

6/1/09

Philippians 1:29 **SUFFERING IS A GOD-GIVEN PRIVILEGE!**

When you talk about the topic of suffering, you're going to touch many people in an area that is very sensitive to them. Yet, the Bible is full of verses that talk about suffering, the kind that is good as well as the kind that's bad. What would be the bad kind of suffering? All the suffering connected with the curse of sin, the curse that came on the human race when Adam sinned. That kind of suffering would include sickness, disease, poverty and a host of other related conditions. Jesus died to free us from the curse of that kind of suffering. But on the other hand, most Christians are unaware of the fact that as far as God is concerned, one kind of suffering is not only good, but a privilege He offers to each one of His children. It's called PERSECUTION, suffering reproach for being a righteous person preaching a righteous message in an unrighteous world that's controlled by Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4) According to our verse today, Paul told the Philippians that it was not only acceptable to suffer persecution for the gospel's sake, it was a God-given PRIVILEGE! The NKJV translation says it has been "granted" to us the opportunity to suffer for the cause of Christ. But the A.S. Worrell translation of the New Testament uses a better word for this in my opinion. Worrell uses the word "privilege" instead of the word "granted". I like that because it agrees with what we see about persecution in the New Testament in other books and passages.

When you undergo persecution for your faith, how do you respond? Do you rebuke it in Jesus' Name? Many believers are doing just that. They mistakenly include this type of persecution with the sufferings that Jesus redeemed us from when He rose from the dead. No, we shouldn't accept sickness or disease as some form of Divine methodology for discipline. That's not what the Bible teaches. But on the other hand, it does teach that suffering for the cause of Christ, persecution, imprisonment, difficulties, torture, social rejection, things like that, are not only acceptable in God's sight, but TO BE EXPECTED AND EMBRACED! Jesus was persecuted this way, and Hebrews says He learned obedience through the things He SUFFERED (Hebrews 5:8). What kind of suffering did Jesus suffer? Sickness? No! Disease? No! Poverty or financial lack? No! He suffered REJECTION, in all its forms and manifestations, culminating in His crucifixion. Why? Because He suffered for His MESSAGE, for His HOLINESS, and for His RIGHTEOUSNESS. If you're going to be just like Jesus, you'll be experiencing the same things He did in terms of suffering. And that's ok. It's not bad. Why? Because all the rewards waiting for us in Heaven are directly connected to our outreach and obedience to the Great Commission in this life (Mark 16:15-18). You must understand this, so that when you're going through "hell" for your Christian witness, you'll not only accept it, but actually rejoice because of it. That's what Jesus was teaching in Luke 6:22-23. In this day in which we live, we need many more Christians to rise above their fear of persecution, and get out into the world and tell people about Jesus, no matter the cost in terms of persecution. Many in the Philippian church came to this realization, and if you've been holding back, I hope you do too (see Philippians 1:12-14).

6/2/09

Philippians 1:19 **PRAY FOR US!**

Sometimes Christians talk about something so much that it loses its sense of urgency or importance. I think the issue of prayer is one such issue for many today in the

body of Christ. I believe every Christian would at least give passive acknowledgement that prayer is important, yet so few of us really take that awareness and turn it into a vibrant, effective, meaningful prayer life. Part of the problem for many is the fact that prayer requires a deep sense of commitment and sacrifice, at a level that most are unwilling to go to. The reason we don't have more people praying is because prayer can be (and most often it is) **HARD WORK!** Our flesh **NEVER** wants to pray, and the devil is constantly working to discourage us from prayer. So if we're to become effective in prayer, we're going to have to really meditate on **WHY** prayer is so important. If we don't we'll never exert enough discipline to become diligent in prayer.

Paul was a great man of faith, but he was also a great man of prayer, as was Jesus our Lord. When Paul wrote the Philippians, he told them his deliverance was directly tied to their prayers for him, as our verse today indicates. That should make all of us re-think the issue of prayer for others! If Paul acknowledges his need for their intercessory prayer, who are we to think we don't need the prayers of others of like precious faith? The fact is this: **WE NEED TO BE PRAYING MORE FOR OTHERS AS THE SPIRIT LEADS.** Too many times we ignore or just reject the Spirit's leadings when He's trying to get us to a place of prayer for others, but we must become much more obedient when He calls upon us for intercessory prayer. People's lives literally depend upon it sometimes! Why is this true, and so important? Because of what God did way back in Genesis 1. Genesis 1:26-28 plainly shows us God's creative intent when man was created. He gave **US** the dominion on earth. God does not have dominion on earth now, **MAN DOES,** and **ALWAYS HAS HAD IT!** That's the first thing God said about man's purpose on earth, to subdue it, have control over it, and exercise dominion. Prayer is the greatest exercises of our dominion that there is, because God **WAITS** for our prayers before He moves to interact in the earth on our behalf. You must understand this, otherwise you'll never understand why prayer is so important, and why its so important to pray for others when God asks you to. So I ask you to do for us what Paul asked of his friends and disciples. **PRAY FOR US!** We need your prayers, and we covet your prayers!

6/3/09

1 Samuel 12:23 **THE SIN MOST BELIEVERS COMMIT HABITUALLY**

This verse today reveals a wealth of information about intercessory prayer. Samuel told the Jews that if he stopped praying for them, it would be **SIN** to him in God's sight. Do you know that? Most believers don't, that's one reason why Christians aren't praying for others like they should be. And here's something else to remember about this. The Jews that Samuel was told to pray for were not a bunch of spiritual giants. They were, at that time, a group of backslidden complainers who were anything but operating in the will of God. Even so, Samuel was told to pray for them, and if he didn't, it would be regarded as sin in **HIS** life, not theirs! It's a lot easier to pray for people we love or like, isn't it? But what about those we don't love or like? They need prayer too because never forget this fact. God loves them as much as you, and He's counting on our prayers to keep His work active in their lives.

That sounds strange to the religious person, but its scriptural through and through. Because God gave man dominion on earth (Genesis 1:26-28), prayer becomes our way of inviting Him into the earth to do what can't be done otherwise. I've heard preachers say

that when it comes to God and man, its all about us, our faith, our authority, our giving, etc. Then others I've heard say that its all about God, God's sovereignty, God's glory, God's greatness, etc. Both of them are incomplete, therefore inaccurate. Its not about God, and its not about man, ITS ABOUT US! God and man in partnership. Man exercising his dominion, and relying on God's greatness and power to do what can't be done any other way. Prayer is partnership, our invitation for God's intervention, and His favorable response. When that happens, God is glorified, and that's the way it should be, and the way He expects it to be. So don't commit the sin most believers commit all the time. Pray for the unlovely. Pray for those you don't like. Pray for those who hate you, despise you and use you. Do your part, and keep that kind of sin out of your life forever!

6/4/09

1 Thessalonians 5:25 **KEEP PRAYING FOR US!**

Some Christians think its an acknowledgment of weakness to ask others for prayer. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Paul asked for it over and over, and he was one of the strongest faith people in the Bible. He knew something many today don't know. Prayers are important! Very important! As strong as he was in faith, Paul knew he needed the prayers of others for success in life and ministry. Asking for prayer is not an admission of weakness. Rather, it's a declaration of wisdom. Because man has been given dominion on earth (now enforced through Jesus as God's right hand), prayer is the MAIN AVENUE for God's operation and involvement in the earth. It always has been, and always will be, as long as we're in this creative dispensation of 7,000 years (that's the approximate length of Adam's lease of dominion on earth, as pronounced in Genesis 1). I have learned to ask for prayer as often as necessary, and not to be ashamed in any way when I do it. I'm asking you for please pray for me, for my family, my marriage, my ministry, my life, everything. If you have me on your heart, please keep me in your prayers! I need them, and will always need them!

Obviously we can't be praying for everyone everyday. That's impossible, and God knows it. What He wants us to be is OBEДИENT when the Holy Spirit lays someone or some situation on our hearts for prayer. He doesn't expect us to pray for everything, but He knows how to delegate our prayer responsibilities in such a way that if everyone does what they're told to do with regards to prayer, every need will be addressed in the ways God wants them addressed. At that point, we've done our job, and exercised our dominion properly. The results at that point are between God and those we've been praying for, they have a free will and can accept or refuse God's help. But know this: even when it looks like God did something for someone or in some situation apart from prayer, prayer WAS involved. It has to be, we have the dominion on earth, not God. That's one reason why prayer in tongues is so important, because many times when we're praying in the spirit, we don't know what or who we're praying about. It could be some missionary in China we're praying for, and even though the missionary sees the results of your prayers as God moves to help him or her, we don't anything about it unless God chooses to reveal something through one of the gifts of the Spirit. But that's ok, because we're to live by faith, and faith is the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1,2). So pray for me, everyday! Please don't stop! Ever!

6/5/09

2 Thessalonians 3:1,2

WE NEED YOUR PRAYERS!

Paul understood the importance of having his disciples pray for him and his ministry. I do too. I need your prayers, and covet them more than you can ever know. So many times over the years, I'm convinced that the intercessory prayers from people like you have prevented accidents, injury and disaster for me, my family and ministry staff. Thank you! I appreciate your prayers, and thank God for all of them! Please don't stop, keep praying! Remember that when you pray for us, you become partners with what we're doing for the Lord in the Philippines, or wherever else I do what I do for the Lord. With your prayers, you stand alongside me, and partner with me to get the job done for God. Paul told the Thessalonians that their prayers protected him from evil men. We believe your prayers today do the same for us. In a nation like the Philippines, there are many evil men waiting in the wings to do harm to us and to the cause of Christ. Your prayers provide us with a much-needed hedge of protection that is needed and appreciated. You've heard the slogan "No news is good news". Well, that's true when it comes to your prayers for us. If nothing bad is happening, that's a sign that your prayers are out there providing us with protection and provision from the Lord. That's why you need to stay faithful in this, even when you don't feel like it! Ministers like me are special targets of the enemy for many reasons, so once again, let me encourage you to pray for us, and to stay faithful in prayer for us. We want to let God's Word run swiftly through this ministry, and to do that, we need your prayers! Thank you!

6/6/09

Hebrews 13:18

PRAYER BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

As we continue looking at the importance of intercessory prayer, keep in mind that according to our verse today, Paul says that he would be restored to them SOONER if they lift him up in prayer. The same is true today. Prayer brings people together. Prayer reunites people. Prayer makes things happen for those you pray for in ways nothing else could. As for this ministry, your prayers provide us with a spiritual bridge that makes it possible for us to come to you, either in person, through the website, or in the form of electronic ministry like TV, teaching CDs and the like. So please stay faithful in your prayers for me, my family and my ministry. We need your help, and we're not ashamed to ask for it!

So many times I'll just stop what I'm doing, and thank the Lord for your prayers. I know that your prayers have enabled me, protected me, helped God provide for me, and positioned me to receive all from the Lord I need to do what I do in His Name. This is the power of prayer, and I want you to clearly understand how important your prayers are to what we do in this ministry. Don't ever think your prayers are unimportant or unnecessary. Those thoughts, if and when they come, are from the devil. He's trying to convince you to cease your prayers because he knows that as long as you pray for us, God is at work honoring your efforts, and providing for us and protecting us in ways only He can. So once again, thank you for your prayers! Don't stop, keep praying! Its more important to our success than you may ever know, but its vital you stay faithful so that together, we can do a great work for the Lord!

6/7/09

1 Chronicles 28:10

ONLY THE STRONG PREVAIL!

God has a job for each one of us to do. No matter who you are, or where you live, God has a job for you to do in the name of Jesus. This was His message to Solomon thousands of years ago. Through David his father, God told Solomon that in order to complete his assigned task, he would have to be strong to do it! Not maybe, but definitely! Nothing has changed. Its still the same for you and I today. Whether it be small or great, whatever God expects you to do, you won't be able to do it until you are strong enough to do it! Remember that, because in this day and age, with sin and compromise everywhere, you won't make it to the finish line unless you're strong enough to make it, its that simple.

I found out a long time ago that even though God loves each Christian equally, He can only work with the strong ones. He WANTS to use EVERYONE, but He can only use those who are strong enough to be used. That's why it says that God searches across the earth, LOOKING for people to show Himself strong to (2 Chronicles 16:9). Why does He have to look for them? Because they can't be found everywhere. He has to find them. Has He found one of them when He finds you, or does He have to pass you over and keep searching? If not, you can change that today. Make a decision to put up with compromise and mediocrity no longer. Get up, strap on your spiritual weapons, exercise your authority, and take dominion in your life according to God's plan and purpose, which is ALWAYS victory! You have the Name above every Name. Use it!

6/8/09

Philippians 2:9 ARE YOU USING THE NAME?

I'm convinced that most Christians have no idea of the power that resides in the name of Jesus. If they did, they'd be speaking that holy name much more often. If you study the New Testament, you can see those early Christians understood the power in our Lord's name. At that name EVERY KNEE bows! It is the name above EVERY name. And here's the good news, its our name now too! Oh yes, if you're saved and a child of God, that name belongs to you. Jesus gave it to you to use. When you use His name in faith, it's the same thing as if He were in person. Actually, He is there in person because He lives in you, so when you declare your destiny by using His name, all of hell has to bow and back away. How often have you been using His name to clear demons, devils and difficulties out of your way?

Have you ever noticed that unbelievers have a very difficult time saying the name of Jesus? They can freely talk about God, or even talk about Christ, but they can't say the name of Jesus. Why? Because that's the name above every name. That's the name of His humanity, and it was in His humanity that our salvation was purchased and the devil's kingdom destroyed. That's the name demons fear. That's the name they have to bow to. Check it our for yourself. Listen to people talk about spiritual things, and see how difficult it is for them to talk about Jesus. They'll talk about God, Mohammed, Buddha, Christ, and many others, but they won't talk about Jesus! That's the name that makes them uncomfortable. That's good! They need to be made uncomfortable, and our Lord's name is just the thing to do that. The Pharisees displayed this in clear detail. Read Acts 4:17,18, then Acts 5:28. They feared THE NAME! And the devil and his playmates still fear His Name today, so use it! Use it, and never get tired of using it! Its yours, Jesus gave it to you, use it to drive the forces of darkness out of your life. And when (not if) he tries to come back, use the name of Jesus again. Read Acts, and

underline every reference to the name of Jesus. Find out what they knew back then. Its for you to use today. **WHATEVER** you do in word or deed, do it in the name of Jesus (Colossians 3:17).

6/9/09

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 **USE SPIRITUAL WEAPONS FOR SPIRITUAL BATTLE**

It would do many Christians well to meditate on this passage. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal (fleshly, or coming from natural sources). They are spiritual. You can't fight spiritual battles using carnal weapons. I doesn't work, and will only lead to frustration and spiritual defeat. Ephesians 6:10-20 tells us that our enemies are not flesh and blood. We are in a spiritual fight of faith against evil spirits. All the problems we face ultimately come from a spiritual source, and his name is Satan. Never forget that, because he is a master of mis-direction. He thrives in an atmosphere where his victims are ignorant of who or what they're fighting against. If you want to live a victorious life in Christ, you must understand the importance of staying in the spirit when dealing with your adversaries.

The good news is that these spiritual weapons that God has given us are **MIGHTY** to the pulling down of any spiritual stronghold the devil may have successfully established in your life. These spiritual weapons that God gives us are designed to protect our minds so that we stay renewed to God's Word, and continue to be doers of His Word, not just listeners (see James 1:22-26). Many sincere Christians try to do battle with the devil using carnal weapons, and that's why they're constantly defeated. You must recognize first of all that your enemies in this life are spirits, not other people, other circumstances or other situations. Secondly, you must recognize and use the spiritual weapons that the Lord has provided for us. When we do that, victory is guaranteed because God's weapons are more than sufficient in driving the enemy out of our lives. So don't try any longer to win spiritual battles with carnal weapons. Use the weapons God has given you, and you will see immediate and impressive results for the glory of God.

6/10/09

Jude 20 **CHARGE YOUR SPIRITUAL BATTERIES!**

In yesterday's Verse-A-Day, we looked at 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. If you want to win your spiritual battles, you'll have to use spiritual weapons. One of the greatest spiritual weapons to use is the weapon of prayer. Prayer is one the best ways to exercise your dominion on the earth. A good example of this is found in Ezekiel 22:30,31. Before God did what He did there, He went looking for a person to stand in the gap in prayer so that judgment would be stayed. He found none, so judgment was poured out. Prayer connects us with God in ways nothing else can. It keeps the flow of supernatural power heading in our direction. If you want to be strong enough to prevail against your spiritual enemies, you must be strong in prayer. There is no substitute for this. Not preaching, Bible Study, outreach, benevolent deeds, worship or even church attendance. Nothing substitutes for prayer. That's why the devil works so hard to try and convince you not to pray, or tries so hard to make you so busy you're too tired to pray. He doesn't care how, just so he keeps you of your knees and out of your prayer closet! Specifically, one of the best prayers to pray is prayer in tongues. Jude says that when you do this, your

“building up yourself”. In the Greek, that means that you’re actually charging your spirit when you pray in the spirit. The more you do it, the more charged up you become. I know in my own life, the more I pray in tongues, the more anointing I have for ministry, and the more sensitive I become to the voice of the Lord. Also, the more power I have at my disposal to do the work of ministry, and to be the father and spiritual leader in my family and marriage. Strong Christians are strong because they stay strong in prayer, and especially stay strong in praying in tongues. The good news about this is that you can be praying in tongues while doing other manual tasks. Unlike praying with your understanding, which requires your mind to focus on the subjects being prayed about, praying in tongues goes beyond that and connects your spirit directly with God through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, you can be washing the car and praying in tongues effectively at the same time. Doing the dishes and praying in tongues effectively at the same time. Driving to the dry cleaners and praying in tongues effectively at the same time. So take advantage of this great weapon of prayer. Pray in tongues, and do so as often as possible. You’ll see the results in many tangible, positive ways!

6/11/09

Philippians 2:9 ARE YOU USING THE NAME?

The name of Jesus is the name above every other name. And here’s the good news: that name is YOURS if you’re a Christian. Do you understand the power of that truth? Most believers do not because if they did, they’d be using that holy and powerful name much more often. Remember, you can’t win spiritual battles unless you use spiritual weapons, and the name of Jesus is one the most powerful spiritual weapons that God has given us. If you go through the book of Acts, you will see how important the name was to the early church. They understood the power behind that name, and they talked about it constantly. The spoke of the name of Jesus in ways most of us would find strange and out of place. It shouldn’t be that way at all!

The name of Jesus is your name because you’re one with Christ. When we talk about the body of Christ, understand that you’re a part of that body. And as such, His name becomes your name. He’s the head, and we’re the body, but the head and the body all have the same name! Do you have a different name for your head and body? Of course not! Your head and body are all one, so your name applies to all of you, not just a part. If I was walking towards you, you wouldn’t say, “Here comes Pastor Mike on top of his body!” No! My head and body are connected, and are one. Therefore, its all Pastor Mike! My head and body have the same name. So, when God says that every knee bows to the name of Jesus, understand that when you speak in His name (Colossians 3:17), every knee has to bow to your faith declarations! Use His name! Use your name! When you do, God is glorified, Jesus is exalted, and you are delivered from the problems facing you!

6/12/09

1 John 3:23 ARE YOU BELIEVING ON HIS NAME?

In John 14:15, Jesus said that we prove our love for Him by keeping His commandments. This verse in 1 John shows us what that commandment is. It has two parts. First, believe on the name of Jesus. Second, love one another as He has loved us. Notice that we’re commanded to believe on the name of Jesus. This is not a suggestion,

but a command. Believe! Believe what? Believe on the power that's in the name of Jesus. This is one of our most powerful spiritual weapons, yet so few in the body of Christ utilize this mighty weapon. The reasons for this are many, but at the core of their neglect is a basic ignorance of the power in the name of Jesus. But never forget that the devil FEARS this name! So if you're using the name in faith, the devil fears you too!

When the early church first started to evangelize, Satan tried to stop it by using the Pharisees to threaten the disciples. Read about their response after Peter used the name of Jesus to bring healing to the cripple at the beautiful gate (see Acts 3:16). "... So that it spread no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man IN THIS NAME." (Acts 4:16) That name so shook them up they couldn't even say it! Think about that! The devil hates the name of Jesus, and fears it more than anything else. When you use it faithfully, not only are you fulfilling God's command, but you're also striking fear in the hearts of every demon you'll ever encounter in this life. Are you tired of the devil tormenting you? Start tormenting him instead! Use the name of Jesus in every situation of life, and use it in love and faith. You'll drive the devil crazy when you do this, and Jesus will be glorified in your life the way He deserves to be. You can't over-use our Lord's name. In fact, He WANTS you to use it as often as you need to. There is not expiration date on the power in His name.

6/13/09

Acts 3:16 Acts 3:16 VERSES Acts 4:16

No section of scripture better describes the war between good and evil as this section of scripture in the book of Acts. As the early church goes out to fulfill the Great Commission, Satan marshals all his resources and power to stop the effort before it gathers any measure of spiritual momentum. In Acts 3, Peter and John are used by God to bring miraculous healing to a crippled man (Acts 3:16). When explaining what had just happened, Peter tells the people that it was FAITH IN THE NAME OF JESUS that brought healing to this person. So what did the devil do? He got all his Pharisees (read: religious people) together, and tried to stop the spread of the name. Friend, Satan fears you when you use the name of Jesus in faith. He HAS to bow to that name (Philippians 2:9,10), and he hates doing it because everytime you bows, he's reminded once again of the defeat he experienced when Jesus rose from dead.

Acts 3:16 reflects the power given to the church (that's you and me today). Acts 4:16 reflects the satanic efforts of religion to stop the power of preaching and teaching in the name of Jesus. The devil doesn't care if you go to church for the rest of your life, or even if you read your Bible once in awhile. What he's so afraid of is you filling your heart with the knowledge of the power in the name of Jesus. He knows when you start speaking that powerful name in faith, he has no choice but to obey and bow his knee TO YOU! Does that interest you? What a tragedy it is to see multitudes of believers cower in fear when the devil comes along with his lies, sicknesses and poverty. We should be taking the fight to him, and pushing him back on all fronts, using the name of Jesus to FORCE him to obey and retreat. The early church was birthed in the miraculous power of the name of Jesus, and the devil's efforts to delay his earthly departure are still the same today. Churches everywhere are pastured by ignorant, and even stupid, pastors who do their best to discourage the people from using the name of Jesus in faith. They're the modern-day Pharisees. They're just a bunch of religious hypocrites being used by the

devil to try and stop people from doing the work of the ministry. Don't tolerate that for a moment in your life. Take the name of Jesus and wield that weapon fearlessly in the face of every impossible situation you'll face in this life. Torment the devil! Use the name of Jesus!

6/14/09

Matthew 8:29 ARE YOU TORMENTING THE DEVIL?

You must use spiritual weapons to win spiritual battles. The name of Jesus is one the most powerful weapons you have at your disposal spiritually. It absolutely strikes fear in the heart of Satan when you speak the name of Jesus in faith. It not only does that, but it also reminds him of his eternal defeat when Jesus rose from dead. Personally, I love this passage from Matthew, not just because of the outcome in setting a hopelessly demonized person free, but also because of the question the demons asked Jesus before He cast them out. "HAVE YOU COME TO TORMENT US BEFORE THE TIME?" The answer: YES! Emphatically yes! Why wait to see the devil tormented? Let's do it NOW! After all, he's looking to torment you anytime you can, so don't be ashamed for desiring the same thing for him.

When you use the name of Jesus, you're tormenting the devil. Learn to love doing that! The devil should know that every time he comes against you, you're going to turn the tables on him and beat him up one side and down the other by using the speaking the Word of God, and declaring your authority by using the name of Jesus. Once he understands that you're going to keep pummeling him in this way every time he comes around, he won't be so quick to attack you! For the most part, he's just a big coward, roaming around looking to torment people who don't know any better. But it needn't be that way with you. Use the name of Jesus like the early church did. Anytime, anywhere, whenever for whatever. Go on the offensive for a change. Stop living a defensive, passive type of lifestyle. Be aggressive with your faith. Take the name of Jesus and turn your world upside down for the glory of God. Exalt Jesus in your life today: use His name to bring victory into your life. Anytime. Anywhere, Whenever. Whatever.

6/15/09

Deuteronomy 30:19 THE POWER OF CHOICE!

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of spiritual strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). You must use spiritual weapons to win spiritual battles. One spiritual weapon to use is prayer. Another is the Name of Jesus. A third weapon is the power of choice! You have a free will. God gave that to you, and Satan change that fact. If you choose to get serious about God, and serious about becoming strong in Christ, there is nothing the devil can do about it. All he can do is make suggestions to you, hoping he'll convince you to choose badly. Remember this: the devil operates in the lives of believers only because they allow him to. Either through ignorance or stupidity, believers have to choose to let the devil in, because he can't just show up in your life without your permission. But the moment you choose to kick him out of your life, he's gone!

Now of course, if you've given him a place in your life, he's going to try and stick around for as long as he can. He won't just pack his bags and leave without a fight. But

if you use the weapon of choice, and choose to put God and His Word first place in your life, he'll have to go. He may whine about it, but he's as good as gone!

In this passage from Deuteronomy, God tells us how to choose, but WE HAVE TO DO THE CHOOSING. God's not going to choose for you. He gave you that privilege and ability. Life or death. Blessing or cursing. Good or evil. Prosperity or poverty. Its all a matter of choice, so choose wisely! Proverbs 18:21 says death and life is in the power of the tongue, and nobody forces you to say what you say, you decide what to say, and what not to say. Right? Ultimately, we decide. We choose. You can choose death if you want, and God will honor your choices. Or, you can choose to strap on your spiritual armor, drive the devil off your doorstep, and enter into a deeper and more meaningful relationship with God. Its all up to you. I can't choose for you, and you can't choose for me. So get busy! God has set before YOU life and death, blessing and cursing. He's telling you which way to go, but you have to make the choice. Its your weapon Satan has no answer for. When you decided to get saved, what could the devil do about it? Nothing! The fact that he didn't want you to accept Jesus had nothing to do with the final outcome, right? You wanted Jesus, you decided to make Him your Lord, and that was it! What Satan wanted didn't make any difference then, and what he wants now against you doesn't matter either, unless you decide to give him a place in your life. So exercise your power of choice! Choose wisely, and choose to raise the bar of excellence in your life. God is waiting for you on the other side of that decision!

6/16/09

Deuteronomy 28:1

THE BIGGEST LITTLE WORD IN THE BIBLE

The power of choice is one of your most effective weapons to use to prevail in your spiritual fights of faith. When you decide to stop tolerating the devil, the world system and the flesh having their way in your life, you're 90% of the way home to victory. That means that when talking about the promised covenant blessings, as listed in Deuteronomy 28:1-15, the word "if" becomes the most important word in the whole passage. "If" is indeed the most important word in all the Bible. It's the biggest little word to be sure. Read our verse today carefully. God says, "It shall come to pass IF…. If what? If you choose to do what God asks of you. Isaiah 1:19 says that if we're willing and obedient, we'll eat the good of the land. It's the power of choice!

Read through the first 15 verses of Deuteronomy 28, and you'll see how important the word "if" is. All of these wonderful promises are conditional, as are all the other promises we find in the Bible as well. If we choose to do things God's way, He promises to bless us, deliver us, protect us, provide for us, anoint us, and basically, do whatever is necessary to bring us to the place in life where we're living and blessing others out of the overflow of abundance manifesting in our lives. You find the word "if" in verses 1, 9 and 13. So its not up to God, or up to the devil. Its all up to us! If we do what God wants us to do, He'll perform His word in our lives. If we choose to disobey God, then we, by our own choice, empower the devil to go to work in our lives to steal, kill and destroy. Do you understand this? I hope so, because most believers don't. Read Deuteronomy 11:26-28. God has set the table for you, but only you can choose to sit down and dine. Choose God! Choose to make the Word of God final authority in your life. Choose to make Jesus the Lord of your marriage, family, home, ministry business and career. Choice! One of the most powerful spiritual weapons at our disposal. You're

only one decision away from victory, so choose and decide that once and for all, you're going on with God. No retreat. No going back. No surrender.

6/17/09

Matthew 5:42 A CASE FOR PROSPERITY

In today's passage, we find Jesus exhorting us to be involved in two things. Giving and lending. He tells us to give to those who ask for help, and lend to those who need to borrow. Both of those actions will require a level of prosperity that many Christians have yet to achieve. Prosperity is not an evil thing, as many in religious circles would lead you to believe. However, the problem is that many have confused GREED with prosperity, and that's what has given the true prosperity message a black eye in the sight of many. I can't give to those who need help if I don't have anything beyond the amounts needed to just pay my bills and keep the creditors off my back. I can't lend when people to borrow if I'm struggling to make my own payments. But that is what Jesus is telling us to do here, so then as far as He's concerned, prosperity is not only needed, its REQUIRED.

If you know what the purpose for prosperity is, you'll never have to apologize for wanting to be prosperous. It costs money to fulfill the Great Commission, and that's why God wants us to be financially prosperous. Its not about hoarding up the things of this world. Its about being in a place in life where we can give if the opportunity arises, or lend if someone needs that kind of help. I know in my own ministry, I'm constantly being bombarded with requests for assistance, aid or help from Filipino pastors, leaders and lay workers. And many times, I've had it in my heart to help, but I couldn't because the extra money just wasn't there. That tells me I'm not yet to the level of prosperity God wants me to get to. I'm on the way though, so that's a good thing. And for you today, are you in a position to help others out of the overflow of finances you have at your disposal? If not, don't be satisfied with what you have now. Believe God for more! Not for you per se, but for you to give or lend to others. That's the purpose for prosperity, and that's what God wants for you!

6/18/09

Philippians 4:4 ARE YOU REJOICING RIGHT NOW?

I love verses like this one! Its one of those statements from God that is so absolute you have no where to go with it except to accept it at face value, and then do it! We must do what we do in this life for God from a position of spiritual strength, and the Bible tells us the joy of the Lord IS our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). Therefore, God tells us to rejoice ALWAYS. Why? Because He wants us to be strong ALWAYS! And guess what? Always means always!

Not some of the time, or only when things are going right for you. In fact, its in the hard times that you really need to be doing this. Paul demonstrated this when he and Silas were whipped within an inch of their lives, then thrown into the dungeon (Acts 16:25). In the dank, dark and repulsive prison cell, with their feet and hands in the stocks and their backs bleeding and swollen, they were SINGING and PRAISING THE LORD! Would you be doing such things if you were in their place? Always means always!

And they weren't just singing and praising quietly to themselves. They were doing it so loudly, the rest of the jail was listening in. What a testimony! What a

demonstration of Christians able to see the bigger picture! That's why Satan couldn't stop the early church. No matter how much intense persecution he brought against them, they just kept their joy and as a result, kept getting stronger and stronger. In Hebrews 10, Christians are admonished to hold on in the midst of persecution. How? They're told to recall the early days of their Christian walk, how that despite the things being done to them, they JOYFULLY accepted the plundering of their goods (Hebrews 10:34). So no matter how hard things may be for you right now, I exhort you to keep your eyes on the bigger picture. Stay strong by learning (and it is a learning process) to be joyful at all times, good times and not so good times! What does "rejoice" mean anyway? It means to overflow with joy. To be so full of joy that you can't contain it or keep it to yourself. If you're not there yet, get started on the journey! Lift your hands to heaven right now, and start rejoicing! For what? How about for your salvation for starters! Then for health or healing. Then for the air you're breathing. Then for the ability to work and pay your bills. Then, then, then, then on and on you can go! That's the key to your ability to be strong, and stay strong!

6/19/09

Matthew 5:11,12 BEING REVILED AND LOVING IT!

If you're at all active in Christian outreach and evangelism, you've no doubt encountered various levels of persecution. But when these things happen, how do you respond? Remember we're commanded to be strong (Joshua 1:9), and because the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10), we're also commanded to be joyful! And when you're being reviled for your Christian witness, that's one of the best times to manifest the strength needed to not only go through it, but to THRIVE because of it. Listen to Jesus here. "When they revile you, persecute you, say all kinds of evil against you falsely because of Me, REJOICE AND BE EXCEEDINGLY GLAD!" What does "revile" mean? To hate intensely. Not just to hate, but to do so with extra venom and intensity! Does anyone hate you like that? If so, REJOICE! And don't just rejoice, but do so with EXCEEDING gladness! Wow! What a wall of spiritual strength and defense!

When was the last time you went to church and everyone was jumping, leaping, laughing, rejoicing and besides themselves with deep joy, all because they had just experienced the worst week of their lives? All hell had come against them, and now they're running around the church shouting the praises of God at the top of their lungs! NEVER! And that's why the church (at least the western free-world church) is so anemic and powerless in this world. At the first sign of trouble or difficulty we fall apart, question God and get bitter at all of us "Faith Preachers". But what did God do with Jesus? He led Him by the Holy Spirit into the WILDERNESS to be TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL (Matthew 4). Things are tough out there in the wilderness, aren't they? Not an easy place to be. That's the way it is with persecution. But if you handle it with the right, spiritual attitude, you'll become so strong you'll have to pinch yourself spiritually to see if it's really you! You can get there! Just start focusing on the eternal picture, the bigger picture, and you'll be well on your way towards securing a level of strength that makes God proud of you, and the devil terrified of you.

6/20/09

Nehemiah 8:10 ARE YOU SENDING ANYONE ANYTHING?

When people quote this verse, most people are focusing on the part of the verse that says the joy of the Lord is our strength. But in the same verse, we see another case for prosperity. God tells us to SEND PORTIONS to those for whom nothing has been prepared. In other words, help those who can't help themselves. With what? With your excess, your abundance, your overflow. You can't do this if you're barely able to keep your own head above water financially. This is why God wants you to be prosperous. You can't help others until you're working out of the overflow in your own life. But, sad to say, many who teach and preach prosperity send the wrong message with the lifestyle they choose to have with the "prosperity" they enjoy. Perhaps its because I've spent 25 years in the third world doing work for God, but as a missionary, having lived among people who have absolutely nothing, I know what I'm to prosper for. Its not about the palatial mansion I can have, or the ridiculously expensive clothes or cars I have or drive. Its about me being a blessing to the world, sending portions to those who, for many reasons, can't take care of themselves.

Am I against living a nice, comfortable life? No, of course not. Having a nice home, and good automobile and some money in the bank is not sin. However, when all of that becomes the lion's share of what we're doing with our resources, that's when we move from prosperity to greed disguised as prosperity. But please remember the world is out there, and we're debtors to them. We owe them the truth. We owe them every effort to reach them. We owe them the lion's share of our resources. Lately, the new buzz word among certain ministers is the word "increase". Everything is about increase. More, more, more. Well, that's fine, as long as we remember what the more is for! Based upon figures supplied by the Foreign Missions Department of the Assemblies of God denomination, less than 1% of all church funds go towards the reaching of unreached people around the world. Not even 1%! Imagine that for a minute with me! My friend, there is coming a day of reckoning before God. I don't want to stand before Him and try to explain how I had chosen to spend the vast majority of my resources on myself, while the lost remained unreached on my watch. Yes, desire prosperity! Stand in faith for it! Believe it in, and don't apologize for doing so. But when it comes to you, know why it has come to you! Are you sending any portions of your resources to anyone in need? If so, how much? Is it convenient for you, or a stretch and a sacrifice? If its not a stretch, its not worth much to God in terms of value. Study Mark 12:41-44. You'll see that as far as God is concerned, its not the amount given that determines the value of the gift. It's the amount LEFT OVER.

6/21/09

Matthew 11:11 JOHN THE BAPTIST ENVIES YOU!

Too many times we Christians think of ourselves as poor slobs who are incompetent and inadequate for the task of fulfilling the Great Commission. Jesus doesn't think so. In fact, when talking about the great prophet John the Baptist, He made this remarkable statement. He (or She) who IS LEAST in the kingdom of God is GREATER than he was! Not the guy who has a world-wide ministry, or the guy who just held a crusade reaching tens of thousands. He that IS LEAST in the church is greater than John the Baptist. If you're Christian that means YOU! Even if you've only been born-again for 10 minutes, you're greater than John the Baptist ever was. Do you see

yourself in that light? If not, its about time to change your personal perception of yourself.

Why is this so? What makes a New Testament Christian greater than a great prophet like John the Baptist? In fact, in the same verse, Jesus said he was the greatest of all the Old Testament prophets. No one, not even Moses, was as great as John was as far as Old Testament prophets go. But the Christian is greater – any Christian. Why? Because we're temples of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives on the inside of you, and that's something no Old Testament person could have. So imagine – if someone like John could do what he did – without being born-again yet – what can you and I do now that the Third Person of the Trinity lives within us? You see, in the Old Testament, people could only be servants of God. They couldn't yet be sons and daughters of God because Jesus hadn't yet come to be our sin sacrifice. But now, on this side of Calvary, we have the privilege of being something no Old Testament man or woman could be. We are now the very temple of God. God LIVES within you! Do you understand that? The more you do, the more God will be doing through you. Yes, John did great things for God. But you can all that plus much more. It starts with an awareness that in Christ, you are seated at God's right hand NOW! Not someday in heaven, but now in this life. If you're not in Christ now, you're not saved. But as a child of God, you have the greater One living inside of you, so rise up and be all you can be for the glory of God. Its all up to you. Make the choice today!

6/22/09

Matthew 12:36 **YOU'RE BEING RECORDED FOR ETERNAL PURPOSES!**

Have you ever called some company, gotten their annoying electronic response, and heard the voice say that your conversation may be recorded for quality control purposes? Well, God is doing the same thing with all of us, but not for the same reasons. Jesus said that every idle word is being recorded, no matter who said it, where or when. No word is missed or overlooked. Stop and think about that. We talk so much we don't even give our words a second thought, but God is carefully and meticulously listening, and recording every word spoken. Why? For judgment someday when we stand before Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:10). That's why the Bible places such a premium on the words men speak. Everything is in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21). Everything! Heaven. Hell. Life. Death. Health. Sickness. Victory. Defeat. Its all about the words being spoken out our mouths.

If you've never considered this, its time to start! If you read Proverbs, you'll see it's a book which is constantly comparing the wise man and the fool. The wise man is the one who knows how to correctly use his mouth, while the fool doesn't. The wise man knows what to say and not say, when to speak and not speak, how to speak and not speak, and who to speak to and who not to speak to. On the other hand, the fool just keeps on blabbing away, completely unaware of what he's doing to himself with his own words and undisciplined tongue. One of my all-time most popular teaching series is entitled WORD WARS! It's a 6 CD series that talks in great detail about the importance of managing your mouth. Get it if you don't have it! Its worth it believe me. Word are containers, containing spiritual power that is released when those words are spoken. So be very careful about what you're saying; about your spouse, your kids, your health, your job, whatever! Think before you speak. This is a discipline that you MUST develop if

you expect to walk in the fullness of God's blessings on this earth.

6/23/09

Matthew 11:18,19 **JUST PLEASE JESUS, NEVER MIND ANYONE ELSE**

In this passage, Jesus reveals to us the futility of trying to please people. Yet, so many of us live for the praises and acceptance of our peers, failing to realize it's a "Mission Impossible". You can't please everybody, so don't waste your time trying to. Just concentrate on being pleasing to Jesus, and never mind the rest. If people agree with you, then fine. If they don't, too bad for them. It's enough for you to know that God is pleased with you. After that, it doesn't matter. A great man of God, T.L. Osborn, once said something very profound about this. He said: "People who are concerned about the opinions of others are slaves to the last people they had a conversation with. They're always running under the shadow of somebody else and are carrying the burden of pleasing somebody. I'm not a slave to anybody, but I'm a love slave to Jesus." What a great truth! He said this back in 1983, and I've never forgotten it. Who are you a slave to when it comes to public opinion? Psalms 118:8 says it's better to please the Lord than put confidence in men. Why? Because everybody has opinions that change with their moods, what's "current", what's "hot", or whatever. Jesus said they criticized John because he didn't eat much and didn't drink wine. Then, they criticized Jesus because He did both. The point? Religion is full of self-serving hypocrites, so don't waste time trying to please them because you can't. Just work to be pleasing to Jesus, and never mind what anybody else thinks about it. After all, you're not going to stand before man's judgment seat someday. You'll stand before the Lord's, so it's His opinion of you that counts, nobody else's. If you walk in the light of that, you'll finally be set free from everybody else's opinions of you. Not everybody loved Jesus. Not everybody agreed with Him. Not everybody thought the world of Him. Remember what He said in John 6:61? "Does this offend you?" In other words, I don't care if you like my sermon or not. God liked it, so that's enough. When Jesus offended the Pharisees and His disciples were so concerned about it, what was His reply? "Leave them alone. They're blind leaders of the blind, and both will eventually fall into a ditch." (Matthew 15:12-14). In other words: never mind what they like or don't like. Follow God and everything will be fine for you. It's good advice. Follow it if you want peace of mind amidst your peers!

6/24/09

Matthew 13:58 **YOUR FAITH IS THE KEY!**

If you study the 4 Gospels, you'll see that in most cases where Jesus healed people miraculously, it was their faith that gave Him opportunity to manifest the power of God in their lives. This verse confirms and verifies that truth. In His own hometown, He could not do mighty works BECAUSE of their unbelief. It doesn't say He WOULD NOT do mighty works there. It says He COULD NOT do mighty works there. Why? Because of their unbelief. So our faith is the key, isn't it? How many times would Jesus minister miracle power to someone, and say something like this as He did it: ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH, BE IT UNTO YOU. Well, things haven't changed today. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:5), and God's power is just as available for you as it was for anyone back then. But, like before, our faith is

the key. Its your choice to believe God that enables God to do the miraculous in your life.

Many people today cry, plead, beg and try to bargain with God to get answers to their prayers. But its faith and faith alone that opens the door to the miraculous. God is not moved by your tears, or by your emotions. If that was the case, every crying believer would be assured of getting an answer to their prayers. God is moved ONLY by your faith. If Jesus Himself, the Son of God, could not do any mighty works in Nazareth because of their lack of faith, who are we today to think it will be any better for us if we choose to doubt the promises of God? Never forget this. YOUR FAITH enables God, and disables the devil. Likewise, YOUR DOUBT enables the devil, and disables God. Its really that simple. Oh yes, there might be times when God, in His mercy, does something for somebody apart from their faith, but those instances are rare. The gifts of the Spirit operate as He wills, and if you've been in Christ for any significant length of time, you know they don't manifest all that often. Why? Because God expects to operate in faith the way He does. We're made in His image and likeness, and He's a faith Being. Everything He does to create is done by faith. He expects us to grow and learn how to do the same thing. So remember what happened (or didn't happen) at Nazareth, and purpose in your heart to never limit God because of your unbelief. Choose to believe! Choose to trust God. Choose to let faith open Heaven's doors for you!

6/25/09

Matthew 15:30 HOW UNASHAMED IS YOUR FAITH?

"I love this story from the ministry of Jesus. I love it because of what we see in the faith of those who came to Him for healing that day. First of all, notice in verse 29 that Jesus climbed to the top of a mountain and sat down THERE. Then, verse 30 says great crowds of people came to him, bringing with them some seriously sick people. Blind, mute, crippled and MANY OTHERS. So if they came to Him, that means they had to climb the mountain to get to Him. Have you ever climbed a mountain? Even if you're physically fit, its not that easy of a thing to do. And how much more difficult would it be for people who are handicapped or severely sick? And, there's no indication in the story that Jesus sent disciples down the mountain to assist the feeble and weak people. No, He just let them struggle up the mountain on their own. And when they got to the top and saw Him, they THREW the sick at His feet. The Greek word here is the word Rhipto, which means to THROW WITH A QUICK, SUDDEN MOTION. The King James Versions uses the word "cast", and that is a more accurate word in my opinion than the words "laid down", as it appears in the New King James Version. Are you that desperate to receive from Jesus with your faith? Most of us are so concerned about our social reputation, we wouldn't dare do something like this. That's why many times we never see the healings and miracles they saw that day on the mountain." "These people didn't care what anybody else thought. They wanted healing, and if that meant climbing a mountain and then throwing themselves at the feet of Jesus, then so be it. Let's face it friends. You have to have faith to pick up your sick Grandmother and heave her through the air towards Jesus, believing that when she hits the ground and bounces up she'll be healed! You'd have to have faith to do it, and she'd have to have faith to let you do it! In our own crusades in the Philippines, we've seen things just like this, so I know what the scene looked like that day with Jesus on the mountain top. We've seen

hundreds of people surging forward in public parks or bus terminals, pushing, shoving and trampling each other – just so that we could pray for them! That’s the kind of unashamed faith God is pleased to respond to. So let me encourage you to analyze your own faith today, and ask yourself if you’ve got this kind of faith. Would you climb a mountain if you were sick, crippled or severely diseased? Would you allow others to pick you up and hurl you through the air towards the preacher to receive your healing? Sounds crude and unrefined, doesn’t it? That’s alright. God has already said He will use the foolish things of the world to confound the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27,28). So, don’t be ashamed to be unashamed before God. David danced half naked publicly before the Lord, and when his wife objected to it, God rebuked her, not David! (2 Samuel 6:16-23). Determined faith! That’s what these people had, and that’s what you need to have today."

6/26/09

1 Thessalonians 5:8

ARE YOU WEARING YOUR HELMET?

One of your most powerful spiritual weapons is the helmet of hope. Why is hope called a helmet? Because hope always deals with the future – with things that haven’t yet happened. Therefore, it’s a spiritual helmet because it protects our imagination, and keeps us thinking the right thoughts about what we’re using our faith to obtain from God. Faith always deals with the now – present tense. Hope always deals with the future – future tense. Both are needed to be strong and stay strong. Hebrews 11:1 says that faith is the substance of what you hope for, so if the devil can take away your hope, your faith will fail because it has no goal or objective any longer. So protect yourself by wearing your spiritual helmet everyday. Keep your thoughts about the future firmly in agreement with your confessions of faith now.

"Helmets are designed to protect our heads from injury. When I go cycling, I always wear a helmet in case of a fall or crash. It has protected me from serious injury more than once. Hope is like that in a spiritual sense. Never forget this fact. Our God-given ability to create mental images which agree with God’s word is a weapon Satan can’t touch. And our ability to be patient while waiting for our faith seed to come up for harvest is called the helmet of hope. James 1:2-5 says that through faith and patience we will inherit the promises of God. However, if we’re to stand patiently we must have our helmet of hope on our heads, to protect our minds from the lies of the devil. In Joshua 14:7-10, Caleb reminded Joshua of a promise Moses made to him 45 years earlier! That’s the power of hope. In 2 Corinthians 4:17,18, Paul talks about his ability to endure intense suffering and persecution because of the fact that he’s working for a far more eternal weight of glory and reward! That’s the power of hope. Colossians 1:5 tells us that the hope we have that is laid up in heaven is our weapon to use in spiritual combat; keeping us strong in faith from start to finish in our lives. So if you want to become strong in faith, you must wear your helmet of hope! "

6/27/09

Matthew 11:1

ARE YOU FOLLOWING ORDERS?

Jesus reveals a marvelous truth here that most Christians are ignorant of. It says that when He finished COMMANDING His disciples, He left to go minister in other places. When I read that lately, the Holy Spirit quickened to me the fact that

WHATEVER Jesus says concerning behavior and lifestyle is a COMMAND, not a request or exhortation to change. So many times, we read His words without realizing they're commands to keep immediately and without question. We tend to think He's just encouraging us to make some positive changes, but it's much more than that! He's the Commander-in-Chief of the armies of God on earth – the body of Christ. He's the 5-star General. He's the One who gives the orders, and barks out the commands. WHATEVER He says is law! That's it! He said do it, or change it, or fix it – and that's it friend. No debate, discussion or contemplation. ANYTHING you find Him telling us to do in any of the 4 Gospels is a COMMAND. And one day when you stand before His judgment seat, that's how He's going to apply judgment. Did you or did you not follow my orders? Did you keep my commandments? Realize this. ALL of our Lord's teachings are also COMMANDS to be kept without question or discussion. You know how the chain of command works in the military right? When the senior officer gives the order, subordinate soldiers say "Yes sir!" They snap to attention, and go do what they're commanded to do. That's what impressed Jesus so much about the Roman Centurion in Matthew 8:5-13. He knew what a command was, and what authority was. It would be well with more of us if we took the time to learn the same things! So next time you read your Bible, and especially those "words of Christ in red", remember that those are not lofty suggestions that God is hoping we get around to someday soon. Those are COMMANDS from the 2nd Person of the Trinity, and will be used as the criteria for our eternal judgment someday soon. When He says change, then change, because you're being commanded to do it. When He says adjust, then adjust, because you're being commanded to do it. When He says repent, then repent, because you're being commanded to do it. Snap to attention now, and say to Jesus, "Yes Sir! Your will be done!"

6/28/09

Isaiah 40:29-31

LEARNING TO WAIT UPON HIM

In our hectic world, we need all the help we can get from God to stay pure, holy, prioritized and sanctified. One of the best ways to do that is by taking time each day to wait upon the Lord. This is not wasted time, but valuable time where in His presence, we get re-charged, refreshed, renewed and reminded of what is and what isn't important in this life. How often do you wait upon the Lord? Most believers spend very little time with Jesus, and that's one of the reasons why so many Christians struggle with sin, temptation, compromise and a host of other tactics the devil uses to try and neutralize them in the great spiritual fight of faith.

I know in my own life, this is a constant area of discipline. I'm the type of person who just wants to get in there and make something happen for the Lord. While that kind of passion is commendable before the Lord, it can also prove to be my undoing if I don't couple my work load with wait time! It's amazing, but whenever I spend time with Jesus, things just have a way of working out. Answers come. Guidance is given. Difficult things are made to look easy. All because I take time to WAIT upon the Lord. Waiting time is not speaking time by the way. It's time spent just listening to God. Waiting for His voice, and His guidance. For me, that sometimes takes a few minutes, or it may take much longer. Either way, I always leave that place in a better way than when I went to the Lord. It will be the same with you. So no matter what is going on with you, don't let

the day's hustle and bustle take you away from your time of waiting with Jesus. The Bible says that when you wait upon Him, you take His strength upon yourself. That's important, because without His strength, we're no match for the temptations we face at every turn.

6/29/09

1 Thessalonians 5:17 DO YOU PRAY WITHOUT CEASING?

"When the Bible tells us to pray without ceasing, what does that mean? It means prayer is to be a vital, regular, habitual part of your day. No matter how busy you are, you must never get too busy to pray. Why? Because prayer is one of the greatest ways to exercise our spiritual authority on earth. Its direct communication with God, and the good news is that when you pray, He's never too busy to listen and reply! Think of that for a moment. At any given moment, millions of people worldwide are praying to God. Yet He's not the least bit confused! Every prayer is heard and understood. No one is told to go to the back of the line and wait his turn! And, God is able to respond simultaneously, individually and personally, to each person who prays, no matter how many people there are who He's talking to! So if that doesn't encourage you concerning God's ability to meet your needs, what could? Knowing that He's always there for you should be daily incentive to talk with Him throughout the day. Are you doing that?"

For me, many times I have sort of a running dialogue with the Lord throughout the day. I like to think of Jesus as my constant traveling companion, a trusted friend who is always at my side to listen and give advice whenever I need it. So frequently I'll just be talking to Him; while walking along, or sitting somewhere in a restaurant maybe, or even in the midst of a crowded room full of people. Its one of the ways I try to be a doer of this verse. I want to pray without ceasing. I want to develop and maintain a vibrant line of communication with the Lord. It's a tremendous help to me when I am able to do this. It will be for you too! Sometimes I'll just stop whatever it is I'm doing, and lift my hands to the Lord and thank Him for being so good to me. Little things like that keep my prayer life alive and exciting day by day. I encourage you to do the same.

6/30/09

Romans 10:17 SPEAK UP! GOD CAN'T HEAR YOU!

The truth contained in today's verse is one of the most important truths God has made known to me since becoming a child of God years ago. Faith is a spiritual force contained in God's Word. Faith is not some "feeling", or some "conviction", or some "inner assurance" concerning the promises of God. Faith is a spiritual substance that God uses to create with, and which He expects us to create with as well. And how do we get more faith to do more and move more mountains for God? The answer is found right here in this verse. Faith comes by HEARING, and HEARING by the Word of God. That means that if you want to increase your level of faith, someone needs to be SPEAKING IT out loud to you. Either you're speaking it to yourself, or someone is speaking it to you. Notice what this verse DOESN'T SAY. It doesn't say faith comes by reading, and reading by the Word of God. No, it says faith comes by HEARING the Word of God. So if you have to hear it, someone is having to speak it!

Most of us read our Bibles silently. There's nothing wrong with that of course, but if you really want to maximize your Bible-reading time, spend that time reading

God's word out loud to yourself. It will probably slow you down a bit, but that's ok. The amount of scripture you're reading may be diminished, but you're going to have a lot more faith deposited in your heart when you're finished reading God's Word. If you study the Bible, you'll find it's a book of words about words. Everything revolves around speaking words. Good words or bad words – we are the product of the things we say. (Proverbs 18:21). So next time you open up your Bible to read, make a point of speaking it out loud, loud enough so you can hear yourself. It may seem awkward at first, but get into the habit and you'll soon discover a whole new way to increase your faith!