

KINGDOM NEWS

The Kingdom is Yours; the power is Yours and the glory is Yours, forever.... (Matt. 6:13)

Volume 7, Issue 3

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Motto for the year of 2013

Come out from among them and be separated and I will receive you," says the Lord.
Know you not that you are the temple of the Living God? Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
(2 Corinthians 6:16-17, 7:1 KJV Adapted)

The Chief Cornerstone



Praying God-Ward

While reading the 9th chapter of Daniel, I was caught, chastened even, with the character of Daniel's prayer.

Daniel said (of himself and his people Israel):

- And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my *confession*...
- We have sinned, committed iniquity, done wickedly, and have rebelled, by departing from Your precepts and judgments...
- We have ignored the words of the prophets....
- We are well served to be confused to our faces; because we have trespassed and sinned against You....
- Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws....
- All of us (*Israel, in this case*) have transgressed Your law...
- We have "dis-positioned" (new word) ourselves in such a way, as that we cannot hear Your voice...

Chief Cornerstone

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The Leadership Corner *Leadership Living, Inc.*

What's in God's "Back Pocket?"

All scripture is KJV paraphrased.

Wow! This year is moving right along. We are in the final month of the first quarter of 2013. Now would be a good time to take a moment to consider what has happened in the last two months. This would allow us to focus on the things we need to do during the month of March.

We will remember that God works on a time table. Everything He does is calculated and appointed a particular time to unfold. I'll start with reviewing a couple of key events in my world.

The year started us off on "hold." At our agency we have a contract where we provide services to a state department. Once services have been performed, our agency usually receives electronic payment within one week. This did not happen in January.

We were performing services as usual. However, there was a glitch in the state department's system and they withheld payment from us. The payment department had invalidated our agency's code in their system. Although it was not our fault, we had to go through a tedious process to get them to reactivate the code.

Keep in mind we had to continue to perform services

The Leadership Corner

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Boot Camp It is Written ...



One day, while doing chores around the house, I mused about Jesus' often references to the things that were "written" beforehand. I heard the Spirit continually say, "It is written..." I thought He was talking about the things that Jesus said and did; that they were written. After the Lord continued to repeat it, I then began to see that He was not just talking about our Lord. He is talking about *me*; about *us*!!!!

One, of the many, things that is so amazing about our Lord's trek through this world, is that He did not initiate a single, new, thing of His own volition. That is quite a mouthful, right!?! I mean, a Man of such wealth of wisdom; of such authority and standing before the Living God. No personal ambitions. Confusing isn't it. That doesn't, therefore, make Him a sluggard. Oh no, He had a very full schedule. Jesus said "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM He and that I *do* nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I *speak* these things. I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."⁽¹⁾ Now that's a rebuke, if I've ever heard one.

My testimony: I was taught to be "ambitious," without any of my "teachers" ever properly defining what it meant to be "ambitious." In this age of relativism, this age of "every man doing what is right in his own eyes," this too was left to my own interpretation. Now while I was being taught to be "ambitious" I was also reading about this Man named Jesus. Funny thing, He never taught anyone to be ambitious. Was it perhaps, because He didn't know what it meant to be "ambitious?" OR was it because He knew exactly what it meant to be "ambitious." And He knew that one could not be *both* ambitious and love the Lord with their whole heart, soul and mind. It's okay, I hear you. This chaffs, doesn't it? It's unsavory isn't it? Perhaps if we were to unwrap the two boxes (*pursuing ambition* and *loving the Lord*) and discern their contents, we'd see that they are mutually exclusive.

Unwrapping the Boxes

To love the Lord with our all requires that we deny ourselves, take up our crosses and keep His commandments.⁽²⁾ On the other hand, the practice of



A Journey to Intimacy Biblical Obedience

If it's okay with you, let's jump right in. Obedience seems to be very urgently on the heart of the Lord God, for me (*and I'm sure for His people, at large*). I say this, because the Spirit continues to hold this before my eyes. So let's look at *Biblical obedience* from the following perspective:

- What is Biblical obedience?
- What do you think is the purpose of obedience (from God's perspective)?
- Are you prepared to be committed to Biblical obedience?

What is Biblical obedience?

Biblical obedience is quite simple to describe. It is somewhat more challenging to walk out. Definitively "Biblical obedience" is to hear the word of the Lord and do accordingly. There is a saying, "*anything is difficult to do when you don't want to do it.*" Such is the case with Biblical obedience. Obeying the precepts and commands of God are "easier" for those who have abandoned this world. But for those who are fixed on "living life on their own terms," Biblical obedience is very difficult. It's difficult because "living life on our own terms" requires of us the exact same allegiance that "Biblical obedience" requires. But ... why wouldn't we want to obey God?

One reason is because we cannot obey God *and* have our own way. And we much more prefer our own way. But our Lord, made it quite clear that we cannot serve two masters.⁽¹⁾ And no master's servant obeys another lord.⁽²⁾

What do you think is the purpose of obedience (from God's perspective)?

There is ultimately only one reason for obedience, as there is only one reason for everything that God does or requires of us. But there are many modes of expressing that ultimate

- Lord, as You promised in the law of Moses, the curse is poured upon us, because we have sinned against You....
- Lord, You were very clear, in the law of Moses. And although all this evil is come upon us, we still have not bowed our knee to You in prayer; that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand Your truth...
- Lord, you did exactly what you said that you would do it we didn't obey...
- So here we are ... as a result of our own choosing.

Talk about breaking up the fallow ground of our heart. ⁽¹⁾ Here is a right exposition of what it means to *plow the ground of our hearts* before God. Doesn't sound like a prayer we've prayed lately, does it? We're too busy, trying to keep God on task, about how He's running (*or not*) our lives.

Daniel said (of God and His righteousness):

- Oh Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments ...
- Oh Lord, righteousness belongs to You ...
- To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness ...
- For the LORD our God is righteous in all His works which He does ...
- Oh God ... cause Your face to shine upon [us]. Oh I'm sorry that's not what it says. ... upon Your *sanctuary* that is desolate, *for the Lord's sake*...
- Oh Lord, hear; Oh Lord, forgive; Oh Lord, hearken and do; defer not, *for Your own sake* ...

Oh Daniel ... Daniel, thou hast well said!!! For it is the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous that makes available great resources (*or availeth much*). ⁽²⁾ And if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. If we know that He hears us, we have confidence that our petitions have been granted. ⁽³⁾

Babylon had taken Jerusalem into captivity. Israel was in slavery, yet again. If we were Israel, in this situation, and we cried out to God, we'd be asking Him:

"Where are You?"

"Can't you see what these heathens are doing to me, I'm Your child."

"I deserve better than this. I'm the head and not the tail..."

"You promised that no matter what I did, You would protect me..."

"Blah ... blah ... blah...."

Not Daniel.

What did Daniel know that we don't "know?" Better said, what was Daniel only too ready to admit; that we

wouldn't dare approach the Throne of God with? What was it that made Daniel's prayer vertical; and our prayers primarily horizontal?

Can I drop a hint?

Daniel had read the Torah. He had seen the *promises* of God to Israel in the first 14 verses of Deuteronomy. ⁽⁴⁾ Just here is a key difference between Daniel's prayer and our own. Daniel didn't just read the portions of Holy Writ that he "liked." He didn't just read the verses that made him "happy." Daniel read the whole counsel of God, as rendered in Deuteronomy 28; the blessings *and* the curses. He knew that the blessings and the curses, together, were the expressions of the mercy *and* righteousness of the Living God. We don't seem to know that; we don't seem to recall that God is both Merciful and He is Righteous. And He cannot be any more the one than the other. His mercy cannot usurp authority over His righteousness; nor can His righteousness usurp authority over His mercy; for the Lord is wholly Holy.

Daniel knew that God meant what He had said in Deuteronomy (vv15-48). Daniel knew that it *would come to pass, that if Israel would not give heed (or hear) the voice of the LORD God; and hear in such a way as to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes; that all those curses would come upon Israel and overtake them.* The Lord was so specific that He said, "I will bring against you [Israel] a nation from the ends of the earth ... a nation whose tongue you will not understand." ⁽⁵⁾

Then the book of Daniel (1:3-4) opens with: ..."*And the king spoke ... bring certain of the children of Israel ... whom we might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans (the language of the Babylonian).*"

Here Israel was, in Babylonian (and then Persian) captivity. And Daniel was crying out to the Lord, but Daniel wasn't confused about *how* they got there; nor was he confused about *whether or not* God was righteous in allowing them to come to that place. We on the other hand, are so upside-down in our understanding of the Righteousness of God that we believe that we can continue in sin and that "grace" will take care of everything else. As if "grace" is the "*clean-up woman*."

Yes, *if* we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, who is Jesus Christ the Righteous. ⁽⁶⁾ But who wants to be in a relationship, for any extended period of time,

with someone who insists on dishonoring and offending them, simply because the other person is gracious?

Humorously: If such a one on their dying bed would say, "You were always so gracious to me, even though I was quite difficult to deal with; when I get to heaven, I'm going to ask the Lord to put my mansion right next to yours." Because of the seriousness of the situation at hand, you may forego a verbal response. But as quickly as you could fall down on your knees; you'd probably say "Father, I promise to never ask you for another thing, as long as the world stands; if You would do this *one* thing for me. Please as long as eternity lasts, may I NEVER see that one again? In Jesus' name Amen."

Why are we comparing our prayers to Daniel's? Well, there are a number of reasons:

- 1) One reason is that while Daniel's prayer was one of accountability; acceptance of personal (and national) responsibility; confession of sins and repentance; ⁽⁷⁾ the focus of the prayer was the *deservedness* of God; and how that Israel had not given to God, His due. When the Lord spoke to Isaiah (*regarding Israel*); The Lord made this amazing analogy: *The ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib: but Israel does not know, and they don't really care to know.* Again the Lord said to Malachi, "A son honors his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My fear?" ⁽⁸⁾
- 2) Another reason is because the scriptures teach us to *mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.* ⁽⁹⁾ You know anybody who could use a little, genuine peace?
- 3) Still another reason is that the Lord answered Daniel's prayer. The Lord sent a personal courier (*Gabriel*) in response to Daniel's prayer. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Anyone seen Gabriel lately? No?!?

Lord, help us to know what Daniel knew, so that our prayers would be God-ward!!!! Help us, to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that our prayers would be vertical and transcendent. Help us, Lord to acknowledge that Your ways are equal!! ⁽¹¹⁾ Help us understand that You have created us for Yourself; to do Your bidding and not the other way around. Help us to acknowledge that this unpleasant place where we find ourselves is very largely the work of our own hands. And may we, my King, indemnify Your righteousness and Your great goodness, when we consider our situations.

May we say that we are here, because we have not heeded the words of Your voice? Help us to ask not for the things that we want; but for the things that are important to You. For even if we received what we petitioned; what would we have?!? But if on the other hand, we would seek the manifestation of Your heart's desire, we would reap the redemption of a nation. This incidentally produces, for all, just such an environment that is conducive to a peaceful and happy life; which is what we "*claim*" we're after anyway. If we seek after Your heart's desire, we get "*two for the price of one.*" But if we continue to seek, every man his own wealth; at length we'll have as much as "caught the wind in our hands" and have nothing to show for it.

The only person who could pray based on their own righteousness was Jesus. ⁽¹²⁾ Every other effectual, fervent prayer has in its site, the character of God. Such prayers indemnify God; they do not market or promulgate our feigned "deservedness." John tells us again ⁽¹³⁾ that God hears prayers that come into agreement with His heart and His purpose.

In the goodness of God, who enables us to approach Him in prayer (in the Person of Jesus Christ); it is not intended that God should do our bidding. Quite the contrary; we were *created* to do His bidding. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Because of the meekness and gentleness of God, we tend to mistake His kindness for weakness. Bad choice ... very bad choice; some mistakes in life we just cannot afford to make. God is HOLY. We are His servants, not the other way around.

If the heavens will be moved on behalf of our petitions, it will be because the heavens have already known that petition. For it resonates out of the heart of God. And in our praying we ENTER into it.

Genuine, God-ward prayer that has "hands and feet" get its character from the fact that it is a chorus of a song, already being song in the heart of God. Our Lord has desires. And we know this because the scriptures are replete with the intimations of His heart.

Vertical prayers get answered. Horizontal prayers ... are ... well ... horizontal.

We bid you God's best, until next month. <cc>

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

- (¹) Hosea 10:12; Jeremiah 3:4
 (²) James 5:16
 (³) 1 John 5:14-15
 (⁴) Deuteronomy 28:1-14
 (⁵) Deuteronomy 28:15, 49; Daniel 1:3
 (⁶) 1 John 2:1
 (⁷) 2 Chronicles 7:14
 (⁸) Isaiah 1:3-4, Malachi 1:6
 (⁹) Psalm 37:37
 (¹⁰) Daniel 9:20-21
 (¹¹) Ezekiel 18:20-32
 (¹²) John 17
 (¹³) 1 John 5:13-14
 (¹⁴) Proverbs 16:4

The Leadership Corner

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while the payments were being withheld. In addition, our agency is very small and we don't have the budget to cover unexpected expenses for a long duration. But, God is Faithful.

We were told that the process to reactivate our code would take approximately two months (which we could not afford to go through). I asked God what we were supposed to do. He directed me as to how to escalate our issue professionally and courteously with the state department (and their payment vender). Long story made short, we followed God's directives and the issue was resolved in three weeks.

While this delay was happening God also instructed us as to how to cover the expenses we had to pay while the funds were being withheld. Again, He is so Faithful.

Towards the end of January and during the month of February our agency was invited to partner with other agencies on five new projects that would be funded. Literally, before we had these conversations, our agency had no knowledge that we would have these opportunities.

As these new projects come to fruition, our agency will be able to increase its operating budget significantly. This will allow us to do the work God has called us to do even more effectively (reaching more people, providing more comprehensive services, and adding staff members). One of the opportunities has already begun and we have received two payments. God is good!

I also want to take a minute to share what God told me He has in store for us this year. He told us at the end of December 2012 that in 2013 He would **establish** and **grow** us. These are the two words we were to focus on.

While that sounded great when He said it, once January rolled around and our payments were withheld, I admit we had to go back to God and double check on those words "establish & grow" because based on what was happening, it didn't seem like this was the direction we were going in. But, now we understand what is happening. God used this challenge to remind us that He is our keeper and He will always provide for us, no matter what is happening in our world. No unexpected event can halt the plan of God in our lives.

God recently told us to use the months of March and April as time to do strategic planning for the events that will take place during the remainder of this year. He told us to position ourselves to receive what He has already determined to bring us.

Having said these things, God instructed me to share with you a question. "What is in God's *back pocket*?" I'm not sure how this question sounds to you, but when He told me, I had to take time to meditate on it. Now, I believe I have a better understanding of the concept.

Let's consider a pair of pants that has front and back pockets. If we use both sets of pockets, do we have in mind how we plan to use them and whether or not there is a relationship between the two? Often front pockets are used to store things we will use frequently and/or soon. While back pockets routinely store items we use less frequently and/or later down the line. The use of back pockets is similar to placing something on the "back burner." It's for later, not now.

Well, I submit to you that God has pockets. He has front pockets that He uses for situations and events that are scheduled to happen soon. And, He places items, events, and opportunities in His "back" pockets that are scheduled to occur later on down the line. Scripturally we could look at Ecclesiastes chapter three verses 1 through 8 to confirm this concept.

We learn in this chapter that God has a time table for the events that happen in our lives. He also promised in His word that He would not allow anything to happen to us that is "more than we can bear." He said He would always "make a way of escape" so we can

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handle all of life's situations. I, for one, will admit that even when God brings us things that are positive, they can be overwhelming if they come too quickly or all at the same time. This is one reason why God "spaces" things out in our lives.

With this in mind, we are in a position to think about what the month of March has in store for us. I've shared what God has been doing in my world, and what He has instructed me to do for March and April (prepare). Now it's your turn. What has happened in your world during January and February? How do these things line up with the word God gave at the beginning of the year? And, what are you supposed to be focusing on this month?

These are questions that I encourage you to prayerfully consider. Specifically, there are things God has you engaged in that are set to blossom later in the year. Now is the time to review your strategy and bring in line areas that need improvement.

Let me give another example from my environment. One of the things God told me to do is to update all of our agency's paperwork. Since our agency moved to a new location last year, I need to ensure that our new address has been sent to all of the organizations (government and otherwise) that need to have current records on file.

He also told me to get a big calendar to show all of the recent opportunities He has brought to our attention. My team and I need to see "at a glance" where we will be conducting services, times, dates, and which staff members will cover each program.

In my personal life, God told me to plan to start investing my money. Please understand that I don't make very much. So, I asked God how I could do this since I don't have enough to open an investment account at a bank. He said, "Joyce, when I instruct you to do something, don't ever focus on what you cannot do. Instead, always focus on what you can do." So, I repented and restated my question.

"God, I thank you for the resources you provide for me. Please show me how to open an investment account starting with what I have." Once I brought my thinking and my words into agreement with His directive, He began to give instructions. God told me to create a "pre-investment" folder at home. Each pay period I am to place an amount of money in this folder. The amount is not what's important; it is the

consistency that matters. Once I have a sufficient amount in the folder I will place the funds in an actual investment account at the bank. This money will then grow so it will be available at a later date for other opportunities God will bring.

He also told me to increase the amount I have automatically transferred to my savings account from my checking account. So, I increased it by \$50 per month. Once I did these things, God told me that if I would establish the "structures" for financial growth, He would bless what I set up.

I hope this information is helpful as you think about your personal situation. Again, we are in the last month of the first quarter of 2013. We have no time to lose. God has great things planned for us and several of those things are in His "back pocket." This means He will bring them to us later this year.

It is our job to attend to what He is telling us to do right now so that we are prepared for what He will bring to fruition as the year moves on.

Be blessed! *(LL)*

Joyce M. White, LMSW

Worship God in Spirit and Truth

But the hour will come, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

For the Father seeks such to worship him.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

... Or they worship not.

John 4: 23-24

pursuing ambition requires that we make the pursuit of attaining success, honor, power, fame, etc. the central object of our aspirations. ⁽³⁾ Do you see it? The practice of "denying oneself" is in direct conflict with the practice of "pursuing honor and fame." These two are mutually exclusive. Remember, in order to reach the mountain top, one must leave the valley behind. One cannot both ascend the mountain and remain in the valley; the law of exclusivity forbids it.

Doesn't that just fly in the face of everything we've being taught? Jesus was not "ambitious." He did not have a 5-year or 10-year strategy for His life. Why not? Is it possible that He knew that the plans for His life were already made? They were not something that He was left to define for Himself (and He is the Son of God); if anyone could succeed at goal-setting He could, huh. But the plans for His life were already "written?" The Law revealed them; the prophets declared them. ⁽⁴⁾ And it was His portion to discern what was "written" and walk them out (or to work them out, whichever is preferable, *smiling*).

Do you see Him ... there in the synagogue, reading Isaiah 61:1-2 *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted; to preach deliverance to the captives; and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, And to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."* ⁽⁵⁾ That would have wrecked the place, but He didn't stop there. Jesus went on to say, *"This day, is this scripture fulfilled in your hearing."* That's the same as saying, "What has been written is now *manifest* before your eyes, and *declared* in your hearing." I'm sure the heavens and the earth were "moved" at that proclamation. For the whole creation groans and travails in pain, awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God. ⁽⁶⁾ Our son-ship is manifest, when we "do" what God has "said;" when we do what is "written" ... every day and in every transaction of life.

"How?" you ask. You may remember, that the Lord answered the "How" question, for us, in the December 2012 edition of the newsletter. His answer was, "... not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit." ⁽⁷⁾ I know that this all sounds lofty and unapproachable; but it is my experience that few things are impossible to the person who really wants to do them. Back to the "how" question; and let's begin with the low hanging fruit. It is written, *"Blessed is the man who does not live his life after the dictates of ungodly counsel. We must shun (or*

sidestep) profane and vain babbling (hypotheses, arguments, postulations, etc.), which increases unto more ungodliness." Now in order to do this, we must study to show ourselves approved, as ones able to rightly discern "ungodly" counsel. ⁽⁸⁾ That's a place to start, right.

Everything Jesus did was for the purpose of glorifying the Father. In His own words, "I do always those things that please Him." ⁽⁹⁾ He accomplished this by "doing" and "becoming" everything that the Father prophesied concerning Him. And so we hear it said of our Lord, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet..." ⁽¹⁰⁾

And seeing that it is God's delight to conform us into the image of His Son, ⁽¹¹⁾ perhaps the plans for our lives are already written, too? I believe we will even find them in the same place where our Lord's "marching orders" were found.

Is it not a glorious honor to God that we do what He said that we would do? Parents don't you feel that simple pleasure, when your children do your bidding. Especially if you announce beforehand (i.e., prophesied) what they would do.

Jesus would say things like ... "it becomes us (*or it is an imperative*) that we fulfill the scriptures." When John the Baptist said to Jesus, "Lord, this seems backwards; I should be baptized by You, instead." The Lord promptly replied, "No... no... there will be time enough for the when My work is done. For now, we MUST do what it has been said of us in the law and the prophets." He talked often about our responsibility to fulfill the scriptures. Sshhh!!! Listen ... do you hear that? Jesus is saying to the disciples, "Your Father delights to give good gifts to those who ask Him. That being the case (i.e., Therefore) all things whatsoever you want others to do to you; you do even so to them." Why, Lord ... why?!? Because this is what the law and the prophets, said that the children of God would do." ⁽¹²⁾

This really began to land on me. Everything (*of any consequence*) that Jesus did or said, with few exceptions was "written" beforehand. He constantly made references to the Torah and spoke many things that should have been known to the Jewish hearers, because these were all "written." But lest you absolve yourself of your duty to "fulfill what is written,"

listen again to our Lord's response to the gentleman who asked "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"⁽¹³⁾ But this time let's listen with both ears, shall we. The Lord recites the first and great commandment. Then He recites the second *and great* commandment. That part we get. It's what Jesus said afterwards, that "rubbed my fur up the wrong way."

Jesus said, "... on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets!!!" Wwwwooooowww!!!!

What?!? You don't get it? Oh... oh... I stand corrected, "YOU" get it. But you think it would be a good idea, if I explained it anyway, so everyone else can be on the same page with you?? I see. I'm inclined to agree with you. So on that note, here's the translation (*jcw style*). I'll even point the weapon at me, if that'll make you feel more comfortable.

Jesus says to me, "JoAnn, it is written, concerning you ... that every servant of the Lord loves the Lord God with all of his heart, all his soul and all his mind; and loves his neighbor as if his neighbor were his very own soul. If you get these two commandments right, every other mandate, precept, ordinance will fall in line. In fact, everything that the righteousness of the law requires and everything that the prophets declared, all resolve themselves into these two imperatives."

So we can see how that it behooves us to also fulfill what is written. Foreign, right?!? Nevertheless, it is verily a reality.

Although, in one sense, as a man, Jesus had no direct control over "where" He would be born, the scriptures nevertheless say, "*And when he [Herod the king] had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet.*"⁽¹⁴⁾

When Paul proclaimed to his Jewish audience, he chided with them. Paul said what amounted to, "the rulers of Jerusalem should have been better able to identify Jesus; for the prophets spoke incessantly about Him. And the prophets were read in the hearing of the rulers of Jerusalem, every Sabbath. Their ignorance, notwithstanding, the rulers of Jerusalem still "*fulfilled all that was written*" concerning Christ.⁽¹⁵⁾ Jesus talking with the disciples about the "end of the age," said essentially that "*all things which are written must be fulfilled.*"⁽¹⁶⁾

There is something REAL about "*fulfilling all that is*

written" of us that genuinely delights the heart of God.

In summary, as we consider our responsibility concerning what "is written;" I submit to you that we are obliged to search out what is "written," and to walk in it. This we must do, instead of chasing from pillar to post trying to design a life that "makes us happy." I submit to you that our lives as servants of the Living God are already "written." Here is one paragraph of our 5-year strategy:

Take no thought for tomorrow. Don't concern yourself with what you shall eat and drink; or with what you shall wear. For this is what the ambitious person seeks after. Your heavenly Father (*Jehovah jireh*) knows that you need these things, and there's a ram coming up the other side of the mountain.⁽¹⁷⁾ So if we're not supposed to chase "houses, cars, jobs, honor, fame and success" what do we do with all of the spare time we now have on our hands? Make your primary object of pursuit, 1) the Kingdom of God and 2) His Righteousness. If you go into the grocery store with only these two items on your shopping list. I promise you that when you come out, you'll find your shopping cart full of the other "stuff." Let's focus on what's "written." The Lord will take care of the rest. <(BC)>

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

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- (1) John 8:28; 6:38
- (2) Matthew 16:24; John 14:15
- (3) The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, Deluxe Encyclopedic Edition, 1991
- (4) John 1:45
- (5) Luke 4:16-21
- (6) Romans 8:22, 19
- (7) Zachariah 4:6
- (8) 2 Timothy 2:15-16; Psalm 1:1
- (9) John 8:29
- (10) Matthew 1:22
- (11) Romans 8:29
- (12) Matthew 7:12
- (13) Matthew 22:36
- (14) Matthew 2:4-5
- (15) Acts 13:29
- (16) Luke 21:22

Psalm 37:5

Commit your way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.

purpose.

The purpose of Biblical obedience is so that the Lord may be glorified, in His Son Jesus. Now that's a worthy purpose, if I've ever heard one. I am not presently aware of a loftier, Sovereign objective: *the Lord being pleased with Himself.*

Now what effects does that have on us, His servants? Our obedience to God is the method by which we submit our dominion to His Sovereignty, so that God has our permission and pre-commitment to conform us into the image of His Son.

Here is a way to understand the concept of "God being Glorified."

God is *glorified* when He looks at thing (person, place or thing) and gets the reflection of His image. Think "mirror," and then look at Jesus Christ. Paul shared with the church at Colosse that Jesus Christ was the composite expression of the fullness of the Godhead bodily.⁽³⁾

Are you seeing what I'm seeing?!? Here's the image: Our Lord's goal is to be glorified, in His Son Jesus. He has also predestined us to be conformed into the image of His Son Jesus.⁽⁴⁾ The closer we get to that image, the closer we are to becoming a reflection of Him. Our *obedience* to Him (and His Word) is the means by which we come into position. If we will not obey; we cannot be conformed and God will not be glorified in a son who does not look like Him.

God seeks to superimpose His image on His children. And He gave us a glimpse of that reality when He gave, to us, our children. Let's take a closer *horizontal* gaze at the "glory of the father in the son."

CAVEAT – Use of the term "*glory of the father in the son*" intends to encompass the whole of parent/child relationships (*males and females included*).

There are at least 2 means by which the glory of the father is impressed upon the son.

- 1) One way, in which the glory of the father is superimposed upon the son, is biological or genetic. When a child is conceived, God has already designed through the vehicle of the DNA, certain biological and genetic impressions and replications. Those are beyond the reach of our "fingertips." This God has done.
- 2) The other way, in which the glory of the father is superimposed upon the son, is through (I'll use the phrase) training and mentoring. There are other phrases that may serve better. The phrase "training and mentoring" seeks to encapsulate the whole of the pattern that the father sets before the son (whether intentionally or unintentionally). Some of these patterns are intentionally transferred from the father to the son; others are imbibed, through daily interactions. One of my old mentors used to say "some things are *taught*, others are *caught*." This we must do.

Likewise, when we are begotten of God, through rebirth of the Spirit,⁽⁵⁾ we see the beginnings of these 2 modes of impression.

- 1) When we are born of the Spirit, there is vouchsafed within us the capacity to be led by the Spirit of God. We have been freed from the tyranny of sin (both its penalty and its power). We are now repositioned to seek God and to obey Him. Before we are born of the Spirit, (by an act of our own volition) we are servants of another master. When we are begotten of God, the strong man of our lives is bound and his good are spoiled.⁽⁶⁾ This God has done.
- 2) So that is the "biological or genetic" effects of being begotten of God. But we can't stop there. At this point, we have just shouted down the walls of Jericho. There is still much land to be conquered. The difference is that now we have the ability to take the land; we have the power and the authority to do so. Before we had the power, but we didn't have the authority. Now we have

both. We may now be "trained and mentored" by our Lord, Jesus Christ. But we must "show up for class." This is not a tele-course or a distance learning opportunity; whereby you sit in front of your computer in your jammies and blog your homework. We must "suit up and show up." We MUST study to show ourselves approved.⁽⁷⁾ And we MUST be transformed by the renewing of our minds.⁽⁸⁾ This we must do.

So we see that the purpose of obedience (from God's perspective) is that we might be conformed into the image of His Son. We want to be so conformed, because God will be glorified in His Son Jesus Christ. And our responsibility is to be found in Him not having our own righteousness.⁽⁹⁾

He has done His part, the rest we MUST do.

Are you prepared to be committed to Biblical obedience?

I'll leave this one for you to answer in the privacy of your own heart, before God; and with the rest of your life.

God speed. [JTI]

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, SMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

- (1) Luke 16:13
- (2) Romans 6:16
- (3) Colossians 2:9
- (4) Romans 8:29
- (5) John 3:5-8
- (6) Matthew 12:28-29
- (7) 2 Timothy 2:15
- (8) Romans 12:2
- (9) Philippians 3:9

My Ways are Equal

Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Ezekiel 18:30

Are You Sure?

There is a healthy contemplation that drives us to check our commitment to our various relationships with others. While I have your attention may I ask another question? Do you ever wonder if you're really saved? I don't mean to intrude ... okay maybe I do intend to intrude. Do you contemplate your loyalty and commitment to your relationship "with Christ" very specifically? Respectfully, we are not talking here about your relationship with a religious institution. We're asking about a very up-close and personal relationship with the Person of Jesus Christ. The scriptures encourage us to periodically check our "fruit." We are admonished to work out your own soul's salvation with fear and trembling.⁽¹⁾

I can just imagine Jesus standing before the fig tree, asking "Hey guys, what type of tree is this?" His disciples replied (almost snickering), "My Lord, it's a fig tree." And Jesus asks again, "How can you tell, that this is a fig tree?" His disciples reply again (almost bursting at the seams), "Teacher, we can tell by the leaves." Jesus once again, "Okay, let Me ask you guys one more question ... what is the purpose of a fig tree, if it won't bear figs." They all fell silent. Jesus cursed the fig tree saying, "Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit, My Father will remove. It will not be allowed to continue to make demands of (or trouble) the ground."⁽²⁾ He looked at the disciples and walked away en route to Bethany.⁽³⁾ So I ask again, how do we know that we have a personal covenant with God?

May I make a few suggestions on ways to discover the truth?⁽⁴⁾

- 1. How does your covenant with Jesus Christ affect your concept of God and your attitude towards Him?**
- 2. How does your relationship with God affect your attitude towards Jesus Christ (Him as a Person and His Lordship over your life)?**
- 3. How does your covenant with God affect your attitude towards the Holy Scriptures?**
- 4. How does your relationship with Christ affect your attitude towards your "self-life" or your "flesh"?**
- 5. How does your covenant with Christ affect your relationship with and attitude towards your fellow Christians?**
- 6. How does your relationship with Jesus affect your relationship with and attitude towards the world?**
- 7. Last, but in no way least, how does your covenant with Jesus affect your attitude towards sin?**

Perhaps we should take the next couple of weeks or months and grapple with this? Try to answer each question thoroughly in light of the scripture's mandates on each of these respective relationships. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.⁽⁵⁾

Be Sure!

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

- (1) Philippians 2:12
- (2) John 15:1-2; Luke 13:7
- (3) Matthew 21:17-19
- (4) Gleanings and adaptations from A.W. Tozer's Man: The Dwelling Place of God, p.62-68
- (5) Hebrews 13:20-21

21st Century Christianity

"Christianity has culturally become this almost nebulous, ethereal, mystical, "difficult-to-define" concept; that is applied to almost everything. Into which one may indiscriminately place almost any ideology or system of beliefs. It has no parameters; no requirements; it makes no demands; there are no distinguishing marks and there are no differentiators to what "Christianity" is and what it "is not." It claims to have a lord, to which one is not required to submit, or make any sacrifices. He does not place any demands upon us. For after all, we are saved by "grace alone, through faith alone."

In one sense, Christianity can be defined as any religious system of belief that does not come under the creedal vale of Juda-ism, Muslim-ism, or Athe-ism. And so the enemy has adopted the "*if you can't beat them, join them*" strategy of dealing with Christianity. It's almost like Kleenex. Whereas it used to be a brand name for a product of distinction, that sought to set itself apart from its competitors. It now stands for almost any facial tissue; the name Kleenex has become something of a label for a "commodity." And such is the social disposition of the term "Christianity." Whereas, it used to be a brand name for a person of distinction, that sought to identify a "set-apart-ness." It has now become almost a cornucopia of modern, conflicting, unfettered, ethereal systems of belief; whereby one seeks to "belong." The term for that is "syncretism."

Let us (you and I) again, on a very personal, God-honoring level restore "Christianity" to its brand distinction. Let us return to our "called-out-ness" from that which opposes the Living God, by again being distinguished as ones who humble themselves; pray, seek His face; and have turned from our personal wickedness. Let us be some of the means by which the name of God is hallowed; the Kingdom of God is manifest and the will of God is done."

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