

01/01/09

Psalms 138:8 Overcoming your concerns in 2009.

Everybody likes to establish “New Year’s Resolutions”. It’s a time for us to evaluate our lives, and make positive improvements in areas we know could be better. The good news is that God WANTS to get involved, and with His power, help us improve our “performance”, and gain victory in areas of chronic compromise or failure. Note the statement in Psalms: “The Lord WILL PERFECT” that which concerns you! Not maybe, but for sure! He WILL do it! All He’s asking for is your time, your faith, your obedience, and your acknowledgement that you can’t do it alone. He knows how to deliver you, and He wants to bring it to pass. Now more than ever, at the start of a new year – let Him perfect that which concerns you!

None of us are perfect – we all have areas we know could be better in God’s eyes. I encourage you to go to your prayer closet, talk to God about the areas in your life where you know improvement is needed, and purpose in your heart to allow God the opportunity to help you gain victory in these areas – once and for all. I’m purposing to do that in my life, and I encourage you to do the same in yours. God’s ready, willing and able to help – and don’t worry about letting Him down – this same verse talks about the mercy of the Lord! What He wants is our sincere effort, and if we fall, His mercy is always there to pick us up and get us moving in the right direction again. It’s a new year! Let’s get started, and make this the best, most productive, and most victorious year you’ve ever had in Jesus!

01/02/09

Psalms 139:17 God's got you on his mind!

It’s amazing to read this verse, and realize how much God thinks about each one of us. People tend to think of God in large, abstract terms, but really, He’s very personal with each one of us, and delights to be intimately involved in the details of our lives. Think about what this verse says! God thinks about you – personally – so much that if you tried to number the times, it would be more than all the grains of sand on all the beaches of the world. That’s a lot of thoughts that He’s thinking about you! **YOU ARE IMPORTANT TO GOD!** From eternity past, God’s had you on His mind. He’s been thinking about you, and planning for your happiness and future. Be encouraged with this truth today. Don’t let the world tell you you’re not important – God says otherwise!

In Jeremiah 29:11, God tells you His thoughts about you are always good – thoughts of peace and not of evil – to give you hope for an exciting and rewarding future in Jesus. Many people get depressed when they realize their lives haven’t turned out the way they dreamed when they were young – but for you as a believer – realize your best days are **ALWAYS** ahead of you! God’s thinking about you all the time, and has developed a plan for your life that included the utmost in happiness and satisfaction. Let Him in – spend time with Him daily. Ask Him for input and advice. Don’t run off without talking to God each day. He knows what you need, and He’s thought it through many times on your behalf. Let Him share His thoughts – if someone can count the number of grains of beach sand worldwide – remember He’s thought of you more times than that!

01/03/09

Jeremiah 33:3 God has a listed number!

God’s number is not unlisted. He’s in the phonebook, so to speak, and invites you to call anytime! You’ll never get a busy signal when you call either – He’s always got time for you! Praise God! Think of the millions of people crying out God all at once worldwide – yet when you call upon Him in prayer, He’s right there for you! He says that when you call, **HE WILL ANSWER!** And, when He answers, He will show you wonderful things pertaining to your future. Do you call upon the Lord daily? If not, you’re

cheating yourself out of so many blessings – so much guidance, so much wisdom! Don't get too busy you can't talk with God. Make your time with Him the top priority each day. To think that the God of the universe WANTS us to call him up! Its so mind-boggling we can hardly appreciate it!

A pastor friend of mine had this little saying posted on the wall in his office. It said: "The top priority is to keep the top priority the top priority." Nothing could be more important! Your top priority each day is spending time with God. Nothing else even comes close. Begin today to make time in your daily schedule for God. Call Him up, when you do, don't be surprised when He answers right away! He WAITING on you! You have His ear, you have His attention! He loves you, and WANTS you to call!

01/04/09

Psalms 142:5,6 **WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT TODAY?**

As we move into the new year, I want to encourage you to spend time reflecting and meditating on all that God has ALREADY DONE in your life. David said he would remember the "days of old", and meditate on all of God's wonderful works. This simply means he was spending time thinking about all that God had already done for him in times past. You should do the same, because in doing so, you're going to find the strength, faith and encouragement you need to tackle the issues you want victory over in 2009.

Most believers spend too much time worrying about the problems they face today, or the ones they think they'll be facing tomorrow. Well, if you want the faith and strength to stand strong and gain victory over the problems you're facing now, or will be facing in the future, spend time like David did. Spend time meditating on all the answered prayers, healings, favors, blessings and guidance you've already received by the hand of God. As you do, you'll be doing what David did in verse 6. You'll have your hands spread, eyes looking up to heaven, a big smile on your face, rejoicing over what you believe God is doing for you now – because of all He's done in the past. He never changes. He's there for you now, just like He was before. Remember that, think about that, and let that be your source of strength as you charge the year 2009.

01/05/09

Deuteronomy 23:21-23 **THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK!**

Have you ever made New Year's Resolutions? Many people do, and you might be one of them. Well, if you're in the habit of doing that, you'd better take heed to what you say if your resolutions have anything to do with God and His Word. I encourage you to meditate on this passage in Deuteronomy. It has a lot to say about the importance of counting the cost before making vows (promises and resolutions) to God. If you chose to vow a vow to God, He considers it SIN if you don't fulfill your vow! He's not just disappointed with you, He counts it as sin in His sight! So think before you speak!

Listen to what the Bible says here. "That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the Lord...". In other words, you didn't have to make the promise or resolution, but because you did, you're now responsible for what you promised. If you don't fulfill your vow to God, its sin – plain and simple! Now if you make harmless resolutions that have nothing to do with God's will or plan for your life – that's one thing. But if you're making promises to God – telling Him you're going to make changes to come into line with His Word, think before you speak, and be sure you're prepared to DO what you VOW!

01/06/09

Ecclesiastes 5:1-5 **DOES YOUR MOUTH CAUSE YOUR FLESH TO SIN?**

What a wonderful, and at the same time – sobering – passage of scripture! I like to read these verses often, because they help me keep everything in perspective. Who is the fool? According to this passage, a fool is the one who is always talking – he just can't shut his mouth! Don't be a fool before God – let Him do most of the talking when you come into His presence. What He has to say is much more important than what you have to say! He already knows what's going on in your life – when you tell Him in prayer is not when He finds out about it! Instead, be slow to speak, and quick to hear. You'll do yourself a great favor if you do that!

And especially, when you're in prayer with God, don't make vows hastily! Think and pray it through before you make promises to God. God has no pleasure in fools who just blurt out vows, resolutions and promises, without taking time to consider the cost. That's why you must be careful you don't let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, because if you SAY to God you'll do something, or change something, or eliminate something – and then don't do it, your mouth has caused you and your flesh to sin – and God's not at all happy about that. Better to keep your mouth shut then to make promises and then not keep them. So as we start 2009, purpose in your heart that you'll no longer be a fool before God. When you talk to God, make every word count, and if you make promises to Him, be sure you keep them!

01/07/09

Colossians 1:29 **LET GOD BE GOD IN YOUR LIFE!**

If anyone understood the difference between the works of faith and the works of the flesh, it was the Apostle Paul. Before his conversion, he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees; totally dedicated to the keeping of all the rules and laws of the Old Testament. But once saved, he learned the value of letting God do the work in him and through him. No longer was he running around trying to make things happen because of his religious zealotry. That's why he could say to the Colossians that his work was according to the working of God within him, a working that was mighty and without equal. We must learn to do the same. Quit trying to make things happen in the arm of your flesh. In simple faith, let God be God in your life. He knows how to take good care of you.

Many Christians become frustrated because they think that if they work hard enough, things will happen the way they want. However, it's not our works that get the job done – it is God working in us, as we allow His power to flow through us. The “work” we're responsible for is the work of faith. Choosing to let God be God is an act of faith – and it is this work that allows God to work on our behalf, and through us bless and help others. When we try to do everything for God in the arm of our own flesh, zealotry and good intentions – we experience frustration and disappointment more times than not. Instead, be like Paul. Work hard – but work smart! Work hard to stay in faith, and expect God to work mightily in you and through you, just like He did with the Apostle Paul.

01/08/09

2 Kings 12:3 **WHAT ABOUT THE HIGH PLACES?**

The Bible says Jehoshaphat was a good king, and did what was right in God's sight. However, he had one problem that many Christians have today. He never got rid of the “high places” in Israel, and today, many believers tolerate “high places” in their lives as well. For Israel, the high places represented places of sin and rebellion – areas that kings like Jehoshaphat just ignored and tolerated. Today, high places are the spiritual areas of chronic failure and compromise which we tolerate and allow to remain. If you're going to really walk in liberty and victory in 2009, you're going to have to pull down your “high places”. They're not going away by themselves. You'll have to pull them down!

High places differ from one person to the next. What are high places to you might not be a problem for another believer. Your responsibility is not to point a critical finger at others trying to

eliminate high places in their lives, but rather, to identify the areas in your life that have become the high places, and **ATTACK** them until they're pulled down and destroyed. For some, that might be victory over alcohol abuse. For others, it might be pornography. Still others might fight the fight against a forward tongue, or uncontrollable eating and obesity, or a cynical attitude, or a lack of love displayed towards others. Whatever it is in your life, you must recognize that until you make it your **NUMBER ONE PRIORITY** to eliminate your high places, they're not going anywhere. They will remain a constant thorn in your side until you decide **ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!**

01/09/09

John 21:21,22 **LEARN TO MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!**

Too many of us have our noses in other people's affairs, instead of concentrating on taking care of the hypocrisy and sin in our own lives. Jesus rebuked Peter when he wanted to know what the Lord was going to be doing with John. He was basically told to mind his own business, which is what we should be doing today. The Bible says to judge not lest we be judged (Luke 6:37). Why? Because we aren't qualified to judge others. We don't know all the facts, and we can't see into their hearts like God can. So when you see others doing or saying things that aren't right, instead of judging them or criticizing them, just pray for them! Then, refocus your attention on your own life, and rededicate yourself to the removal of your own sins and hypocrisy.

This is part of what it means to walk in love. Love doesn't stick its nose in other people's affairs. Instead, love covers sin, is always hopeful for a full recovery concerning those who have sinned, and believes the best about that person. The fact is, many believers who criticize and judge others have worse problems concerning sin in their own lives. Carnal Christians love to roam around and comment on everyone else's lifestyle, while ignoring the sin and hypocrisy in their own lives. If that's been your tendency, stop it now, and get busy with the problems in your own life. Never mind about what God is or isn't doing in the lives of others. Just stay focused on getting your own act together! In doing so, you protect yourself against the same kind of rebuke Jesus gave Peter about John!

01/10/09

Ephesians 4:12 **MINISTRY'S 3-FOLD PURPOSE (PART 1)**

In verse 11, we see what kinds of ministry gifts Jesus gave the body of Christ after His resurrection. He gave 5 ministry gifts: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. In my own ministry, I started as an evangelist, then God added the gift of teacher, and finally, moved me to office of Apostle. No matter what gift or office a person stands in, they have a 3-fold purpose, and they're listed in verse 12. 1) **TO EQUIP THE SAINTS**, for 2) **THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY**, for 3) **EDIFYING THE BODY OF CHRIST**. This is the job of a pastor, an apostle, a prophet an evangelist or teacher. If this is not the primary focus for the minister, he or she is missing the whole point of ministry!

Notice that I've listed these 3 in a progressive manner. **FIRST**, ministers are to equip the saints, **THEN SECONDLY**, once equipped, the minister helps the saints go out to do the work of the ministry, and then **THIRD**, as we're busy doing the work of ministry, we're encouraging and edifying one another in the body of Christ. **FIRST**, believers are to be equipped **FOR** the work of ministry **SO THAT** the body of Christ is edified. This is the 3-step progression for ministry impartation. Ministers need to understand their purpose, and this is their purpose. If they don't understand this progression, their ministries will lack focus and direction. So make sure you're involved with ministry leadership who have knowledge of Christ's purpose for His 5-fold ministry gifts. Otherwise, you might find yourself spiritually, adrift and without a plan or purpose for your life!

01/11/09

Ephesians 4:12 MINISTRY'S 3-FOLD PURPOSE (PART 2)

FIRST, we must be equipped to fulfill the Great Commission – Mark 16:15-20. We can't just go out the door and expect to turn the world upside down because we love the Lord. We've got to be equipped to get the job done, and that's the first job of the 5-fold ministry. As an apostle, my job is to equip myself, and then help you equip yourself for the work of ministry. Equipped with what? With knowledge, spiritual understanding, anointing, power, wisdom, maturity, and a host of related things that enable us to face the enemies of the Gospel fearlessly and effectively. Take a look at yourself today, and ask yourself if you're really equipped for the task at hand. Imagine! God is sending us into the world to witness in His name. That's quite a daunting assignment – fully equipped! How much more if we're lacking the equipment needed to do the job!

When looking at the ministry gifts that affect your life today, ask yourself – are these gifts really helping to equip me to more effectively attack the world and win souls in the Name of Jesus? Answering that question honestly might create a situation where decisions need to be made about whether to stay hooked up someone's ministry – or not! Whether it be a church, an missions ministry, or an evangelistic organization, what are they doing to use the equipment available for effective ministry, and are they passing that information and knowledge on to those aligned with them in the ministry of helps? Jesus knows what He's doing, and first of all, He wants His leaders and believers to be fully equipped. Are you? Are you trying to witness purely on zeal alone? That's a mistake. Get yourself close to a minister or ministry flowing with the supernatural equipment of Heaven, and stay there! You'll not only be a help to them, but they'll be an invaluable help to you! Its their first purpose!

01/12/09

Ephesians 4:12 MINISTRY'S 3-FOLD PURPOSE (PART 3)

SECOND, a 5-fold ministry is to show you how to use God's heavenly equipment to fulfill the work of ministry. As I said in yesterday's VAD, you can't expect to confront the world successfully if you don't have the right equipment. So once you've got the equipment – knowledge, spiritual understanding, anointing, power and all the rest, its time to go out and turn your world upside in the Name of Jesus. The ministries in your life should be helping you to do that. Once you've been equipped, the focused ministry will be right alongside you, working to win souls and disciple believers into a closer walk with Jesus. This has been the primary emphasis in all the sermons I've ever given – anywhere. If you hang with me, you're going to be challenged to get off the bench and get in the game! Are you ready!

Get equipped so that your ministry work will be fruitful for the glory of God. Many souls saved, many lives changed. That's the work of ministry. Its YOUR work! Find the ministries that prioritize on winning souls, take all the equipment you've been given by the Holy Spirit, and hook up with those ministers and get a job done for God! It doesn't matter how much equipment you've got from God – if you're not being challenged to use it to reach souls for Jesus, the ministers in your life are basically worthless to you, and to God. So don't wait any longer. Take stock of the divine equipment you've got, and look for the 5-fold ministers who can help you go out and turn your world upside down!

01/13/09

Ephesians 4:12 MINISTRY'S 3-FOLD PURPOSE (PART 4)

THIRD, a true 5-fold ministry will help you to edify and encourage other believers in the body the Christ. As you're out there at work in ministry, realize that you are not only helping people find Jesus, but you're becoming an example to other believers watching you! That's a good thing, and it should be happening in all our lives as we go out to evangelize in Jesus' Name. Many believers find it difficult to

get actively involved in outreach, but as they watch you operating with God's equipment, doing the work of ministry, they'll be emboldened to join you! This is something every ministry should be actively pursuing, because God needs ALL OF US to be busy about the Father's business.

There are no super-stars in the body of Christ, and a focused 5-fold ministry gift knows that. God wants everyone involved, because the body of Christ is a many-membered organism in need of proper function from EVERY member. Are the ministries in your life helping you to set examples for those around you? They should be. Imagine if EVERY BELIEVER got personally involved in the business of soulwinning! That's my job – and the job of every minister. I want to help equip you, lead you into spiritual battle, then work with you to encourage others to get off the sidelines and join the fight! Praise God! How about you? Are the ministries in your life doing what they're supposed to be doing – in you and through you to others? I'm doing my best to follow the mandate given by Jesus in Ephesians 4:11,12. Join up with me and let's do more for God than ever before!

01/14/09

Galatians 6:6 **LET YOUR GIVING SAY THANK YOU!**

How do you show your gratitude when someone helps you see some marvelous truth from the Bible? It should be with your giving at the very least. Paul wrote and told the Galatians to "share in all good things" with those who had taught them well. What price could you put on revelation knowledge? How much is a Rhema word from heaven worth to you? Looking at this from the natural: if you had an incurable disease, how much would the cure be worth to you? Sad to say, many believers cheat not only their teachers, but also themselves – when they fail to give generously in return for what they've received in terms of insight, revelation, inspiration, knowledge – whatever! Don't let that be you! If it is, change TODAY!

If the teacher is pure in heart and motive, he or she isn't in ministry for the money you give, but on the other hand, they who preach the Gospel are to live by the Gospel (1 Cor.9:14). And when you and I fail to bless those who help us with their teaching, we do an injustice to them, to ourselves, and to God. Always strive to be generous with those who labor in the word on your behalf. It's the right thing to do. To stay strong and protected, our spirit man is constantly in need of feeding, which is why Jesus gave the gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers. We're here to help you grow and learn in Jesus. Be generous in return, and God will respond the same way back to you! Remember, you can never out-give God!

01/15/09

Galatians 6:7 **WHAT YOU SOW IS WHAT YOU REAP**

There are a number of spiritual laws mentioned in the New Testament. The law of faith, law of love, law of life in Christ Jesus, law of sin and death – to name a few. But the master law, the one over all the others, is the law of sowing and reaping. Jesus said so in Mark 4:26-30, and the Bible confirms that in many places with many verses. **WHATEVER** you sow, **THAT** is what you'll reap. Think about that! "Whatever" means any topic you want to talk about – its covered by the law of sowing and reaping. Whatever you have in your life today is the product of something you said or did yesterday. That's a fact because it's a spiritual law, and spiritual laws don't change from person to person, culture to culture, or nation to nation. They're the same for everybody because God is no respecter of person. That includes YOU!

So if you're not satisfied with what's going on in your life today, step back from yourself and objectively analyze what you've been saying and doing. This is where you'll find the source of your problems – always. Proverbs 26:2 says that curses don't come upon us except there be a reason. That

means if the devil has a place in your life, its because somehow you let him in! Sowing and reaping. **WHATEVER** means **WHATEVER**. If you're reaping financial difficulties right now, its because of something you did to cut God off and enable the devourer to come and steal from you. Sowing and reaping. On and on we could go with this. You want love? Sow love first. You want more money? Sow more money first. You want health? Sow words of faith, health and healing first. Whatever you have is the result of whatever you have sown. It's the master law my friend. It governs your life whether you want it to or not, whether you know it does or not. Be wise! Begin today to plant the right kinds of seed – and you'll get the right kind of crop. Every time!

01/16/09

Galatians 5:24 **ARE YOU CRUCIFIED TODAY?**

If you're born again, you belong to Christ. If you belong to Him, you're responsible for crucifying your flesh daily. Paul said he died daily (1 Cor.15:31), and this is what he was talking about. The crucifixion of the flesh. Understand your flesh is not your friend. It's a deadly enemy which seeks to kill you and take you to hell. You must subdue it and crucify it everyday. The people who do this successfully are the one who qualify for the rewards waiting in heaven. This is the real war we all wage daily. No one else can do this for you, you have to do it for yourself. Its your body – you have the responsibility to control it. Are you controlling it, or is it controlling you?

Ever notice that no matter what you give your flesh today, it wants more tomorrow? Why? Because the flesh is never satisfied. Give it one Krispy Kreme donut today, it'll want a dozen of them tomorrow (you may already be at that place in your life – I'll be praying for you!) That's why we see people doing stupid things all the time, because their flesh is controlling them, rather than they controlling their flesh. Its not an easy thing to do because carnal appetites are strong forces within us, but we **MUST** crucify our flesh if we expect to please God and be useable for His work on earth. Crucifixion is **PAINFUL**. It **HURTS!** It is **DIFFICULT!** But its **NECESSARY**, and it's your **JOB!** So get busy! Nail that flesh of yours to the cross of Christ today – and everyday. Don't let it have it's way in your life. Walk in the Spirit, and you won't fulfill the desires of your flesh (Gal.5:16)

01/17/09

Galatians 4:10 **EACH DAY IS A GIFT!**

Paul chastised the Galatians because they were making certain days more important than others. This is not the way of liberty in Christ. Its fine to set days aside to commemorate something special – spiritual or natural. However, in Christ you must never forget that **EVERYDAY** is a special day – not just the ones we observe annually on the calendar. When you wake up in the morning, the first thing you should do is praise God for another day. Why? Because tomorrow is guaranteed to no one, including you. You can't change the past, and the future isn't here yet. Today is all we've got, so we should make the most of each day – recognizing it for what it is – a gift from God – a wonderful opportunity to repent and start over with God, or to just continue serving Him with all your heart.

In December of 2004, an earthquake and subsequent tsunami waves killed thousands of people throughout Asia. I doubt that many of those people woke up that day expecting to die and step out into eternity, but that is exactly what happened. One minute people are going about their daily lives as usual – some even on vacation at seaside resorts – and the next minute they're dead and facing an eternity with our without Christ – depending on the state of their soul at the time the waves hit. Around 3,000 Americans went to work on 9/11/01, and never came home because of terrorist attacks. I doubt there were many in that group of dead who planned on dying that day. Don't take today for granted. It's a gift from God – cherish it, enjoy it, make the most of it for the Lord. If changes need to be made in your life, make

them TODAY. Now is the accepted time, today is the day of salvation (2 Cor.6:2)!

01/18/09

Psalms 90:12 **HAVE YOU NUMBERED YOUR DAYS?**

We're told to number our days. That means you should keep a running tab on how many days you've lived on earth. Why? To help keep your life in perspective, and not take today from granted. God wants you to figure out how many days you've been on earth, and use that as a benchmark to measure the value of your life before the Lord. Just take your birth date and year, and add up the number of days you've lived from then until today. I was born on November 22nd, 1951. From then until today, that's 19,403 days (if my addition is correct!). Remember, when judgment time comes in heaven, your life will be judged **ONE DAY AT A TIME**, because that's the way God set up our time-bound dimension here on earth. Day by day! One day at a time – that's the way we live our lives.

Our lives are just a long string of days lived back to back. Sunrise, sunset – day after day. But if you number your days, you become more aware of the importance of each day, what a gift it is from God, and how important it is to make the most of the spiritual opportunities that each day offers you as a believer. And also, when you number your days, you're less prone to let large chunks of time slip away unnoticed. Ever notice how fast our children grow up? One day they're playing on the swings in the backyard, next time you look up they're graduating from college, and you wonder where all the time went. Number your days friend. Do it today, and keep a running tab. Refer to it from time to time, and let that figure galvanize your faith, and strengthen your spiritual resolve to be your best for God today!

01/19/09

Psalms 82:1 **DO YOU BELONG TO GOD'S CONGREGATION?**

In the body of Christ today on earth, we have many groups, denominations and organization. All claim to have the corner on truth and correct Biblical interpretation and application. However, only **ONE** congregation is God's congregation, and that is the **CONGREGATION OF THE MIGHTY!** Praise God! That's the **ONLY** group He stands in the midst of. Not any other. If you want to hang with God, and be a member of His congregation, you're going to have to get mighty, and stay mighty in the sight of the Lord. He loves **ALL** men, and loves **ALL** Christians, but He only stands (has intimate fellowship) among those who are strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10)

God reserves His power, His intimate conversations, His special assignments and favor for those in the congregation of the mighty. He wants to do this with **ALL** believers, but He can't. He can only have close fellowship with those strong enough to qualify for it. Are you qualified? If not, why not? Believers fight small wars over which denomination is "right", but as far as God is concerned, all that doesn't matter. What matters to Him is whether you're **MIGHTY** in Christ or not. Its one thing to be saved, but quite another to be a member of this elite congregation. King David had many soldiers in his army, but only a handful were called "David's mighty men". The same is true concerning the body of Christ today. You may be a soldier in the army of the Lord, but are you a member of the "special forces"? You can be if you want to be – it only takes your decision and God will help you become a member in good standing – a member of the congregation of the **MIGHTY!**

01/20/09

Psalms 82:1 **THE FIRST OF SEVEN PRE-REQUISITES TO JOIN GOD'S CONG**

To join God's congregation of the mighty, at least 7 pre-requisites are required of you. #1) **BECOME PASSIONATE ABOUT THE THINGS OF GOD.** This may sound elementary, but most believers are **NOT** at all passionate for God. They're passionate for the things of this world instead. Great

men and women of God made plenty of mistakes throughout the Bible (exception: Jesus), but they still maintained membership in God's congregation because first and foremost, they were passionate about God and the things of God. An example is David in the Old Testament. He made mistakes, and committed grave sins, but he's still called a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). Why? For one thing, because of his passion and deep love for God. He is the one who wrote "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE HAS CONSUMED ME" (Psalms 119:139). Does it consume you? If not, you're not qualified for membership in God's congregation of the mighty.

David was just one of many found in the Bible who had this one common denominator. **SPIRITUAL PASSION.** In this day of rampant compromise and mediocrity within Christian circles, it's all the more important to find Christians who are totally sold out to God, and won't let lukewarm or double-minded saints douse their flames of spiritual passion for God and His cause. Where do you stand on this issue? So many of us are so afraid of offending other men, we forget that in doing so, we're already offending God! You need to take stock and spiritually analyze your level of passion for the things of God. If you want to join up with God's mighty congregation, this is where everything begins.

01/21/09

Psalms 82:1 **THE SECOND OF SEVEN PRE-REQUISITES TO JOIN GOD'S CON**

To join God's congregation of the mighty, at least 7 pre-requisites are required of you. #2) **DON'T TOLERATE ANY HIGH PLACES IN YOUR LIFE.** In the Old Testament, the "high places" referred to places of idol worship, where the Jews would go to offer sacrifices to demons disguised as idols. In the New Testament, the "high places" refer to those specific areas of weakness the devil exploits against you time and again. Many Old Testament kings were good but not great because although they loved God and served Him well, they never took down the high places. They tolerated them. Asa, Jehoshaphat, Solomon. All called good but never great Kings – because they tolerated the high places. Are you doing the same with your specific and chronic areas of sin and spiritual struggle? If you want to join God's congregation of the mighty, you must **ATTACK** these areas and pull them down!

One King called **GREAT** in the Old Testament was Josiah. Read 2 Kings 23 carefully, noting how many times it talks about how he tore down the high places. That was the difference. That's what elevated him beyond good to great. How about you? Galatians 5:9 says a little leaven leaves the **WHOLE** lump. That means you can't allow the high places to remain in your life, and they won't be going away until you get **ANGRY ABOUT IT**, and **PULL DOWN THOSE STRONGHOLDS** with our Lord's strength (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). What are your high places? Drugs? Alcohol abuse? Tobacco? Sexual immorality? Unrenewed mind? Carnal lifestyle? Uncontrolled temper? Uncontrolled tongue? Whatever the high places are in your life, **ATTACK** them, and make it priority #1 to see them removed. Until then, you're never going to qualify for membership in the congregation of the mighty!

01/22/09

Psalms 82:1 **THE 3rd OF 7 REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN GOD'S CONGREGATION.**

To join God's congregation of the mighty, 7 requirements need to be met, and today we look at #3, which is to **MANAGE YOUR TIME.** Everyone has 24 hours to work with daily. Nobody has less or more. You must manage the clock, or you'll never qualify for membership in God's Mighty Congregation. To do this, you must avoid becoming entangled with the affairs of life (2 Timothy 2:1-7), and keep the weights and sins off your back while running your race for God (Hebrews 12:1-3). So much of the day is wasted by Christians, doing things that occupy their time, and keep them away from God's spiritual priorities. This keeps them in a state of spiritual weakness: and unable to join God's congregation of the mighty.

Psalms 1:3 says that if we meditate in the things of God day and night, we'll be like a fruitful tree planted by the rivers of water. In other words, we'll be deep-rooted and able to withstand the attacks of the enemy daily. There are 7 Spiritual Priorities of Life you must do daily to manage your time wisely. They are: #1) Worship. #2) Praise. #3) Prayer. #4) Confession. #5) Meditation. #6) Study and Reading. #7) Sharing (Witnessing). All believers have done these things, but very few do them consistently. You must manage your time by avoiding the entanglements, sins and weights that prevent you from doing these 7 things everyday. Only then can you become a member of God's Congregation of the Mighty.

01/23/09

Psalms 82:1 THE 4th OF 7 REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN GOD'S CONGREGATION.

Of the 7 requirements to meet to become a member of God's congregation of the mighty, #4 is this: ONLY BELIEVE! When a desperate father heard his daughter had just died, Jesus responded with these words: "Fear not – ONLY BELIEVE!" To be a member of this congregation, you must eliminate double-mindedness, and choose to walk by faith, and faith alone. Stand on God's word, no matter what things look like, or feel like, or sound like around you. God's Word is final authority, and that Word has the power in it to change ANYTHING on earth when ANY human being speaks it in simple faith.

Romans 14:23 says that WHATEVER is not of faith is SIN! Whatever means anything! No exceptions! No excuses! Unbelief is sin – God said so here, and in other places like Hebrews 4:1-11. He also said to rejoice ALWAYS in Philippians 4:4-6. If you ONLY believe, you're rejoicing ALWAYS! That's how it works! Faith and joy are always coupled together in the New Testament. You can't find one without the other. The reason you rejoice ALWAYS is because you're choosing to ONLY believe – nothing more, nothing less. This simple decision puts you in God's congregation because in this congregation, people trust God and consider His Word to be beyond discussion, doubt or debate. That's the way it has to be with you too, if this is the congregation you want to be a part of.

01/24/09

Psalms 82:1 THE 5th OF 7 REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN GOD'S CONGREGATION

The fifth of seven requirements needed to become a member of God's congregation of the mighty is this: LET GOD BE GOD IN YOUR LIFE! Hebrews 4:1-11 says your responsibility is not to try and do what you can't do, but instead, choose to believe that God will do the impossible in your life. God doesn't ask us to do what we can't do, but He requires us to do what we can do – and that is the "work" of faith. We're told to LABOR to enter into God's REST! That's faith! That's letting God be God when we face impossible situations or circumstances. Colossians 1:29 tells it all. We're to work according to God's working, which is supposed to be working mightily in us and through us! That means we get into God's flow of promise, power, provision, protection and prosperity, and just enjoy the ride! Are you enjoying YOUR RIDE in life?

Ephesians 3:16,20 says that God can do in your life EXCEEDINGLY and ABUNDANTLY above ALL you can ask for, or even imagine for- ACCORDING TO.... According to what? According to God's power working in us. That's letting God be God! In every challenge, attack, assignment or situation, victory is won when we partner with God and cooperate with Him. Here's how it works. When we do what we can do, God does what we can't do. What can we do? Choose to believe, and work hard to stay in that place of faith! That's our job. Stay in faith! Its not an easy job, but that's our job – our "labor". When we do that, God goes to work on our behalf, doing what we could never do without Him. So come to a place of rest today! God's congregation is always at peace, and at rest. They know that God is God, and they aren't! Do you know that? If so, relax and let Him love you and take care of you.

Believe in Him, and it will be done!

01/25/09

Psalms 82:1 **THE 6th OF 7 REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN GOD'S CONGREGATION**

The sixth of seven requirements to become a member of God's congregation of the mighty is this: **MANAGE YOUR MOUTH!** James 3:2 says if we can control the tongue, we can control the whole body! That's quite a statement. God's congregation is made up of people who have their flesh under control, and for that to have happened, they had to get control of their tongue. Do you have control of YOUR tongue? Most believers don't! Read all of Proverbs, and all of James. Read also Ecclesiastes 5:1-6. The wise man knows how to manage his mouth – the fool does not. That's how God defines wisdom and foolishness. Are you wise, or are you a fool? Listen to what's coming out your mouth, and you'll know.

From Genesis to Revelations, the message is clear! Think before you speak! Manage your mouth. Proverbs 18:21 says death and life is in the power of the tongue. Jesus said men will give account for every idle word spoken (Matthew 12:36). James 1:19 says to be swift to hear and slow to speak. The greatest world war is a war of words! Undisciplined, unscriptural words, when spoken, become a spiritual kindling which lights up a forest fire of trouble in our lives (James 3:5). Members of this congregation know the importance of keeping the mouth shut when tempted to say things that violate God's word. Remember: what you have today is the product of what you said yesterday! God can't use a person who doesn't know this, and who hasn't learned to control the tongue.

01/26/09

Psalms 82:1 **THE 7th OF 7 REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN GOD'S CONGREGATION**

The seventh and last requirement for joining God's congregation of the mighty is this: **LEARN TO LOVE!** Walking in love is a topic frequently preached about, but very seldom practiced. Yet, without love, our faith won't work (Galatians 5:6), and without faith, you can't please God (Hebrews 11:6). Members of God's mighty congregation please Him by walking in faith which is working through love. 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 says it all. Even if you have all faith to move any mountain, but haven't got love operating in your life – you are nothing! Just a lot of hot air and irritating noise! Don't let that be your description, because if it is, you'll never be a member of this elite, mighty congregation.

It's a commandment to walk in love, and it's the only commandment of the New Testament. Paul said so in Romans 13:8-10. No one can be a member of God's congregation without mastering the ability to walk in love. Its not easy, that's why so few have mastered it in their lives! Every persecutor, liar, malicious, backbiting, gossiping, carnal, jealous, unforgiving and unmerciful person you meet will take you back to love school! It's a constant challenge, but one we must overcome consistently! Most people don't know anything about God or His nature, so they will not be in a love "flow" with you! You must rise above their carnality and immaturity, and walk in love especially when they aren't walking in love towards you. You must practice Matthew 5:44. No, its not easy! It requires hard work and discipline, but in Christ you can do it!

01/27/09

Galatians 6:1 **ARE YOU TRULY SPIRITUAL?**

Paul wrote and told the Galatians that if another believer was overtaken in a fault, they would demonstrate their spirituality by working to **RESTORE THEM**. Is that what we see going on in the church today? Hardly! Instead of working to restore believers who have stumbled into sin, most of us are working to destroy them! How? With gossip and backbiting. With the acceptance and dissemination of unsupported rumors. To assume the worst and never the best, to name just a few. That is not the work of

spiritual people! Instead, it's a manifestation of shallowness and carnality, and that's where most believers are today. What about you?

Your goal in life should be to rise above carnality, and become a spiritually mature believer in Christ. Sad to say however, most believers never make it to that level of life. They forever remain carnal, governed by their flesh instead of being governed by their spirits and the Word of God. This is revealed most tellingly in how they react when others around them fall into sin or failure. Time and again, Paul admonished his readers to rise above the flesh, work to help and restore one another in times of crisis, sin and failure, and thus move towards maturity in Christ (examples: 1 Corinthians 3:1, Galatians 6:1 and Hebrews 5:12). The mature saint will not rejoice in another's demise, but instead, find ways to restore that person as quickly as possible. Is this what you do? It should be, if you expect to grow up and mature in Christ. Next time someone around you falls, measure your maturity in how you work to restore rather than destroy!

01/28/09

Ephesians 4:1 **ARE YOU WALKING WORTHY OF HIS CALLING?**

When you work to restore fallen brethren, as it says we must do in Galatians 6:1, you're walking worthy of your calling. You're demonstrating true spiritual maturity. You're walking in the spirit, and conquering the desires of the flesh. If you read all of Ephesians, you'll see that much is said about learning how to "walk" right in Christ. As an example, in Ephesians 4:17,18, we're told not to walk as the Gentiles walk. In other words, when a fellow believer commits sin or makes a mistake, instead of working like unbelievers to destroy such a one, we as mature Christians work to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. How? Read on in Ephesians chapter 5 and God will show you!

In Ephesians 5:2, we're told to walk in love. In Ephesians 5:8, we're told to walk as children of light. In Ephesians 5:15, we're told to walk circumspectly. What does all this mean? It means that if we're to show maturity in Christ, our walk should be a careful walk of love and light towards those around us who have failed God in some way or another. There are at least six major ways to express your true spiritual maturity towards fellow believers who struggle, sin or compromise in their walk with God. If you want to mature and please the Lord with your life, you're going to have to know how to properly respond when others are "overtaken" in faults, sins and mistakes, **ESPECIALLY** when their failures affect you directly and personally! For the next few days, let's look at what those six things would be from the Word of God!

01/29/09

Mark 11:25 **FORGIVENESS: THE 1ST MARK OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY**

Many "faith people" love to quote Mark 11:23 and 24, but fail to include the next 2 verses. Verses 25 and 26 go right along with verses 23 and 24. If you want your faith work, you **MUST** forgive those who have wronged you! This is the first expression of spiritual maturity at work in your life. Jesus said if you **ANYTHING** against **ANYBODY**, when you stand praying, forgive them! Notice: forgive them when praying, **NOT** when they ask for your forgiveness! No mention is made here of waiting for them to apologize to you before you forgive them. You're to do it when you stand praying the prayer of faith – with or without their apology or repentance towards you! Have you been doing that when you pray your prayer of faith?

The ability to **INITIATE** forgiveness, under all circumstances, is a mark of true spiritual maturity. In this passage from Mark, Jesus tells you to forgive in these three ways: 1) **ANYONE!** 2) **ANYTHING!** 3) **ANYTIME!** Jesus did it on the cross. He forgave those who nailed Him up there, while they stood there laughing at Him, spitting on Him, and blaspheming Him (Luke 23:34). Stephen did it, on his knees

while the crowd threw stones at him to kill him (Acts 7:6). Paul did it, when all his friends abandoned him when he went before Caesar to defend himself (2 Timothy 4:16). If they can do it, we can do it today! Some like to excuse themselves by saying that they're not like Jesus when He forgave his murderers from the cross, but what about Paul and Stephen? They're no different than us – and if they forgave their enemies, we can do it too. The first expression of spiritual maturity is the ability to forgive unconditionally. Its not an easy thing to do, that's why so few have mastered this discipline, but I'm persuaded you can do it! There's no better time to start than right now!

01/30/09

Ephesians 4:27 UNFORGIVENESS GIVES PLACE TO THE DEVIL

The devil is not the main problem concerning the work of God today. The greatest problem is immaturity among the saints! One of the ways that immaturity is manifested is with unforgiveness. It gives place to the devil, and empowers him to work against us for as long as we fail to forgive. This is why many prayers of "faith" go unanswered, according to what Jesus said in Mark 11:23-26. He said we must initiate forgiveness while standing to pray, otherwise God won't forgive us! Think about that! If you don't forgive others for what they've done against you, God won't forgive you for what you've done against Him!

When talking about love characteristics in First Corinthians 13:5, Paul says that love does "thinks no evil", or, as it is rendered in other translations, not take into account a wrong suffered. In other words, when walking in love and spiritual maturity, you forgive the people who have wronged you – and you then treat them AS IF THEY HAD NEVER HURT YOU. You don't hold their sins against them, and constantly bring it back up every time you think of them, talk to them, or see them in public. Can you do that? Most believers cannot. They want to gain a measure of revenge, and see their persecutors suffer for what they did. This is not the mature way in Christ. Jesus didn't do this, so neither should we. If you're mature, you'll understand this, and work to practice this everyday in Jesus.

01/31/09

Ephesians 4:32 FORGIVE EVEN AS GOD HAS FORGIVEN YOU!

Paul told the Ephesians to forgive one another EVEN AS God, in Christ, had forgiven them. The key words are "even as...". If you're to walk in spiritual maturity, you have to do what God did in Christ. You must initiate forgiveness, before those who offend you ask for it. This is what God did in Christ, so we must do the same. Romans 5:8 says that while we were sinners, Christ died for us. In other words, forgiveness was acquired by Jesus even before you and I knew we needed to be forgiven! God didn't wait for us to ask for it; He provided it ahead of time. We must follow God's lead, and do the same with one another. This is a manifestation of true spiritual maturity.

In Luke 17:3,4 Jesus tell us to forgive after our offenders ask for it. Does that mean we're to wait for our offenders to ask for forgiveness before we forgive them? No, because many other verses tell us to initiate the forgiveness, not waiting for those who offend us to ask for it. So what does this verse mean in light of all the other verses about forgiveness? It means we're to forgive when our offenders ask for it, and we're to forgive when they don't! Luke 6:37 says forgive, and THEN we'll be forgiven. That's the same as what Jesus said in Mark 11:23-26. Even as God initiated forgiveness with us through Christ, we're to follow that example and offer forgiveness whether or not it is asked for. This is the first expression of spiritual maturity, and where the love walk really begins to take hold in our lives.