

IF SAVED,

WHY

WORK?

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NOTE: ALL SCRIPTURE REFERENCES ARE FROM THE NEW
KING JAMES VERSION OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

As of this writing date of November 2008 I am nearly sixty years old and my wife, Pam, and I have been married since November 1972. We have lived over thirty years in the same house in Plano, Texas, a suburb of Dallas.

From the world's perspective I feel like I have lived a very successful life. Having been born in Houston as part of a very loving family, I grew up financially poor, but did not realize it until many years later. We always had the basic necessities, but no extras as my Dad often worked two or three jobs and my Mother worked many of those years. During this time I felt that nothing was impossible if I wanted it bad enough and was willing to work hard enough to obtain it. As a result, in the seventh grade I began planning to go to Texas A & M University when I graduated from high school even though no one in my immediate family had gone on to college. As I got older, I began working during summers and saving for my education.

In December 1970 I graduated from Texas A & M with a

BBA degree in Accounting, having successfully paid for all of my four years education costs. It was during my sophomore year that I received Jesus Christ as my Savior as a result of my roommate continually praying for my salvation. There is power in prayer and prayer changes people. Upon graduation I accepted an accounting position with Mobil Oil Corporation in Dallas, Texas, and had a very successful career there until July 1996 when I was a part of a major downsizing program. In 1977 I received my Certified Public Accountant license from the State of Texas. Since 1996 I have had various positions with different companies including controller and accounting manager. I continue to work in the Dallas area as a CPA/Controller.

In 1987 God began to move on my heart as I began to feel that there was more to Christianity than what I was experiencing. I felt like we were going through the rituals or motions of religion and not experiencing the fullness and joy and everything that God had for us, including a purpose and destiny and a deeper relationship with Him through His Son Jesus Christ. The year 1987 was a marked turning point for me as I truly received Jesus Christ for the first time as Lord of my life. From this point on many things happened that indicated to me that God truly loved me and He had a specific purpose and plan for my life. Many of the details are discussed in my book, The Nine-Year Notice.

Since 1987 my wife and I have gone to Israel on a ministry trip. I have written two books, The Realities of Prayer and The Nine-Year Notice or (Downsized, But Still God is Faithful). The Realities of Prayer has been published and both books are available as a free download at www.larrysiemans.com on the internet. It has been distributed throughout the United States and many foreign countries. In addition, it has been translated into Russian and more than 30,000 copies have been distributed throughout the former Soviet Union. I have been to Russia four different times where I have preached and taught especially on the subject of prayer. It is a desire of my heart to get The Realities of Prayer translated into Chinese and distributed throughout China. I am looking forward to God opening the door for me to go to China soon to teach the people about prayer and whatever else the Lord wants me to do.

During this time my wife and I both received a Master of Arts Degree in Theology from Tyndale Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. In 1996 I became a Licensed Minister through International Ministerial Fellowship in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

I truly believe that in 1987 it was like my life started over. I was now doing what I felt God called me to do. Things I did prior to 1987 and my secular position in

the workplace today are important, but they are not everlasting. It is the things since 1987 and the things in the future that I feel God has called me to do that are significant in God's eyes. They are the things that touch other people for eternity's sake and can help them become what God wants them to be and fulfill God's purpose in their lives.

We are to be excellent in everything we do whether it is only temporary (secular) or eternal (God's calling).

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION

My purpose in writing this book is to point out that God truly has a higher purpose and plan for each of our lives. After we have been born again into the kingdom of God, we have a higher calling by God to further His purposes on earth while we are alive. We are saved to serve Him until we actually see Him face to face.

Many years ago my wife and I read a prophecy that said in the last days God was going to use those people who considered themselves to be no-goods, no-bodies, unheard-ofs, no-accounts, do-nothings or not worthy to be used by Him. We both were encouraged greatly by this word as at that time we felt we met these qualifications. Since then we have learned that God wants to use everyone. He is looking for anyone and everyone who is a humble, willing, obedient person that is available to serve God. Even though you may not think you have any abilities, you are the person God can use in mighty ways. God will give you the abilities by His Holy Spirit to do what He wants you to do, go where

He wants you to go, and say what He wants you to say. And above all, God will get all the glory because you will know that you could not have done these things in your own strength, talents or abilities. Many scriptures in the Bible will have greater significance as you walk out your Christian journey fulfilling the God-given purpose and plans for your life. The following scripture has had a major impact on my life for more than twenty years as I have tried to fulfill God's calling:

**. . . 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts.
Zechariah 4:6 NKJV**

In the following chapters, I will try to point out the eternal significance of serving God and fulfilling the unique purpose and destiny that He has for each of us. If we will just accept it from Him and obey His higher calling. Among the many topics I will discuss are: salvation by God's grace, saved for works **not** by works, empowerment by God's Holy Spirit, faith without works is dead, the Great Commission, pastors alone cannot get it done, ordinary people doing extraordinary feats, earthly purpose, heavenly rewards and the power of prayer.

CHAPTER THREE

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN?

How do you know that you are a Christian? The term "Christian" today is loosely defined by many people in different ways. However, sad to say, there are perhaps millions of people worldwide who call themselves "Christian", but are not truly Christian as defined in the Bible, the true Word of God. Many of these people are in various cults around the world and are deceived.

The term "Christian" actually means "a follower of Jesus Christ" even though the singular or plural form is mentioned in the Bible only three times. It was first used in the Book of Acts as follows:

. . . So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Acts 11:26

Why do you want to become a Christian? The Bible makes it clear that every human being ever born or to be born will spend eternity in one of two places when they die. These two choices are heaven or hell. It is by our own personal choice that we determine where we will spend eternity.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

John 3: 16-17

The Son refers to Jesus Christ, who was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless perfect life, and then was painfully crucified on the cross at Calvary for all of our sins (past, present and future), and buried in a tomb. If all Jesus did was die, then He was truly a good man, but no different than countless other good men. However, what separates Jesus from every other good man that ever lived is that having been buried in a tomb and guarded by Roman soldiers, on the third day He rose from the dead and walked among the people for many days. Approximately five hundred people actually saw Him alive after He was pronounced dead and buried and then resurrected. He ascended in bodily form to be in heaven with God the Father.

It is important to know that before Jesus was born, the Old Testament of the Bible says that man's sin could not be forgiven without the shedding of innocent blood according to the Law of Moses. This blood was that of goats and calves.

**And according to the law almost all things are purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. Hebrews 9:22
Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption, For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the**

purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Hebrews 9:12-14

Jesus, in shedding His innocent blood on the cross at Calvary, became the ultimate sacrifice for all our sins; thereby resulting in our forgiveness. By His substitutionary sacrifice, He put an end to the need for man to continue to make animal sacrifices for the forgiveness of their sins. It was finished or completed on the cross at Calvary. Jesus said,

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. Matthew 5:17

How do you become a Christian? Is Jesus God? How do you know that you are going to heaven? The Bible is very clear in teaching us how to become a Christian and thus spend eternity in heaven. Jesus the Son of God says that there is only one way to have eternal life in heaven with God.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known my Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." John 14:6-7

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep my Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. John 14:23

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26

God does not leave us hopeless as far as how to become a Christian and have eternal life. God's plan is very clear and simple because He saw the futile hopelessness of mankind. In His marvelous mercy and grace, He reached down to man to save him through His Son Jesus and through His finished work on the cross at Calvary, death, burial and resurrection. God did everything He could do to grant us everlasting life with Him in heaven. The rest is up to us as individuals with a God-given free will to choose life or death. God will not force Himself on anyone; but He has made it as easy as possible for us to choose our future.

Jesus tells us in John 3 that in order to be a Christian and enter the kingdom of God, we must be born again.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3
Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again." John 3:5-7

Being "born again" is not a man-made thing. It is truly a work of the Holy Spirit which draws or leads a person to accept Jesus Christ into his heart as Lord and Savior. It is the power of the Holy Spirit which changes the sinful condition of a person's heart into a new creation where he is "born-again" where his old ways (sins, atti-

tudes, etc.) are then cleansed and forgiven by the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary.

What then does man have to do to be born again? As the Holy Spirit moves on a person's heart convicting him of his sinful condition, the Bible clearly says that to be born again, he must believe in his heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, shed His blood and was crucified on the cross, was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead. All this was done for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus then ascended to heaven and has guaranteed that we will have everlasting life in heaven. The Bible says that we are to publicly acknowledge that we believe this and accept Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior.

That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.

Romans 10:9-10

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:12-13

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

John 20:31

CHAPTER FOUR

MUST I WORK TO BE SAVED?

Many people around the world claim to be a "good person". They have not murdered anyone or committed any heinous crime. They try to live a good life. Many of them are actually doing a lot of very worthwhile humanitarian deeds that are making a lot of difference in possibly millions of lives around the world. They may be contributing thousands or millions or perhaps billions of dollars to worthy organizations, even churches; or devoting hundreds of hours of their personal time. All of this is very honorable and appreciated and it is wonderful that they are doing these things.

Will these "good works" alone get a person to heaven? The answer is "No". The Bible is clear in that outside of Jesus Christ and His redeeming work for our salvation, these good works may give a person rewards while still alive or may even give him a false sense of security, but they will not give any spiritual reward as far as entering into the kingdom of God. Jesus made it perfectly clear that only by

accepting Him as your Lord and Savior will you be assured of your eternal destination to be heaven.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me". John 14:6

Many people from around the world and various religions have disputed this statement. They claim that there are many ways to get to heaven and that this belief of Christianity is very narrow-minded. Even Jesus knew that it was narrow-minded, but it was the truth and the only way to salvation and eternal life:

Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Matt. 7:13-14 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. John 10:9

As a result, many religions have been formed over thousands of years that claim they have the answer to get to God and heaven; and not through Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Satan has deceived millions of people through the ages in making them think that they can earn their way to heaven by doing enough good works. As a result, countless religions or cults have been formed whose basic premise is that if you work hard enough and do enough good works, that when you die you will go to heaven. There are many fallacies to this belief. First, and most important, it is contrary to the Bible, the inerrant Word of God. The Bible

clearly says that we are saved by God's grace through faith in His Son Jesus Christ, and not by anything we can do to justify our salvation.

**But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.
Ephesians 2:4-9**

Secondly, if we can be saved by our works, then why did God send His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to go through the painful, excruciating suffering and then death on the cross at Calvary? If Christ did not have to die for the forgiveness of our sins, then He died in vain.

I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain. Galatians 2:21

Thirdly, whose standard are we going to look to and obey? God, the unchangeable perfect Creator or man, the ever changing, imperfect being created by God. Is the creation greater than the Creator? Absolutely not. Man ever since creation, has been known for changing his plans, objectives, goals, values and belief systems. Many times this is a result of changes in his circumstances or environment. As a result, man's standards are like a moving target—always changing; not stable or secure. On the other

hand, God and His character never change.

For I am the Lord, I do not change Malachi 3:6

God's ways are higher than man's ways. He set His standards at the highest ever by giving us His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to be the substitutionary sacrifice for the forgiveness of all our sins. It is through Jesus' shed blood at Calvary that He became our righteousness forever and ever.

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God which is through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Romans 3:21-28

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

The last fallacy discussed here is that if we are saved by works, who are we comparing our works to? Are we judging our works based on what someone else is doing? How will we ever know if or when we have done enough good works to earn our way to God and heaven? Who is keeping score? What if we mess up and do something awful? Do they cancel out the

good works we have done? Who determines what counts as good works and if we have done enough good works? If it is another person or organization that determines this, who has appointed them to be our judge? How can we be sure that they are better than we are? Who are they accountable to? All men have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Otherwise, they would be God and we know that is impossible. To me, this is like doing exercise on a treadmill. You are doing a lot of work, but are you going anywhere?

In conclusion, the sad fact of trying to do good works to earn your salvation is that throughout your life you will never have the confidence and assurance of your salvation. You never know if you have done enough. In fact, you may often have a sense of guilt or condemnation because you feel that you have not done enough good works. However, in knowing that we are saved by God's grace, we can have through faith the peace of God that passes all understanding assuring us of our future home in heaven through the finished work of Jesus Christ Himself on the cross at Calvary.

**There is therefore now no condemnation to those
who are in Christ Jesus who do not walk according
to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
Romans 8:1**

CHAPTER FIVE

SAVED FOR WORKS NOT BY WORKS

As previously discussed, it is definitely clear that we are not saved by our works no matter how many or how great they may seem to us. No matter how hard we work in trying to obtain salvation, it will not work. In other words, our works do not work. The Bible makes it clear that we can be saved only by the grace of God through our faith in Jesus Christ.

**For by grace you have been saved through faith,
and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,
not of works, lest anyone should boast.
Ephesians 2:8-9**

The question then is why does God save us? God must have a reason for doing so. God is not a timewaster. He does not waste His time or our time. If God does not have a reason or purpose for saving us, it must make sense that after we are born again into the kingdom of God, He then immediately allows us to die so we can enter into His presence. In other words, God allows us to live here on earth until we choose eternal life by being born again by His Spirit through our acceptance of Jesus Christ as our

Lord and Savior. After that, God has no other purpose or reason for us to continue living here on earth. This is all ridiculous.

As we will soon see, our best days here on earth should immediately begin the moment we are born again. God has a higher purpose for us. We are saved **for God's work**, plans and purposes in us and not by **our works**, plans and goals for God.

God created us for His pleasure and His purpose in us and through us. God works through human beings to obtain His ultimate purpose which is that all people around the world will come to repentance and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

God wants each of us to be a channel of blessing that He can work through and at the same time He will be glorified in and through us.

We are created in the image of God for His purpose and works that He uniquely designed or prepared for each of us before we were even born.

**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
Ephesians 2:10
Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with**

me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.

2 Timothy 1:8-9

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

It is sad to say that most truly born again Christians, especially here in America, are not fulfilling the high calling of God on their lives. Most of them, if they are even going to church and giving their tithes and offerings, are going through the motions, rituals and traditions of religion. The most remote thing from their mind is that God truly does have a high calling and unique purpose for their lives. The problem is that most Christians are still too connected to this world with its cares, riches and pleasures. They have a narrow vision of possibly themselves, family and a few close friends. However, God wants them to have His vision—the world vision. He gave His only begotten Son Jesus Christ so that the whole world can be saved.

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

Many Christians have also believed the lie of the devil that God's high calling is reserved for only a selected few individuals who may have received specialized education or training in seminaries or Bible schools. There is nothing

further from the truth as God is no respecter of persons.

Then Peter opened his mouth and said: In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. Acts 10:34

The Bible clearly says in Luke 12:48 that for everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required. How can we in America, the most blessed country in the world, continue to ignore this scripture? No other nation in history has been blessed materially, financially, economically and spiritually over the years as America has. We as individuals and the church in America need to wake up to our responsibilities as Christians to the lost and dying world.

Countless people are dying each day without the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. If we do not obey God's higher calling on each of our lives, I am afraid that we will have to answer to God when we see Him face to face. Many people in America over the years have tried to sidestep this issue of responsibility and commitment to the lost and dying world by accurately stating that America has given more money to foreign missions than any other nation. However, this is the last of the last days and God is demanding more of His people. In January 1993, a prophetic message was spoken at our church which bore witness to my wife and my spirit. The Word was that time is short, the harvest is now, and that Jesus Christ is coming back soon. The message also said that in these last days concerning the harvest, God was requiring more from Christians, especially those in America,

than in the past. In the past God was pleased with our sending our money to reach the lost around the world, but now He was saying that our money was not enough. It takes man and money to reach the lost and bring in the harvest. God is now saying that we as Christians in America are to not only send money, but are also to physically go into the harvest fields as laborers for Jesus Christ. We are all supposed to fulfill the Great Commission.

**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
Matthew 28:19**

**And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15
Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Luke 10:2**

In December 1993 on our second missions trip to Russia, God confirmed to me that He is calling everyone to fulfill the Great Commission. After a glorious day of ministering in Moscow as we got off the bus at the hotel, I sensed the Holy Spirit say, "I'm not looking for specialists such as a minister of music, etc. I'm looking for a humble, willing, obedient vessel that I can use. I will give you the grace and ability to do what I want you to do."

Our works do not save us, but they should be the evidence of our faith in Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ is the Lord and Savior of our lives, then we as Christians should want to obey God's Word and put Jesus first in our

lives. The Lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives means that Jesus is ruling on the throne of our heart and not our self ruling in our heart. It means that we are trying to seek first the kingdom of God in every area of our lives. We are to seek His perfect will, plan and purpose and then all of our needs will be met.

If Jesus is truly our Lord and Savior, we should have excitement, encouragement and enthusiasm; and we will want to share the Good News of the gospel with others. If we are filled with the Spirit of God and have the Word of God in us, then we should want to use it to make a difference in other people's lives. We will not be able to keep it within ourselves. If we are content each day to hear the Word of God, but at the same time do nothing with it, then we are deceiving ourselves. We are not being good stewards of what God has entrusted us with.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. James 1:22-25

It is easy for a person to say that he is a Christian, but does he really want to do what God has called him to do. If not, then is his faith alive or dead? The evidence of our faith is through our works. James in chapter 2 says

that faith by itself, without works, is dead. By our works our faith is made perfect. As a comparison, if the body without the spirit is dead, then faith without works is dead also.

CHAPTER SIX

WITH THE CALLING COMES THE ENABLING

God does not call everyone into fulltime ministry, but He does have a calling on every born again Christian. It may be to go on short-term missions trips, teach a Sunday School class, visit nursing homes, write a book, financially support outreach organizations, be Christ's witness at your place of employment, be a prayer intercessor, etc. If you do not know what your calling is, ask God to reveal it to you. It is God's pleasure for you to truly fulfill His purpose and plan for your life. We are to be a channel of blessing whom God can work in and through so that we can truly be a blessing to others. The key is our obedience to God.

Many people are afraid that God will reveal something to them that is too difficult or impossible for them to do.

With the calling of God comes the enabling by God's Spirit for you to fulfill His plan and purpose for your life. God will not tell you to do something that He already knows that you cannot accomplish. Again, God is not a time-waster. He

does not waste His time and He does not waste our time.

On the surface, what God tells us to do may seem impossible for us to do in our own strength and ability. That is the way God designs it. If it is too easy, then we will rely on our own strength and abilities; and we will not need to trust God and ask Him to help us. God wants us to depend totally on Him. He wants to receive all the praise and glory. Having been to Russia on four mission trips, I have seen many things accomplished that I never dreamed were possible. I have learned that God wants us to be a humble, willing, obedient vessel through whom He can give the grace and ability to accomplish His will on earth. I have found that everything accomplished is not by my strength or abilities, but it is by God's Spirit. Whenever I begin to do anything that God calls me to do, I stand on the following scriptures which are some of my favorites:

**So he answered and said to me: This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.
Zechariah 4:6
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13**

What does it mean to be a humble, willing, obedient vessel? What does the Bible say? First of all, "humble" means to be not proud or haughty, not arrogant or assertive, but offering yourself in a spirit of submission.

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil

with the proud. Proverbs 16:18-19
But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God
resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
James 4:6
Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He
will lift you up. James 4:10

The term "willing" means inclined or favorably disposed
in mind, prompt to act or respond, or accepted by choice or
without reluctance. In other words, to be ready.

**For I bear witness that according to their
ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were
freely willing. 2 Corinthians 8:3
Let them do good, that they be rich in good works,
ready to give, willing to share. 1 Timothy 6:18
Remind them to be subject to rulers and
authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good
work. Titus 3:1**

"Obedient" means to submit to the restraint or command
of authority or to the control of another.

**For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you
to the test, whether you are obedient in all
things. 2 Corinthians 2:9**

One of the definitions of "vessel" by Webster's New
Collegiate Dictionary is that it is a person into whom some
quality (as grace) is infused (a child of light, a true
vessel of the Lord).

As long as we are available to God as a humble,
willing, obedient vessel, He will give us the ability by His
Holy Spirit to do what He wants us to do.

It is very important to know that God never rescinds
His call or purpose for our lives. He may change our
circumstances or location, but He will never abandon His

will for our lives. God has a unique work for each of us to do, and no one can take our place as long as we are obedient to Him. He often positions us in a place of responsibility, which includes some type of difficulty, to accomplish His purpose. That way, God receives all the glory and honor and praise. The bottom line is that God uses each one of us for His glory and His alone. We need to always maintain the proper perspective when obeying God's call to serve Him, and that perspective always includes a humble, contrite heart.

It is important to note that we may not openly refuse to do what God has called us to do, but this is what happens when we decide to take a different route or a shortcut around His command to us. We can either obey or dismiss basic principles in the Word of God. A spirit of pride in us will always encourage us to turn away from God's way and follow our own line of thinking. When we refuse to obey God, we can expect to experience His discipline in our lives. Pride isolates us from God. It prevents us from becoming people with hearts solely devoted to Him. Pride is a stumbling block, and if left unchecked, it will wreak havoc in our lives. But, even worse, pride exalts self and not God. Instead of God receiving the glory for our lives, we end up seeking praise and glory for ourselves. Following are some signs that indicate we are struggling with pride:

1. Arrogance

2. Self-promotion
3. Lack of giving to God and others
4. A selfish attitude
5. Refusal to listen to the advice of others
6. Lack of submission to those in authority
7. A spirit of rebellion
8. Bragging or boasting
9. Lack of humble regard for God and others
10. Inability to receive a compliment or gift

CHAPTER SEVEN

EMPOWERED BY GOD'S SPIRIT

We are all saved by God's Holy Spirit to do good works while we are still alive on earth. However, most born-again Christians feel that only a select few are actually called by God to do His works. Many other believers feel that they are inadequate or not qualified for service; or they use this as an excuse for not really doing what they know God wants them to do. In reality, God has called each of us to do something once we are truly born again into His kingdom. This was made clear to me in December 1993 in Moscow, Russia, as the Holy Spirit spoke to me the following:

"I am not looking for specialists such as ministers of music, etc., but I am looking for a humble, willing, obedient vessel whom I can pour out My Spirit on and give My grace and ability to do what I want him to do."

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He told His disciples that it was important for Him to leave them, but He would not leave them powerless or comfortless. He also told them that they would do greater works than Jesus did because He goes to His Father.

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also, and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. John 14:12

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, John 14:16

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. John 16:7

This Helper is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity. It is important to realize that since Jesus has ascended to heaven and is at the Father's right hand ever interceding for us, the Holy Spirit is the only person of the Trinity who exists here on earth. Jesus, in His flesh, could not be everywhere at all times. However, the Holy Spirit can fulfill this purpose as He is alive throughout the earth and is in every born-again believer. He is omnipresent (everywhere) and omnipotent (all-powerful) and has many functions to perform. Among His major responsibilities are the following:

1. He draws or leads people to Jesus Christ for salvation.

And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged. John 16:8-11

2. The Holy Spirit infills the believer.

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, Ephesians 5:18

3. The Holy Spirit guides the believer.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. Romans 8:14

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. John 16:13

4. The Holy Spirit teaches the believer.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:26

5. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ the Son of God.

He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. John 16:14

6. The Holy Spirit empowers the believer.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

It is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in a believer that enables him to go forth preaching and teaching the Word of God with boldness, courage, clarity and God's anointing with signs and wonders following him.

. . . And the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil. Isaiah 10:27
And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name, they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; . . . they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." Mark 16:15-18

As we can see from the above, the Holy Spirit is most

important in the life of each born-again believer. However, in order for the Holy Spirit to be everything He wants to be in our lives and to enable us to do everything He wants us to do, we must make a free will choice to allow Him to do this. It is important to know that God does not force Himself on anyone. We can have as little or as much of God in our lives as we personally allow.

What must we do to enable the Holy Spirit to work in and through us to accomplish His purpose in our lives? The answer is: receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit which is actually the releasing of the Holy Spirit who already dwells within us. What does this mean? It can be compared to the water pipes in our homes. There is water in the pipes, but we must do something to receive the water. The water is there, but it is not doing anything. In essence, it is not active or fulfilling its purpose. We must turn on the faucet to release the water or activate it. The same is true when it comes to releasing the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The Bible clearly tells us what to do to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The born-again believer must believe that it is Biblical, absolutely necessary for abundant, victorious and fruitful Christian living for today, an experience beyond salvation, and beneficial to the believer.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call".

Acts 20:38-39

And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit".

Acts 9:17

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Romans 8:26-27

The believer's heart must also be prepared by thorough repentance before he can ask God **in faith** to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit truly believing and expecting to receive it. It is important to note that countless millions of believers throughout the world just since the early 1900's have experienced the joys of receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. If a believer wants to be empowered by God's Spirit to fulfill God's purpose in his life, it is most critical for him to truly have a sincere hunger for the fullness of the Holy Spirit in his life.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Matthew 5:6

If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? Luke 11:13

Upon a believer asking God for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, how does one know when he has received it? In addition to internal signs such as changes in the desires of the heart, attitudes, etc., there is the actual manifestation or evidence of God giving each person a unique or heavenly language, often referred to as speaking in tongues or praying in the Spirit. God enables each person to speak a language of syllables or words totally unfamiliar to him which comes from the innermost part of his being, or his spirit-man, completely bypassing his intellect, logic and understanding. This experience will completely change a believer's life and Christian purpose in this life.

As Christians, especially in America, most of us are blessed beyond measure. The problem is that we have plenty of blessings coming in, but we are not being a blessing to others. If we will give to others the blessing we have received, plan our lives around greater service and concentrate on being a blessing to those around us, we will find that the Holy Spirit is with us. He will bestow blessings on us for service, giving us all that He can trust us with to give away to others. We are to truly be a "channel of blessing" whom God can work in and through for His glory and honor.

It is very important to clarify two common misunderstandings concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit. First of all, a person's eternal salvation is an experience totally separate from the baptism in the Holy Spirit. A person must be born-again before he can receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The other issue is that a person who has received the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not a better person in God's eyes than the believer who has not received this gift. Remember, God is not a respecter of persons. He loves each of us the same. However, the believer who has received the baptism in the Holy Spirit will be empowered to fulfill God's purposes more effectively and will enjoy a victorious and abundant life in the Spirit.

In concluding this chapter, I personally would like to say that after being born-again, having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit was the most important and life-changing experience of my life. It was approximately nineteen years after I was born-again that I asked God for the gift of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Since 1987, my life has changed tremendously because I suddenly and supernaturally acquired a greater hunger, zeal and enthusiasm for God, His Word and the things of God. I soon realized that God had a higher purpose for my life which has been very exciting and spiritually rewarding.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GREAT COMMISSION

What is the Great Commission? Many Christians perhaps have never heard of the Great Commission or even know what it is.

Just before Jesus Christ ascended to heaven to be at the right hand of His Father, He told His disciples to go into all the nations, make disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen. Matthew 28:19-20

Basically, Jesus was commissioning His disciples to go around the world sharing their faith by telling others the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and that Jesus Christ is the way to eternal life. This commission is even more applicable to believers today as we approach the end of the last days on earth as we know it. As born-again believers we should be excited and enthusiastic about sharing our faith with others and sharing the things of God.

There are many reasons why we should share our faith with others. First of all, God has commanded us to do so in Acts 1:8 where Jesus tells us to be witnesses to Him in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. By sharing our faith with others, it clearly demonstrates our love for God. Another very important reason is that all people are born lost without hope of eternal life until someone shares the love of Jesus Christ with them. God has created human beings for His pleasure and purpose. We are God's chosen method to tell all people of the good news of our redemption through the saving blood of Jesus Christ. It is God's desire to save all people and He works through humble, willing, obedient vessels. A third reason is because someone once shared his faith with us which led us to accept God's plan of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. As a measure of our thankfulness, gratitude and appreciation, we should be excited to share our faith with others so they too can have eternal life. Why would we not want to share the most precious gift of life with others? Why would we want someone to miss the opportunity of eternal life because we neglected to share our faith with them? If God's love has touched you, you **cannot not** tell others. It is your responsibility to God and to them.

It is not physically possible for every born-again

believer to fulfill the Great Commission by actually going to the ends of the earth. However, it is most crucial that the body of Christ have God's heart, love and passion for the lost and dying world. They must have the passion to see people saved by God's Spirit. They must focus their energy, finances and vision outside the four walls of their local church and unto the world. They should pray for God to give them His heart for the lost, missions and the world. They need to begin thinking globally as far as God is concerned with regard to the lost souls around the world.

Do you not say, There are still four months and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! John 4:35

It is important to note that there appears to be a misconception in the body of Christ, especially in America, regarding fulfilling the Great Commission. The majority of people attending local churches in America believe that it is up to the pastors and so-called ministerial staffs to fulfill the Great Commission. There is nothing further from the truth. Yes, they can do a little from time to time, but that is not their primary focus or purpose. As stated in Ephesians 4:11-14, their primary purpose or calling by God is to equip or prepare the saints (born-again believers) for the work of ministry in order to build up the body of Christ.

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some

prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie wait to deceive, Ephesians 4:11-14

In true Bible-based churches, the Great Commission is not being fulfilled in the churches themselves. The majority of the attendees of these churches are already born-again believers. They should be attending these churches in order to be encouraged and equipped for reaching the harvest outside the four walls of the local church. It is the people in the pews who have the opportunities each day to reach the harvest in their spheres of influence—community, employment, schools, shopping centers, gas stations, etc. There are lost and dying people everywhere, not only overseas. America is as much a harvest field as the dark jungles of Africa. It is interesting that in Acts 1:8, Jesus told His disciples to be witnesses beginning in their home city of Jerusalem, then outward to Judea and Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth. In other words, we are to be effective witnesses first to our local community and the people who know us; and then as we venture out and come in contact with other people. Even if we never have the opportunity to become a witness to the ends of the

earth, we should pray for God to give us a heart for the world. He will put in our heart the people in various countries around the world for us to pray for each day. It is most important to obey this prompting of the Holy Spirit to stand in the gap or intercede that God will intervene in these countries. Remember, God gave His only begotten Son Jesus Christ so that the whole world can be saved. God is no respecter of persons.

So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Ezekiel 22:30

As a born-again believer, it is crucial to know that God gave us prayer as a means of communicating with Him. Prayer is our lifeline to God. We should always be aware of the fact that there is power in prayer and that prayer changes things, situations and people. The key is that we pray as led by God's Spirit according to God's Word that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. For more specific insights regarding prayer, please refer to my book, [The Realities of Prayer](http://www.larrysiemans.com) at www.larrysiemans.com available as a free download.

In praying for the harvest in other countries, it is important to pray the following:

1. That God will keep the doors open so the Gospel can be freely preached.
2. That God will open doors in countries and to

people groups that are currently closed to the Gospel.

3. That God will raise up more laborers who will obey the call to go into the harvest fields on both short-term missions and fulltime mission assignments.

Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Matthew 9:37-38

4. That God will move on people's hearts to provide necessary finances to support those laborers into His harvest. It takes both man and money to reach the lost people around the world.

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:14-15

Following are other reasons why we must share our faith in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth:

1. Every Christian has a call by God to do so.

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means

hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover". Mark 16:15-18

The above scriptures are not talking about a few selected special men or women of God. Jesus is referring to all those people who believe in Him. Throughout the Bible many ordinary people did extraordinary feats in their walk with God. A few examples are Moses, Joseph, David, Daniel, Peter and Paul. As mentioned before, God is no respecter of persons and is the same yesterday, today and forever. Due to the fact that time is so short, it is imperative that Christians believe God's Word and act on it in fulfilling the Great Commission.

**. . . but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. Daniel 11:32
And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. Joel 2:28-29**

2. Our Lord Jesus Christ is worthy to be known and loved in all the nations of the earth.

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. John 3:17

3. God the Father is longing to bring everyone to His loving embrace.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in

that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

4. The harvest field is ripe. Even though the fields may be white for harvest, believers going into the harvest fields must be led by the Holy Spirit in all their words, actions and attitudes. They must seek the wisdom of God in all their efforts in bringing in the harvest. It is most important to realize that the lost people that believers are trying to reach for Christ do not care how much you know or even what you are telling them **until** they know that you really do care about them as individuals. Equally important as this, is the fact that believers should always bring forth God's truth with the love of Christ.

But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-Christ.

Ephesians 4:15

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35

5. The nations are deserving of the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There are more than 2.2 billion people throughout the former Soviet Union, China, India, Tibet, Mongolia and the Muslim countries of the Mid-East and Africa who

have never heard the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is important for believers to go through these doors of opportunity as they are opened. These opportunities are often brief and urgent as they are only available for a season. Only God knows how long the individual season will be. Worldwide, three persons die every second which translates into more than 250,000 deaths every day. We must press on and obey God's call to fulfill the Great Commission. Time is **short** and the harvest is **NOW**.

**I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.
John 9:4**

Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." Acts 10:34-35

CHAPTER NINE

GIFTS AND FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When God calls a believer in Jesus Christ to do something extraordinary, out of his normal realm of capability, it is for the sole purpose of accomplishing God's will on earth. God created people for His pleasure and to have a vessel to work in and through to fulfill His purposes. In doing so, it should be clearly evident that whatever is done is not by our might or power, but by the sovereign power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. God is to receive all the glory for without Him we can do nothing.

In addition to the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit working in and through each believer, God gives each believer unique gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are not for the sole purpose of building up the believer, but are also used to equip the body of Christ to reach the lost and dying world for Jesus Christ.

It is most important to remember that God by His Holy Spirit has given every believer spiritual gifts and that they belong to God and are given for the believer to use for

His glory. If God does not have a unique purpose for each believer in reaching the lost and furthering the kingdom of God on earth, then why does He give us spiritual gifts? If we are not going to use them to accomplish God's purpose, then why have them?

**". . . For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more."
Luke 12:48**

There are many kinds of spiritual gifts, but they all come from the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who distributes the spiritual gifts by His grace to each believer as He wills. They are all required and necessary for the body of Christ to function as God intends. It is important to remember that no one single gift is better than any other gift.

The Bible devotes the majority of three chapters to the discussion of spiritual gifts—**1 Corinthians chapters 12 and 14 and Romans 12**. Countless books have been written regarding spiritual gifts so I am limiting my discussion to the following:

The gifts of the Holy Spirit can be segregated into three categories—revelation, utterance or inspiration, and power. Within the category of revelation, the gifts reveal something. Within utterance or inspiration, they say something. Within power, they do something.

The three gifts of revelation are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and discerning of spirits. The word of wisdom is a supernatural revelation by the Spirit of God concerning the divine purpose in the mind and will of God. It is a revelation concerning the **future** plan and purpose in the mind of God. It is only a fragmentary part of God's wisdom. God has all wisdom and knowledge. He only reveals that part of His wisdom that He wants the believer to know at that particular time.

The word of knowledge is a supernatural revelation by the Spirit of God concerning facts in the mind of God, concerning people, places or things. The revelation is always present tense or something that has happened in the past.

The discerning of spirits gives us supernatural insight into the realm of spirits—divine, Satanic and human. God communicates with our spirits and our spirits know things that our minds do not know.

The three gifts of the utterance or inspiration are prophecy, diverse kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Prophecy is supernatural utterance in a known language. The Hebrew word for "to prophesy" means "to flow forth" and the Greek word for "prophesy" means "to speak for another". It means to speak for God or to be His spokesman. The gift of prophecy is to edify, exhort and comfort others.

Diverse kinds of tongues is supernatural utterance by the Holy Spirit in languages never learned by the speaker, not understood by the mind of the speaker nor necessarily always understood by the hearer. Speaking in other tongues is a vocal miracle as a result of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It has nothing to do with linguistic ability or the mind or the intellect of man.

The interpretation of tongues is the supernatural showing forth by the Holy Spirit the meaning of an utterance in other tongues. It is not the translation of tongues, but it is the interpretation of tongues. The purpose of this gift is to render the gift of tongues intelligible to the hearers so that the body of Christ as well as the speaker may know what has been said and therefore be edified.

The three gifts of power are faith, working of miracles, and healings. The gift of faith—special faith—is something besides saving faith. This gift of faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the believer that he might receive miracles. Those who possess this faith believe God in such a way that He honors their word or proclamation as His own and miraculously brings it to pass. Each believer has been given a measure of faith. However, each one of us may have a gift of faith in different areas in our life. For one, it may be for finances. For another, it may be for healing—physical, mental or spiritual. For others, it may

be for something entirely different.

The working of miracles is a gift of the Holy Spirit given to the believer that he might work or perform miracles to the glory of God. What is a miracle? A miracle is a supernatural intervention in the ordinary course of nature, a temporary suspension of the accustomed order, an interruption of the system of nature as we know it operated by the force of the Holy Spirit. The working of miracles is used to display God's awesome power and magnificence. It is a mighty gift that glorifies God "of all power", stimulates the faith of His people and at the same time astonishes and confuses the unbelief of the world.

The gifts of healings are for the supernatural healings of diseases. The purpose of these gifts is to deliver the sick and to destroy the works of the devil in the human body.

In Romans 12, the apostle Paul encourages us to use the other gifts that God has given us such as ministry, teaching, exhortation or encouragement, giving, leadership, mercy and hospitality.

In addition to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, God also expects believers to grow in integrity and godly character as we walk the Christian walk each day. It is important to know that God is more concerned about our character than our comfort or conveniences. We are to grow each day from faith

to faith and from glory to glory. We are to walk in the Spirit, not according to our fleshly desires, being led by the Holy Spirit in all our words, actions and attitudes. As we are transformed daily by the renewing of our minds into the image of the Christian that God intends for us to be, we are expected to develop other traits which will help us to truly be an effective witness for Jesus Christ. These traits are known as the fruit of the Spirit and are developed as we mature as Christians, especially during those times of testing, trials and tribulations.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.
Galatians 5:22-26

It is walking in the Spirit with the evidence of the fruit of the Spirit, especially love, in our daily lives that speaks volumes to those people around us about our Christianity. Our walk truly speaks louder than our talk. People should automatically know by our behavior, actions and attitude that we are Christians. We should not have to tell them that we are Christians. If they do not know

without our telling them, then we need to re-examine our hearts and our commitment to Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER TEN

EARTHLY PURPOSE AND ETERNAL REWARDS

As we seek God in finding His purpose, plan and destiny for each of our lives, it is most important that we are doing it for the right reasons. We should not be seeking it for financial gains, recognition or fame. The Bible is clear in that if you seek or receive rewards while here on earth, you have received all your rewards. You will not receive any further rewards when you get to heaven.

"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly." Matthew 6:1-4

Our motivation for doing anything is very important, but especially when it comes to fulfilling our God-given purposes. God looks upon our hearts and He knows the real reason we do something for the kingdom of God. Above

everything, our motivation should be that we are showing God that we love Him. We want to do these things as our expression of our love, appreciation and gratitude to God for giving us eternal life through His Son Jesus Christ. In doing so, we are an example to other Christians and the world of what true Christianity should be.

Jesus had much to say concerning those people who performed so-called works of God, but had the wrong motives.

"Therefore by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" Matthew 6:20-23
"Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." Matthew 23:28

It is important to know that all our acts of obedience in fulfilling God's purpose and plans will be rewarded when we get to heaven as long as they were done with a pure heart and right motives. This is in addition to receiving the greatest reward which is seeing Jesus Christ face to face. However, God wanted us to know that those things we do as our expression of our love to Him do not go unnoticed by Him.

"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." Matthew 16:27

It is important that we do the works that God calls us

to do. That way, it will be a successful work and one that endures to the end.

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become manifest; for the Day will declare it, because it will be rewarded by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.
1 Corinthians 3:11-15

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. Colossians 3:23-24

We are not to give up in fulfilling God's purposes in our lives. We are to keep on keeping on and endure to the end. Each of us has a spiritual race that we are not just to run, but we are to finish. The race we are to run is not a sprint, but it is as a marathon. We are to run it as if we are seeing Jesus just beyond the finish line urging us to keep on running the race He has set before us.

Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. 2 John 8
. . . let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. Hebrews 12:1
Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.
1 Corinthians 9:24-25

In the book of Revelation there is further proof that

God will recognize and reward those works done by believers who had a pure and holy heart and godly motives.

And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, "Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

Revelation 19:8-9

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

Revelation 22:12-14

In conclusion, the most important reason for fulfilling God's purposes in our lives is not to receive eternal rewards, but it is to be a humble, willing, obedient vessel whom God by His Spirit can work through to further His kingdom here on earth. We are to do our part in bringing lost souls to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Then each of them will reach others for Christ. We reach the lost and dying world one person at a time. At the end, we will all share in the eternal rewards that God longs to give to each of us.

If you want to start today in fulfilling God's earthly purpose and plan for your life, do the following:

1. Give God permission to use you however He feels necessary. Tell Him not your will, but His will be done in your life. Remember, God

will not override your free will. He will not force Himself on anyone.

2. Start obeying God in your current situation. He already knows what you are doing. Repent and submit to God. He will then equip you and enable you to do what He wants you to do.

"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?" Luke 16:10-12

3. Make yourself available to God by removing the limitations in your life. Major limitations or obstacles to fulfilling God's purpose in the majority of Christians would be high debt and time obligations which often affect each other. For example, high debt often results in a person having to spend many hours working one or more jobs in order to meet his high debt obligations. Many Christians are also exhausting themselves by staying busy doing things which have no eternal focus or benefit to anyone. Christians in many ways are no different from the world. They can spend most of their time working and spending their money, oftentimes

using credit cards to buy things they do not need to impress people they do not even like. If you cannot remove these obstacles all at once, then ask God to help you reduce these obstacles one at a time and to then begin devoting your time and efforts to eternal matters.

4. Ask God to help you to stop resisting the Holy Spirit. This is one of the major areas that keeps Christians from fulfilling their God-given purpose. Many times we may be prompted by the inner voice of the Holy Spirit to do something, but we resist that urging of the Holy Spirit. Oftentimes, we resist because of fear or rejection or what other people may think about us. Who do we ultimately want to please? God or man? We must remember that the sin of omission is just as bad as the sin of commission.

The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe. Proverbs 29:25

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE POWER OF PRAYER

As God by His Holy Spirit will give to you dreams and visions, it is most important to pray them through to fruition. It is extremely important to ask God for wisdom, discernment and direction regarding what He has called you to do. God gives us dreams and visions for an appointed time which many times may not be fulfilled until sometime in the future. Oftentimes, God may have a further work to do in us in order to prepare us for the calling and purpose He has for our lives. This may be in the area of our spiritual maturity, attitudes, humility or trust in Him alone. I have also found that God may cause the dreams and visions to come to pass in various steps or phases and not all at once. For example, in my own life, I first began to understand my call when I started receiving dreams and visions in 1989. Over the next nearly twenty years (currently 2008 at the time of this writing), they have been partially fulfilled, but I know that they are still to be completed as God gave them to me. God is not a time-waster or a teaser. Everything is

beautiful or completed in His perfect time.

At this point, it is most important to not give up on the dreams and visions God has given you. Remember, God gave you the dreams and visions and it is totally up to Him to cause them to come to pass in His appointed time.

Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

Habakkuk 2:2-3

**He has made everything beautiful in its time . . .
Ecclesiastes 3:11**

Prayer is the most important thing that Christians can do each day. Seek God to know what your purpose is and to fulfill His perfect will for your life. Our relationship to God and the ability to hear His voice is directly proportional to the time we spend in prayer and in His Word each day. Prayer is given to us from God as a means of communication. It is our lifeline to God. Throughout the Bible, the importance of prayer is stressed.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16

For more insight on the subject of prayer, please consult my book, [The Realities of Prayer](#) at www.larrysiemans.com available as a free download.

Following are some areas of prayer in regard to seeking God's will for your life, our nation and the world:

1. Pray for God to give you wisdom and

revelation concerning every area of your life for it is clear that God wants you to have wisdom.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. James 1:5

2. Pray that you will hear clearly God's voice and that you will be in the center of His perfect will in everything you do.
3. Pray that you will have a greater thirst and hunger for God, His Word, His ways and His presence and power.
4. Pray that God will direct your path and give you favor with people.
5. Pray that God will give you divine appointments, connections and opportunities.
6. Pray that you will always maintain a positive attitude, a spirit of gratitude and that your words and actions will be a reflection of Jesus Christ in you.
7. Pray for the leaders in government (local, state, national) that God will save them by His Spirit and that they will have wisdom to make righteous decisions.
8. Pray for our nation that it will turn back to God and become what God has intended it to

be.

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14

9. Pray that God will pour out His Spirit again on America and the rest of the world and that hundreds of millions of people will be saved.

10. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem and all of Israel; that God will bless Israel and the Jewish people there and around the world. Pray that God will open the spiritual eyes of the Jews and Arabs around the world to the truth so that they will receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May they prosper who love you. Psalm 122:6

11. Above all, be led by the Holy Spirit in your prayers as you allow God to expand your borders and vision as you pray for other nations, people groups and ministries.

I would like to conclude this book by giving you the opportunity to pray two different prayers. The first prayer is for those readers who have not sincerely and personally invited Jesus Christ to be their personal Savior and Lord of every area of their lives. He wants to forgive them of their sins and give them assurance of everlasting life in

heaven with God. For those readers who would like to do so at this time, please repeat the following prayer with all sincerity and belief:

Dear God,

I come to you as a sinner. I know that I have not lived my life in the way you want me to. I am tired of living my life this way trying to do it on my own without you. I need you to come into my life and help me become the person you want me to be. Please forgive me of all my shortcomings and sins in actions, words and thoughts that are not of you. I thank you God for giving us your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who was born of the virgin Mary, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross at Calvary for the forgiveness of all my sins. I thank you that on the third day He then arose from the dead so that I could live and have everlasting life. I now ask Jesus Christ to change my heart and be my Savior and Lord forever. Help me to be the Christian you have called me to be and to fulfill your purpose in my life. Help me to be a channel of blessing that you can work in and through that I may be a blessing to others. Thank you God for saving me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

The second prayer is for those Christians who truly want to know what God's purpose is for their life and to fulfill God's calling in their life:

Dear God,

First of all, I want to thank you for saving me through your Son, Jesus Christ and giving me eternal life. God, I want to know what your purpose is for my life now that I belong to you and the family of God. Please reveal to me your purpose and plan for my life and show me what I am to do to further the kingdom of God on earth. Please help me to always be a humble, willing, obedient vessel that you can give your grace and ability to in order for me to accomplish what you have for me to do. Help me to always know that it is not by my might or power, but it is by your Spirit. Thank you for giving me your dreams and visions for my life. Thank you for the baptism in your Holy Spirit and for the gifts and fruit of your Spirit. Thank you for enabling me to hear your voice clearly and to obey your voice each day. Thank you for helping me each day

to be more and more on fire for you God and the things of you. Help me to die each day to this world and the things of this world. Help me to keep my priorities in the right order. Help me to take up my cross each day and seek first the kingdom of God and your righteousness. Help me to have your heart, love, vision and passion for the lost, for missions, for souls and the world.

I thank you God that you have called me for your purpose and you are granting the desires that you have put into my heart. I thank you that everything is beautiful in your time. I thank you for encouragement, for the joy of the Lord is my strength. Thank you for continuing to equip and prepare me for these last days, enabling me to truly be your witness for Christ to the marketplace and to the ends of the earth. I love you God. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

In closing, I would like to remind you once again that God has a unique purpose and plan for every Christian. We are saved by God's grace through His Holy Spirit to spend all eternity with Him. But until we see Him face to face, we are called to be God's servant here on earth being effective witnesses of Jesus Christ. We are to be good stewards of the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit in order to reach the world for Jesus Christ. Remember, the life of a Christian is not to be a one-man show, but it is to be as part of a marathon race running alongside millions of other Christians, each fulfilling their God-given purpose. There will be trials and tribulations as you run the race, but you will find nothing more satisfying and fulfilling than **knowing that you know** what your God-given purpose is and that you are living it out daily in the center of God's will for your life and destiny.