

What To Do...

When You Don't Know What To Do

Biblical Strategies For Confronting Crisis

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Table Of Contents

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| PREFACE | | 1 |
| THE BIBLICAL TEXT | | 3 |
| CHAPTER ONE: | A BAD REPORT | 5 |
| CHAPTER TWO: | A GREAT MULTITUDE | 9 |
| STEP ONE: | REPLACE FEAR WITH FAITH | 13 |
| CHAPTER THREE: | FEAR PARALYZES | 14 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: | FAITH ENERGIZES | 20 |
| STEP TWO: | RISE UP TO SEIZE YOUR DESTINY | 27 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: | STANDING UP INSIDE | 28 |
| CHAPTER SIX: | A PLACE CALLED THERE | 32 |
| STEP THREE: | REFOCUS YOUR ATTENTION | 36 |
| CHAPTER SEVEN: | FROM ME TO THEE | 37 |
| CHAPTER EIGHT: | FROM NOW TO THEN | 42 |
| STEP FOUR: | REJECT REASON FOR REVELATION | 49 |
| CHAPTER NINE: | THE TURNING POINT | 50 |
| CHAPTER TEN: | SIX STAGES OF REVELATION | 55 |
| STEP FIVE: | RESPOND IN OBEDIENCE | 60 |
| CHAPTER ELEVEN: | HOW TO BE ESTABLISHED IN GOD | 61 |
| CHAPTER TWELVE: | HOW TO PROSPER IN ALL YOU DO | 68 |
| STEP SIX: | REVERSE THE CURSE | 76 |
| CHAPTER THIRTEEN: | AMBUSHING THE ENEMY | 77 |
| CHAPTER FOURTEEN: | VICTORY IN THE VALLEY | 86 |
| EPILOGUE | TODAY IS YOUR TOMORROW | 90 |
| Notes | | 99 |

PREFACE: WHAT SHALL I DO?

A hazy sun was obscured by the smoke of numerous fires, casting an eerie morning light over the streets of Nairobi, Kenya. The scene from my third floor hotel room was one of complete devastation. Car windows were smashed, buildings were riddled with bullets, stores were ransacked, and dead bodies lay in the streets. After 19 years of peace, the city of Nairobi was caught in the crossfire of a bloody coup between rival military powers attempting to overthrow the government.

That day we were scheduled to start a training institute for African Christian leaders from all over the continent. The administrator of the facility we were renting for the institute was frightened by the coup and did not want us to open the sessions. Due to anti-American sentiment, the Kenyan government was advising Americans to flee the country if they could find a way out. A Swiss airline crew staying in the hotel where I was residing offered me a ride to another city from where I could catch a flight to America, and I was seriously considering it. Our national coordinator and the African delegates, however, wanted to open the training institute as scheduled. The final decision was mine, but--what should I do?

To be honest, I gave serious consideration to hopping a plane back to the safe haven of my California home, but would this be wisdom or a cowardly retreat? Should I remain in Nairobi and open the institute as scheduled, despite the danger? If I did, it could cost someone's life--maybe mine!

While every dilemma we face in life is not quite as dramatic as the situation I confronted in Nairobi, complex circumstances frequently result in the same question: "What should I do?" We are usually taught that to find God's will we should pray, study the Scriptures, listen to the inner voice of the Holy Spirit, seek Christian counsel, and analyze the circumstances. But what happens when there is no angelic visitation, no audible voice from God, no supernatural manifestation, no time to seek counsel--but you have a pressing situation and need an immediate answer?

In 2 Chronicles 20 the Bible records the story of a man who faced such a dilemma. A formidable enemy was rapidly advancing to invade King Jehoshaphat's nation. As the massive army marched towards him, Jehoshaphat fearfully acknowledged that he had no strategy to face the crisis. He didn't have time to search the Scriptures, make an appointment with a Christian counselor, or wait for circumstances to work out. Jehoshaphat's story begins with confusion but ends in conquest because he learned what to do when he didn't know what to do--and so can you! Once you master the strategies Jehoshaphat used you can apply them to every crisis you encounter.

That terrifying day in Nairobi I decided to open the training institute as scheduled, despite the continuing coup and governmental warnings. Hundreds of our African delegates got on their faces before God and interceded for Kenya until some 52 hours later the government triumphed and President Daniel Moi publicly gave glory to God for restoring peace to his nation. That day, I learned that my life, the spiritual destiny of others, and perhaps even that of an entire nation may be profoundly affected by what I do when I don't know what to do.

If you are seeking God's will but you are confused and perplexed--then this book is for you! Like Jehoshaphat, once you receive this revelation you will never again be fearful or indecisive when you don't know what to do.

-The Author

The Biblical Text

2 Chronicles 20:1-30

- 1 *It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat.*
- 2 *Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi).*
- 3 *And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.*
- 4 *So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.*
- 5 *Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court,*
- 6 *and said: "O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?*
- 7 *"Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?*
- 8 *"And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying,*
- 9 *'If disaster comes upon us-- sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine-- we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.'*
- 10 *"And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir-- whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them--*
- 11 *"here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit.*
- 12 *"O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You."*
- 13 *Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord.*
- 14 *Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.*
- 15 *And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.*
- 16 *'Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel.*
- 17 *'You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you."*

- 18 *And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, worshiping the Lord.*
- 19 *Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.*
- 20 *So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."*
- 21 *And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever."*
- 22 *Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.*
- 23 *For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.*
- 24 *So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.*
- 25 *When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much.*
- 26 *And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the Lord; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day.*
- 27 *Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies.*
- 28 *So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the Lord.*
- 29 *And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel.*
- 30 *Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.*

Chapter One

A Bad Report

It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the seas, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is EnGedi). (2 Chronicles 20:1-2)

There are always “some” with a bad report. The Biblical record is filled with their gloomy proclamations:

-Moses received a bad report concerning the dangerous depths of the Red Sea which blocked Israel’s exodus from Egypt.

-Messengers came to Nehemiah describing Jerusalem in ruins with its fortified walls collapsed in devastation.

~Naomi, a woman whose story is recorded in the book of Ruth, received a series of bad reports: Her husband and both sons died.

~King David looked out over the plains and saw a messenger running with news from the battlefield. It was a devastating report that his son, Absalom, was dead.

~A righteous man named Job seemed to have a propensity for bad news. He received word that his children were killed and his servants and herds captured by the enemy. Lucky man--he also had a wife who seemed to delight in emphasizing these negative reports (as if Job needed someone to tell him how bad things were). Her advice was to “curse God and die.”

-As Jarius hurried towards home bringing Jesus to his ailing daughter’s side, his servant met him with the tragic news that the child was already dead.

There are always "some" with a bad report. In fact, there are usually “more” than “some” because we live in a negatively oriented world. If you don’t believe it, observe what happens when you share an innovative idea. The common response is for others to immediately point out why your plan won’t work. This negative mind-set is tremendously evident on the evening television news where practically every report concerns crime, political wrangling, or societal crisis. Even the weather report is negative. Why not say “80% chance of sunshine” instead of “20% chance of rain”?

HAVE YOU RECEIVED A BAD REPORT?

Did the doctor say your disease is terminal? Are you being sued for divorce or battling for custody of your children? Are you facing financial ruin? Did the pediatrician tell you that your precious little baby will never be normal?

Perhaps you grew up in a negative environment where you constantly heard “bad reports” from parents who declared, “I’m sorry you were ever born!” or “You are so stupid... You will never amount to anything!”

Your bad report may be a written document similar to the threatening letter received by King Hezekiah in Old Testament times. Perhaps your “evil report” is in human form, someone who is doggedly pursuing you as Queen Jezebel did the prophet Elijah.

Whatever the form of your “bad report,” whoever the source, and regardless of its message, the book you now hold in your hands is your answer. You will learn what to do when you don’t know what to do, using Biblical guidelines drawn from the story of King Jehoshaphat’s battle with enemy forces recorded in 2 Chronicles 20.

A KING WHO WALKED GOD’S WAY

Jehoshaphat was the son of King Asa and a woman named Azubah. He was a young man of 35 when he became king over Judah:

Jehoshaphat the son of Asa had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. And he walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. Also Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. (1 Kings 22:41-44)

Details of Jehoshaphat’s administration of the kingdom of Judah are recorded in 2 Chronicles chapters 17-19. Jehoshaphat immediately strengthened Judah’s military forces, sent priests and Levites throughout the kingdom to teach God’s law, and established a righteous judgment system. The Chronicles declare concerning him:

Now the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to the acts of Israel. Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honor in abundance. And his heart took delight in the ways of the Lord; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah. (2 Chronicles 17:3-6)

When a man chooses God's way it won't be long until his commitment is challenged. This is exactly what happened in the account recorded in 2 Chronicles 20 which opens with the phrase "It happened after this..." After what?

- After Jehoshaphat made a commitment to walk God's way.
- After he established righteous judgment and instruction in God's law.
- In the midst of "delighting himself in the ways of the Lord"...

...That is when he received the bad report:

It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi). (2 Chronicles 20:1-2)

When you are doing your best to live for God, ordering your life and ministry by His Word, and establishing yourself in holiness--that is when Satan and his demonic forces launch their fiercest attacks.

AT HIS WIT'S END

When Jehoshaphat heard that the enemy surrounded him, he cried out to God saying, "*We have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us, nor do we know what to do*" (2 Chronicles 20:12). This is not the way most of us talk today. We boast of our great power in the face of adversity. We declare, "Greater is He within me than he that is in the world." But at the first hint of disaster, we retreat in fear and dismay. We really don't know what to do, but we act like we know it all. Jehoshaphat humbly admitted his dependence on God.

Jehoshaphat was at his wit's end, which means he came to the end of his own mental and emotional resources. Have you ever been at your wit's end? Are you there right now? Do you know where the expression "wit's end" originated? You may be surprised to learn that it comes from the Bible:

For He commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves of the sea. They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths; their soul melts because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. (Psalm 107:25-27)

Psalm 107 details what it is like to be at your wit's end. It is compared to the uncontrolled environment of a raging storm:

*For He commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves of the sea.
(Psalm 107:15)*

Your “wit’s end” is a place of instability marked by spiritual, emotional, and mental “ups and downs”:

They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths; their soul melts because of trouble. (Psalm 107:26)

At your wit’s end your soul (your inner man) is “melted” and you are spiritually famished:

Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them...They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths; their soul melts because of trouble. (Psalm 107:5 and 26)

Your “wit’s end” it is a condition of spiritual anorexia paralleling that of physical anorexia in the natural body:

...They fell down, and there was none to help...They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits’ end. (Psalm 107:12,27)

Your “wit’s end” is compared by the Psalmist to hard labor (Psalm 107:12). It is a lonely place, a “solitary way” where there is no one to help:

They wandered in the wilderness in a desolate way; they found no city to dwell in...there was none to help. (Psalm 107:4,12)

When the difficulties of life bring you to your wit’s end, as they did Jehoshaphat, things appear to be out of control. Psalm 107:25 indicates, however that the stormy winds and waves are actually under God’s authority. “But why would He allow a devastating storm in my life?” you question. “Why would God permit an enemy alliance against me? Why would He allow me to come to my wit’s end?”

Because it is at your wit’s end--when you feel deserted, powerless, and fearful--that you learn what to do when you don’t know what to do...and once you master these strategies you can apply them to every difficulty of life you encounter. While others are running around wringing their hands in despair you will know exactly what to do!

CHAPTER TWO

A GREAT MULTITUDE

Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the seas, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar"...
(2 Chronicles 20:2)

The multitude that came against Jehoshaphat was a formidable alliance consisting of the Moabites, Ammonites, and others with them. To really understand who these people were, we need to look at a bit of their history.

The Moabites were descendants of Moab, the grandson of Lot who was conceived by incest with his eldest daughter (Genesis 19:30-38). Their territory was situated along the eastern border of the Dead Sea, on the plateau between the Dead Sea and the Arabian desert. To the south and west of Moab was the nation of Edom and to the north was Ammon. It was a fertile area for crops and herds and a major trade route ran from Syria to the Gulf of Aqabah, bringing wealth and culture to the Moabites.

When the Israelites camped in Moab just prior to crossing the Jordan River, the women of Moab enticed the Israelites into ritual sexual immorality which resulted in God's judgment against Israel (Numbers 25:1-9).

The tribes of Reuben and Gad settled in northern Moab (Numbers 32:1-37). When the nation of Israel became morally corrupt during the period of the judges, Eglon, a king of Moab, oppressed Israel and captured territory east of the Jordan River as far as Jericho. Ehud, the judge, delivered Israel from Eglon's control (Judges 3:12-30).

The Moabites also threatened Israel when Saul was king (1 Samuel 14:47). David eventually conquered Moab and the nation remained subject to Israel until after Solomon's death (2 Samuel 8:2). Omri, king of Israel from 885-874 B. C., kept Moab under his control, as did his son Ahab (874-853 B. C.) until he became preoccupied with wars against Syria and Assyria and Moab broke free.

King Jehoram of Israel, the King of Edom, and King Jehoshaphat joined forces to attack Moab about 849 B. C. They failed to conquer the Moabites because of a superstitious act when the king of Moab sacrificed his own son to show how deeply he believed in his cause (2 Kings 3:1-27). Given this brief historical background, you can readily see why Jehoshaphat feared the Moabites.

AN ENEMY ALLIANCE

The “great multitude” Jehoshaphat faced was composed not only of Moabites, however. Joining them were the Ammonites, a nomadic race descended from Lot’s son, Ammon. During the days of the Exodus, the Israelites were instructed by God not to associate with the Ammonites (Deuteronomy. 23:3). No reason is given in the Bible for the hostility between the two nations, but the rift continued for several centuries.

In the days of the judges, Eglon, king of Moab, enlisted the aid of the Ammonites in taking Jericho from Israel (Judges 3:13). In King Saul's time, Nahash, the Ammonite king, planned an attack against the Israelites living in Jabesh Gilead, threatening to put out the right eyes of all the men and disable them for warfare. King Saul responded to their call for help and saved them from this fate (1 Samuel 11:1-11).

The chief god of the Ammonites was “Molech” to whom they offered human sacrifices in gruesome orgies where his image was heated and the bodies of living children were placed into his arms (1 Kings 11:7).

The Ammonites and Moabites created a powerful alliance--but we aren’t finished yet ! The “others” with the Moabites and the Ammonites were the Edomites. These people were descendants of Edom (Esau) who made his home in Mt. Seir and disposed the original inhabitants (Deuteronomy 2:12).

After the years of wilderness wandering when Moses wanted to lead Israel northward to Canaan across Edom, the king of Edom refused them passage forcing them to take a more lengthy and difficult route through the desert to the east (Numbers 20:14-21; Judges 11:17,18).

During the reign of King Saul, Israel fought against Edom (1 Samuel 14:47) and later King David conquered Edom, along with a number of other adjacent countries (2 Samuel 8:13-14). During the time of the Divided Kingdom, a number of hostile encounters occurred between God’s people and Edom and the evil Edomites were the only neighbor of Israel not promised mercy from God (Isaiah 34:5-6: 63:1). [1]

These three nations--the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites--were fierce by nature, hostile towards God’s people, cruel, and idolatrous. This was the composition of the “great multitude” Jehoshaphat faced!

WHAT ABOUT YOUR MULTITUDE?

Now think for a moment...What is the composition of the “great multitude” you face? You may think your “multitude” is a person who is making your life miserable. If you are a pastor controlled by a carnal church board, you may consider them to be your great multitude. Children out of control, abusive mates, hostile co-workers--who do you think composes the great multitude generating your bad report?

If you identified any of the above--children, co-workers, or controlling and abusive people around you--you are wrong. Your enemy is not those rising up against you. Your real foes are only disguised in “flesh and blood” and as long as you perceive your battle to be on a natural level you will continue to be terrorized by the enemy.

Behind every “great multitude” and every “bad report” there are spiritual causes. The Apostle Paul explains that...

...we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)

Your enemy is not your mate, your co-worker, or your abuser. Your enemy is the controlling power behind the great multitude, the forces of Satan and his demonic hosts. Their strategy is similar to the enemy alliance Jehoshaphat faced, because “*the thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy*” (John 10:10).

You must face a spiritual enemy with spiritual strategies. This is why the Apostle Paul declares, “*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds*” (1 Corinthians 10:4).

MEETING THE MULTITUDE

The first time God’s people came to the borders of their promised land they faced a great multitude. There were giants in the land and the majority of Israel were terrorized by them. Intimidated by the multitude, Israel turned back to wander in the wilderness another 40 years.

On another occasion, the Prophet Elisha’s servant, Gehazi, was intimidated by a multitude of warriors encamped around the city of Gothan. The prophet prayed that Gehazi’s eyes would be opened so he could see into the spirit world, enabling him to recognize that the forces of God were greater than those of the great multitude.

If you are to confront your great multitude successfully, then your spiritual eyes must be opened. Begin by making this declaration:

“Lord, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O Lord, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You!”
(2 Chronicles 14:11)

“Your enemy is coming,” they warned Jehoshaphat. “They have already forded the waters and are encamped nearby.” What do you think will happen to Jehoshaphat as he faces his great multitude of enemy forces?

“I don’t know what to do!”--that is Jehoshaphat’s immediate response. He freezes. He is rendered completely immobile with spiritual paralysis. If Jehoshaphat is to prevail against the enemy, then he must look beyond the clouds of dust kicked up by their horses and the threatening glimmer of their armor in the late afternoon sun. He must see beyond the immediate crisis into the spirit world and view his battle with spiritual perception.

What about your great multitude? Your enemy is also encamped nearby. You can hear the intimidating sound of advancing footsteps. Like Jehoshaphat, you may not know what to do--so what will you do?

STEP ONE:

REPLACE FEAR WITH FAITH

Chapter Three

Fear Paralyzes

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. (2 Chronicles 20:3)

Jehoshaphat received a bad report concerning a multitude of enemy forces and his first response was fear. This is understandable for, as we learned in the last chapter, the coalition of enemy forces aligned against him were quite formidable.

Centuries later our immediate response to difficult circumstances has not changed. When we receive a bad report or face a multitude of problems--when we don't know what to do--we usually respond with fear. Impossible situations are never resolved by fear, however, so the first thing we must do when we don't know what to do is replace fear with faith.

POSITIVE FEAR

The Bible has two connotations for the word "fear." One is positive, reflecting a healthy respect for God, and it is foundational to spiritual wisdom:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever. (Psalms 111:10)

This positive fear of God results in blessings:

Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments. (Psalms 112:1)

Those who fear God are protected from evil:

The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them. (Psalm 34:7)

He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; he also will hear their cry and save them. (Psalm 145:19)

In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge. (Proverbs 14:26)

Those who fear God know no want:

*Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him.
(Psalm 34:9)*

There is a tremendous spiritual heritage for those who fear the Lord. They receive mercy, salvation, and compassion from God:

For You, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear Your name. (Psalm 61:5)

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him (Psalm 103:11)

*Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land.
(Psalm 85:9)*

*As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him.
(Psalm 103:13)*

The fear of the Lord is the fountain of spiritual life:

*The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death.
(Proverbs 14:27)*

The fear of the Lord is a positive emotion that enables you to reject evil:

In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil. (Proverbs 16:6)

THE NEGATIVE FORCE OF FEAR

The other Biblical connotation for the word “fear” is negative. This type of fear first appeared as a result of sin when Adam and Eve were ashamed and fearfully hid themselves from God’s presence. Shame over the past and fear of the future were the two responses emanating from man’s fall into sin and are the root of all other negative emotions. This type of fear is tormenting:

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. (1 John 4:18)

When you are “perfect in love,” you will not fear because you know there is no circumstance of life that can separate you from God’s love. The Apostle Paul declared:

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 8:35,38-40)*

Fear is spiritual incarceration:

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." (Romans 8:15)

Fear is a snare concealed in the tangle of negative circumstances of our lives as an animal trap is concealed in tall grass:

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

Like a snare, the trap of fear springs open to catch the prey and render it immobile.

THE MANIFESTATIONS OF FEAR

There are numerous manifestations of this tormenting, binding, ensnaring fear apparent in our world today. Multitudes of people fear for their safety, hiding behind closed doors and barred windows and arming themselves with lethal weapons. People also fear failure, rejection, pain and sickness, poverty, old age, and death. There are so many fears that psychologists have developed an extensive list of common "phobias" to catalog them:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Acrophobia: | The fear of high places |
| Agoraphobia: | Fear of open and public places |
| Achmophobia: | The fear of sharp objects |
| Algophobia: | Fear of pain |
| Anthropophobia: | Fear of man or a particular person |
| Astraphobia: | Fear of thunder, lightening, or storms |
| Claustrophobia: | A fear of closed places |
| Ereuthophobia: | Fear of blushing |
| Gynophobia: | Fear of women or a particular woman |
| Hematophobia: | Fear of blood |
| Hydrophobia: | Fear of water |
| Monophobia: | Fear of solitude |
| Necrophobia: | Fear of dead bodies |
| Nyctophobia: | Fear of darkness |
| Ochlophobia: | Fear of crowds |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Pathophobia: | Fear of disease |
| Pyrophobia: | Fear of fire |
| Thanatophobia: | Fear of death |
| Toxiphobia: | Fear of poisons |
| Zoophobia: | Fear of animals |

...And so the psychological cataloging of this force called fear continues.

RECOGNIZE FEAR AS SIN

If you are to deal with this powerful force then you must recognize fear for what it is. Fear is a spirit Satan uses to torment, dominate, oppress and control you:

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

When you become a born again believer, God gives you a different nature of “power, love, and a sound mind.” Thereafter, whenever you fear, it is because you allow the spirit of fear to seize control of your mental processes:

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” (Romans 8:15)

Fear draws your focus from God to your circumstances. Fear immobilizes and paralyzes you when you face difficult situations. Fear is sin because “*whatever is not from faith is sin*” (Romans 14:23). If you are not demonstrating faith then you are operating in fear--and fear is sin. The Apostle John records in the Revelation that...

...the fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8)

When you face a problem and you are not sure what to do, there is one thing you know *not* to do and that is to fear! If you have allowed fear to engulf you, then stop right now and confess fear for what it is--sin!

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-9)

FEAR VERSUS FAITH

The opposite of fear is faith, and fear and faith cannot operate simultaneously. Matthew 8 provides a narrative about the Disciples of Jesus on the Sea of Galilee in a great storm that threatened to capsize their boat. They were fearful as they struggled against the raging torrents and Jesus said to them:

“Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. (Matthew 8:26)

The collation is apparent: If you are full of fear then there is little room for faith to operate. Both fear and faith have creative powers: Faith generates positive results and fear generates negative consequences.

After losing his family, servants, and flocks Job declared, *“For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me” (Job 3:25)*. When you are fearful you release a negative creative force that prevents you from hearing from God:

So will I choose their delusions, and bring their fears on them; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not hear; but they did evil before My eyes, and chose that in which I do not delight. (Isaiah 66:4)

You will never conquer your problems operating in fear. In Old Testament times the fearful were not allowed to go into battle for the Lord:

The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, “What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.” (Deuteronomy 2:8)

When Gideon was building an army to confront enemy forces God told him:

“Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, ‘Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.’” And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained. (Judges 7:3)

The fearful were not allowed to engage in battle because fear paralyzes and renders a person immobile. The fearful freeze in conflict and have tendencies to retreat from the enemy.

Every area of your life is either governed by faith or fear. In the face of impossible situations for which you have no answer you will either be mobilized by faith or conquered by fear. Fear binds and renders you ineffective to deal with the difficulties of life. Fear paralyzes, but faith energizes.

“Jehoshaphat feared” initially but he did not continue to operate in fear. If you peek ahead in the text of 2 Chronicles 20 you will discover that Jehoshaphat effected a mighty victory against the enemy. The question is, how did he make the transition from fear to faith? And--more pertinent to your present situation--how can *you* be released from fear and begin to operate in faith?

Chapter Four

Faith Energizes

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. (2 Chronicles 20:3)

In the preceding chapter we examined the negative facets of this force called fear. The Bible says “Jehoshaphat feared”--but the narrative does not stop there. Although Jehoshaphat was apprehensive about the forces advancing against him and had no creative solutions to solve the dilemma, Jehoshaphat knew what to do when he didn’t know what to do. His first step was to replace fear with faith.

A key principle frequently reiterated in God’s Word is that any void in your spiritual life must be filled. When the Apostle Paul admonishes us to “put off” certain negative behaviors, he immediately instructs us to “put on” other positive qualities. Jesus taught that when the evil spirits depart the spiritual house must be occupied by the Holy Spirit. So when fear departs the void must be replaced by faith.

Jehoshaphat demonstrated faith in God by calling together all the people of Judah to seek the Lord:

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court...Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord. (2 Chronicles 20:3-5,13)

What a tremendous declaration of faith! The King, the leaders, every family--even the little children--stood expectantly before the Lord. By their actions they declared, “We are positioning ourselves in faith and remaining here until we find out what to do!” As commentator Matthew Henry notes:

“Those that would seek the Lord so as to find him, and to find favor with Him, must set themselves to seek Him, must do it with themselves to fixedness of thought, with sincerity of intention, and with the utmost vigor and resolution to continue seeking Him.” [1]

The Amplified Version says Jehoshaphat “set himself (determinedly, as his vital need).” Literally it means he “set his face to seek the Lord (yearning for Him with all his desire).”

We are admonished to seek God continually (1 Chronicles 16:11) and to set our hearts to seek Him (1 Chronicles 22:19). Seeking God results in rejoicing (1 Chronicles 16:10). It also brings forgiveness and healing:

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)

The prophet Hosea declared:

Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, till He comes and rains righteousness on you. (Hosea 10:12)

God's hand is upon those who seek Him (Ezra 8:21) making them understand "all things" (Proverbs 28:5). We are promised that if we seek we will find (Matthew 7:7) and that God rewards those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6):

But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deuteronomy 4:29)

The Psalmist David made seeking God his first priority:

One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. (Psalm 27:4)

When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, Lord, I will seek." (Psalm 27:8)

O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. (Psalm 63:1)

Jehoshaphat did not just seek God's hand to move in his behalf, rather he sought God.

Many of us seek the work of God instead of God Himself. We seek Him to change our circumstances, defeat our enemies, or increase finances. Jehoshaphat sought God and as he and all Israel stood before the Lord, he made a powerful declaration of faith:

"O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?" (2 Chronicles 20:6)

A bad report, a great multitude, no knowledge of what to do--but Jehoshaphat boldly declared his faith in the face of these adversities.

WHAT IS FAITH?

If you are to replace fear with faith, then you must understand what faith is and how to attain it. The Bible defines faith as “... *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (Hebrews 11:1). The Amplified Bible adds to this definition:

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

Faith gives assurance that things promised in the future are true and that unseen things are real. The words “faith” and “believe” are used nearly 500 times in the New Testament and faith is one of the basic Christian doctrines listed by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 6:1-6.

Faith differs from hope because hope is simply a desire or expectancy concerning things in the future. Faith is the belief in something you cannot see but have assurance you already possess. Hope is in the mind while faith is in the heart:

But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. (1 Thessalonians 5:8)

In this verse, faith is associated with the region of the heart as a breastplate. Hope is a helmet associated with the head (the mind). Hope is a mental attitude of expectancy about the future, while faith is a condition of the heart producing belief in God:

For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:10)

Believing with the heart always produces change in your life. The result is something experienced in the present, not something hoped for in the future:

“Faith is not what we see. Faith always goes beyond what we see to what we hope for and to what we believe we receive. That is why we thank God for the answer to our prayer before the answer is seen. When it is seen we thank him by sight-but then we are no longer thanking him by faith.”[2]

Faith is not the same as "mind over matter" which teaches that man can overcome problems by using his mind, reason, or willpower. These teachings are man-centered because they rely on self instead of God. Faith is God-centered, not man-centered. It is a gift of God, not something produced through self-effort.

There is a natural faith that most people develop, a trust in things that prove stable. For example, you have faith that when you flip an electric switch the lights will turn on. This

confidence is placed in things that you learn by experience are usually dependable.

Biblical faith, however, is confidence placed in what is not yet seen but is declared as fact before it is evident to the natural senses. Biblical faith is not just faith in general, but it is directed faith. It is the faith towards God referenced in Hebrews 6:1. Faith in general can be misdirected. You can misplace your faith by placing it in carnal weapons. David declared *“I will not trust in my bow, nor shall my sword save me” (Psalms 44:6)* and proclaimed *“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God” (Psalms 20:7).*

David warned *“Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help” (Psalms 146:3).* David knew that even faith in a good friend can be misplaced:

Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. (Psalm 41:9)

You can misdirect your faith by trusting in yourself instead of God:

He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered. (Proverbs 28:26)

Confidence in money or position is also misplaced faith:

Here is the man who did not make God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness. (Psalms 52:7)

True faith is directed "toward God" and is a potent spiritual weapon. In describing our spiritual armor the Apostle Paul says *“above all taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one” (Ephesians 6:16).* When you face impossible circumstances of life, Satan attacks your faith by sending darts of unbelief into your mind. Faith provides a powerful spiritual defense to these onslaughts. Faith is “above all” the spiritual weapons.

HOW TO REPLACE FEAR WITH FAITH

Jesus spoke of people who did not use their faith as being faithless (Matthew 17:17). He spoke of those with little faith (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; Luke 12:28) and of those with great faith (Matthew 8:10; 15:28; Luke 7:9). The Bible also teaches that each person has a certain amount of faith received as a gift from God:

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. (Romans 12:3)

Each believer has some faith because it is through faith you are saved (Ephesians 2:8), but this measure of faith can be increased. Here are three steps to replace fear with faith:

1. HEAR GOD'S WORD:

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)

This is evident in saving faith, because you must first hear the Word of God in order to repent of your sin and receive Jesus as Savior. After you are saved, Biblical teaching and preaching continue to increase your faith. The more you hear the Word of God, the more your faith increases. The more faith increases the easier it is to defend against spiritual attacks of the enemy because even a small amount of faith is very powerful:

So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:20)

Nothing is impossible if you have even a small amount of faith! Here are some selected Scriptures that will eliminate fear and generate faith:

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? (Psalm 56:3-4)

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)

Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. (Psalm 46:2)

In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? (Psalm 56:4)

Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this I will be confident. (Psalm 27:3)

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? (Psalm 118:6)

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

For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.' (Isaiah 41:13)

Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; `For YAH, the Lord, is my strength and song; he also has become my salvation.’” (Isaiah 12:2)

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

Do not fear, nor be afraid; have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one. (Isaiah 44:8)

So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Hebrews 13:6)

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. (1 John 4:18)

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” (Romans 8:15)

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

2. KEEP YOUR MIND ON GOD:

Despite negative circumstances, you will remain peaceful when your mind is fixed on God:

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. (Isaiah 26:3)

The word “stayed” in this verse is translated from a Hebrew word which means “to lean upon or take hold, to be established and steadfast.” To keep your mind fixed on God means trusting Him at all times and in all circumstances, believing that when you face the enemy and do not know what to do He has the answer!

3. ACT ON YOUR FAITH:

Faith is a fact, but it is also an act. Hebrews 11 is called the “faith chapter” because of its numerous references to the faith of the great men and women listed there. In each example, faith is combined with works:

- By faith Abel offered a sacrifice.
- By faith Enoch walked with God.
- By faith Noah prepared an ark.
- By faith Abraham moved to an unknown land.

- By faith Sarah birthed a child when she was past childbearing age.
- By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed seven days.

...And so the chronicle continues. Attitude is combined with action and faith is illustrated both as a fact and an act.

Faith is what you believe and works are what you do. The Bible teaches faith is a gift of God increased by hearing and responding to His Word, but this does not mean works are not important. James declared:

Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. (James 2:17-18)

Your works--how you live and react to the circumstances of life around you--are a test of the reality of your faith.

James sums up the connection between faith and works by the example of the relationship between man's body and spirit. The Bible teaches that when a man dies, his spirit leaves his body. James declares that...

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (James 2:26)

Your actions should reflect the living faith within you because "*the just shall live by faith*" (Galatians 3:11) and...

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

When you face circumstances of life for which there seems to be no answer--when you don't know what to do--the very first thing to do is replace fear with faith. Like Jehoshaphat, get your eyes off the problem and direct your attention to God. Fear paralyzes and renders you immobile, but faith energizes you to take the next step...

STEP TWO:

RISE UP TO SEIZE YOUR DESTINY

Chapter Five

Standing Up Inside

Then Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court. (2 Chronicles 20:5)

Jehoshaphat arose...

...right in the midst of a fearful people
...in the path of an advancing enemy army
...despite the fact that he really didn't know what to do...
...Jehoshaphat stood up.

Standing up--it seems so simple, doesn't it? Simple, yet pregnant with tremendous significance because it wasn't a mere physical act but rather a spiritual declaration:

-God told Abraham to arise, walk the length and width of the land promised to him, and claim it (Genesis 13:17).

-Moses was commanded to "*rise up early in the morning*" to stand before Pharaoh to plead Israel's deliverance (Exodus 8:20).

-"*Moses my servant is dead,*" God told Joshua. "*Now therefore, arise, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them*" (Joshua 1:2).

-King David rose up from the ashes of defeat at Ziklag to retrieve from the enemy all that was stolen from him (1 Samuel 30).

-Deborah challenged a hesitant Barak to "*arise and lead captivity captive*" (Judges 5:12).

-Gideon was told, "*Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand*" (Judges 7:15).

-The young man Samuel arose from his bed to deliver God's message to Eli (1 Samuel 3:8).

-Elisha arose to follow Elijah and minister to him. He never regretted his decision, for eventually the mantle of the anointing slipped from his master's shoulders to his own and he fulfilled God's destiny for his life (1 Kings 19:21).

-Nehemiah rose up at midnight to survey the ruins of the Jerusalem walls, then he challenged the workers to *“rise up and build!”* (*Nehemiah 2:18-20*).

-Esther arose from her couch of luxury to stand before the king and save an entire nation (*Esther 8:4*).

-Eleazar arose and attacked the Philistine enemy with such might that the sword stuck to his hand as he effected a major victory for God’s people (*2 Samuel 23:9-10*).

-Saul the adversary became Paul the apostle when he responded to the directive, *“Arise and go into the city and you will be told what to do”* (*Acts 9:6*).

-An angel told the Apostle Peter, “Stand up!” Peter could have said, “Why should I do that? Here I am bound between guards in the maximum security section of the prison. I’m not going anywhere. Stop disturbing my nap!” He could have remained sleeping right where he was--in prison--but Peter chose to stand up. As he did, the chains of bondage fell from his hands (*Acts 12:7*).

-*“Arise and go down to the potter’s house,”* God told Jeremiah. *“There you will hear my words”* (*Jeremiah 18:2*).

-When Jonah obeyed God’s command to *“arise and go to Ninevah,”* the greatest revival in history occurred. The entire city repented (*Jonah 3:2*).

-At the border of their promised land, the nation of Israel was challenged, *“Arise...go up against them. For we have seen the land, and indeed it is very good. Would you do nothing? Do not hesitate to go, and enter to possess the land”* (*Joshua 18:9*).

These mighty men and women of faith didn’t just passively wait on God, nor did they rush forward in aggressive confrontation or devise schemes to manipulate themselves out of their crisis. Instead, they rose up in faith to seize their God-given destinies. In so doing, they perpetuated miracles, conquered enemy armies, and saved entire nations.

This “rising up” is more than a physical act. It is “standing up inside” and declaring that despite the fact you don’t know what to do about your problem, you are getting ready by faith to act! If you are ever to fulfill your destiny, then you must take a strong spiritual stand and literally wrest your victory from the hands of the enemy.

Each person who arose in faith received divine revelation of what to do about his circumstances. Each plan of action was different, of course, because no two situations were identical, but each man or woman who rose up and declared their confidence in God received an answer and fulfilled their destiny.

CALLED TO ARISE

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus continually called men and women to rise up in faith despite their circumstances...

-He said "Arise" to the man at the pool of Bethesda, and his crippled limbs were healed (John 5:8).

-Jesus took a dead child by the hand and commanded her to arise (Matthew 9:25).

-He passed a funeral procession and told the deceased man, "I say to you, arise!" The mourning turned to a celebration of life! (Luke 7:14).

-At Christ's command, Matthew arose from the tax collector's to fulfill his destiny (Matthew 9:9).

-The blind men by the side of the road were told, "Rise...He is calling you," and as they stood they laid aside their beggar's garments. They wouldn't be needing them anymore (Mark 10:49).

To all of those blinded and crippled by negative circumstances, to those who sit in bondage by the side of life's road, to those who feel dead spiritually, mentally, and emotionally--Jesus commands, "Arise!"

When you don't know what to do, do not succumb to passive waiting. Do not attempt aggressive manipulation. Simply take your stand for God. Rise up spiritually and begin to do what you know to do. It may be a prayer. It may be a simple act of faith. For each person who reads these pages, the response will be different because no two circumstances are identical--but take your stand and begin to act by faith!

If you arise spiritually and declare your faith in the face of adversity, the light of God will dispel the darkness:

Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. (Isaiah 60:1-2)

Let your spiritual man rise up and declare God's Word in the face of the enemy forces aligned against you:

Therefore prepare yourself and arise, and speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces, lest I dismay you before them. (Jeremiah 1:17)

When you rise up in faith, it inspires others to do likewise. Jehoshaphat stood up, the Levites followed his example, and then the entire congregation of Israel stood--fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, and little children. By the simple act of standing they declared, "We don't know what to do, but we won't just sit here and do nothing. So here we are, God, trusting you to move in our behalf."

Are you ready to take your stand and join them?

*"Arise, let us go up against them. For we have seen the land, and indeed it is very good. Would you do nothing? Do not hesitate to go, and enter to possess the land."
(Joshua 18:9)*

Chapter Six

A Place Called There

So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court. (2 Chronicles 20:4-5)

Jehoshaphat stood up, but he didn't pick just any place to make his stand. He stood in the house of the Lord before the new court because it was *there* that God had promised to hear the cry of His people. Jehoshaphat reminded God:

...and (you) have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, "If disaster comes upon us-- sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine-- we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save." (2 Chronicles 20:8-9)

Jehoshaphat's request was based on an appeal made by King Solomon at the dedication of Israel's temple. Solomon asked that God's...

"...eyes may be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where You said You would put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant prays toward this place. When there is famine in the land, pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers; when their enemies besiege them in the land of their cities; whatever plague or whatever sickness there is; whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows his own burden and his own grief, and spreads out his hands to this temple: then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of the sons of men)." (2 Chronicles 6:20,28-30)

It was not just any prayer voiced by anyone in any place that gained God's attention. The Lord's eyes and ears were fixed upon the temple where His Name was exalted by His people. God promised that no matter what type of evil afflicted them, He would hear and save those who appealed to Him from His temple.

EVERY KIND OF DISASTER

The categories of affliction itemized in this passage are inclusive of every type of situation you might be facing:

-“**The sword**” speaks of direct Satanic attacks, unexpected, cutting, and wounding.

-“**Judgment**” refers to false accusations, stereo-typing, and evil judgments raised against you by others as well as recompense for sinful conduct.

-“**Pestilence**” represents lingering, aggravating, destructive circumstances.

-“**Famine**” refers to the dry, desolate times of life when God seems far away and you feel forsaken by everyone.

The sword, judgment, pestilence, famine--whatever your disaster--God hears and answers prayer when you take your stand in the right place.

A PLACE CALLED “THERE”

The Biblical record is filled with accounts of how God directed people to specific locations for spiritual purposes:

-God told Ezekiel to arise and go to the plain and he would talk with him *there* (Ezekiel 3:22).

-Jeremiah was told to go to the potter’s house and *there* God would cause him to hear His words (Jeremiah 18:2).

-Elijah was told to go to a widow in Zerephath and *there* God would sustain him (1 Kings 17:9).

-Jacob was instructed to go to Egypt and *there* God would provide for him during the famine (Genesis 45:11).

-Moses was told to come into the mount and *there* receive God’s law (Exodus 24:12).

-It was *there*, in the tabernacle, that God promised to meet with the children of Israel (Exodus 29:43).

-God told Moses to stand *there*--in the cleft of the rock--and He would reveal Himself to him (Exodus 33:21; 34:5).

-It was *there*--on mount Zion--that the Lord commanded blessings forevermore (Psalms 133:3).

-The Prophet Hosea said that *there*--at Bethel--God spoke to His people (Hosea 12:4).

-Joseph was told to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt and wait *there* until God gave him further direction (Matthew 2:13).

-Jesus told His followers to go to Galilee after His death and *there* they would see Him (Matthew 28:10).

Jehoshaphat made his appeal to God from an actual physical location. He stood *there*--before the temple, in the presence of the Lord--where God had placed His Name. The question is, where is our "there?" Where is that special place we must stand in the presence of the Lord and make our appeal with confidence that He will hear and answer?

Jehoshaphat, stood before an actual temple in God's presence to make his appeal, but the New Testament teaches that *you* are the temple of God:

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16)

As the temple of God, your spiritual being is inhabited by the Holy Spirit:

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

Your inner being is where you stand up against the enemy--the spiritual man that is regenerated by the Holy Spirit through the born again experience--the soul and spirit portion of your triune nature. As long as you allow the enemy to threaten and intimidate, he will do it. Paul warned, "Do not give place to the devil" because he knew whenever you give place to Satan he always takes it!

In the face of disaster--when you don't know what to do--don't cower in dismay before the enemy. Instead, be like the little boy whose mother repeatedly told him to sit down. Finally, after many attempts to get the child to be seated, he sat down muttering, "I may be sitting down, but I'm standing up inside!"

You are God's temple and His presence dwells in you (Ephesians 2:22). Because His Name is *there* your deliverance from the enemy is assured:

Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. (Psalm 91:14)

You do not have to go to a physical place to gain God's attention, for *you* are the temple of God, inhabited by His presence. Let your spirit man rise up there--within you-- to face your enemy.

Tell God your specific need and then make this declaration:

“I am the temple of God and your presence dwells within me because your Name is written upon my heart. You said your eyes would be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where You said You would put Your name. You said when there were disasters of the sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine that you would hear the prayer made in this place. I stand there spiritually--in that place--boldly claiming your promises to hear and save me. In Jesus Name, Amen!”

STEP THREE:
REFOCUS YOUR ATTENTION

Chapter Seven

From Me To Thee

“O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?” (2 Chronicles 20:6)

When Jehoshaphat stood up in the place where God commanded, there was no divine light from heaven. There were no angels, no audible voice from God, nothing supernatural happened--but Jehoshaphat was strategically positioned to receive an answer from God.

Since he didn't know what to do about his problem, Jehoshaphat did the only thing he knew to do. He began to pray:

“O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, ‘If disaster comes upon us--sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine--we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.’ And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir-- whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them--here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.” (2 Chronicles 20:6-12)

Jehoshaphat's prayer contained eight elements that our own intercession should include when we face difficult circumstances. They are declarations that change our focus from self to God, “from me to Thee” :

ROYALTY:

Jehoshaphat focused on Who God is, proclaiming His royalty and divine attributes. “Are You not our God?” It was a declaration rather than a question...

-Despite the marching feet of the enemy sounding in the distance...
“Are you not our God?”

~Despite the threats of the enemy...
“Are You not our God?”

-We don’t know what to do, but...
“Are You not our God?”

When you call on God, you actually invoke all the inherent power of His name. God is...

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Jehovah-Tsidkenu: | Your righteousness |
| Jehovah-M-Kaddesh | Your sanctification |
| Jehovah-Shalom | Your peace |
| Jehovah-Shammah | The God who is there |
| Jehovah-Rophe | Your healer |
| Jehovah-Jireh | Your provider |
| Jehovah-Nissi | The banner over your life |
| Jehovah-Rohi | The shepherd who provides your every need |

These eight names of God address every potential problem and need of life. When you declare, “You are my God,” you are actually confessing these benefits.

RULE:

Next, Jehoshaphat confessed God’s authority over every circumstance of life:

“O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?”

Some of us readily see the hand of God in the good things of life, but do we really believe He is in control of negative circumstances? Do we see Him ruling in power and might in the routine, hum-drum days of life? Can we see God’s hand at work when all around seems to be falling apart? Can we declare with Job, *“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him?” (Job 13:15).*

RECORD:

Jehoshaphat’s prayer focused on God’s past record of faithfulness: *“Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel...”*

When we face perplexing circumstances, how quickly we forget all God did for us in the past. Did He not provide in time of need? Wasn’t God faithful when you were faithless?

Didn't God stand beside you in times of grief and financial hardship?

When you face situations for which there seems to be no answer, focus your attention on God's track record. As you declare the faithfulness of God in the past, it encourages faith that He will move in your present circumstances.

RELATIONSHIP:

Jehoshaphat appealed on the basis of a friendship relationship with God:

“Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?”

A covenant was established between God and Abraham that extended to succeeding generations and in his crisis, Jehoshaphat appealed for help on the basis of this relationship.

There is a level of intimacy with God that is fostered no other way than through the difficulties of life. The Apostle Paul cried out, “That I might know Him--in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering!” It is exciting to experience God in resurrection power, when prayers are answered, the sick are healed, and your finances are blessed. But there is another dimension of relationship discovered only in the fellowship of His suffering when bad reports and great multitudes are bombarding you. It is then you learn to love God for Who He is, not only for what He has done.

REWARDS:

Next, Jehoshaphat confessed God's promises:

“Here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit.”

Jehoshaphat declared, “This is Your land and You gave it to us as an inheritance! This is your promise to us!”

The Bible reveals that God promises aid in times of trouble. He pledges salvation, healing, and deliverance. He said your household can be saved and your children be strong in the Lord. When you face impossible situations, appeal to God on the basis of His promises because when God moves it is always in response to His covenant with man.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Jehoshaphat reminded God of His responsibility to deliver His people:

“If disaster comes upon us--sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine--we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.”

Jehoshaphat did not deny the devastating potential of life’s problems. Some people claim that acknowledging a problem is a negative confession that aborts faith. When Christ’s disciples thought Lazarus was sleeping, however, Jesus pointedly corrected them. “Lazarus is dead,” He declared. Talk about a negative confession! But in the next breath Jesus said, “But I go to raise Him!”

If you do not acknowledge a problem, how can you deal with it? When deliverance comes, how can God receive glory if you refuse to admit there was a problem in the first place? Acknowledge the problem, but at the same time proclaim your confidence in God’s promise to help.

Jehoshaphat mentions the sword, judgment, pestilence, and famine which are inclusive of every category of life’s problems. He realistically appraised the challenges, but his focus was on God’s promises rather than the problems. “When we cry out in our affliction,” he declared, “You will hear and save!”

When you face difficult circumstances of life, where is your focus? Are your thoughts constantly consumed with the problem? If so, you must change your focus from the problem to the promises of God.

RIGHTEOUSNESS:

Jehoshaphat appealed to God on the basis of His righteousness judgment asking, *“O our God, will You not judge them?”*

Jehoshaphat did not rant and rail against the enemy. He did not start a negative propaganda campaign against the enemy or call the elders together to rehearse their sinful acts. He committed his enemy to the righteous judgment of God.

RELIANCE:

Finally, Jehoshaphat declared absolute reliance on God:

“For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”

No mention is made of Jehoshaphat calling up the military, although he had a great army. Instead of summoning his army, he declared his complete dependence on God. He used “thou, thy, and thee” a total of 18 times in his prayer (King James Version), changing his focus from the problem to the solution, from “me to thee.”

Where do you place your confidence in times of crisis? Is your trust in other people? Do you rely on your own natural abilities to solve the problem? Do you trust in your finances, position, and education--or do you, like Jehoshaphat, declare your absolute reliance on God?

THE ENEMY IS COMING!

Jehoshaphat's enemy was advancing rapidly, yet this man stood where God commanded and prayed. Your enemy is advancing also and his forces and threats are fearsome. Will you focus on the problem or the promises? Don't deny the problem, just change your focus from "me"--your problems and circumstances--to "Thee"--God's unlimited resources.

As you close this chapter, make this declaration:

"My enemy is advancing and I don't know what to do, but You are my God and You have proven faithful in times past. You are my only hope! I have no power or might, but my eyes are upon You!"

Chapter Eight

From Now To Then

*“Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? “
(2 Chronicles 20:7)*

Jehoshaphat stood--there in the place where God commanded--and began to pray. In the previous chapter we analyzed this prayer which changed his focus from the problem to the promises when he declared, “You are our God. Our eyes are upon You!”

In this chapter we continue examining Jehoshaphat’s prayer, finding that his concern did not remain on his present dilemma. Instead, he turned his attention “from now to then”--from the present problem to the past and the future.

REMEMBER THE PAST

Moses constantly encouraged Israel to remember God’s faithfulness in the past and it is well for us to take these admonitions to heart:

*Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life.
(Deuteronomy 4:9)*

Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the Lord your God has forbidden you. (Deuteronomy 4:23)

Then beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. (Deuteronomy 6:12)

Lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them, when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. (Deuteronomy 8:12 -14)

And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. (Deuteronomy 8:18)

These admonitions confirm there is an inherent danger in forgetting what God has done for us in the past. We are to diligently beware lest we forget that God delivered us from the bondage of sin. We are to acknowledge our covenant relationship with Him, recalling all He has done in our behalf. The Psalmist David encourages us to:

Remember His marvelous works which He has done, his wonders, and the judgments of His mouth. (Psalm 105:5)

Some people know God by His Words but have never experienced His work in their lives. We must come to know Him by both His works and His Words. When you confront problems, begin to meditate on His works:

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands. (Psalm 143:5)

When you are discouraged, recall God's faithfulness to you:

O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, and from the heights of Hermon, from the Hill Mizar. (Psalms 42:6)

I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember Your wonders of old. (Psalm 77:11)

Focus on the inherent power of God's name:

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. (Psalm 20:7)

Praise God for blessings experienced in the past:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. (Psalm 103:2)

In the face of desperate circumstances, declare God's promises:

For I have become like a wineskin in smoke, yet I do not forget Your statutes. (Psalm 119:83)

I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have given me life. (Psalm 119:93)

When David was soundly defeated by the enemy at Ziklag--his wife and family were taken captive, the city was destroyed, and his own men talked of stoning him to death--David encouraged himself in the Lord. He didn't wait for someone else to do it (there was no one). He did it himself.

When you face the devastation of the enemy, take responsibility for encouraging yourself in the Lord. Don't wait for a pastor or friend to do it. Encourage yourself by recalling the Words and works of God in the past.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

When you focus on what God did in the past, you actually renew hope for the future:

That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments. (Psalm 78:7)

The Apostle Paul declared:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)

Paul learned to change his focus from the present to the future--from now to then. This is why he could boldly declare:

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

Do not focus on your present circumstances. Open your spiritual eyes to acknowledge what God did in the past and to see--by faith--what He will do in the future.

Faith, hope, and love are declared to be the greatest three abiding virtues of Christianity (1 Corinthians 13) and although we hear numerous messages on faith and love, we rarely hear much about hope. The Greek word for hope is *elpo* which means "to look forward to with pleasurable confidence and expectation."

The Bible repeatedly emphasizes the desolate condition of those who are without hope (Job 7:6; 1 Thessalonians 4:13), whose hope is perished (Job 8:13), failed (Job 11:20), removed (Job 19:10), or cut off (Job 8:14). The writer of Proverbs observes that "*hope deferred makes the heart sick*" (Proverbs 13:12) and Jeremiah describes the effects of hopelessness on the soul:

My strength and my hope have perished from the Lord. Remembering my affliction and roaming, the wormwood and the gall. My soul still remembers and sinks within me. (Lamentations 3:18-20)

When Jeremiah focused on his problems he was bitter and depressed, but when he focused on God's goodness in the past and the hope of what the Lord would do in the future, his attitude changed. Jeremiah said:

This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. (Lamentations 3:21-22)

Hope is vital to spiritual stability because those who no longer hope (Isaiah 38:18) or decide "there is no hope" (Jeremiah 2:25) turn back from following God:

And they said, "That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart. " (Jeremiah 18:12)

The Bible declares that the misplaced hope of the wicked fails (Job 11:20), as does that of the hypocrite (Job 27:8). Those who place their hope in riches will be deceived (Job 31:24) and the hope of unjust men perishes (Proverbs 11:7). The Apostle Paul further describes the effects of hopelessness recalling ...

...At that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (Ephesians 2:12)

Piercing our hopelessness is the reality that *"the Lord is the hope of His people"* (Joel 3:16) and *"the God of hope"* (Romans 15:13). The Lord Jesus Christ is the source of hope (1 Timothy 1:1). There is hope in His righteousness (Galatians 5:5), His calling (Ephesians 4:4), His glory (Colossians 1:27), His Gospel (Colossians 1:27), His salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:8), His grace (2 Thessalonians 2:16), and in the eternal life of which we are assured. The Apostle Paul declared that our hope is not limited by time, but extends to eternity for...

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. (1 Corinthians 15:19)

The righteous can rest in hope (Acts 2:26) because even in death we have the hope of eternal life for the soul and spirit. (Proverbs 14:32). You have full assurance of your spiritual hope because it is secured by God's Word (Hebrews 6:11).

Jeremiah declares, *"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord"* (Jeremiah 17:7). David said, *"Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God"* (Psalm 146:5). We are blessed and happy in evil times because we hope in God (Jeremiah 17:17) Who declares that even the valley of Achor (trouble) will become a door of hope:

I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. (Hosea 2:15)

Because our hope will be rewarded (Proverbs 10:28) we are admonished to *"hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord"* (Lamentations 3:26).

Hope is not something you work up or pray down, it is a gift of God through grace:

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace. (2 Thessalonians 2:16)

While hope is a gift from God, you have the responsibility to maintain it. The Bible directs us to exercise hope toward God (Acts 24:15), wait in hope (Galatians 5:5), rejoice in hope (Romans 5:2;12:12), and anticipate the hope reserved for us in Heaven (Colossians 1:5). We are told to "abound in hope" (Romans 15:13), which means "have enough to spare, a supply that is overflowing, excessive without measure." We are to hold hope fast (Hebrews 3:6), look forward to that blessed hope (Titus 2:13), and lay hold on the hope set before us (Hebrews 6:18).

Do not despair when you face situations for which there seems to be no answer because hope is actually generated by the difficulties of life:

. . . but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. (Romans 5: 3-4)

At one time the nation of Israel lost hope (Ezekiel 37:11) but when their hope rekindled, God said:

You are wearied in the length of your way; yet you did not say, "There is no hope." You have found the life of your hand; therefore you were not grieved. (Isaiah 57:10)

Hope dispels weariness and leads to spiritual renewal. Hope is an anchor for your soul, sure and steadfast in times of trouble (Hebrews 6:19). Everything you do should be done with an attitude of hope (1 Corinthians 9:10) because the Lord takes pleasure in those that hope (Psalm 147:11).

Hope is based on faith:

For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. (Romans 8:24-25)

The Patriarch Abraham is perhaps the best Biblical example of a man who learned the

power of hope. Despite his age and Sarah's barren womb, he believed "God who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did" and "contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken " (Romans 4:17-18).

The Psalmist David wrote more about hope than any other Biblical author. Ask God to rekindle your hope for the future as you make the following declarations from the book of Psalms:

*Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope.
(Psalm 16:9)*

But You are He who took Me out of the womb; you made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. (Psalm 22:9)

*Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the Lord.
(Psalm 31:24)*

*Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy.
(Psalm 33:18)*

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we hope in You. (Psalm 33:22)

For in You, O Lord, I hope; you will hear, O Lord my God. (Psalm 38:15)

And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You. (Psalm 39:7)

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God. (Psalm 42:11)

For You are my hope, O Lord GOD; you are my trust from my youth. (Psalm 71:5)

But I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more. (Psalm 71:14)

*Remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope.
(Psalm 119:49)*

My soul faints for Your salvation, but I hope in Your word. (Psalm 119:81)

You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word. (Psalm 119:114)

Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live; and do not let me be ashamed of my hope. (Psalm 119:116)

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope. (Psalm 130:5)

...Hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption. (Psalm 130:7)

Make the decision--right now--that you will *"hope in the Lord from this time forth and forever!" (Psalm 131:3).*

FROM ME TO THEE, FROM NOW TO THEN

Jehoshaphat stood in the place God commanded and did the only thing he knew to do--he prayed. He turned his focus from "me to thee" (the problem to the promise), and from "now to then" (from the present to God's faithfulness in the past and his hope for the future):

"Jehoshaphat's reaction here is a powerful gesture of piety; he does not delay his praise and thanksgiving until the battle has proven God's promise. His trust in the Lord is such that he is content with the prophetic assurance that his prayer has been heard. " [1]

When Jehoshaphat finished his appeal to God, a hush fell across the waiting congregation. No one stirred. Even the little children remained quiet. They stood there waiting before the Lord. Dependent. Vulnerable. Will their confidence be rewarded?

STEP FOUR:
REVELATION

Chapter Nine

The Turning Point

Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the congregation; And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: "Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you." And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. (2 Chronicles 20:14-18)

His name was Jahaziel. He appears on the pages of Scripture but once--and that briefly--yet his message impacts the destiny of an entire nation. His words were pregnant with the potential of a turning point in Israel's circumstances, but to accept his message God's people must reject carnal reasoning for divine revelation.

In every circumstance you face for which you have no answer there comes a turning point, a moment in time when all of a sudden, in answer to your perplexities and prayers, God reveals His plan. The details vary according to each situation because no two sets of circumstances are identical, but there are common elements evident in divine revelation. These are noted in the words of Jahaziel which marked Israel's turning point.

DO NOT BE AFRAID:

As we learned in Chapter 3, carnal reasoning generates fear. Divine revelation, however, empowers you to face the enemy unafraid.

Many years previously, when Israel stood at the border of their promised land, God warned them:

Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them. (Numbers 14:9)

The inhabitants of Canaan were labeled "bread," meaning that Israel's encounter with their enemies would actually result in spiritual strengthening. The Lord is with you and there is no need to fear. When you face your circumstances in His strength, your problems become as "bread" to you and result in spiritual strengthening.

Israel refused to heed God's command and wandered for 40 years in a desert wilderness. Years later Moses sadly reminded them:

Then I said to you, Do not be terrified, or be afraid of them. The Lord your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes. (Deuteronomy 1:29-30)

Carnal reasoning says to "retreat" from threatening circumstances. Rationalization dictates that you must learn to co-exist with an enemy because you aren't strong enough to conquer him. God says He will fight for you, but He can only go before you if you are advancing against the enemy and facing each challenge in His strength. God cannot go before you if you are retreating.

Prior to his death, Moses gave a similar admonition to his successor:

Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, He is the one who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed. " (Deuteronomy 31:7-8)

Do you know why the enemy wants to keep you in the indecision of not knowing what to do? He knows God has a divine destiny--a spiritual inheritance--for you. If you are strong, of good courage, and advance with God leading the way, you will fulfill it.

DO NOT BE DISMAYED:

The next portion of Jahaziel's message to Israel was, "Do not be dismayed." Dismay means "alarm, apprehension, anxiety, and dread."

- "Be careful," advises the voice of alarm.
- "I just don't feel right about this," suggests the voice of apprehension.
- "This just won't work for me," cautions anxiety.
- "You never were good at confrontation," dictates dread.

When you are trapped in any of these cycles you will not advance in faith to conquer your problem.

RECOGNIZE THAT THE BATTLE IS GOD'S:

You become fearful and dismayed when you face the battles of life armed with your limited human resources. You must always remember that the battle is not yours, but God's. The ministry is not yours--it is the Lord's. The problem is not yours--it is God's problem. The church you pastor is not yours because Jesus said, "I will build my church."

MOVE IN GOD'S TIMING:

"Tomorrow go down against them," instructed Jahaziel. When you don't know what to do, don't do anything until you do know what to do and then act in God's timing.

- Noah shut the door of the ark at the specific time commanded by God.
- The death angel passed over Egypt at the set time.
- Esther waited until the perfect timing of God to appear before the King with her request, and she saved an entire nation.
- Jesus was born in the "fullness of time" and rose from the dead on the third day, the exact time that was predicted.

Carnal reasoning always dictates haste: "You better do something now--tomorrow may be too late!" God's Word indicates, however, that spiritual victories come to those who learn to wait:

Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord! (Psalm 27:14)

But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

...Then you will know that I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me. (Isaiah 49:23)

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope. (Psalm 130:5)

POSITION YOURSELF FOR VICTORY:

"You will not need to fight," instructed Jahaziel. "Position yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

Charles Spurgeon observes:

"Despair tempts us to give up. Cowardice calls us to retreat. Presumption says 'Step out, advance into enemy territory and fight for your rights and expect a miracle.' Precipitancy says 'Don't just stand there ...do something.' But faith listens neither to presumption, nor despair, nor to cowardice, nor to precipitancy, but it hears God says, 'Stand still, keep the position of an upright man ready for action, expecting further orders, cheerfully and patiently awaiting direction...' [1]"

Christ's Disciples went fishing one night and caught nothing. At Jesus' command, however, they rejected carnal reasoning and threw their nets into the water one more time. They responded in faith and hauled in the catch of a lifetime! Who knows what rich bounty lies beneath the empty boat of your own failures?

REJECTING REASON

The turning point in every dilemma of life comes when human reasoning is rejected and divine revelation is embraced:

- Noah rejected reason, built an ark on dry ground, and his family was saved.
- Moses rejected reason and led the Israelites across the Red Sea.
- Joshua rejected reason and conquered Jericho with shouts and blasts of rams' horns.
- A poor widow rejected selfish reasoning, baked a cake for the prophet from the last of her meal and oil, and her supply of staples was replenished continually for the duration of the famine.
- At the prophet's word, a debt-ridden widow borrowed vessels from her neighbors and began to pour from a single container of oil. The oil continued to flow until every vessel was filled, then she sold the oil and paid her debts.
- The prophet Elijah prepared a sacrifice, drenched it in water, and then called for the fire of God to fall. Against all human reasoning, the flames consumed both sacrifice and water.

- The prophet Ezekiel rejected human reasoning and, at God's command, paraded through the streets with his dirty underwear on a stick!
- A little boy rejected reason, offered his lunch to Jesus, and a multitude was fed.
- The Apostle Peter rejected reason when he heard Jesus say, "Come." In the strength of that one word he got out of the boat and walked on water.

You must learn to reject the voice of human reasoning when you face situations for which there seems to be no answer. Do not listen to education, tradition, religion or experience. Listen to God. One word from God is more powerful in your circumstances than an entire discourse emanating from human reasoning.

God's plan for Jehoshaphat defied human reasoning. Instead of calling Israel to arms, teaching them how to keep ranks, training them to follow orders and fight valiantly, Jehoshaphat told Israel two things: "Believe in the Lord God. Believe in His prophets."

Chapter Ten

Six Stages Of Revelation

In a confused and misdirected world, God promises His people revelation knowledge:

Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it, whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left." (Isaiah 30:21)

There are six stages of development through which we pass as we reject carnal reasoning and embrace divine revelation. These are evident in the story of Jehoshaphat and numerous other Scriptural examples. The six stages of revelation are: Vexation, Revelation, Hesitation, Resignation, Verification, and Exaltation.

STAGE ONE: VEXATION

Jehoshaphat was fearful when he received word of the enemy alliance advancing against him. The dread, terror, and anxiety arising from situations for which there appears to be no answer are often quite vexing. That is why we are calling this stage "vexation."

What Jehoshaphat did not realize at the time--and what we often do not comprehend--is that "vexation" is the first stage of revelation. Perhaps you are questioning your own perplexing circumstances and are troubled about why certain things are happening in your life. Vexation is the impetus that secures your attention and prepares you to receive God's plan. Vexation is actually the first stage of revelation.

STAGE TWO: REVELATION

Vexation catapults you to the next level of revelation:

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. . . "For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord. (2 Chronicles 20:3-4,12-13)

A troubled spirit caused Jehoshaphat to focus his attention on God and prepared him to receive the divine strategy for his circumstances. The revelation came through a man named Jahaziel who spoke a prophetic word from God:

And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you. "' (2 Chronicles 20:15-17)

Instead of wringing your hands in despair and chanting the universal motto of the perplexed--"I just don't know what to do"-- allow vexation to open your mind and spirit to God's revelation. As Jehoshaphat, come before God in prayer, admit your frustrations, and wait in His presence until He responds:

"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know. " (Jeremiah 33:3)

Don't give up until you receive your revelation. You will know when it comes because you will no longer be confused and frustrated. You will move from a position of not knowing to knowing exactly what to do and how to do it.

STAGE THREE: HESITATION

It is strange, but usually when God reveals His strategy we start thinking of all the rational reasons why His plan cannot work. This is because God's way often is contrary to human reasoning.

In Jehoshaphat's case human reasoning would say, "Take stock of your weapons. Train the warriors. Map out the battle plan." But God said, "Set yourself, stand still, fear not, tomorrow go out against them."

Some people spend years in the hesitation stage continuously articulating reasons why they cannot accept God's revelation. God recognizes hesitancy in accepting revelation that defies human reasoning. This is why He warned Jehoshaphat: *"Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's ...Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you"* God commanded Jehoshaphat: "Tomorrow...right away...don't hesitate...put my plan into action!"

When you receive your answer from God, do not hesitate ...
...Even if your answer defies human reasoning.
...Even though you are overwhelmed by its impossibilities.
...Despite the fact that your friends and relatives may think you are crazy...
...Allow God to move you to the next stage of revelation which is...

STAGE FOUR: RESIGNATION

Resignation does not mean you quit! Resignation, as we are using it in this model, means that you resign your will to the plan of God. You set aside your own human reasoning for divine revelation. You reject your own desires to accept God's direction.

This was Jehoshaphat's response to God's revelation, despite the fact that the prophetic message of Jahaziel was unusual. The people were to position themselves and let God fight for them as they advanced into enemy territory singing His praises. A pretty crazy strategy, don't you think--sending the choir first into battle?

God's answer to your dilemma may appear equally unusual but if you will position yourself as He commands, advance in faith, and begin to praise Him, God will fight for you! Jehoshaphat rose up early in the morning to execute God's plan:

So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." (2 Chronicles 20:20)

Jehoshaphat encouraged the people to resign their will to God's plan. He told them, *"Believe God and you will be established. Believe His prophets and you will prosper."*

STAGE FIVE: VERIFICATION

God verified His plan through a mighty victory executed on the enemy:

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever." Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. (2 Chronicles 20:21-22)

The victory came from God through an army of singers! A united congregation, praising God in the beauty of holiness. A people strategically positioned according to God's revelation. When you resign your human will and carnal reasoning to God's plan it will not be long until you, too, receive verification, and when you advance on the basis of this knowledge the enemy will be defeated!

STAGE SIX: EXALTATION

Following God's plan does not mean you will be without problems and challenges. Jehoshaphat had to motivate, organize, and position the people strategically according to the

revelation he received. The plan of God is always greater than any temporary inconveniences involved, however, and--in the end--revelation knowledge results in the exaltation of God:

Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies. So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the Lord. (2 Chronicles 20:27-28)

A REPETITIVE PATTERN

It is important to understand these six stages of revelation because God frequently follows this pattern when providing divine revelation. This same pattern is revealed in the following biblical examples:

Moses: Exodus Chapters 1-15

Vexation: Experienced vexation in Egypt killed an Egyptian

Revelation: Comes through a voice from a burning bush

Hesitation: Moses raises objections

Resignation: Moses decides to go

Verification: Miracles before Pharaoh and Israel's deliverance from Egypt verify his commission

Exaltation: Joy and praise to God after crossing Red Sea

Gideon: Judges Chapter 6

Vexation: While threshing wheat, Gideon pours out vexation (verse 13)

Revelation: Comes from an angel (verses 12 and 14)

Hesitation: "My family is poor, I am the least" (verse 15)

Resignation: Gideon resigns himself to God's plan (verse 17)

Verification: "Show me a sign" (verses 17 through 23)

Exaltation: Builds an altar and praises God (verse 24)

Mary, Mother of Jesus: Luke Chapter 1

Vexation: She is troubled (verses 30-31)

Revelation: An angel brings a revelation from God (verses 30-31)

Hesitation: She questions and hesitates (verse 34)

Resignation: She resigns herself to God's plan (verse 38)

Verification: The plan is verified by Elizabeth (verse 45)

Exaltation: Mary exalts God (verse 46)

GOD HAS A PLAN!

When you face impossible situations for which you have no answer, God's Word to you is:

*...I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace, and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.
(Jeremiah 29:11 TAB)*

In order to reaching that "final outcome," you will frequently follow the pattern discussed in this chapter. Remember these stages of revelation, for you will pass through them repeatedly in your spiritual journey:

- Vexation
- Revelation
- Hesitation
- Resignation
- Verification
- Exaltation

STEP FIVE:
RESPOND IN OBEDIENCE

Chapter Eleven

How To Be Established In God

Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high. And they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established. Believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever." (2 Chronicles 20: 19-21)

The man who didn't know what to do learned what to do and he "rose early in the morning" to do it. Jehoshaphat's instructions to his people contain the next key to in resolving our own dilemmas of life: *"Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established. Believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."*

This chapter focuses on the first portion of this directive, *"Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established."* Chapter Twelve examines the second portion, *"Believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."*

HOW TO BELIEVE AND BE ESTABLISHED

"If you believe God, you will be established," declared Jehoshaphat. The prophet Isaiah later articulated the converse of these words, *"If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established" (Isaiah 7:9)*. When you are established in God, negative circumstances no longer immobilize you. You may not know what to do, but you know God has the answer. Confusion is replaced by confidence. Fear is conquered by faith.

But how do you believe and become established in faith? Here are some scriptural guidelines:

REJECT DOUBT:

If you are going to embrace belief, then you must reject unbelief and doubt like the plague because they result from a hardened heart:

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. (Mark 16:14)

An unbelieving heart will not receive God's message:

But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. (John 5:38)

Unbelief hinders you from receiving solutions for your problems. Doubt literally cuts you off from the blessings of God! This is graphically illustrated by the experiences of the nation of Israel. God supernaturally delivered Israel from Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and guided them through the wilderness. At Kadesh-Barnea God directed them to take possession of their promised land, but when ten of the twelve spies returned with an evil report the people's hearts were filled with unbelief:

Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. (Hebrews 3:17-19)

The Amplified Version translates verse 19, "*Unbelief had shut them out.*" Unbelief cuts you off from the supernatural life flow of God:

Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief... (Mark 6: 5-6)

Don't limit God's power to work in your circumstances by your own unbelief. Reject doubt and assert your confidence in God. You must believe it is God's will to establish you because, "*if you will not believe, surely you shall not be established*" (Isaiah 7:9).

The Psalmist David declared, "*He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps*" (Psalms 40:2). God sees the hurt and confusion generated by the situations for which you have no answers. God longs to lift you from the pit of these circumstances--and He will do it--but you must believe.

Belief is not optional. It is a command:

And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. (1 John 3:23)

Is it hard for you to believe? Have you been in perplexing circumstances so long that you see no way out? As the New Testament man whose child was ill, begin to cry out, "Help my unbelief!"

Belief is fostered by immersing yourself in God's Word:

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)

To be established you must believe God exists and that He will respond to those who seek Him, for "... he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him " (Hebrews 11:6). Belief generates faith and soon you will receive an internal witness that your confidence is not misplaced:

He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. (1 John 5:10)

Jesus said:

- "Don't be afraid ... only believe."
- "Believe and you will receive."
- "If you can believe, all things are possible."

"All things" includes the solution to your circumstances for which there seems to be no answer.

OBEY GOD'S WORD:

It is not enough to just read and study God's Word, you must also obey it if you are to be established in God. Samuel told King Saul:

... "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever." (1 Samuel 13:13)

When you take God's Word literally for what it says and let it reign over your circumstances, then its supernatural power is released to work in your life:

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

Obedience brings blessing, but disobedience allows curses to operate in your life (Deuteronomy 11:27-28). God declares:

- "Obey my voice, and I will be your God." (Jeremiah 7:23)*
- "Obey my voice ...and you will be my people." Jeremiah 11:4*
- "Obey and your soul will live." (Jeremiah 26:13)*

Those who observe and obey the Word are blessed:

Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God. (Deuteronomy 12:28)

Many refuse to obey God's Word, close their ears to the truth, and live in rebellion. Others compromise the Word of God to accommodate their own fleshly desires. James cautions:

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)

Obedience is not infeasible. God enables you to obey through His ability, not your own:

I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. (Ezekiel 36:27)

You can break the power of disobedience in your life by determining, like Jesus, that you will do God's will:

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. (John 5:30)

LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY:

The Apostle Paul declares:

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? (Romans 6:16)

Obedience results in righteousness and the Word declares, *"In righteousness you shall be established..." (Isaiah 54:14).*

EVALUATE YOUR LIFE:

Consider the direction of your life and evaluate the consequences of each decision. Proverbs encourages you to *"Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established" (Proverbs 4:26).*

Sometimes we end up in complex circumstances because we act before we think. We become involved in worldly entanglements and then cry out, "I don't know what to do!" Ponder your direction in life, think seriously about each decision, and let God guide your footsteps each day. Decisions determine destiny.

BE GROUNDED IN THE FAITH:

Stability results from being "established in the faith," which means you are grounded in the basic doctrines of God's Word. Paul encourages us to be *"...rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:7).*

COMMIT YOUR WORKS TO GOD:

The Bible declares, *"Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established" (Proverbs 16:3).* Instead of struggling to work out your situation, commit your work to the Lord. It is God's work, His plan, His ministry. Release the stress and tension of your troubling circumstances to Him and you will find that your thoughts are established, you begin to think clearly, and the fog of confusion lifts.

SEEK WISE COUNSEL:

The writer of Proverbs declares, *"Plans are established by counsel; by wise counsel wage war" (Proverbs 20:18).* Wise spiritual counsel often generates solutions to your problems and enables you to successfully wage war on the negative circumstances of life.

EXERCISE GODLY WISDOM:

The writer of Proverbs reveals that *"through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established" (Proverbs 24:3).* The wisdom that establishes is not worldly wisdom, but the Godly wisdom described by James:

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:17-18)

When you ask for wisdom without doubting, you will receive it:

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. (James 1: 5-7)

You will not always hear a voice from Heaven or receive a supernatural sign concerning your problem. When these are absent and you are faced with a decision, be assured that God's wisdom is resident within you. Make a decision in faith that He is guiding you with wisdom from above.

ACCEPT GOD'S GRACE:

Recognize that it is grace, not your own works, that establishes you spiritually:

Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. (Hebrews 13:9)

You will be delivered by God's grace, not through scheming, manipulation, or carnal conflict.

RESULTS OF AN ESTABLISHED LIFE

When you emerge from the mire of your perplexing circumstances to be established in God, then your confusion will cease. You will no longer fear because you know the enemy will be conquered:

His heart is established; he will not be afraid, until he sees his desire upon his enemies. (Psalms 112:8)

Fear will be eliminated. Oppression and terror will no longer torment you:

In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you. (Isaiah 54:14)

ESTABLISHED IN GOD

Here are the nine Biblical principles discussed in this chapter that enable you to believe on the Lord and be established:

- Reject doubt
- Obey God's Word
- Live righteously
- Evaluate your life
- Be grounded in the faith
- Commit your works to God
- Seek wise counsel
- Exercise Godly wisdom
- Accept God's grace

"Believe in the Lord your God and you shall be established"--that was the first battle strategy. The second part of Jehoshaphat's admonition was "Believe his prophets and you shall prosper." We will implement this strategy in the next chapter.

Chapter Twelve

How To Prosper In All You Do

So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." (2 Chronicles 20:20)

God's people faced a formidable enemy alliance and didn't know what to do. As they waited before the Lord for direction a prophetic word came through a young man named Jahaziel. Jehoshaphat immediately obeyed God's revelation and prepared his troops to advance.

His instructions to his people were brief but spiritually potent: *"Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."*

In the last chapter we examined the first point of this two-part battle plan--*"Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established"*--as we dealt with the importance of obedience. In this chapter we focus attention on the second part of the strategy: *"Believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."*

BELIEVING THE PROPHETS

Prophecy is one of the spiritual gifts bestowed on believers by God through the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:28). "Prophecy" is speaking under the special inspiration of God. It is the supernatural ability to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through a divinely-anointed utterance.

In the Old Testament people went to prophets for guidance because the gift of Holy Spirit baptism was not yet given and the presence of God was shut up in the Holy of Holies. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we now have access to the presence of God and the gift of the Holy Spirit, both of which provide guidance. Paul declares, *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14).*

It is no longer necessary to go to a prophet to receive spiritual guidance since this is one of the functions of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian. Each believer should learn how to be led by God's Spirit which is actually the "spirit of prophecy" operating in them. The New Testament gives no record of believers seeking advice from prophets after the gift of the Holy Spirit was given, but this in no way undermines the importance of the prophetic ministry. To "prophecy" means to declare openly words from God that exhort, edify, and comfort:

*But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.
(1 Corinthians 14:3)*

The words spoken by a prophet under divine inspiration are called prophecies and if you adhere to them you will be successful.

The Holy Spirit is always in control of true prophecy and directs attention to Jesus Christ:

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1-3)

Prophecy does not replace the written Word of God. The Bible says prophecy will cease, but the Word of God abides forever (1 Corinthians 13:8; 1 Peter 1:25). The Bible warns of false prophets (Matthew 24:11,24; Mark 13:22). A person called "the false prophet" will be prominent in events at the end of the world (Revelation 13:11-17; 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). Because there are false prophets, God's Word provides several ways to identify them:

DOCTRINAL ERROR:

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith. (Romans 12:6)

The phrase "in proportion to faith" means in right relation to the faith. The way to recognize true prophecies is by whether or not they agree with the basic doctrines of the Christian faith revealed in the Bible. For example, false prophets do not confess the deity of Jesus Christ:

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. (1 John 4:1-3)

False prophets teach sexual immorality and permissiveness:

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. (2 Peter 2:1-3)

DECEIVING SIGNS:

False prophets deceive people with miraculous signs:

Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many ...For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. (Matthew 24:11,24)

BAD FRUIT:

The evidence of spiritual fruit is the true test of any ministry:

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? (Matthew 7:15-16)

Spiritual fruit is observed by analyzing results of a prophet's ministry and the spiritual qualities demonstrated in his life.

FALSE CLAIMS:

Any prophet who claims to be divine is false:

Then if anyone says to you, "Look, here is the Christ!" or "There!" do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. (Matthew 24:23-24)

UNFULFILLED PROPHECIES:

The final test by which a true prophet can be identified is whether or not what he prophesies comes to pass:

But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?--when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)

Because there are many false prophets, some believers totally disregard the prophetic ministry, but Jehoshaphat declared, "*Believe His prophets and prosper.*" Success comes through

believing the "sure Word of prophecy" delivered by true prophets and through the spirit of prophecy that abides within each Holy Spirit filled believer. Perhaps there would be less confusion in the Church today if the prophetic ministry was reactivated in more of our congregations.

WHAT IT MEANS TO PROSPER

"Believe God's prophets and you will prosper," declared Jehoshaphat. To "prosper" means to "push forward, to break out, to come mightily, to be successful," but God's definition of prosperity differs from that of the world. The world focuses on possessions or performance while God is concerned with person. Character is more important than achievement in God's analysis. In the world, success is man-centered instead of God centered. Your achievements are evaluated in comparison to others instead of by the unchanging standard of God's Word. The effects of comparison are devastating:

- Satan compared himself to God and ushered sin into the universe.
- Jacob compared Joseph to his brothers and generated destructive sibling rivalry.
- The people of Israel compared themselves to other nations and forsook God's unique purpose for them.
- Saul heard the people comparing him to David and was jealous.

Other people's achievements are not the standard for your life. This is why Peter's question, *"Lord, what about this man?"* received the rebuke, *"What is that to you? You follow me."* (John 21:21-22).

Money, power, fame--these are all worldly standards of success, but God's Word warns, *"And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them..."* (Jeremiah 45:5). Instead, believers are to be special people whose unique purpose is to proclaim God's praises:

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

The life of a true believer is one of stewardship, not ownership, and your success is measured in terms of fulfilling God's plans and purposes for you. It has been said that success is not what we are, but what we are compared to what we could be. Success is not measured by what we do, but by what we do compared to what we could do.

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL

The Bible reveals basic principles that--when applied to your life--guarantees you will prosper in all you do!

PRINCIPLE ONE: RECOGNIZE THAT TRUE SUCCESS COMES FROM GOD:

So I answered them, and said to them, "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem." (Nehemiah 2:20)

Education and self-improvement may help you get ahead in this world, but they do not make you successful in God's eyes. Wealth and fame do not guarantee success, for we witness daily the demise of many of our "super stars." True success comes from "the God of heaven Himself." This means you may be unpopular and still be successful. You may be poor in the things of this world but rich in faith. God declares over your life:

I, even I, have spoken; yes, I have called him, I have brought him, and his way will prosper. (Isaiah 48:15)

PRINCIPLE TWO: REPENT OF YOUR SINS:

He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

You think nobody knows about your secret sin, but God declares, "If you cover your sin, you will not prosper." This doesn't need a great deal of explanation, for it is quite clear: Hide your sins and you won't prosper.

Repenting of sin is not a once in a lifetime act at the time of conversion to Christ. Jesus taught repentance as part of the model prayer which is to be prayed daily and the Apostle John declared:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-9)

PRINCIPLE THREE: RELY ON GOD'S WORD:

The following passage tells how to be successful in everything you do:

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. (Psalms 1:1-3)

Here's the guarantee: "Whatever he does shall prosper. " Similar to guarantees in the material world, however, this is a limited warrantee. Here are the conditions:

1. Do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly: The word "ungodly" means "unsettled, aiming at no certain end, and walking by no certain rule." The successful man does not walk in their counsel. He is not present at their meetings, he does not measure himself by their principles, nor does he act according to their advice.

2. Do not stand in the path of sinners: The word for "sinners" signifies those who practice sin. The successful man shuns sinners because their way is not his way. He does not imitate sinners, associate with them, or choose them for intimate companions:

Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn away from it and pass on. (Proverbs 4:14-15)

3. Do not sit in the seat of the scornful: The "scornful" are those that "set their mouths against the heavens," aligning themselves with the accuser (Satan) who rails against God and man alike.

There are two powerful spiritual forces operational in both heaven and earth. These are the forces of the accuser (Satan) and the intercessor (Jesus Christ). By the words of your mouth you continually align yourself with one or the other. The successful person does not "sit in the seat of the scornful" accusing the brethren and does not associate with those who sit in open judgment of others.

4. Delight in the law of God: *"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success " (Joshua 1: 8).*

A successful person submits to the guidance of the Word of God. This is what fortifies him against the ungodly, sinners, and the scornful:

...by the word of Your lips, I have kept away from the paths of the destroyer. (Psalm 17:4)

The affection of a successful man is set on God's law, he delights in it, and it becomes a way of life for him.

5. Meditate in God's Word day and night: To meditate in God's Word is to dialogue with yourself concerning the great truths it contains, fixing your thoughts on it, applying its precepts to your life. The successful person does this continually--day and night--and governs his conduct and activities by the standards of the Word. God told Joshua:

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1:7-8)

It is to those who meet these five conditions that God guarantees blessing and success, those who:

- Do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly.
- Do not stand in the path of sinners.
- Do not sit in the seat of the scornful.
- Delight in God's law.
- Meditate on God's Word.

When the psalmist undertakes to describe a successful person he characterizes an individual who governs his life by God's standards. The successful person is compared to a tree planted by living waters. The waters will not fail and the tree will not wither and die. Even in drought, the successful man does not fear because in due season his "tree" shall again flourish and his "fruit" will abound. Whatever he does in conformity to the prophetic revelation of the Word will prosper because God's declares:

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)

PRINCIPLE FOUR: REQUEST GOD'S ASSISTANCE:

The Apostle John wrote these words to New Testament believers:

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. (3 John 1:2)

We conclude from this passage that we can pray for physical and spiritual prosperity and success in every area of life--"all things." Jehoshaphat found prayer vital in times of indecision. His request for God's assistance resulted in divine direction and victory over the enemy.

Intercession births revelation. In the Old Testament, revelation came to God's people from the outside in--through prophets, kings, and judges. From New Testament times on, revelation has come from the inside out. It was birthed internally through intercession. A classic example is the Apostle John who was interceding on the Isle of Patmos when he received one of the greatest revelations of all times.

PRINCIPLE FIVE: RELEASE YOUR RESOURCES:

Worldly wisdom says to retain your resources: "Stock up, save, tuck it away for a rainy day." God's Word teaches the principle of giving to receive. It encourages you to continually release your resources--your talents, gifts, time, abilities, and finances:

In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, either this or that, or whether both alike will be good. (Ecclesiastes 11:6)

When you "sow your seed" and give of your resources then you are assured success because you always receive increased returns:

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. (Luke 6:38)

PRINCIPLE SIX: RESOLVE THAT YOU WILL SEEK THE LORD

In Chapter Four we discussed what it means to "seek the Lord" when we analyzed Jehoshaphat's response to his difficulties. If you want to prosper in all you do, resolve that you will continually seek the Lord.

Uzziah was only 16 years old when he became king of Israel and he reigned successfully for 52 years. The Bible declares that *"he did what was right in the sight of the Lord ...He sought God ...and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper"* (2 Chronicles 26:4-5).

SIX STEPS TO PROSPERITY

If you will apply these prophetic principles of success, you will prosper:

1. Recognize that true success comes from God.
2. Repent of your sins.
3. Rely on God's Word.
4. Request God's assistance.
5. Release your resources.
6. Resolve that you will seek the Lord.

Jehoshaphat told God's people, *"Believe the prophets and you will prosper"*--you--not the enemy--will prosper. As you conclude this chapter, make this declaration and claim this promise:

"But the Lord is with me as a mighty, awesome One. Therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not prevail. They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper. Their everlasting confusion will never be forgotten." (Jeremiah 20:11)

STEP SIX:

REVERSE THE CURSE

Chapter Thirteen

Ambushing The Enemy

Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped. (2 Chronicles 20:22-24)

The turning point in Jehoshaphat's dilemma came when God's people acted upon the divine revelation they were given. Faith is a fact that always involves an act:

- You receive the "word of faith " for salvation, you act upon it by responding, and you are saved.
- Noah acted upon a word received from God concerning a forthcoming flood and built an ark to preserve life on the earth.
- Moses received a commission to deliver Israel and acted upon it by returning to Egypt to petition Pharaoh in their behalf.
- Blind men saw, the lame walked, and the deaf heard as they acted in response to the words of Jesus.

Faith is not just passive believing or wishful hoping. Faith is acting on the fact of God's Word. Jehoshaphat was instructed by God:

"Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, standstill and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you."
(2 Chronicles 20:15-17)

Jehoshaphat had a word from God and acted in faith on it. The next day he positioned himself for victory and watched God work in his behalf.

POSITIONED FOR VICTORY

What does it mean to "position" yourself for victory? The answer is given in this passage: And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying:

"Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever." Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. (2 Chronicles 20:21-22)

When you position yourself in praise and worship, God will move in your behalf. Israel began to sing and praise God and ambushes were set by the Lord against the advancing enemy. God moved in their behalf "when they began" to sing and praise--not when they finished. The enemy was "ambushed" by God and when Israel arrived on the battle field, instead of finding living men to contend with they found only the carcasses of the enemy. There they were--in full battle array, armed with shields and spears--but there was no life in them. Their deadly potential was eliminated when God's people began to praise and worship.

SEND JUDAH FIRST!

Repeatedly in Old Testament conflicts God directs Israel to send the tribe of Judah into battle first. The name Judah means "praise," so whenever you see that name used, substitute the word "praise." Praise is the purpose for which we are ordained:

My sons, do not be negligent now, for the Lord has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that you should minister to Him and burn incense. (2 Chronicles 29: 11)

The first of the ten commandments is to worship God (Exodus 20:1-5; Psalms 45:11) and the Bible reveals that God actively seeks those who will worship and praise Him:

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. (John 4:23)

God created us to praise Him:

This people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise. (Isaiah 43:21)

The Bible is filled with commands for us to praise God:

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:5)

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

*Praise the Lord, for it is good..praise is becoming and appropriate.
(Psalms 147:1 The Amplified Version)*

WHAT IT MEANS TO PRAISE GOD

Praise involves worship and thanksgiving. To worship means "to do reverence, to kiss, do homage towards, revere, stand in awe of, show devotion, bow down and honor." Worship is an acknowledgment of God, His nature, attributes, ways, and worth.

We thank God by acknowledging our gratitude for His works. We praise him by blessing Him, celebrating, and boasting of what He has done. Actually the word "praise" has eight different meanings, two of which are quite interesting. They are to "release before the Lord" and to be "clamorously foolish." Other words related to praise and worship are:

Glorify: To give honor to, rank, beauty.
Honor: To exalt and show preference.
Magnify: To ascribe greatness, glorify.

There is no sharp dividing line between praise, worship, and thanksgiving. As you worship, you can flow easily from one to another, as demonstrated in the book of Psalms. Many of us are conditioned to being led into worship, but God directs says "you enter" and "you offer a sacrifice" of praise:

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. (Hebrews 13:15)

PRAISING GOD IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

Jesus said:

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. " (John 4:23-24)

What does it mean to worship in spirit and truth? Turn to John 4 in your Bible which summarizes the encounter of Jesus with a Samaritan woman. Jesus was resting by a well when a woman came to draw water. She was obviously poor materially since she had no servant to draw water for her, but she was even poorer spiritually. Jesus told the woman, "If you knew" (John

4:10), indicating that you must worship from a position of knowing. Knowledge (or truth) results in understand who the Lord is and results in worship. Jesus said, "If you knew, you would ask." Knowledge (truth) always requires a response.

The woman told Jesus, "You have nothing to draw with to give me this water." Like this woman, many of us focus on the impossibilities of life, while we are in the presence of the Source of miracles. The life Jesus gives results in worship, a spiritual stream that quenches your thirst by springing up from deep inside your spirit. When you face impossible situations and you begin to worship, then the miracle worker is present because God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3).

Jesus said the Samaritans worshiped with spirit, but without truth (verses 19-24). In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah when the Samaritans were not allowed to help Israel rebuild the temple, they built their own temple on Mount Gerizim. This was the site where they believed Abraham offered Isaac and Jacob had his dream of the ladder extending to Heaven. The Samaritans climbed this mountain often and worshiped, but they did not know what they worshiped. They were enthusiastic in their worship, but without the truth of the Gospel.

The Jews worshiped in truth (law) but with no spirit. Jesus, who was a Jew, said "We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews." The Jews understood the truth, but they were cold, legalistic, hypocritical, and ritualistic. They went through the motions of worship but their hearts were not in it. God is to be worshiped as both "Father" and "Spirit." Spirit is nature while Father is relationship. The issue of true worship is not where and when it is done as much as who and how. If you are a true worshiper you do not have to try finding God. God comes looking for you because He seeks those who worship Him in spirit and truth.

Man is a triune being composed of a body which is visible and an invisible soul and spirit. The soul is the "soulish" nature of man, the mind, will, and emotions. The spirit is the spiritual inner man and your spirit has emotional responses like the soul. Soul and spirit are closely related but are separate, because the Bible tells us the Word of God is sharp and can divide them.

You cannot really worship with your spirit unless it is energized by His Spirit, so worshiping in spirit involves the Holy Spirit also. As you worship, God's Spirit bears witness with your spirit (Romans 8:16). Since man is a triune being, when you worship with your spirit you must also worship with your soul and body.

The word "truth" means to uncover, open up, and not hide. Worship is to be based on truth which is information gained in meditation which results from time spent with God in discovery. If you are going to truly worship, you must be committed to the Word of God, not just some emotional feeling.

To worship in spirit is to allow the Holy Spirit to move upon your redeemed spirit, causing love, adoration, devotion, honor, and respect to ascend to God who is a spirit. To worship in truth is to worship according to the Word of God and to properly respond to the truth of God.

WHEN, WHERE AND HOW TO DO IT

The Bible indicates that we are to worship God daily (2 Chronicles 30:21); continually (Psalms 34:1; 35:27; Hebrews 13:15; Luke 24:53); after a special manifestation of the Lord (Exodus 34; Genesis 12); when granted favor by man (Genesis 24:52); and upon receipt of promises from God (Genesis 13:14-18). It is especially important to praise God in times of crisis:

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle he shall hide me; he shall set me high upon a rock. (Psalms 27:5)

The Bible directs us to praise God corporately in the Church (Psalms 22:22; 35:18 149:1); in our homes (Psalms 149:5); in the presence of unbelievers (Psalms 40:3; 96:2-3); and before the nations of the world (Psalms 96:1-3; 108:3).

Praise and worship in the Bible was reverent at times as people fell on their faces, meditated, and were silent before God. Worship was also joyous, noisy, and exuberant. It was said of Israel, the "shout of the King is among them." When there was noise in the tabernacle, God's presence was there. When there was no noise, He was not present.

Here are some Biblical ways to worship the Lord:

Giving To God: Repeatedly in the Old and New Testament records, giving of material resources was part of the regular service and considered an act of worship. When you face financial crisis, giving is a tremendous act of worship that ambushes the enemy's plot for financial ruin.

Keeping Silent Before Him: This silent attitude of reverence includes meditating on God and His Word (Zechariah 2:13).

Worshiping With Your Mouth: Science has proven that, like fingerprints, each human voice has what is called a "print." Your "voice print," like your fingerprint, is different from all other voices. God knows your voice and waits to hear it lifted in praise to Him daily. You can speak praise (Hebrews 13:15), praise God in your prayer language (1 Corinthians 14:14-18), shout (Numbers 23:21; 1 Chronicles 15:28; 1 Samuel 4:5-6), and sing praises to God (Ephesians 5:19; 2 Chronicles 5:12-15).

Praising God With Instruments: The following verses are exemplary of many that encourage us to praise God with instruments: Psalms 150:3-5; 147:7; Psalms 33:2. **Worshipping With Your Body:** Here are some references that explain how to praise God with your body: Standing in His presence (2 Chronicles 20:19; Ezekiel 44:15; Psalms 135:1-2; 134:1); lifting up your hands (Psalms 63:3-4; 141:2; 119:48; 143:6; 1 Timothy 2:8; Psalms 134:2); clapping (Psalms 47:1); bowing and kneeling (Genesis 24:48; Exodus 4:31; 12:27; 1 Chronicles 29:20, 30; Psalms 95:6); walking and leaping (2 Samuel 6:16; Acts 3:8); and dancing (Exodus 15:20; 1 Samuel 18:6; 2 Samuel 6:14; Psalm 30:11; 149:3; 150:4).

HOW TO REVERSE THE CURSE

No man can enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. (Mark 3:27)

The Greek word for "spoil" in this passage is "*diarpazo*" which means to plunder, seize, or snatch away. The Greek word "house" is "*oikos*" meaning "dwelling place." The powerful enemy that Jehoshaphat faced was not just "bound" by God's people, but they were "spoiled" by a complete conquest. If you seek total victory in the circumstances you face then "binding" the enemy is not enough. You must learn how to "spoil his house."

Satan thinks your house--your mate, your children, your finances--belong to him. As the enemy threatened Jehoshaphat, Satan also threatens to "steal, kill, and destroy" what is yours. Simply binding the work of the enemy does not yield total victory because if you let your guard down, he might get loose again. You must totally "spoil" his house.

God told the prophet Jeremiah:

See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant. (Jeremiah 1:10)

Jeremiah was directed to put his spiritual axe at the root of evil and terminate its growth, and, in so doing, destroy spiritual strongholds. A stronghold is any area where Satan has seized control:

- It may be addictive, destructive habits which you seem unable to conquer.
- It may be uncontrollable emotions of anger, rage, and bitterness.
- It may be a tendency towards violent, criminal behavior which has surfaced throughout successive generations in your family.

These "strongholds" are passed on through what we call "generational curses." Satan seizes control in one generation, and the curse is passed on to succeeding generations.

The Bible reveals that the forces that determine all events in this world fall into two divisions: Visible and invisible. Blessings and curses are invisible forces of spiritual power which are transmitted by words because *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue"* (Proverbs 18:21). You speak either a blessing or curse and the words you speak produce either good or harmful results.

Most people readily accept the concept of "blessing" as valid and Biblical, but are skeptical about this subject of "curses." They think the word conjures up images of the dark ages, witches, and voodoo dolls. But just as the opposite of good is evil, the opposite of blessings are curses.

The word "curse" occurs about 230 times in the Bible. It means to speak evil over, pray against, or wish evil against a person or thing. Cursing is a pledge, oath, or commission that is devoted to destruction. The first occurrence of this word was when God cursed the serpent and the ground:

So the Lord God said to the serpent: *"Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life."* Then to Adam He said, *"Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life."* (Genesis 3:14,17). These two curses in Genesis 3 contrast the two blessings spoken over man and the earth in Genesis 1:22 and 28.

The Bible indicates that *"the curse causeless shall not come"* (Proverbs 26:2 KJV), meaning that behind every curse there is a spiritual cause. Deuteronomy 27:15-26 lists moral and ethical sins that create spiritual breaches that open you up to strongholds of Satan. A summary of these includes worshiping false gods, disrespect for parents, all forms of oppression and injustice, all forms of illicit and unnatural sex, and rebellion against God's Word.

Other Biblical references contribute to this list of sins that bring a curse. Galatians indicates that those preaching "another Gospel" (apostasy) will be cursed (Galatians 1:6-9) and Jeremiah notes that those who trust in "flesh" (works) instead of God are cursed (Jeremiah 17:5). Robbing God of tithes and offerings brings a financial curse according to Zechariah 5:1-4, Haggai 1:4-6, and Malachi 3:8-9. Anti-Semitism is also dangerous spiritually because God promised the Jewish nation *"I will curse him that curses you"* (Genesis 12:2-3).

Some curses are imposed on you by authority figures in your life, for example a parent who told you were stupid and you believed it. It is also possible to receive a "curse" of propensity towards certain physical conditions. When you confess that cancer, heart disease, or

stroke "run in your family" you are actually acknowledging that curse in your bloodline. You may also be under a curse because of involvement by your ancestors with witchcraft. Other curses are brought on by your own sinful conduct: "*Cursed be the man that obeys not the words of this covenant*" (Jeremiah 11:3).

Deuteronomy 28 reveals seven indications of the operation of a spiritual curse or stronghold.

1. **Mental or emotional breakdown:**
The Lord shall smite thee with Madness. (Deuteronomy 28:28; See also verses 20, 34, 38, 65)
2. **Chronic sickness:**
The Lord shall smite thee with consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with extreme burning... (Deuteronomy 28:22; See also verses 21, 27, 28, 35, 59, 61)
3. **Alienation and breakdown of marriage and family relationships:**
Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her... (Deuteronomy 28:30; See also verses 41, 54)
4. **Barrenness or a tendency to miscarry:**
Cursed shalt be the fruit of thy body... (Deuteronomy 28:18)
5. **A cycle of poverty:**
Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store... (Deuteronomy 28:17; See also verses 29, 43, 44)
6. **A history of unnatural or untimely deaths:**
And thy carcass shall be meat unto all fowls of the air and unto the beasts of the field. (Deuteronomy 28:26)
7. **Continual defeat by the enemy:**
The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them... Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee... (Deuteronomy 28:25, 48)

Curses are perpetuated through negative, hateful, bitter words that have the power to bring emotional, spiritual, intellectual--and even physical death. There are curses instilled by authority figures through their words or operate because of personal violation of God's Word (sin). Curses also operate through strongholds established by Satan in your ancestors which are passed down through generations.

You may ask, "When I accepted Jesus as Savior, weren't all of these curses broken over my life?" When you are born again, you are forgiven of your past sins and the shed blood of Jesus has the power to break every curse. As in the story of Jehoshaphat, however, Satan will return through "bad reports" and "great multitudes" to try to bring curses back on you. Like Israel, when you begin to praise God the strongholds are broken and the curse is reversed upon the enemy because the positive force of praising conquers the negative force of cursing:

I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live. (Deuteronomy 30:19)

You choose "blessing" when you praise God and your worship literally "spoils" the enemy's house:

For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another ...So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped. (2 Chronicles 20:23-24)

Do you want to disarm the enemy forces arrayed against you? Would you like to reverse every diabolical curse and stronghold that threatens and controls your life? Then begin to praise God!

Don't wait until you see the hand of God moving and your victory is assured. Begin to praise Him, even while you hear the sound of advancing troops echoing across the dessert plains of your life. Begin to sing in the face of adversity when--like Jehoshaphat--you don't know what you are going to do about your circumstances .

...And don't be surprised when you get to the battle field if all you can find is the disintegrating carcass of your problem.

Chapter Fourteen

Victory In The Valley

Dead bodies littered the plains as the sun rose over the wilderness that morning. The curse of the enemy was reversed! Their military forces actually turned against one another and self-destructed.

What a victory for Jehoshaphat, a man who at one time confessed he didn't know what to do ...and what a tremendous victory you will experience when you apply the same steps he took to confront your own difficult dilemmas.

In the closing verses of 2 Chronicles 20 there are four results of reversing the curse of the enemy, benefits which you will also experience when you learn to triumph in impossible situations:

REAPING:

When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. (2 Chronicles 20:25)

God not only delivered His people from their foes, He enriched them with the spoil of the enemy. It took three days to gather all the valuables!

Jesus has conquered your enemy. Satan was defeated at the cross of Calvary and it took Jesus three days to carry away the spoils of the enemy! Stand in the place where you are, turn your attention to God, and begin to praise Him, for the victory is won!

The Bible reveals that...

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"). (Galatians 3:13)

When Jesus died on Calvary, He not only died for your sin, He redeemed you from every curse! You can reverse the curses in your life by appropriating the power of the blood of Jesus, but as in every other spiritual victory the blood must be applied. In the Old Testament account of the Passover in Egypt, it was not the fact that the blood of a lamb was shed that effected deliverance. The blood was applied to the door of the house and then the destroyer did not come near that residence.

The blood of Jesus has power to reverse curses over your life, but you must apply that blood in order for it to be effective. You apply it as you ...

- ...snatch your unsaved mate from Satan's evil clutches.
- ...exercise your rightful authority over your children.
- ...take control of your finances.
- ...take authority in every area where the enemy has established a "dwelling place."

RELEASING:

And on the fourth day they assembled in the valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the Lord; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day. (2 Chronicles 20:25-26)

The Valley of Berachah was located between Bethlehem (where David was anointed as king of Israel) and Hebron (where he fortified a refuge against his enemy, Saul). "Berachah" means "blessing," so the place of blessing is situated between the "anointing" and the "refuge."

The word "bless" occurs about 410 times in the Bible. It means "to cause to prosper, be happy, and favored, blessed in every way and in every area of life." Just as a curse is initiated by words, the Bible reveals it is possible to release a blessing by what you say.

When God created the first man and woman He "blessed them" and told them to be fruitful and multiply. After the flood, God blessed Noah and His sons. The central element of God's covenant with Abraham was "I will bless you...and you will be a blessing" (Genesis 12: 2-3). The Old Testament patriarchs understood the power of the blessing, for they customarily extended it to their children before they died. (A good example of this is the extensive record of Jacob blessing his children in Genesis 49 which was subsequently fulfilled in minute detail).

We see this concept of the blessing permeating the New Testament record. During His first sermon, Jesus pronounced a blessing. He said:

*Blessed are the poor in spirit...blessed are those who mourn...blessed are the meek
...blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...blessed are the merciful...
blessed are the pure in heart...blessed are the peacemakers...blessed are those who are
persecuted for righteousness sake... (Matthew 5:3-11)*

Jesus blessed the children who were brought to Him:

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them ". . . (Matthew 19:13-15)

While hanging in agony on the cross, Jesus blessed His tormentors and the last thing He did before ascending back into heaven was to lift His hands and bless His disciples:

And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. (Luke 24:50)

From these Biblical examples it is evident that the blessing is released by the spoken word of authority. This means you can speak a blessing over your son, daughter, mate, and every negative circumstance of life. You have the authority through the Word of God not only to bind the work of the enemy in their lives, but to release God's blessing upon them.

When you speak a blessing it can never be reversed. Remember the Old Testament account of Jacob, who through deception received the blessing intended for his brother, Esau? Their father, Israel, could do nothing to reverse the blessing after it was given, even though it was deceitfully attained: *"But he said, 'Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing,'"* (Genesis 27:35).

A blessing cannot be reversed, but a curse can. Immediately after his victory over the enemy, Jehoshaphat gathered God's people together to reverse the curse of the "bad report" brought by the "great multitude." God's people blessed the Lord and as they did, their blessing reversed every curse of the enemy. The valley where the enemy intended to slay them became "Berachah," the valley of blessing.

REJOICING:

Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies. So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the Lord. (2 Chronicles 20:27-28)

The people assembled in the house of the Lord before going out to battle and returned there after their victory with tremendous joy, praise, and music. If we would venture out in faith to confront our enemies instead of hiding and cowering in fear, perhaps we, too, would assemble with more joy when we come to the house of the Lord.

RESTING:

And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around. (2 Chronicles 20:29-30)

Israel's victory fostered in their neighbors a reverence for God. They recognized it is dangerous to fight those who have God with them and, as a result, Jehoshaphat had rest "all around." Enemy forces were still encamped just over the hill and across the streams, but they were not a threat to Jehoshaphat because God gave him rest.

You will be surrounded by enemy forces as long as you are in this world, but you do not have to be troubled by them. Never again will you wring your hands and lament, "I just don't know what to do!" You will be too busy in your valley--reaping the spoils from your enemy, reversing the curse by releasing the blessing, rejoicing over the victory, and resting in God.

Epilogue: Today Is Your Tomorrow

God told Jehoshaphat, *"Tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you"* (2 Chronicles 20:17).

Today is your tomorrow--it is time to face your own difficult circumstances and conquer the enemy! Use the interactive exercises in this closing epilogue to apply what you learned in this study.

A BAD REPORT-A GREAT MULTITUDE:

Analyze the problem you face for which there seems to be no answer.

Summarize your problem:

How do you think these circumstances developed?

What do you think are the root causes (underlying spiritual issues) of your problem?

STEP ONE: REPLACE FEAR WITH FAITH

Fear paralyzes, faith energizes--so you must replace fear with faith.

List specific fears you have concerning your problem:

Pray about each fear you listed. Confess fear for what it is: Sin.

Review Chapter Four and write out a definition for faith:

Review the Scriptures concerning fear given in Chapters Three and Four and use a concordance to find additional verses. Commit some of these verses to memory and quote them when the enemy tries to make you fearful.

Write out a plan to institute each of the following faith "generators" in your life:

1. Hearing God's Word: How can you increase your hearing of God's Word? Church attendance? Cassette tapes? Personal devotions?

2. Keeping your mind on God: Has your mind been focused on your problem or your God?

What specific steps can you take to keep your mind focused on God instead of your problem?

3. Acting on your faith: Can you think of specific ways you can demonstrate your faith in God as you confront your problem?

STEP TWO: RISE UP TO SEIZE YOUR DESTINY

The categories of affliction itemized in Chapter Six are inclusive of every type of problem you might be facing:

-**"The sword"** speaks of direct Satanic attacks, unexpected, cutting, and wounding.

-**"Judgment"** refers to false accusations, stereo-typing, and evil judgments raised against you by others as well as recompense for sinful conduct.

-**"Pestilence"** represents lingering, aggravating, destructive circumstances.

-**"Famine"** refers to the dry, desolate times of life when God seems far away and you feel forsaken by everyone.

What types of problems are you presently facing?

Do not cower before these threats of the enemy. Rise up from your confusion, depression, and discouragement to seize your God-given destiny. Pray this prayer:

"God, I am tired of running, hiding, and fleeing from the enemy. You said you would hear the prayer made in the temple where your Name dwelt. Your Name is written upon the temple of my life, so I know you will hear my prayer. As an act of confidence, I am rising up in my spiritual man. I will not be defeated by the enemy. I will not be dismayed in the face of this problem. I am proclaiming in the face of every foe, I will fulfill the destiny you have planned for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen."

STEP THREE: REFOCUS YOUR ATTENTION

Change your mental and spiritual focus from self to God, from the present to what He has done in the past and your hope for the future. Focus on:

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| God's royalty: | Proclaim Him as: |
| Jehovah-Tsidkenu: | Your righteousness |
| Jehovah-M-Kaddesh | Your sanctification |
| Jehovah-Shalom | Your peace |
| Jehovah-Shammah | The God who is there |
| Jehovah-Rophe | Your healer |
| Jehovah-Jireh | Your provider |
| Jehovah-Nissi | The banner over your life |

God's Rule: Declare Him as Lord over every circumstance of your life. Pray each day for His Kingdom to come and His will to be done in your life.

God's Record: List some great things God did for you in the past (deliverance, healings, comfort, guidance, etc):

Thank God for each of these.

God's Relationship: Base your appeal upon your relationship with God. You are His child. Come boldly to Him for help.

God's Rewards: List some specific promises God has given you for the future:

Make a positive confession of faith concerning each of these promises and thank Him that they will become reality in your life. If you find yourself worrying about your problem again, return to this list and refocus your attention on God's promises for the future.

God's Responsibility: Instead of bearing your own burdens, cast them upon the Lord. Remember that it is His responsibility, His ministry, His plan.

God's Righteousness: Do not rise up against your enemies, but refer your situation to God knowing He will deal justly with all concerned.

STEP FOUR: REJECT REASON FOR REVELATION

The turning point in every situation is when you reject carnal reasoning for divine revelation. Think about your problem: Have you tried to use carnal reasoning to solve it? What have you done wrong? Why do you think your attempts did not work?

Rate yourself in relation to Jehaziel's admonitions to Jehoshaphat:

1. Do not be afraid: Are you presently fearful about your problem? ___ Yes ___ No
2. Do not be dismayed: Are you currently dismayed about your problem? ___ Yes ___ No
3. Recognize that the battle is God's: Do you really believe the battle is God's or have you been trying to fight it in your own strength?
___ I have been trying to fight my battles in my own strength.
___ I have recognized the battle is God's.
4. Move in God's timing: Have you moved ahead of God or lagged behind Him to try and resolve your problem?
___ I have moved ahead of God and tried to work things out on my own.
___ I know what God wants me to do, but I have not done it.
5. Position yourself for victory: Do you feel you are now positioned for victory?
___ I am positioned for victory.
___ I am in the process of being positioned.
___ I am still fearful and despondent about my situation.
(If you checked the third option, review Chapters Three and Four again.)

Pray about areas of weakness identified in items 1-5 above.

Review the six stages of revelation discussed in Chapter 10. Where do you think you are at the present time in this process?

- ___ Vexation
- ___ Revelation
- ___ Hesitation
- ___ Resignation
- ___ Verification
- ___ Exaltation

What can you do to advance from your present stage of revelation to succeeding stages?

STEP FIVE: RESPOND IN OBEDIENCE

Jehoshaphat told God's people, *"Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established. Believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."* Scriptures were presented in Chapter Eleven for each of the following which result in an established life. Review these and then evaluate how you are doing:

| | I Am Doing... | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Excellent | Good | Poor |
| Rejecting doubt | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Obedying God's Word | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Living righteously | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Evaluating my life | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Becoming grounded in the faith | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Committing my works to God | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Seeking wise counsel | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Exercising Godly wisdom | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Accepting God's grace | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Pray and write out a plan of improvement for each item which you marked "poor."

Now rate yourself on the principles of success:

| | I Am Doing... | | |
|---|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Excellent | Good | Poor |
| Recognizing that success comes from God | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Repenting of your sins | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Relying on God's Word | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Requesting God's assistance (prayer) _____

Releasing your resources _____

Resolving that you will seek the Lord _____

Pray about the items marked "poor" and write a plan of action to improve each one:

STEP SIX: REVERSE THE CURSE

Review the seven indications of a curse and check those you believe might be operating in your life:

- Mental or emotional breakdown
- Chronic sickness
- Alienation and breakdown of marriage and family relationships
- Barrenness or a tendency to miscarry
- A cycle of poverty
- A history of unnatural or untimely deaths
- Constant defeat by the enemy

Pray aloud and name each of the curses you identified. Bind the power of Satan to operate in your life and in your generational line.

The Bible declares that you can overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21), so after you bind the operation of the enemy against you, release a blessing over your family. God told Moses:

Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, "This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." (Numbers 6:23-26)

Now release the same blessing over your family. Place your hands upon your children and say these words:

"I bless you in the name of the Lord. His face will shine upon you and be gracious to you. He will lift up His countenance upon you and you will have peace."

God also told Moses to "put His Name upon the children of Israel" and He would bless them. The Old Testament names of God are combined with other descriptive titles to form what are called "compound" names which reveal God's blessings.

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Jehovah-tsidkenu means | "Jehovah is our righteousness" | Jeremiah 23:6 |
| Jehovah-m'kaddesh means | "Jehovah Sanctifies" | Exodus 31:13 |
| Jehovah-shalom means | "Jehovah is peace" | Judges 6:24 |
| Jehovah-shammah means | "Jehovah is there" | Ezekiel 48:35 |
| Jehovah-rophe means | "Jehovah heals" | Exodus 15:26 |
| Jehovah jireh means | "Jehovah My Provider" | Genesis 22:14 |
| Jehovah-nissi means | "Jehovah My Banner" | Exodus 17:15 |
| Jehovah-rohi means | "Jehovah My Shepherd" | Psalms 23:1 |

Use these names to "place God's name" upon yourself, your mate, and your children by using this sample prayer:

"God, I place your name upon my child. Through the blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, you are my child's righteousness and sanctification. You are his peace, You will be there for him--he will never be alone. You are my child's healer and provider. Every spiritual, physical, and material need will be met in his life. You will be the banner of protection over him and the shepherd who guides him. "

As you learned, a vital key to reversing the curse of the enemy is praise and worship. During your personal devotions, try the following Biblical ways of worshiping God:

___ Giving to God

___ Keeping silent before Him

___ Worshiping with your mouth:

___ Speaking praise

___ Using your prayer language

___ Shouting

___ Singing

___ Praising God with instruments

- Worshiping with your body:
 - Standing in His presence
 - Lifting your hands
 - Clapping
 - Bowing and kneeling
 - Walking and leaping
 - Dancing

NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO...

Through the example of Jehoshaphat, you have learned what to do when you don't know what to do. Now God wants to turn your valley of Achor (trouble) into the valley of Berachah (blessing) so it is time to...

Reap: Take back the spoils from your enemy! Begin to exercise your rightful authority over your children. Take control of your finances. Take authority in every area where the enemy has a stronghold. List some practical steps you can take to accomplish this:

Release: Release God's blessing to overcome the evil of the enemy's curses. Release the blessing on:

- Yourself
- Your mate
- Your family
- Your friends
- Your ministry
- Your business and finances

Rejoice: Praise God for the answer to your problem--even before you receive it! Rejoice in the victory of which you are assured using various Scriptural patterns for praise and worship.

Rest: Your "tomorrow" is right now--today--because as you took the steps described in this book, God set an ambush for your enemies!

Oh yes--you will face perplexing, confusing circumstances again in your Christian experience because these are essential elements of the enemy's arsenal. But each time you find yourself thinking, "I don't know what to do" review the story of Jehoshaphat. Use this pattern to counteract each bad report you receive and to boldly confront every great multitude of negative circumstances. You know what to do now--so just do it!

Notes

CHAPTER TWO:

- [1] Historical information on the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites was compiled from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986).

CHAPTER FOUR:

- [1] Matthew Henry. Commentary On The Whole Bible, Volume II. (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell, Company), page 955.
- [2] Jim Glennon. Your Healing Is Within You. (London: Hodder and Stoughton: 1978), page 40.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

- [1] Sara Japhet. Commentary on 1 and 2 Chronicles. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 796.

CHAPTER NINE:

- [1] Charles H. Spurgeon. Morning and Evening, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1980), July 23rd devotional.