gift of interpretation of tongues. I do not

want the interpretation to be just me (in the flesh) and something that we want to hear. It's got to be truly from the Spirit of God. Maybe I was in the flesh when I gave that interpretation and it was not from the Spirit at all and it gave everyone a false sense of hope.

I had asked Mike Underhill, our pastor from the London Apostolic Gospel church, to assist me with the funeral. He spoke after me at the service and he performed the grave side ceremony. In Mike's message he made reference to the John 11:4 scripture and ended up giving us the true meaning concerning the verse "*this sickness will not end in death.*" This was God at work, talking to us, giving instruction and helping us to grow and mature spiritually. Mike focused our attention to the fact that as a result of a saving faith in Jesus, we will never die. Lazarus died in the Biblical account in John 11 and Jesus raised him from the dead, but years later he would die again. The meaning of the passage is that physical death is not an end. Life is so much more than just living here on the earth. Life is being with Jesus Christ and Bill had experienced that wonderful event. Jesus in the raising Lazarus said to Martha, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?*" (John 11:25-26) We need to value our eternal life with Jesus Christ. We had taken that verse and tried to make it apply to healing when it actually was speaking of eternal life. It was evident that God decided to call Bill home. The message to us is believers in Jesus Christ will never die, but have eternal life.

Mary and I were lying on the bed around 7:00 P.M. after the funeral. Lying there I was still thinking over what had happened during the day and how Jesus revealed to us the whole picture of what had occurred over the past weeks.

I felt the presence of Jesus in a very strong way in the room and Bill was with Him. I could feel Bill's spirit and I could sense youthfulness in it. It was like he was 30 years old again and he was with his Jesus.

Jesus said to my spirit, "*Bill knows what happened today and he is pleased with everyone. He is all right and he is with Me.*" Jesus also said that, "*Bill knows that we know*" the meaning of what happened. It was like Bill asked Jesus to relay a message to us that He is okay and that he knows that we know. This took care of the unfinished business that I mentioned earlier.

When I told Mary of this experience a few minutes later, she said that yesterday, she prayed that Jesus would let her Dad know that, (1) she loves him, (2) that she's very happy for him, and (3) that she will be seeing him soon. It is apparent that Jesus told him this and that he sent a message back to Mary.

The thing that we know is the meaning of the statement Jesus gave us through tongues and interpretation when we prayed together before Bill went to the hospital. That statement was, "*This sickness is not unto death.*" We can all rest in the fact that everything is settled. This was God's gentle way of telling us and teaching us of a beautiful spiritual truth. Nothing can separate us from our God, "*And whoever lives and believes in me will never die.*"

The reason I am telling this is to show a side of God's grace that we may not recognize. For a Christian, death is not an end, nor does it have to be painful and terrible experience. What I saw in the passing of my father-in-law was "dying grace." God prepares the person, God prepares the family, and as the final days wind down, we really see on display that life is in the Word. It

is my prayer that when it comes my time to pass on, I can experience the dying grace that Bill experienced.

Standing on the Word includes holding on to the truth that we have eternal life, and nothing, including physical death itself, can hold us back from our Lord. Our life here on the earth is a preparation ground for the glory that is to come. We can stand on the Word that says, *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 8:38-39)

As I conclude this story, I want to share one more point. It was evident that we were standing on the Word for a healing miracle. We had misinterpreted the meaning of the scripture, thinking it applied to healing, but instead, it was speaking of our eternal life. We don't know everything about the Word and at times we will make mistakes. Don't let that hold you back from trying and knowing the Bible the best you can. God's Holy Spirit will lead and guide us in all truth and gently nudge us in the right direction. This is what God did for Bill and us, even after he went on to be with the Lord.

One Foggy Morning

I want to relate an incident that happened on one foggy morning that could have had a terrible outcome if I did not know how to stand on the Word of God. This incident involves my children getting on the school bus in the front of our house.

To begin this story, in my first testimony I spoke of how my wife and I stood on the Word in order to have our children. Well guess what, once your children are born it takes a lot more standing as you go through life in raising them. In order to tell you what happened on that foggy morning, I need to take you back to the time that my son David was born.

When Mary was pregnant with David, during an ultrasound the doctor could see that he had a problem with his bladder. David had a reflex, which is condition where a valve does not work properly, allowing urine to backup into the kidney. This could cause serious damage to the kidney so the doctors were prepared to deal with this when he was born. Of course they give you the option to abort but we would not even consider that option. We immediately went to prayer and was trusting God for another miracle.

When David was born, he was taken straight to intensive care where a catheter was inserted because he could not urinate. This had to be done to allow his urine to drain and not backup into his kidney. It was a serious situation and Mary and I were naturally worried. The doctors were telling us that he would need surgery and that he may need to remain in the hospital for as long as six months. This news is not what a first time mother wants to hear. They could not permanently remove the catheter unless David could urinate. One evening in prayer, Mary heard a sound like a baby crying. We took that as a message from God that He had heard our prayers. Later, a doctor called and told us that unexpectedly, when the catheter was removed, David was able to urinate on his own. He would not have to stay in the hospital for months. We were going to get to bring him home!

This story had a happy ending because David's problem was later corrected by surgery. Mary and I believe that God used the doctors to repair the valve and he later got a clean bill of health.

Standing on the Word

The reason why I am telling all of this is that going through this experience taught me a valuable lesson in standing on the Word. At first, I didn't understand why God would so marvelously answer our prayer for a child and then allow us to sorrow over a serious birth defect. During Mary's pregnancy I found a scripture that I could stand on in believing that God would take care of the situation. The verse that helped me said, *The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.* (Proverbs 10:22 KJV) I was taking a stand against this condition and trusted God to take care of it, which He did! From that point on, I choose to stand on the Word of God for protection from unforeseen problems or dangers that may come upon us in the future.

A passage of scripture that I have stood upon for many years is Psalm 91. It is a psalm where God gives us promises of security. The part of the psalm that I make a part of my prayer for my family each day says, *If you make the Most High your dwelling-even the LORD, who is my refuge-then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.* (Psalm 91:9-11)

I believe when we are asking God for something in prayer, we should base our request on scripture. What ever the area of need is, you can find scripture that relates to that need. God always honors His Word because it records our covenant with Him. The blessings promised to us as stated in His Word are available to His children through faith. In my particular case, I was praying for God's protection over my family. I believe Psalm 91 is a very powerful passage of scripture that we can base our faith and our prayers on.

Over the years, I have quoted various scriptures over my family as I stood on God's Word. Verses 9-11 in Psalm 91 have been scriptures that I have included in my prayers since my children were born. I believe that we can fortify ourselves in the Word of God and program our spirits to be in tune with God. It will prepare us for whatever dangers or evils that may come down the road in our lives. When a crisis comes, we can react automatically based on God's Word that we have been reprogramming our minds with.

Every morning I help get my kids ready to board the school bus which stops in the front of our house. The bus would pick up my kids and then drive a short distance to the next stop that was next door to our house. One particular morning a very dense fog rolled in before the bus was scheduled to arrive at our house. I looked out our window and you could hardly see twenty feet. In looking out at the road, I couldn't see a car's lights until they got right beside our driveway. I didn't know if I should let them get on the bus or not. Normally, school is delayed when there is bad weather like snow or fog. I thought that maybe the fog was just in a small area around my house. Needless to say, I started praying and was quoting Psalm 91.

The bus appeared through the fog and stopped in front of our house. You couldn't see the flashing red lights and the bright fog light until it was almost ready to stop. David and Rachel got on the bus and it started to coast the short distance to the next stop. To my horror, just as the bus pulled away, I heard an eighteen wheeler semi-truck traveling approximately 55 miles per hour bearing down on the unsuspecting school bus. I knew that there was no way for that truck to see the bus and stop in time. Right there in front of my house could be a terrible tragedy. Immediately I started yelling, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!" The truck started to hit its breaks about the time it reached our driveway. The bus was about 150 feet away stopped on the road.

That truck was able to come to a complete stop after traveling 55 miles per hour in the short space between our house and the next bust stop. Even if the truck's trailer was empty, and I

don't think that it was, there is no way physically possible for it to stop in that short of a distance. I did some research on the internet and found that the overall stopping distance for a vehicle traveling on dry pavement is 175 feet. On wet pavement, the overall stopping distance jumps to 300 feet. Another source of information I obtained said the stopping distance for a truck traveling at 55 miles per hour was 242 feet. As you can see, based on these calculations, there was no way for that truck to stop in time without crashing into the bus. I did some measurements of the distance in the front of our house from our driveway to where the bus was stopped and came up with a distance of approximately 150 feet. Even in perfect conditions, that was not enough distance for the truck to come to a complete stop.

I know that God was at work bringing that truck to a stop. Every day I make a conscious effort to stand on the Word for my family's safety. It is in times like these that all our efforts in building ourselves up in God's Word pays off. God's promise of divine protection from evil is written in the Bible. As soon as we discover that these promises are there, we need to stand on God's Word and He will fulfill these promises in your life.

Deliverance from Death

In December of 2003, my mother-in-law, Mary Jane Dennehy was in the hospital. She had the flu which got progressively worse and was just a very sick woman. Her complexion was white as a sheet, she was very weak, the nurses could not get her to eat, and she just seemed to have lost the will to live. The family was very concerned for her. My wife Mary's sister was preparing to call hospice and make the arrangements leading up to her final days. She was 82 years old at the time so everybody knew that this day would eventually come.

Mary's sister called her at home one morning and was explaining all the arrangements that were being made with hospice. She was also contacting family members to let them know that they better get up to the hospital to see Mary Jane. After she got off the phone, she was telling me what her sister had said. All of a sudden a boldness came on Mary and she said that her mother is not going to die. Mary said, "We're going up to that hospital and pray for her!" She went on to say that the devil cannot take her and we are going up to the hospital and take authority over him.

I believe Mary experienced what the Bible calls the "gift of faith." The Bible mentions a number of spiritual gifts that God gave to the church to build up the body of Christ. The body of Christ is a term that represents all believers who have made Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior. These gifts are given supernaturally by God to believers as He wills.

Nine of these spiritual gifts are mentioned in the following passage, *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.* (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) These gifts are given by God to benefit the church. Many times you will see several of these gifts working together in a particular situation. I believe Mary and I were about to experience the gift of faith and healing, and possibly several of the other gifts all at the same time.

I called the pastor of our church and asked him to meet Mary and me at the hospital so he could pray with us. I told him the situation with Mary's mother. We felt led of the spirit to pray for her and command the spirit of death to leave her. Years before I remember listening to a minister on the radio teaching on the subject of spiritual authority and how he commanded the spirit of death to leave a person. Mary and I knew if Jesus would do it for one person, then He would do it for another. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that you can pray on every terminally ill person and command them to live. However, there are times when you are moved by the Holy Spirit to do certain things. In this case, we were moving in the realm of God's spiritual gifts for this particular situation. We just believe that God wouldn't call Mary Jane home to be with Him in such a manner.

We all arrived at the hospital and went to Mary Jane's room. Since we had our pastor with us, we were able to meet with her privately. Several of the other family members were at the hospital and had temporally left the room. Our pastor started talking with Mary Jane and said a little prayer and was ready to leave. In my spirit I said, "We're not done here!" We didn't come to the hospital to say a little prayer and leave her in the same condition that we found her in. I started to talk to her and tell her that God wanted to heal her and that we were going to take authority over the spirit of death. I just felt in the spirit to take over in the situation. No disrespect to our pastor, but God had given Mary and me the supernatural gift of faith to minister to her.

We started to pray. As we were praying, Mary started to pray in tongues. She was praying so loud, it was echoing down the hospital hallways, but we didn't care. When you are in a battle for someone's life you don't care what other people think. You could sense the authority that was in Mary's voice as she prayed in tongues. As I was praying I commanded the spirit of death to leave her and that it could not take her. We took authority over the spirit of death and claimed that it was not God's will for her to die like that. We prayed with that intensity for about five minutes and then we sensed that we broke through and got the victory.

When we were finished, Mary Jane's complexion was back to normal. She started talking and said that she wanted something to eat. Other family members were arriving expecting to see her alive for maybe the last time. I'll never forget the astonished look on their faces when they realized what God had done! All we did is stand on the Word and allow ourselves to be led by God's Spirit.

This was not the only experience that Mary and I had concerning praying the spirit of death away from a person. Later in 2004, my mother called me and said that her brother, Don Miller, was in dire need of prayer and was on the verge of dying. He went to the hospital due to chest pains and was admitted. They found that his left lung was infected and that he was bleeding internally. In the span of 18 hours Don had three surgeries where doctors did a double heart bypass and repaired an aorta valve in the heart. His brain was swollen and his doctors said if he survived that there could be brain damage. The doctors had been giving him blood transfusions but there was so much internal bleeding that they were giving up hope. There he was on the operating table and they were at the point where they could not give him any more blood. His blood would not clot and he was at the point of bleeding to death. Don was in a very critical situation fighting for his life and worst of all, he was not saved and ready to go to Heaven.

Mary and I started to pray. It was about 7:00 o'clock in the evening. We felt to pray and command the spirit of death to leave him. We were not in the hospital, but at our home at the time. Distance is no factor in the spirit realm. We prayed in the same fashion as we did for Mary's mother less that a year earlier. We continued until we felt in our spirits that our work was completed.

Later my mother let us know that shortly after she called us to request prayer, Don's situation had a dramatic turnaround. His blood start to clot and he was going to recover. We rejoiced and praised for Lord for what he had done! I know that we were not the only people praying for Don, but I know that we played a part in seeking God for his healing. As I said, Don was not saved at the time and we didn't want him going off into eternity without God. Shortly after his ordeal he gave his life to Jesus Christ and is saved today.

Again, I'm not saying that you can just blindly pray for anybody in this way and expect them to be delivered from death's door. Don was 74 at the time but he was not saved. The Bible says, *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.* (2 Peter 3:9) Mary and I used that verse as the basis for our prayer. We stood on the Word of God and trusted Him to do what He had promised. It's not God's will for anyone to die without Jesus Christ. When you know what God's will is in a situation, you know how to react. At that point, you stand on the Word.

Truck Driver's Miracle

This is another testimony that concerns my father-in-law Bill Dennehy that happened in the early 1980s. This incident occurred before Bill was filled with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. Bill was a Catholic all his life and in his later years he experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit and became very zealous for the Word of God.

My wife Mary can be described as a prayer warrior. She prays and intercedes for many people and things that come up in life. Mary would pray for her father who was a truck driver. Being a truck driver you face many hazards on the road. Mary remembered seeing a film in her high school driver's education class about an accident where someone crashed into the back of a truck that was hauling logs. As you can imagine, the person running into the back of the truck was decapitated and it was a very gory scene. This image always stuck in her mind and she would pray specifically that her Dad would never have this kind of accident.

Praying involves standing on the Word. We need to believe what the Bible says about God hearing and answering our prayers. There are a number of Bible verses that could be quoted that deals with prayer. Scripture teaches us to ask and we will receive, that God will give us the desires of our heart, and if we confess our sins that he will forgive us. Prayer is our lifeline to God. Prayer is talking to God. When we pray and ask God for something, or for Him to do something, it is called "petition prayer." When we talk to God and request for him to move in our life or for others, we have to trust and believe that He hears and will answer our prayer. How can we know God will act on our prayers? The answer is because the Bible says He will. Prayer requires us to stand on the Word.

There was an occasion that Bill was driving his semi truck through the state of Indiana. The weather was very bad. The wind had blown up a lot of dust from off the farmer's fields and the

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heavy rain had carried the dirt onto the windshields of the cars and trucks traveling down the road. The visibility was very poor and the driving conditions were very dangerous.

Bill was driving his truck down the highway and there all of a sudden in front of him he could see another truck stopped on the road in his lane. It happened to be a truck hauling a load of logs. Bill came up on this truck so fast that he didn't have enough time to hit the brakes and bring his truck to a stop. He looked to pass the truck but he couldn't because of oncoming traffic. If he tried to pass, he would have a head on collision with a car and kill those people instantly. He couldn't pull off to the right because there was a guardrail. Bill said that he thought to himself, "this is it, I'm a goner!" Since he couldn't pass the truck, he was going to allow his rig to run into the backend of the truck that was stopped on the road. Bill knew it would kill him but he didn't want to kill someone else.

As I mentioned earlier, this was the very situation Mary would pray about concerning her Dad. Here he was going to have the kind of accident that Mary feared. She had prayed all these preventative prayers and now it was time to see how God would answer. Mary had stood on the Word for years that God would protect her Dad.

As Bill's truck approached the other truck stopped on the road, he closed his eyes and was prepared for the end. The next thing he realized, he was now in front of the other truck and was pulled off to the side of the road. The driver from the other truck saw Bill coming and dived into the ditch assuming there was going to be a terrible collision. When this truck driver saw Bill's truck up ahead and pulled over on the road, he ran up to Bill and said, "I knew you had me!" He couldn't understand where Bill's truck went.

There is no natural explanation for how this accident was avoided. The only explanation I can give is God performed a miracle by intervening and prevented the collision based on Mary's prayers. I don't know if God lifted Bill's truck over the other truck, or if his truck passed right through the other truck. Somehow, the physical laws of nature were suspended or overridden by God's power.

Again, I need to take you back to the 91st Psalm. *For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.* (Psalm 91:11-12) Is it possible that God had His angels lift up Bill's truck and set it down so it would not collide with the other truck?

There is an account in the New Testament where Philip was supernaturally transported from one location to another. God had led Philip to an encounter with an Ethiopian eunuch who was reading a passage of scripture from Isaiah Chapter 53. Philip asked the man if he understood what he was reading and he said how could he unless someone explains it to him. Philip seized the opportunity to explain the scripture share with him the good news about Jesus. The eunuch asked Philip to baptize him and the Bible says, *When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.* (Acts 8:39-40) The Word says the Philip disappeared from sight and the Holy Spirit took him away. God can miraculously move a person from one place to another. Is it possible that God did the same thing for Bill to prevent a deadly accident?

I firmly believe that if Mary had not stood on the Word and believed that God was protecting her Dad, that Bill would have been killed that day. This shows us how important our prayers really are! The following verse is one that you can stand on when you pray.

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. (1 John 5:14-15)

Praise God for His Word!

Personal Testimony Final Comments

I could go on and tell you of other wonderful things that the Lord has done for me and my family. I shared these in hopes to give you an understanding of how to stand on the Word in your life. You may think some of these testimonies sound pretty fantastic, and they are. I'm just a common everyday Christian who has discovered some awesome promises in the Bible and has dared to believe in them. I'm sure full time ministers in the gospel could share many more instances that these of how they have witnessed God work. You too, if you would take the time to think about it, could probably come up with an impressive list of things that God has done for you.

You may think that I am having things like this happen all the time. Actually, these experiences have happened over the course of the last 20 years. Many days in your Christian life you may not experience any outstanding miracles, but when you stand on the Word, you will be ready when the time comes. In fact, the greatest miracle of all is being saved and washed in the blood of Jesus Christ and filled with God's Holy Spirit. Make a conscious decision to stand on the Word.

Standing on the Word

Questions for Discussion

1. What miracles has God done for you in your life?
2. What gifts of the Spirit have operated in your life?
3. What Bible passages have had a big impact on you?
4. How important is it to use scripture in your prayers? If so, why?

Key Points to Remember

God is no respecter of persons, His Word works no matter who you are, what your job is, or what positions you may hold.

Things will come up unexpectedly in life and your stance on the Word will be critical on the outcome. The time spend in the Word fortifying yourself is time well spent.

Allow God's Spirit to lead you in how you respond to situations that come up. The more sensitive you are to spiritual things, the more God can use you in fulfilling His purposes. The gifts of the Spirit can more freely operate in your life as you stand on His Word.

CHAPTER 8: Standing on the Word for Salvation

Probably the most important area of all where we need to stand on the Word is for our salvation. When we speak of salvation we are referring to what it requires to become a Christian. Salvation is the deliverance from the power and effects of sin. There are other terms that we use for this experience such as the new birth, being born again, receiving eternal life, and getting saved. This is the point of time when we are converted (going from one set of beliefs to accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ) and receive God's Holy Spirit.

It is essential that a Christian understand from scripture why a person must be born again. Once a person knows what the Bible teaches about this experience, they must stand on the Word and trust that God has indeed saved them. Many times a Christian may not feel like they are saved due to all the troubles that they must face in life, but God's Word says that we are saved when you receive Christ as your Savior.

In order for a Christian to have the full assurance that they are saved, they need to understand why Jesus Christ had to come to the earth and die on the cross. As we share our faith with others it will eventually be said that *Jesus died on the cross for our sins*. What does that really mean? Why did Jesus have to die so that we can be forgiven of our sins? If Jesus was God, why couldn't He just say, "I forgive you," and not have to go through the suffering and agony of crucifixion? I want to provide some answers to these questions to help Christians know WHY it had to be this way.

The first thing we must realize is that EVERYONE, except for Jesus Christ, has sinned. Sin is disobeying God, or going against His will. A person may live what they think is a good life, such as always telling the truth, never cheating on their taxes, giving to charities, donating their time to community causes, plus a number of other things. Even if a person does all these kinds of things, there still will be areas in which they fall short of God's will and sin. The Bible says, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*. (Romans 3:23) Based on what God says, nobody can live a sinless life. This is the first thing we need to keep in mind. David in the Old Testament made this confession before God, *For I am conscious of my transgressions and I acknowledge them; my sin is ever before me*. (Psalm 51:3 Amplified) When an unsaved person comes to God they must realize that they are a sinner.

There is another side of sin that is called "original sin." It is the fallen state of humanity that occurred when Adam ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. God gave Adam and Eve one commandment. *And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."* (Genesis 2:16-17) Satan came to Eve in the form of a serpent and said, *"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"* (Genesis 3:1) Here we can see the tactics of the devil. He always attacks the authority of God's Word. The serpent reassured her that she would not die. Again, we can see that the devil is a liar. He goes on to deceive Eve and she gives Adam the fruit from the forbidden tree and he ate it.

When Adam ate the forbidden fruit he did not drop over dead on the spot, but he did die. He experienced what is called “spiritual death,” or the fall of man. This single sin caused the entire human race to be separated from God. The word death does not mean that you cease to exist. In biblical terms, the word “death” means “to separate.” When a person dies physically their spirit separates from their body. They do not cease to exist, but their consciousness or awareness lives on. The question at that point in time is where will they exist, Heaven or Hell? Spiritual death is separation from God. The condition of spiritual death was passed on from Adam and Eve to every person who was ever born. This is the reason why a person needs to be born again and have their relationship with God restored. This is why living a good life will not get you into Heaven. Every person has inherited a “sin nature.” We see the sin nature evident in all the evil that is present in this world. Even if a person could live a life without sinning, they have inherited original sin which has separated them from God.

There is a penalty for breaking the laws of God just as there is a penalty for breaking the laws of our country. The Bible tells us the penalty for breaking God’s law, *For the wages of sin is death.* (Romans 6:23a) The scripture is saying the wages (what you earn or are paid) of sin is death. Sin brings on both physical death and spiritual death. That is the penalty for sin. In order for sin to be forgiven, the penalty has to be paid. However, in order for us to be reconciled (restored) to God, someone has to pay the penalty for us.

The only way that the debt of sin could be paid was through conducting a blood sacrifice. A sacrifice is the ritual through which the Hebrew people offered the blood or the flesh of an animal to God as a “substitute payment” for their sin. The principle was that the innocent paid the price for the guilty. The animal in this case did not sin; but its death paid the price for the person that did sin. Even though the sacrificial animal’s death paid the penalty, it had to be done over-and-over again. This was only a temporary solution until the perfect sacrifice came along that only had to be offered one time. Jesus Christ became the perfect sacrifice that could permanently take away man’s sins. The following scripture illustrates this truth.

For Christ [the Messiah Himself] died for sins once for all, the Righteous for the unrighteous (the Just for the unjust, the Innocent for the guilty), that He might bring us to God. In His human body He was put to death, but He was made alive in the spirit. (1 Peter 3:18 Amplified)

In order for Jesus to be the perfect sacrifice, He had to be totally free from sin. This was why Christ had to be born of a virgin. The virgin birth was the way in which Christ would not inherit the original sin from Adam. Jesus during His life on the earth never sinned, therefore making the Son of God totally innocent. The sinlessness of Jesus Christ made Him the perfect sacrifice so that the innocent could die for the guilty. This is why we can say Jesus died for our sins. The shedding of Christ’s blood and His death on the cross paid the penalty for the sin of the human race.

The beautiful part of God’s plan of salvation is that it takes a simple act of faith on our part for us to be born again. Jesus did the work and all we have to do is believe the gospel message. It is by God’s grace (His favor that is extended to us) that our faith saves us. The Bible says, *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.* (Ephesians 2:8-9) We are saved by faith alone, not by faith plus some other work that we must perform. Salvation is a gift from God!

The basic steps a person must take in order to be saved and live a Christian life are as follows.

1. Admit that you are a sinner and guilty before God.
2. Acknowledge that you need a Savior who can pay the penalty for your sin.
3. Believe in your heart that Jesus is God and that He rose from the dead.
4. Repent (making the commitment to turn your life around by turning to God).
5. Confess Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. (Pray the sinner's prayer)
6. Receive the Holy Spirit (this is when He comes to dwell in your spirit).
7. Live a life of obedience to God's Word.

This is what it takes to become a Christian. There are three words which summarize the experience of the new birth. These words are **believe**, **repentance**, and **confession**. After a person is saved we can add a fourth word; **obedience**, where we commit ourselves to follow God's will as recorded in His Word. To "believe" means to have a firm religious faith or to accept as true, genuine, or real. "Repentance" is to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to God. The word "confession" means to admit to or agree with. The "sinner's prayer" which many people recite when accepting Christ is not actually found in scripture. It is a form of confessing one's faith in Christ for salvation. When a person confesses Jesus Christ they are agreeing with His message, teachings, and with surrendering their will to His. Finally, "obedience" means to comply with or follow the commands of the Bible. The first act of obedience when a person accepts Christ is to be baptized in water. Water baptism is not a condition that must be met in order to be saved, but is done as an act of obedience because you are saved. We do it because Jesus said we should do it.

The main scriptures that support these steps are provided below so that you can have the biblical evidence of how to be saved.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16) [Steps 1-3]

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. (Acts 3:19) [Step 4]

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. (Romans 10:9-10) [Step 5]

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (John 7:38-39) [Step 6]

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." (John 14:23) [Step 7]

These are the scriptures from the Bible that we must stand on in knowing that we are saved. Now you should also know why Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins. He took the death penalty that paid the debt of our sin. This satisfied God's requirement that sin has to be judged and the punishment for it carried out.

Standing on the Word

If you have not given your life to Jesus Christ and are ready to do it now, your confession of faith can be expressed by reciting this simple prayer.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died for my sins. I want to turn from my sins. I now invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as Lord and Savior.

In Jesus' name. Amen

If you have prayed that prayer from your heart you can rest assured that you have been born again. If you have made that confession in past, you also can be assured that God has given you eternal life. I hope this book has given you a greater perspective of standing on the Word.

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you feel Christians fully understand why Jesus had to die on the cross for their sins?
2. Are there ever times that you feel like you are not saved? If so, how do you deal with these feelings?
3. Explain the difference in feeling like you are saved with knowing you are saved based on the Word of God?
4. When you share your faith with others, do you use scripture?

Key Points to Remember

We can have assurance that our salvation is secure in Jesus Christ. Standing on the Word for our salvation is where we begin our new life in Christ.

God devised a plan to take care of the sin problem of the human race. Jesus' death on the cross was necessary to pay our debt of sin. It provided the legal and judicial means for God to reconcile the human race to Himself.

When a person confesses their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, they are in effect standing on the Word by trusting that God has indeed made us a new creation.

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