

Presence Of God

by

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First Edition

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May this Christian book on the Presence Of God help you have a closer walk with the Lord.
“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy...” Psalm 16:11.

All Scripture references in this book are from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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Preface

This book is written to be a life-changing book. It is a book about problem solving and getting questions answered. Everyone who has ever lived has probably sought these kinds of answers. I pray this book is a blessing to you and to many people around the world for years to come.

Do you remember what it's like to be all alone, feeling abandoned and rejected in a certain point in your life? Perhaps you feel that way now. Maybe you used to feel that way. Whatever your circumstances, it is highly likely that you (the reader) may feel abandoned or rejected sometime in the not-so-distant future.

Let me start off by being upfront. I believe there is a God and a devil. Without you knowing my beliefs in this regard, you might not understand this book. I strongly believe that there is a struggle going on in this world that many people fail to see or properly recognize. It is truly a good vs. evil situation, where you and I, and every person on the planet, are the targets. Our eternal destiny is at stake. While many people might not be aware of the battle going on in the various realms (such as the spiritual, physical and emotional realms), this does not negate the truth of the matter. Regardless of what you have been told by others, YOU are IMPORTANT. If it were not so, why would both good and evil forces be battling for you on a continual basis?

This is a book birthed by the things I have learned so far in my life. Everything I state here is the truth, to the best of my current understanding. I have personally lived these things and experienced them. I want you to be set free from some (and hopefully all) of these things, so you can have the most robust, satisfying life possible, one that is full of the freedom and fullness that God intends for you to experience.

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The Need to Be Loved

Everyone has the need to be recognized, to be respected and to receive the approval of others. It is in our foundational makeup. That is why the devil attacks people usually in these areas. He uses the fear of rejection and abandonment to control people. Too many people care about what others think of them. Really, you cannot please all the people all the time. You will always have some detractors and critics. Try not to change your life to please others. You were not created to be a **man-pleaser**, but rather to be a **God-pleaser**.

The need to be loved by one or more people can be a controlling force that directs (or misdirects) your life down strange alleys or paths that you might not otherwise go down. Whether you are seeking the love or approval of your mate, parents or friends, you **should not** let others control you using fear, intimidation or anger. A common ploy of the enemy is to use people to threaten to withdraw their approval or love from you if you don't behave a certain way, or if you don't change to fulfill the image they have for you to be.

You are a unique individual, and therefore you shouldn't try to be a clone of, or a doormat to, another person. True, there are boundaries for behavior that are outlined by God, but apart from those, you should conduct yourself in the best way to fulfill the often hidden or suppressed destiny that is waiting to be birthed from inside of you. I have wasted too many years trying to please others. Many times I got mixed or incorrect signals of what was expected from me by others. I then tried to carry out what I believed to be their wishes for my life, and not follow what I really felt called to accomplish in life.

Everyone has the need and desire to know that **they are OK**. Approval and respect, when withheld from a person, can cause much emotional damage and scarring. Too many people are in counseling, and taking prescription drugs to deal with depression and other emotional disorders, because of the failure of people in positions of trust and authority over them to adequately nurture and influence them positively in their life (i.e. positive role models). The formative years of a child are especially important. Today, if both parents are still together, they may both need to work outside the home to make a living due to increasing financial pressures. Very often, the mother can't stay at home to train and raise the children for as long as she would have liked to.

Television and movies are increasingly becoming the “trainers of the youth,” and we all know that is not the best approach to training up a child in the way he or she should go. There is simply too much violence, sexual situations, murder and improper behavior being portrayed by the “entertainment” of today. The pop culture is shaping our youth to become rebellious and to lose respect for much of what we should hold as dear to us. The traditional family, marriage, abstinence, faith and the like are under increasing attack by the media. The ability for our children to choose what is right and wrong is now being severely blurred by what they are feeding themselves through television, movies, music and the Internet.

Without a strong sense of traditional values, our youth are more likely to reach out to whomever and whatever they feel will show them some love, attention or respect. Unfortunately, with the many absent and overworked parents today, the youth are vulnerable like never before in our country's history. We used to pass laws to protect our children and teenagers. Now, with all the relatively recent “rights” laws and court decisions, you have to be careful when disciplining a child for fear of being sued. Teachers can't spank or “paddle” anymore in most locations. Students are increasingly rebelling against authority figures in their

lives, such as teachers, principals and parents. We have allowed our society to disintegrate into one of less and less morals.

There are many classes of predators popping up who seek to maim, kill or destroy the lives of our youth. Be it child molesters, rapists, kidnappers or what have you, the world is becoming a more dangerous place for our children. The number of children who have been abused is seemingly increasing all the time. Teenage pregnancy is a real issue also. Sexually transmitted diseases are spreading like wildfire. People are “hooking up” for all the wrong reasons. They may think that someone will love them forever, if they yield to temptation, but that is so often not the case. They seem to be seeking love and affection, but that feeling is usually temporary and fleeting. True love waits and never tries to force itself on another.

The Inner Void

Every one of us has an **inner void**, a space that is empty from birth. A medical doctor can't see it with machines or tests, but it is there. It is similar to the situation that doctors can't see your soul or spirit that is within your body. From birth, it seems that we try to fill that inner void with every conceivable thing or vice, but usually to no avail. It is like trying to place a square peg in a round hole. Other things simply won't fit. There is only one thing that will fit and properly fill that void. Some people go about their whole life without ever finding the true thing they should have to fill that void. They allow addictions and things that bring about lusts of the flesh to try and give them temporary pleasure or a feeling of escape. But nothing other than the true thing intended to fill that void will truly satisfy them.

People go about their daily lives, usually doing the same things without giving much thought to their destiny and why they are here. They know inside they have an inner void, but they often neglect it. People and situations will usually come across their path to remind them in certain ways of that void, but unless they are receptive to the “hints” given by these people and things, they may miss out on knowing someone who is truly special and worthy to be discovered.

Our world and entertainment are so motivated by celebrities and reality TV. It seems like the media is always telling us who is doing what, when they are famous people. Have you ever stopped and considered for yourself why you should care what some “celebrity” is doing? Following gossip and tabloid journalism seems to be all the rage of the day. We are literally bombarded with “news” of the latest celebrity “hookups” and breakups. Who just got plastic surgery? What juicy gossip rumor is the latest rage? What movie or series is this celebrity starring in?

It has turned into a blatant form of idol worship where everyday citizens are allowing people to be put up on a pedestal for all the world to gawk over and to partake in their surreal lives. People are watching TV shows and buying all kinds of magazines and newspapers full of tabloid gossip and the latest entertainment news. Paparazzi are chasing down “the stars” to get photographs and videos of them in compromising or uncomfortable situations, which they can sell for money. It is an unfortunate state of affairs that our world is coming to when how a person looks and who they are with is more important than what they are accomplishing in life.

But there is one true thing that was uniquely designed to fill that void: the Presence of God.

The Presence of God

When I talk about Presence, the word brings up thoughts to people of a **closeness to**. When you are in someone's presence you are standing close to them. You are nearby, or right next to, someone. You can't be in someone's presence if there is great distance between you and the other person. That is unless that person has the ability to be right where you are instantly. This is the way it can be with the Presence of God.

First off, God is a Spirit. Some people get confused over the names God (the Father), Jesus Christ (the Son), and the Holy Spirit. The three are what is commonly called the Trinity (meaning “three in one”). They are all the same God, but existing in three different persons. To not get entrapped in theological debate over the terminology and definition of the Trinity, I will be using the name God throughout this book to refer to the God whom I believe is the one true God, the Creator of the Universe. I may also refer to Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit on occasion in this writing.

God has feelings, like you and I, and can be grieved and experience other emotions as well. He is a God of order and one who cannot lie, according to the Scriptures. If God is on your side and you are in right relationship with Him, no foe can successfully attack you. I know this is a bold statement, and I will endeavor to prove that statement to you in the upcoming chapters, based on a combination of Scripture and my personal life experiences. Unfortunately, today, a large number of people aren't walking in the fullness of what God has for them to experience. You might only be experiencing a “trickle” of what He has for you. That is why I wrote this book — to help you discover the fullness of the wonderful Presence of God moving and operating in your life.

Presence Evangelism

I am a strong believer in what I call **Presence Evangelism**. God gave me those two words years ago to describe a thrust or focus of my ministry. I am called to teach, inform and demonstrate to people the power of the **Presence of God**.

The Presence of God involves having so much of God “on the scene” that you cannot deny His existence or power. Most people who are sensitive can feel His Presence. My goal is to have His Presence with me 24 hours a day, each and every day. Presence requires relationship, and relationship involves belief, trust and obedience.

Any doubt that you entertain may instantly remove the Presence and protection of God away from your life. You must guard and protect your relationship with God above all other things. This is so important to God that this command is recorded at least 3 times in the New Testament (Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27). “And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” (Deuteronomy 6:5). His Presence, and your relationship with Him, are worth doing whatever it takes to preserve and protect them.

Whatever activity you are engaged in, no matter where in the world you are, you should consult God for His Direction and His Presence. Seemingly simple decisions that you need to make can result in catastrophic outcomes if you neglect to consult Him for His Wisdom. Too many people say God is not concerned about this or that outcome, or that they don't want to “bother Him” with praying about a certain circumstance or

decision. What if David had taken that stance about facing Goliath, and had decided not to take him on? Would God have forced David to fight? Or would this have been another in a series of missed opportunities? Thankfully David heard from God, and decided to act in obedience to God (1 Samuel 17).

Not having the Presence of God on the scene is like going out and leaving your spouse home alone. I want God to be “my better half,” and to be present at all times, so as to keep me in proper order and alignment. See my writing called *Everything You Do Affects Everyone Around You* for more about the reasons why you need the continual Presence of God.

Don't try to hold a church service, prayer meeting, revival, healing service or even a Bible study meeting without the Presence of God being present. The Holy Spirit wants to move and direct your worship and learning about God, but He can't if you don't invite Him. Invitation is a two-way street. He must invite you and you must invite Him. Only then can you truly experience the manifestation of His Presence. He will only show up when He is invited and wanted. In addition, you should make sure that you have met the conditions I have outlined in this book to maintain your proper relationship with Him. Getting rid of things like sin and blame from your life is one of the requirements for experiencing His Presence. It is also a requirement to believe fully upon Him.

Source of Power

Over the last few years there has been much use of the word “**anointing**” to describe the power of God, or God's hand upon a person or situation. Quite frankly, I have become a bit dismayed over how liberally and loosely the term has been used. Don't get me wrong — I am a believer in the Power of God. Unfortunately, I don't get excited when I see someone using the words “anointed” or “anointing” anymore. When I investigate what the word is used to describe, I am often disappointed to see no evidence of the manifest Power of God as the name implies. Therefore I prefer to talk about the **Presence of God**, because without His Presence there can be no power or anointing. It would be like saying there is power or electricity in the house when the line to the power company is not connected. No matter how much you advertise that there is power in the house, it should be quite evident to any person entering the house that there is no power.

You must know your source (of the power) before you can experience the manifest power. How can a person identify himself or herself with Christ if they aren't sure He Is who He says He Is? After all, God called himself the “Great I AM.”

Satan goes around masquerading as an angel of light. He can fool some of the people some of the time. He can try to impersonate the works of the Holy Spirit. He is a deceiver and the father of lies. He wants to present to you a **false source of power**. Just like pigs don't care much what they ingest for food, Satan is looking for those who can't differentiate his false source of power from God's true power. The evil one can be very persuasive and tricky. I have been fooled on a number of occasions by people and things pretending to be of God, when they really were not.

The caution here is that you can be so duped and deceived that you are reluctant **to trust** people or God anymore. I have a word of wisdom for you: People will always let you down. They contain flaws, and as such are not perfect. If you think you are perfect, try walking on water. We all “blow it” at times. Our words can get us in trouble and sometimes will hurt others. That goes back to my point I made at the beginning of

this book, that too many people care about what others think of them. We can literally “walk on eggshells” in an attempt to not make mistakes.

People seem afraid to say or do anything that will cause others to think less of them. You are not put on the earth to please men, but to please God. He knows we can be frail at times and “blow it.” Remember the story of the prodigal son? The key isn't that the prodigal son messed up and lost all his worldly possessions, but rather that he **came home** and was not afraid to admit his mistakes to his father, who loved him unconditionally. Always remember that the fear of rejection is a tool of the devil. There is nothing so bad you have done that you can't go to God about it, to confess your mistakes (repentance) and seek His forgiveness through Jesus Christ. The key is your willingness and desire to turn from your mistakes. Of course you must also believe that God is God and that He can handle your situation.

Comfort is doing something that requires little or no change. It usually is easy to be comfortable. You create your own little world that makes you happy, and there is nothing wrong with that. The problem with comfort is when maintaining your “comfort zone” (your own little world) becomes more important to you than seeking and doing what God wants for you to do.

Satan can often make you comfortable so that you won't advance in seeking and serving God. If the devil can't outright kill or destroy you, he can **make you ineffective** for the Kingdom of God. You won't be a threat to him or his plans then. Think of it as being a spiritual couch potato. If you give over to Satan control of your life, either through omission or commission, he will take it.

The devil doesn't mind if you waste your allotted time here on earth. He will give you what you need to pacify you and keep you comfortable. He doesn't want you to have a reason to seek out and serve God. I can speak from experience on this one. Satan offered me many “pacifiers” over the years to try and keep me distracted and away from discovering what God's plan was for my life. The enemy loves to choke out the seed that God has planted within you for your future destiny.

That is why it is **so important** for you to know the true source of your power. Test and examine your power source periodically to make sure you aren't getting “bad juice” from the devil. Ask God to reveal to you anything you are doing, saying or thinking that is opening up any doors for the devil to attack, deceive or control you. God is faithful, and when you ask in faith for His help He will give it to you. You must then be prepared to listen to His leading and His instructions. He will help you escape all the wiles of the evil one.

Awareness and Knowledge

The Scripture says that His people perish for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). God is talking to us here. Awareness is a beautiful thing. We must be made aware of and pay attention to our surroundings if we are to master them and protect them. God wants us to prosper and flourish, but He tells us that His people perish for lack of knowledge. If we aren't aware or knowledgeable on a certain topic, we must pursue Godly knowledge at all costs. Awareness is made up of more than knowledge, and might best be described as our overall attention level and talents combined with our knowledge base. You might be more aware in certain situations than others. Ask God for help and His direction in this area.

You can think of awareness as a night guard who is guarding something valuable. If the guard is aware, he will notice anything out of the ordinary that is approaching his direction that might be trying to sneak up on him to overpower him and steal what he is guarding. Otherwise, an unaware guard might be bound, maimed and have his possessions stolen.

Satan goes around like a raging lion, seeking those whom he can kill or destroy. He also doesn't mind roaring often to try to scare you and get you to take your guard down. Fear is his biggest weapon. If he can get you to fear him and doubt God, he knows you will then be ineffective in serving and following after Christ.

Knowledge is a key to enhancing your understanding of how things work so you can be a better problem solver in life. God wants us to be efficient in everything we do. God doesn't waste a thing, and likewise He wants us to be good stewards. The more aware and the more knowledgeable we are, the better equipped we are to serve Him to be good stewards of the things He has entrusted to us. Wisdom is the principal thing. Get Godly wisdom, knowledge and understanding. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

All too often, people act like the unprofitable servant, where they bury their God-given talents and gifts into the ground, just because they don't know how or when to use them. Perhaps they are also afraid to use them. God takes a dim view on people who waste their time, seed or talents. In fact He usually turns around and takes them away and gives them to another who is a better, proven steward. If you lack anything, ask of God and He will help you with whatever you seek, as long as you are doing it out of a desire to know and serve Him more.

Get rid of all selfishness, vanity and pride, as they all lead to inevitable destruction. Repent and change your ways, ask for His forgiveness through Jesus Christ, and start walking on the better path today. Hunger and thirst after His ways and His righteousness. Don't be afraid to ask Him to send people, learning experiences and situations across your path to help you be a better believer in Him.

He Is

God says that He Is. He calls Himself the "I AM." God wants people (followers) who believe that He Is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). I must explain more about believing that HE IS. This concept is so vital for you to understand.

A Christian by definition is a follower of Christ. Another name used is a believer. What is a believer? Simply put, it is one who **believes that He Is**. This one thing encompasses many other things that we must believe: That He is God, that God exists, that He is rewarding of them that diligently seek Him, that He is the captain of our faith, and many other things that He will likely reveal to you over time. His attributes are so unfathomable that we could literally spend a lifetime and not even scratch the surface of the depth, the goodness and the attributes of God.

Let's start at simple faith and work our way outward. Faith is simply defined as confidence in God. It has many more meanings, but let's start with this one. Read Acts 16:30,31. Note the part that reads, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." What kind of belief do you believe He is talking about here?

First you must have followed His previous commands, namely, to repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins. Only then, after your sins have been forgiven, can you come to Him in faith believing upon the Lord Jesus Christ and receive of His salvation which He purchased for you. If you don't repent, how can you truthfully and honestly believe in Him? Believing is both a state of mind and a state of being. It is a continual thing. It is a covenant of trust between you and God. He keeps His part of the agreement as long as you keep yours.

Let me digress. Let's say a couple is married. If a husband and wife have trust issues, how can they expect to fully believe in each other? If even one seed of doubt or mistrust remains in either of their minds, it can grow to become the source of widespread unbelief in their marriage partner. Unbelief can shut down the connection and communication between the partners in the marriage covenant. The power of agreement has been broken and mistrust runs rampant. Also, one or more marital vows may soon be broken as well.

That is why fear is so deadly. Fear is the opposite of faith, and can be very powerful if you let it blossom and grow. Fear is disbelief in God. Faith in God attracts good things to you. Fear attracts things I would rather not speak of. Hopefully you get the picture.

Do you really trust God? Do you truly believe in/on God? I like Proverbs 3:5,6 which says "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." This gives me great peace. I pray it is a help and encouragement to you as well.

In a trust relationship, there are things **expected** of both parties. There is an implied **agreement** between them to trust and believe each other. Believing someone encompasses expecting them to do what they have promised. The same applies here to God. When you believe God, you not only believe that He Is who He says He Is, but you also trust and expect Him to do what He has promised. Our job is to discover His promises in His Word and expect Him to perform them. We must also discover our obligations and the conditions God requires us to meet, and then act to faithfully fulfill them. Then will we have a well-balanced trust relationship.

It's All About Relationship

Do you talk with your friends or spouse? If you ever stopped talking for a long enough period of time, and ignored your friends or spouse, do you think they would still be your friends or spouse for very much longer? Neglect or abandonment of any relationship will tend to cause a relationship to sour and cease to exist in a proper form. You can't reasonably expect to stop sowing your time, attention, love and caring into a friendship or marriage and not see the relationship change for the worse.

It takes two active participants to have a healthy relationship. If one person disassociates from the other, the unity factor is in danger of falling apart. There is a spiritual law called the Power of Agreement. When two or more are in agreement with each other, there is no way of stopping them from accomplishing that which they have determined to undertake. Only if one or more parties to the agreement gets disillusioned and stops performing their part of the agreement can the plan fail, come apart and be aborted. Satan knows this, so he usually goes after the weaker one in an agreement to break it apart.

The same applies to your relationship with the Almighty God. Satan wants you to stop communing with God, stop reading your Bible, stop reading Christian books, stop going to church and stop associating with strong believers who encourage you.

For Satan knows that God will not force you to stay in covenant with Him, and eventually, if you don't do your part to maintain the relationship with God, you will grow weaker and more distant from God. When we feel that God's Presence is not around us, we must examine ourselves and see "who moved" out of covenant. Your lack of belief will open the door for you to be inundated with attacks, vices and temptations from the evil one. God's protection will likely be at least partly lifted off of you, due to your failure to stay in the covenant of believing Him. You are in danger of self-destruction, suicidal tendencies, depression and a world of hurt and pain if you don't immediately right your belief in, and relationship with, God.

A healthy, well-kept relationship with God brings the promises, blessings and protection of God into your life. The more you draw near to Him and desire to know of His Ways, the more He will likely reveal Himself to you. Once you receive an invitation from God to draw near to Him, your life will be powerful and wonderful. His Presence will astound you, and His Peace will bring you much comfort. You will naturally want to spend time with God because you have a relationship with Him. As with any relationship that you truly value, you will invest your time, money and energy in it to the utmost extreme. Nothing else matters.

No Other Gods before Him

God will not permit anything or anyone to take away from the proper worship, time, admiration and respect due His Holy Name. The first commandment states that you shall have no other Gods before Him. No graven images and no idols of any kind are permitted. Think about it, and do a reality check now for anyone or anything that you value or place before God. If there is anything you can't see yourself letting go of, than it likely has more control over you than God does, and it is quite possibly an idol in your life.

Worship is respecting God with your singing, your words, your heart, your time and your substance. You must truly believe that HE IS, and one of the ways you show that to Him is to worship Him. You bring a portion of your time and substance back to Him and lay it at His feet as an act of worship and reverence.

God searches all of our hearts to determine our true sincerity concerning how we really feel about Him and how we feel about others. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. He is looking for people who come to Him with a pure and contrite heart. Contrition is a state of feeling sorry for the things you have done wrong. It is not beating yourself over the head for these things, but rather exuding a reverent and sorry attitude, coming to Him for forgiveness, and allowing Him to reshape and remold who you are. He is seeking people who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Only when He spots contrition and purity of heart in you can He really begin to use you in a powerful way for His glory.

As David sang in Psalms 51:10-13, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit. *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

What powerful words those are! Let that be your prayer today. Ask Him to create in you a clean heart and to renew a right spirit within you. Ask Him not to take His Holy Presence from you. Ask for the joy that comes from knowing His Salvation. You need His Presence and His Holy Spirit to uphold you, protect you and teach you. Once He has made you whole, you can teach others about His Goodness and His Ways.

Pleasing God

Once you have come to the point of removing any and all idols that you have permitted to stand in your life before God, you will now be set free to give God the ultimate demonstration of your trust in Him and love for Him. Part of believing in God is demonstrating your belief in Him. To fulfill your believing requirement in Acts 16:30-31, you must stay in a constant, true belief in every area of who He is, what He's done for you and your expectation of Him to perform what He has promised to do for you.

God tells you what you must do now. He says that it is only through **obedience** that you can truly show and demonstrate your trust and belief in Him. For if you don't trust someone, you are demonstrating to them that you don't believe in them.

Obedience proves your trust in God. Obedience is an action, and God's Word says obedience is better than sacrifice. Too many people try to demonstrate to God by way of their sacrifices that they trust Him. All He really is looking for is their **obedience to His instructions** that He has given to them.

This is a key to pleasing God: **God wants to be believed.** The only way you can truly please God is for you to **believe Him.** God is adamant about this point. No one wants to be disbelieved.

Your life is a big lesson in whether you choose to believe Him or not. It's up to you. God respects the gift of **free will** He has given unto you. God will never force you to serve Him or believe upon Him. But His Word definitely says, "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..." (Acts 16:30-31).

Think about what will happen to someone if they choose to disregard this warning and choose not to believe! Why anyone would choose not to believe upon Him is hard for me to imagine. But there are indeed many who go to their death without truly believing in Him. What a shame!

The enemy of souls is active in getting people to disbelieve God. He has so many traps and snares to get people away from the Truth. It is our job as spiritual deliverers to bring the good news (gospel) message of Jesus Christ to the world. See the chapter later in this book on *Presenting the Gospel to the World*.

If you are in a relationship with someone and they realize that you don't believe them, they will not want to stay in relationship (covenant) with you much longer. No one wants to not be believed. You basically are calling a person a liar if you choose to not believe them.

You are saying you don't have confidence in them and that they can't be trusted. That is what you are saying to God when you demonstrate to Him by your thoughts, words and actions that you don't believe Him. Unbelief, or disbelief, is so dangerous when it comes to God. You are literally turning your back on God, disrespecting Him and forcing Him to withdraw from you. This opens up the door for the enemy to come in

and have his way in your life, as you have shut God out of your life by your thoughts, words and/or actions of disbelief.

That is why I can't say it plainly enough — you must believe in God. God will reward you for your belief in Him.

Now we come to the conditional nature of serving God.

Blaming God

Have you ever been mad at God or wondered why God permitted suffering and pain to exist today? We put conditions on God all of the time. We ask Him why He doesn't do this or that. Why did some person have to die or suffer with a disease? Where are His Compassion and Mercy?

To help answer these types of questions, let's look at some real-world examples. Many people will tell you they are “suffering for Jesus” when they are going through a trial or pain. Sickness is another example where some people say that God has given them the disease to “increase their faith.”

God is a God of order. If there is disorder, then you can believe that God has not caused it and has no part in it. God creates, Satan destroys. God allows destruction only when there has been disobedience to His instructions and therefore disbelief in Him. After all, if you believe someone, you will follow their instructions. Delayed obedience or outright failure to follow instructions results in disobedience, rebellion and unbelief. God compares the sin of rebellion to that of witchcraft. We read in 1 Samuel 15:23, “For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.”

I can't stress enough the importance of **obedience** to the instructions of God. In 1 Samuel 15:22 we see that “...to obey *is* better than sacrifice...” — We show God we believe Him by our obedience to His instructions.

People love to blame God for things. They blame Him for not stopping natural disasters, disease, wars, turmoil, death and the like, when in reality, God gave us the ability to choose the destiny of this world and how our lives will turn out.

There are really only three ways of looking at life and who is in control of our destiny:

God is in control. Many people will say “God is in control,” and take a “whatever will be, will be” attitude. They will even say that everything is the will of God. While God created the world, He destined for man to be in control of it and to subdue it. To make the claim that “God is in control” would be to blame Him for every bad and evil thing that is allowed to happen here on the earth. Many people speak of predestination, and how God has predestined everything to happen in life. If that is the case, and if you believe this theory that God is in control of everything going on on the earth, then you are saying that God predestines murder, rape, child abuse and every evil on the earth that man commits. If you believe this, then you must agree that we are merely robots, that we can't make any decisions on our own (i.e. that there is no free will), that we can't change anything, and that our entire lives and all our actions are scripted by God.

Satan is in control. Others think Satan is in control. If that were truly so, then Satan, formerly known as the archangel Lucifer, would wipe us all out of existence in one fell swoop. He would murder billions of people in a second. He hates us, and he hates God. He is a liar and murderer. Obviously there is some restraining force preventing Satan from the blanket killing of all of us who exist here on earth, so Satan cannot be in total control of everything that happens.

Man is in control and is responsible for his own actions. His decision affects his future and destiny. We are all stewards of the earth, and are responsible for the choices we make. This is the best way of looking at the “who is in control” issue, in my opinion. God gives us **free will to choose** whether to serve Him or not. Our lives are the result of our decisions and the choices we make. God's spiritual laws are in control of the universe, but it is up to us whether we choose to accept His Ways or our own ways. He gives us instructions to follow so that it will go well with us in life, but the choice is ours if we choose to follow or reject His instructions. We can please God with our **obedience** and **belief**, or open up the door to Satan to control our lives when we disobey God.

God Is Not Moved to Act by Our Pain

God can definitely feel our pain, but He is not moved to act by it. Many people think that God responds to the pain they are going through, and that He will act on their behalf to alleviate the source of the pain. If this were the case, then every hurting, starving or sick person would be healed by God instantly. To take this approach in believing how God acts is incorrect, and will cause you to diminish or destroy your faith and belief in God when the source of the pain is not removed by God.

God is instead moved by our faith, or our confidence and belief in Him and His abilities. Faith is the only thing that moves the hand of God. Our **obedience** to His instructions proves our trust for Him and attracts God toward us. **Our believing in Him** proves our faith, or our confidence in Him. God's supreme desire is to **be believed** by us.

An example I can give is from my own life, and there are similar testimonies to mine which I have heard from the lives of others. When driving a car and hitting a patch of ice on the road, I was facing a surreal skid experience where the car was fishtailing out of control and turning. I instinctively called out one word, “Jesus,” and instantly the car stopped turning and miraculously was put back in the right course so as not to hit anything around me. I believe an angel picked up the car and righted it. Was it a case of God responding to the pain I was going through or was it my calling out in faith the name of Jesus that caused the reaction from the servant of God? I have heard very similar testimonies from others about their cars and icy conditions where similar things happened to them, and each of them also called out the name of “Jesus” and saw instantaneous miracles. I do know that I have seen many healings performed by God in front of my eyes when we combined agreement with our faith and belief in God. The place of agreement of our combined faith served as a catalyst in the person receiving their healing from God.

Pain is showing you there is a problem or disorder in an area or situation in your life. Pain should serve to motivate you to seek change. Pain is not there to motivate God, but rather to motivate you to action. Pain focuses your goals and shows you what is important. It is sort of like the red warning light that comes on in your automobile to warn you of service needed or impending damage to your engine. Unfortunately, the

world tends to try and mask out pain using drugs, chemicals, vices and entertainment. They try to disguise or “deaden” the pain.

Pain will not allow itself to be masked or ignored for long. Eventually the root cause of the pain or disease (disorder) will show itself and usually be much more severe than if you dealt with the source of the pain early on. Procrastination when it comes to pain is not a wise thing. Seek out the specialist problem solver that can properly diagnose and treat the source of your pain.

Ask God to give you His Wisdom to locate the root source of the pain and how best to resolve the disorder causing the pain. Use your **faith** in God and seek His Wisdom.

God Is a God of Conditions (IF...THEN...ELSE)

Life is made up of a series of choices. Even if you don't make decisions, someone will make decisions for you. It is best if you make the decisions, as you might not like the decisions others will make for you. People resist change by nature. They like the “status quo” where nothing will change. Change is often uncomfortable for people.

As a computer programmer for most of my life, I am well acquainted with the IF...THEN...ELSE... structure in most modern computer languages. I learned it first in the BASIC computer language in the late 1970s, but it holds true and is patterned, I believe, after the way God gives instructions in His Word. In the Bible, you will find many conditional references stating that if you do something then certain blessings will come upon you, but if you choose not to do what God instructs, then curses or other problems will come towards you. We can see this at work in Deuteronomy 28 (read the entire chapter). Note the conditional nature of this chapter.

Notice well the part of the verse in Deuteronomy 28:1 that says, “...if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God...” What does this mean to you? Sounds pretty conditional, doesn't it? Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you now as you read all of Deuteronomy 28.

God is a cautionary God. He speaks with His Still Small Voice to you. He warns us of impending disaster, if we choose to hear Him. The problem is that in this fast-paced, noise-cluttered, instant-gratification laden culture we tend to live in today, it may be hard for most people to hear God's Voice speaking to them. Until you get to the point where you can clearly hear the Voice of God in your Christian walk, you must rely on His Word and His Spirit to guide you into all truths and understanding. Seek out Godly counsel, but remember that men may have flaws, and test everything you read or hear by the Word of God. Praying to God is highly advisable also.

Until you get to the point where you understand that God sets conditions for all of us to operate through and with, you won't totally be set free in this area. It is not our will, but His that needs to be done. Many people try to serve God in the power of their own mind and their own strength, and soon grow weary in well-doing, because they weren't led into that path by the Wisdom of God. Just because one man can do a certain ministry, does not mean that you are intended to do it also. Never try to copy or be a clone of another in ministry.

More than likely, you have different gifts, talents and instructions than the other person you are trying to emulate has. What God tells someone else to do, He may not tell you to do. Never try to force someone to minister in the manner you are ministering in. Allow God to be in control of every area of your life and ministry. Seek direction from Him, and Him alone.

Find His promises in His Word that He wants you to relate to you, and start exercising them in your life.

Failure is directly related to one or more instructions from God that you failed to obey in a timely manner. If you find yourself in “failure mode,” go back and ask God's help in fixing the mess that resulted from the instruction(s) you failed to obey. Repentance and the desire to follow future instructions will start the healing process caused by failure.

You are directly responsible for the success or failure of your future. Only when you successfully follow the instructions God gives you will you succeed in life, as that demonstrates your obedience to God. Your decisions act like a rudder which decides your course in life. Remember the IF, the THEN and the ELSE part of all conditions set forth by God.

OBEDIENCE (successfully following Godly instructions) = **SUCCESS** in life, while
DISOBEDIENCE (not following Godly instructions) = **FAILURE** in life.

So it is all up to you whether you choose to follow God's instructions or not, just as you must choose to believe God or not in this life. Make wise choices.

Solving the World's Problems

A common condition that new born-again Christians find themselves in is one of zeal. They usually have a lot of zeal to tell others about Christ but have very little knowledge about the Kingdom of God. They have cause to be excited about finding new life in Christ, but whoever “led them to Christ” may not have told them about the pitfalls of zeal. New converts usually disobey God's law of **free will** and try to force themselves and the belief in their God on everyone around them. See earlier in this book where I discussed the fact that God never forces Himself on anyone and how He is a respecter of an individual's free will.

Evangelism is an art form where one must be yielded and totally led by the Spirit of God. A Christian must not try to evangelize or minister to a particular person or group of people unless they know that God has directed them to speak or minister **at that particular time**. Timing is everything, and unless the Lord builds the house, they that labor to build it will labor in vain.

One can do more damage in applying wrong timing to evangelism or ministry than any good they personally think will come out of it. It goes back to either ministering out of the flesh or being led by the Spirit of God. Anything your flesh does based on its own selfish reasoning, no matter how well-intentioned, will ultimately fail or bring forth poor results. But, when God is in the matter, it cannot fail, as long as you obediently follow the instructions He is giving you concerning that matter.

Consider an example where you are doing street witnessing. If you go up to someone and confront them about their wrong behavior and tell them they are going to Hell if they don't repent, what is your motivation?

Did God really tell you to confront this particular person? If so, that is fine. But if you are acting out of zeal trying to reach 20 people that day with the gospel, then perhaps you are trying to satisfy your own desire, and God may have no part in your endeavor.

What if next week, a nice person is scheduled by God to come across that person's path and share the gospel with them in a way God knows is the only way they will receive Him? And along you come this week, totally unscheduled by God, and try to “save” this person through fear and intimidation tactics. You could be putting a large stumbling block in front of this person, so that the person will reject the “nice person” God had planned to lovingly share Jesus with them next week. They will remember you, and your tactics, and be “put off” by that person. In this example case, you have just aborted and frustrated a plan of God to reach this person, by your acting out of self-righteousness and lack of wisdom concerning evangelism.

The key here is that God is in charge through His Holy Spirit of drawing people to Him. Only He truly knows the right time, the right environment and right way that a person will correctly and truthfully best respond to Him. God will reveal to His servants the timing and method to approach this person. He will schedule assignments of sharing Himself to His trusted evangelists. This applies to one-on-one evangelism, but what happens when there is a group of people gathered for a religious service? Then the speaker must use godly wisdom in saying whatever the Lord directs for his or her message. You can affect and damage people through your words, message or presentation if you are not obedient to God in this regard.

Once we properly realize that it is not our job to do the work of God's Holy Spirit, we can rest in the fact that we are vessels that He may selectively choose to use. Our bodies can't be running 24/7 evangelizing. We would grow weary in well-doing then. We must learn to maximize our talents and our time to best serve Him and His ways. That is why we must **hear His Voice**, so we can follow His commands and instructions. You were created to be a vessel for His Wisdom, and it is not up to the vessel to tell the Master how and when it can be used. Your job is to be an obedient, yielded vessel to flow when and where He directs. Only when you are properly aligned to Him through obedience can you truly reach souls for Him.

So don't try to solve all the world's problems. That isn't your job. The Spirit of God is in charge of overseeing world evangelism. We must align ourselves to the Holy Spirit and experience the Presence of God continually, to always be ready to “answer His call” and direction. I liken it, in my own life, to being like a firefighter. I spend time preparing and training, waiting until the fire bell rings, then I am able to be dispatched to solve a particular assignment or problem. When the assignment is complete, I return back to the firehouse and wait for the next assignment, meanwhile spending time in His Presence learning more about Him.

Abiding with Him

This brings us to the important topic of abiding with Him. The word “**abide**” means to wait for, to remain stable, to continue in a place and to accept without objection. Abiding with Him (in His Presence) is the key to it all. This is a secret that unfortunately few Christians find. You probably remember earlier in this book I mentioned the statement: If God is on your side and you are in right relationship with Him, no foe can successfully attack you. The answer to finding the key to this blessing of protection is found in abiding with Him.

Look at Proverbs 19:23, “The fear of the LORD *tendeth* to life: and *he that hath it* shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited by evil.” I especially like the part of the promise about not being visited by evil. I want to abide satisfied with Him all the days of my life. There are many, many blessings that come from abiding with God. You should seek Him and ask Him to abide with you on a continual basis. Abiding implies **obedience** and **belief** on your part, so you must believe that **He Is** and **that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him**.

Look at the entire chapter of Psalm 91. In verse 1, “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Let's look at some of the many benefits of abiding with Him mentioned in Psalm 91:

1. Protection from evil - He will deliver thee from snares and pestilence (diseases).
2. His Truth shall be thy shield and buckler.
3. You shall not be afraid of terror or arrows, destruction or disease.
4. He is my fortress. In Him will I trust.
5. He will set me on high, because I have known His name.
6. He will satisfy me with long life, and show me His salvation.

There are many more blessings and protections mentioned in Psalm 91. Search them out, and ask Him to reveal Himself to you now.

Abiding with Him brings many benefits. Consider also the peace that comes from being close to Him. He desires a personal relationship with you and me. Nothing else matters but serving Him. When you learn this key, your life will forever be changed for the better.

The Presence of God is one thing that cannot be bought or gained except as a gift from God. He has to choose to invite you to dwell with Him. Once you receive that invitation, don't be like the unwise people who rejected the King's invitation to the wedding supper. Put on the white robe that He provides for you to wear and enter into the fullness of His Presence. Abide with Him forever more. You will never regret it.

Thanks

Thanksgiving can release huge favor from both God and men on your behalf. When you are thankful and demonstrate your genuine thankfulness to others it causes a change in their attitude towards you. The same applies, I believe, when you express heartfelt gratitude and thankfulness to God.

Let me give you an example that changed my life:

Many years ago I was on my way walking somewhere one day, and I stopped for a moment and tilted my head up and expressed my thankfulness to God for the air that I was breathing. I thanked Him for the air and

for my ability to breathe the air. I thanked Him for allowing me to live. I told Him that without the oxygen in the air I could not live another moment. I acknowledged and confessed that my existence depended on Him and Him alone. Without Him providing both the air and the ability for my body to breathe the air, I couldn't exist.

Almost instantly, a warm feeling came over me. I felt as if someone had wrapped their hands around me and was hugging me. It was invisible, but an overwhelming sensation overtook me. It was definitely real. It was like electricity was in the air all around me. I felt so safe and protected. Nothing else mattered to me anymore. I wanted to stay there in what appeared to be His embrace. I didn't know much about God at the time, but after that **experience** my life was changed forever.

I began to hunger to know more about Him and His Ways. At the time that I said those words of thanksgiving, I wasn't sure if I really knew fully that God was real. But something inside of me urged me to speak those few words of thanksgiving to God. My life changed. It was like the earth stopped rotating for a few moments and it was just me and God together at the same place and time. It seemed like He had stopped being some figure you hear about and instantly became real and personal to me. I thought, who is God that He is mindful of me? I later found out that David had said similar words about God in the book of Psalms.

His Presence changes you. An encounter with the Presence of God will leave you not being the same person as you were before. An encounter with His Presence is the truest and purest form of evangelism in my opinion. A personal touch by the Almighty cannot compare to hearing a sermon or reading a book or a tract. Sure, God can use these and other things to touch you, but a life-altering personal experience with His Presence is something I encourage everyone to truly experience. There's nothing else like it! That's why I wrote this book. I want everyone who desires to have this kind of experience to meet Him.

A word of caution: Never take God or His Presence for granted. Always appreciate every moment. Be thankful and show Him respect and admiration at all times.

His Righteousness

Matthew 6:33 states, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." We are to seek after His Kingdom and His Righteousness. We are not to seek after the cares of this world, for God knows what we need here, but rather we must be Kingdom-minded. We must be about the Master's business (Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 2:49, Mark 16:15,16).

Note what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:6, "Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Clearly, we are to seek after His Righteousness. We should be so filled with His Righteousness that nothing carnal (fleshly) shall control us or reign in our lives anymore.

Righteousness requires pursuit. In fact, the proof of anything you are passionate about is demonstrated by your level of pursuit of it. Whatever you invest your time, energy, talent and money in is what you are pursuing and what you are passionate about. Take the "passion test" and see what motivates you in your life. What are you pursuing above all others? Is it something Godly, or is it worldly?

In Isaiah 64:6 we see that "...and all our righteousness *are* as filthy rags..." Therefore we **cannot rely** on our own righteousness for anything. We must ask of God for His Righteousness to be implanted within us, so that we may do works of righteousness that bring honor and glory to Him for His Name's Sake.

Seeking after His Righteousness is a key to experiencing the manifest Presence of God continually abiding with you and leading your life.

His Righteousness within you is the guarantee of protection from all evil. Nothing can harm you if you are abiding under His Shadow (Psalm 91). It is when people get out from under the shadow of His Righteousness that the enemy can attack them. Remember, no one could attack Jesus unless He permitted them to do so. He gave His Life. They didn't take It from Him.

Staying in His Righteousness and in His Presence requires knowledge of the ways the enemy can attack you (2 Corinthians 2:11). Don't be ignorant of the enemy's devices, but be knowledgeable of God's Righteousness. Experience God's Presence and learn from Him of His Ways. God's Truth shall be your shield and buckler.

The Peace Test

With so many voices trying to distract you and get your attention today, it is easy for people to not know for sure what God's will and direction for their life is. Should you turn left or right? Who is telling the truth in a matter? I have found the answer that seems to work for me to discover God's will in any area of my life. I call it the "Peace Test."

Satan is a thief, liar, murderer and deceiver. He does not have your best interests at heart. He would like nothing better than to destroy or mislead you. Fear and doubt are two of his biggest weapons. If he can get you to stop believing something a man of God told you, he will do it. If he can cause gossip, rumors and scandal to infiltrate a church congregation, he will do it. Don't believe everything you hear people talking about. They may just be, willingly or unwillingly, vessels of deceit the enemy is using to spread lies.

The devil will try at times to counterfeit the things of God. He can appear as an angel of light. He can trick and beguile you. He can be subtle or overt, but regardless of the many things he may be able to counterfeit, I have never known the devil to be able to counterfeit the Peace of God.

Yes, I have been waylaid by the enemy many times in my life, especially prior to my more fully knowing the things of God. He tried to impersonate the voice or message of God to me on numerous occasions. I was duped several times, but I always kept reaching out to God asking Him to reveal His Truth to me. Truth is not in the devil. He might mix some truth and falsehood to try and deceive you, but he is not 100% truth. Truth is not in his nature. Likewise, he can't masquerade as the Peace of God, **as that is not in his nature.**

Only Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. The closer you are to Jesus and to the Presence of God, the more peace that tends to follow you around, and the more peace you tend to exude to others around you. I often get comments when I am ministering that people say they feel or sense the Peace of God all around me. That doesn't puff me up, but it is a sign that I am on the right track following after the Presence of God. He confirms His servants to people.

When I need to make a decision, I look for the Peace of God in the answer. If I have several choices before me that I must decide from, I wait and seek out His Peace that will alight upon one of the choices. If I don't sense the Peace of God in any of the choices, I do nothing until the peace is shown. I have never known Satan to ever counterfeit peace when I asked God to give His Peace to help with decision making in my life.

Timing is everything. Whether you are led to evangelize, speak, preach, teach or help someone, the timing is the factor that makes the difference between success and failure. Ask God to give you His Peace to help your timing **line up** with His Timing. Never be in a hurry, and never ignore His Timing either.

No matter how silly it may seem to you, God may ask you to do things that you wouldn't normally do, but your proof of **obedience** will make all the difference in serving Him. He will know that He can trust you by your obedience to his instructions. Seek instruction, seek wisdom, and never presume anything is too difficult for God to accomplish or perform.

Gifts and Callings

We all have certain gifts and callings from God. Gifts are imparted to us to perform a specific task for Him. Callings are directions or fields of assignment that He wants us to pursue. Some people may have an artistic or musical gift; others may excel at public speaking or preaching. Whatever your gift, it is a tool to be used properly for His service. Many people “miss the mark” in life. They either never fully discover their gift(s) or else they fail to use them to properly glorify God. You may have heard the public service advertisements that say “a mind is a terrible thing to waste,” but I tell you the truth is that a gift or calling from God is a terrible thing to waste.

Your life is a golden opportunity to shine and reflect on what God has given you. You take the gifts, and give the fruits of them to others in His Name, so that He may receive the Glory.

How and what you do with the gifts you have been given will reflect to Him how much you honor and love Him. Some people take their gifts for granted and refuse to glorify God or even acknowledge that God gave the gifts to them. Some let vanity and pride get the best of them, and they think they are better than everybody else because they have a certain gift. This is often commonly referred to as *letting something go to your head*. Watch out for vanity and pride. You know who fell from his position due to these attributes.

Ask God for His Wisdom on how best to discover and use the talents He has already given you. Don't try to “go against the grain” and be something you weren't destined to be. If you aren't a singer, don't try to play one on TV or in a church service. You will only end up disillusioning people and turning them off to receiving the real gifts God has placed inside you. Don't succumb to pressure to be something or somebody you are not. Wasted lives result from always trying to fit a square peg in a round hole. Parents, don't put unrealistic expectations on your children. Perhaps they aren't athletic or musical. If not, then don't force them to play sports or take piano lessons.

Foster and encourage their innate gifts which they will exhibit if you look closely enough. What are they good at? What makes them happy? What occupies their time? What do they want to be?

Dreams

Dreams are fascinating things. Ask God for dreams that He wants you to receive. This subject is not developed enough in Christian literature. God can speak to your inner self through dreams. I have heard very few teachings about the importance of Godly dreams.

Your mind should be your most guarded asset. The devil loves to attack people in the area of their mind. The mind is like a type of fertile soil that will produce anything that is planted in it, whether good or bad.

You may have heard of some people who are called “bad seeds” by other people. They usually mean that the person is “bad to the core” and almost exclusively displays bad acts and behaviors. There can be many things causing this bad behavior, but you can likely trace it back to a time when “bad seeds” were implanted in that person's mind and memory. They may be replaying the “tapes” of the fruit of those bad seeds over and over and think they are acting in a normal manner. Serial killers, murderers, child molesters and other “hard-core” criminals, especially those displaying deviant behavior, may likely have allowed “bad seeds” to develop in their minds.

The mind is the place where imagination begins. Imagination brings you images and pictures of things you desire. You are greatly influenced by your imagination. What you watch and who you listen to will greatly affect what you will imagine and dream about. After all, brainwashing begins with implanting thoughts and images into a person's mind. Repetition causes the person to believe the item being brainwashed into them is the truth.

Imagination will cause things to be birthed into reality. What you imagine starts to become real in your life. You will do everything possible to see what you are imagining become alive. Can you now see the power that your mind and imagination have? Is it no wonder that the enemy of your soul is seeking to attack you in your mind and thoughts?

He knows that if he can attack you in your mind, and influence your imagination, then the battle is almost already won to control you, so as to keep you from discovering the riches that are in Christ. That is why you must protect what you experience, see, hear and imagine at all costs.

I can't watch a movie preview for a horror movie. I close my eyes and usually plug my ears as well when it comes on. There is so much evil, hate and destruction present even in the movie advertisement that if we aren't careful, something can rub off on us. There is no way I am going to subject myself to sitting through a horror movie where there are multiple killings, lots of blood and gore and satanic images. No way! And yet, I know of many Christians who love to go to every new horror or demonic movie that pops up at the theater.

Things we watch on TV and events we see in person influence us. God can grant protection to those who are serving Him and who are in His Presence, but unless He specifically tells you to be around those events, you have no business being exposed to them. I have seen so much damage caused by the entertainment and media of today on people's lives. It is just not worth any negligible temporary side benefits that being exposed to these things offers.

You must make a conscious effort to plant good thoughts in your mind and in your imagination. Only listen to good music and to good audios and videos. Protect the space around you. Your environment controls how you feel and how you react to others. A good environment will do wonders for your life. A bad environment full of noise pollution and ungodly talk will tend to bring you down.

Dream big things and dream Godly things. Ask for God's dreams that He made just for you to flourish and come to life.

Power of Forgiveness

Get rid of any hint of your being unable to forgive another person. Never should you hold any bitterness or be unwilling to forgive others who may have wronged you. The Bible is clear in this regard.

In Matthew 6:14-15, we see a very conditional statement from God, “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Being unable to forgive others is one of the quickest ways to shut down the blessings, protection and Presence of God in your life. All it takes is one person who upsets you or knows how to *push your buttons*. Don't you know that the enemy has people out there just waiting to frustrate you so that you will get into a mode of refusing to forgive them? I have had this happen to me. Afterwards I realized that I was “set up” by the enemy. You must be wise and ask God to show you when any of these snares concerning forgiveness are about to be unleashed on you. You can then dodge the snare and stay in an attitude of forgiveness to people no matter what is thrown at you.

It may take practice for you to be an **immediate forgiver**, but the benefits far outweigh giving the enemy any foothold in your life due to your inability to forgive others. This is not to say that you should be a doormat and let others walk all over you. Some Christians get into that mode. Rather, you should be wise and not allow anyone or anything to take advantage of you, but be quick to forgive those who do you wrong.

God is so concerned about getting rid of any root of bitterness between His people that He makes it clear in Matthew 5:22-24 that you must reconcile any disagreements with your brother before coming to offer a gift to God. You may get angry at people at times, just don't hold things against others such as bitterness or blame. See Ephesians 4:25-27. Ask God to help you release anything you are holding against another person.

Forgiveness is about giving over to God the authority to pronounce judgment and any penalties for any wrongdoings. You remove yourself from determining or paying back someone for something wrong they have done to you. It really lifts a weight off of your shoulders. You are no longer “trapped” by the actions of another.

Repent and forgive yourself for things you have done that were wrong. If God has forgiven you, you should forgive yourself also. That is not giving you a license to sin, but rather a way of escape from the penalty of sin. Allow God to offer that way of escape to others as well. Don't hold grudges, seek revenge or harbor bitterness toward people for the way they have mistreated or wronged you. The ability to forgive yourself and others is a mark of Godly character being exhibited in and through your life.

The Sin Trap

Another way the enemy can get at you to help separate you from the Presence of God is to use sin. Sin is an offense against God. When you violate God's laws, commands or instructions, you are in a state of disobedience. The last thing you would normally ever want to do is to offend God.

One of the ultimate offenses you can do to your marriage partner is to commit the act of adultery. You are substituting your affection from being placed on your lawful relationship with your spouse, by placing it on another person who is not in a lawful marriage covenant with you. In like manner, you violate your covenant with God to continually believe in Him, on Him and serve Him when you commit the offense of disbelief and sin.

It is like you are allowing a third party into the faithful agreement you made with God. Just as one promises to love, honor and obey their spouse and be faithful to them, you will violate your covenant with God to love Him, serve Him and be faithful to Him alone if you allow another person or thing to get in the way of your relationship between yourself and God.

God will not allow you to change your confession and agreement, which you made to believe Him, by adding other parties to that agreement. Either you believe Him or you do not. If at any time during your life you choose to violate your belief covenant with God, He is not obligated to keep His end of the agreement, including to protect and bless you.

Are you willing to throw away all that God desires to give you for some act(s) of sin or disobedience? The Scripture warns you to “forget not all His benefits” (see Psalm 103:1-5).

Just like when Esau sold away his birthright inheritance for a bowl of soup or stew (Genesis 25:29-34), you can easily break your covenant with God when you engage in sinful thoughts or endeavors. The enemy knows this and will try many ways to get you to be separated from God. Sin and blame are his weapons of choice.

That is why the Bible tells us to beware of sinning, and to avoid all kinds of lust, covetousness, stealing, adultery, fornication, worshipping idols, hatred and the many other sins mentioned in the Bible (read Galatians 5:19-23).

God knows that the day you enter into covenant with sin, you will have broken your covenant with Him. He wants us to live holy and righteous lives following Him and His Ways. He will give us the power to overcome sin if we ask Him for it.

Removing the Barriers of Sin

Sometimes it takes some time to rid yourself of things and thoughts that encourage and enable you to sin. After all, you didn't start sinning overnight. It took one or more seeds of sin that you allowed, willingly or unwillingly, to be planted and take root in the fertile soil of your mind and imagination to start the sin ball rolling. Babies and children can be like “blank slates.” Their thoughts are molded and shaped by the things they hear and the people they trust around them. They will usually believe anything you tell them, especially

if told to them by someone that shows them love. In like manner, we get “implanted” with thoughts and ideas all the time that are wrong and that will spark sin in our lives. Just look at TV for examples of “bad messages” that are being portrayed to children and adults.

The key is that we need to be so full of the Presence of God, His Righteousness and His Peace that we will immediately spot any sinful thoughts that are trying to be implanted in us and reject them. Read Philippians 4:7-9. Note that it is “...the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, that shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Then in verse 8, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.”

It is clear that He wants us to think on things with good attributes and refrain from anything that is evil. Carefully test all things before you allow them to enter, reside in and affect you.

You need to repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins, and then you must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and receive His Salvation (Acts 2:38, Acts 19:4, Acts 16:30-31).

Then don't take your Christian walk lightly, but rather do so in reverence and honor to Him. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). If you need help along the way, ask of Him and He will give it to you.

Demons

And now, we will go on to the controversial part of the book. I could have left this section out, but doing so would be a disservice to you, the reader. I want you to be set free in this area as well. Many may disbelieve what I am about to say, but I can say from my personal experiences that I believe this is the truth. I won't elaborate on how I know all of this here, but if you doubt, please ask of God and He will confirm that what I say here is truth.

Most Christians cringe when they hear the word “demons.” Some blame everything that happens to them on demons, while others dismiss them as made-up creations of people's imaginations and the lot of fairy tales. I have had numerous first-hand experiences with demons, including demon-possessed people who were near to me. I have been attacked on numerous occasions in the past, before I knew how to adequately defend myself, by both demons themselves and people who had demons using them.

The reason I am mentioning them at all, is that the Scripture says we are not to be ignorant of Satan's devices. I am not trying to lift up demons here, but rather to expose the truth concerning who they are, where they came from, what they are doing today and how to protect yourself from their influence. You can't be totally free to experience the Presence of God if you have demon issues.

The most popular myth about demons is that they are fallen angels. That is not the truth. Fallen angels have no need to inhabit the body of a human as they have their own spiritual bodies. Also, a fallen angel could do more damage to you in a quicker time. Satan and a group of the fallen angels, who fell after their rebellion

against God in Heaven, decided they were jealous that God had created Man in His Own Image. God had created a type of offspring to be vessels for His Wisdom. Satan and the other fallen angels had never been offered the ability to be vessels of God's Wisdom and were quite filled with rage, anger, pride and jealousy.

After the deception that Satan perpetrated upon Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he set up a design, along with some of the fallen angels, to impregnate some of the women on the earth for the purpose of creating his own offspring. This was in direct violation of the commands and desires of God, but these certain fallen angels disregarded God and did this heinous deed, and they were subsequently punished by God and were bound in chains under the earth for a season.

The result was a mixed race of giants, who were part human and part angelic (Genesis 6:4, Number 13:33, Deuteronomy 2:11, 1 Corinthians 11:10). The Bible does not give a lot of details about the giants, but it definitely says that they existed and describes how they came into being. If you are in doubt, ask God to confirm this to you. Giants were bloodthirsty murderers who went around doing the bidding of their fathers, the fallen angels. God went about to right this wrong that the fallen angels had bestowed upon the men of the earth, and that is why I believe He sent the flood of Noah. He wiped out the bodies of flesh on the earth, but saved those people and animals that were inside Noah's ark.

The demons of today are the disembodied spirits who were formerly known as the giants. The flood wiped out their natural bodies, but since they were a mix of human and angelic progeny, they have a spirit part which searches around for bodies to inhabit even today. So the giants did not die, only their fleshly bodies did. They can't do everything they once could. They seek to do the bidding of their fathers, the fallen angels, by inhabiting the bodies of men and women today, and causing as much mayhem and destruction as they can. They want to get as many people to sin and disbelieve God as possible, to cause there to be a separation between God and His people.

There are many examples of demon possession recorded in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. They are often referred to by the name "unclean spirits." Note that you will never see a case of anyone casting a demon out of someone prior to the flood of Noah. Demons don't want you to know the truth of who they are and where they came from, as it makes it easier for a strong Christian to get rid of them. If you don't know the truth behind what you are trying to cast out, it makes it a whole lot harder.

I used to get choked in the middle of the night by demons. I could hardly get the name of Jesus out of my vocal chords to cast them away. I even had a demon hover over my bed and attempt to breathe fire down on me. In the morning I woke up and my skin was red as if singed by heat. I know what I am talking about. I have lived through experiences and dealt with them. Thank God He has delivered me from their grasp and I have been free from them for years now.

There is a debate today over whether Christians can be demon-possessed or demon-influenced, due to the Spirit of God dwelling in believers. I can say that I have personally seen on numerous occasions demon-possessed people who confessed their belief in Christ. I have had demons talk to me using a different gender voice coming out of a professing Christian. So I know they are real and they exist. The Scripture says you shall know the truth, and it shall set you free. Knowing the truth about demons and fallen angels is important, so as not to be ignorant of the enemy's devices. I already said more than I planned to about this topic in this writing on the Presence of God, but I feel so strongly that you need to be aware they exist.

If you are dealing with demon problems yourself or with other people, I strongly advise you to seek Godly Wisdom on how to deal with them and get rid of them. Anyone who has invited a demon to have access to them must be willing to close the door on them returning again before that demon should be cast out. Otherwise the end result would be worse than the former (see Luke 11:24-26).

So if you are motivated to sin, and don't know why, it could be that there is a demonic component urging the sin to be happening in or around you. If you have tried everything you could find to free yourself from any type of sinful bondage, make sure there is no demonic influence involved. Jesus came to set us free so that we would be free indeed! (John 8:36)

The closer you are to the true Presence of God, the more protection you will have from demonic attacks and influence. Eventually, once Satan knows he can't get to you, he will reassign those demons to go bother someone else. Demons can't stay where the Presence of God is. They flee like rats, or like pigs going to their slaughter.

Powerful Majesty

So far I have dealt with many of the pitfalls to avoid on your path to experience the fullness of the Presence of God. Now I want to deal with some of the many benefits of experiencing the Presence of God. Believe me, it is worth all the hard work to get to the place of proper relationship with God. Nothing else matters or can compare with how wonderful it is.

Majesty is one of the best ways to describe His Presence. It is a knowing that He is able to rule and reign forever more, justly and powerfully.

That brings us back to **faith**, trusting in Him for all that we need and desire. He is our guide and confidant. He is our best friend, our King and the Creator of the Universe. In Him and through Him we have our being.

Apart from Him, we are nothing. He is the air we breathe. He is the one and only. I will worship Him alone.

Won't you come and discover the fullness of His Presence today? What are you waiting for?

Everything else in life is meaningless or vanity and will only serve to frustrate you (Ecclesiastes 1:2). You need His Presence or you won't have a lasting reason to exist. He is our source and our comfort.

All strength, honor and power be unto the King of Kings!

Importance of Moments

It is up to you to discover Him. He makes Himself available for us to discover more of Him, each and every moment of each and every day. Yet few realize the importance that each moment contains.

Some people think we are just here in life “wasting time” or “taking up space.” I used to wonder about that also. Many people have struggled over the meaning of life.

Life flows like a current or river and is divided up into elements that we measure and call time. Time is like a type of currency that we can exchange for one thing or another. We can spend time, sow time, invest time and put ourselves in debt or servitude to time. Our choices are what demonstrate the importance we place on different moments of time.

We can choose to respect time or reject it, although time will never allow you to totally ignore it or forget it. You see, time is made up of moments, and moments are made up of lessons and experiences for us. We are to discern the message from God that is contained in each moment. Each moment is sent into your life for a reason. Your job is to discern and figure out the reason and the message. God delights in showing Himself to us through the various moments and experiences of our life.

The moment knows what it has been sent to accomplish, but you must discern what is hidden in that moment. Everything God sends to us requires us to demonstrate a desire and willingness to reach out for it. Do you want a healing? Reach for it. Do you need better finances? Ask God for help in that area and reach out. After all, you must believe that He Is, and that He is a rewarder of them **that diligently seek Him**. Find the uniqueness of the moment or place you are in. Learn to appreciate each moment, as it may never come around again.

Presenting the Gospel to the World

Once you have been set on the right course, been healed, been set free from sin and demonic bondage, been shown the goodness and majesty of His Presence, been shown how to walk in forgiveness, and once you know He is the true source of your power, you can now get ready to prepare to be sent out to help others.

There is very little chance of a sick and wounded man being able to convince others that he has the secret to healing. Likewise, if you aren't whole in an area of your life, how can you be a witness and give a testimony for God in that area and be believed? If you want to be healed, listen to the testimony of someone God has healed. If you need help with your spouse, find a person who has been healed with their relationships. Seek out the problem solver with experience in the area you need to be free in.

Every minister should be a spiritual deliverer to set the captives free. After all, ministers are called to preach the good news to the captives. If they themselves are in bondage and not yet free, they should first get help before trying to help others.

Find the appropriate type of problem solver or deliverer that has experience in the area you need help with in your life. Is it finances, employment issues, parenting skills, health or a spiritual matter? Then seek the appropriate “specialist” in that area who knows how to succeed and help you to be free.

We are not to put our lamp under a bushel and hide it from the world, but rather to let it shine so that all may see the wonderful grace God freely gives. For His Grace reveals the wonderful person that God truly is. We are ambassadors of the “good news” of Christ. Let us make sure we are qualified and convinced that we have good news to share with others.

Too many people aren't doing the works God has called them to do. The Scripture says that "faith without works is death" (James 2:20,26). Your faith in God is proved by your works. People can examine your fruit to show them your level of faith in God. The manner in which you minister and support others in ministry will show your faith. What you spend your time on shows your level of faith also. Ask God what kind of works you are to do and who you are instructed to bless. Follow His instructions. Don't go out using the "shotgun approach" of trying to bless others, but be targeted by God to bless those He specifically wants you to bless.

If you are not yet whole in certain areas, and therefore don't feel right going out ministering to others, **then send** others who are ready to go and qualified to be examples of God. Do your part and God will do His part. Remember that God is seeking people who want to reach out to Him and pursue Him. Seek out and follow His instructions for your life. Your obedience to Him proves that you trust and believe Him. Live a holy and righteous life full of the joy of the Lord. Start pursuing His Presence on a continual basis. You will never look back.

Final Thoughts

No one can write a book without there usually being some final words of admonition or caring that the author wishes to impart. This book was purposely written to be as concise and small as possible. It's a "just the facts" type of book, without a lot of stories and embellishments to fill pages. It might be used as an outline for preachers to preach on various subjects contained in the book. But most of all, it was written in a very casual, conversational style to help you, the reader, know what is going on in this world, so you can learn and rise victoriously above the cares of this world, to soar like the eagles, and experience God's Presence in fullness in your life.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. Love your neighbor as yourself. Upon these things rest all of the commandments of God. It's so simple, yet hidden, so that many people miss the secret of living. Many of our problems in life concern how we deal with other people.

1. Everything you do affects everyone around you. So be careful at all times of your thoughts, words and actions.
2. Worshipping God is a noble profession. Exhibit thanksgiving and humility. Have a pure and contrite heart.
3. Repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ continually and receive His Salvation.
4. Be content. Make good choices. Follow Godly instructions.
5. Don't try to do the job of the Holy Spirit and save the whole world, but rather be led by Him to accomplish that which you are assigned to do in life.
6. Don't try to force your will on others. Be meek, kind and respectful to people. Don't be a doormat, but don't turn people off to God either.

7. Life is precious. Respect it. Celebrate it.
8. Each person is born with gifts and talents. Figure out and do the job you were destined to do. Do what you are good at and what you enjoy doing.
9. Things, especially material things and the accumulation thereof, are meaningless and don't last. You can't take material things with you when you die.
10. People who derive their identity from "things" they possess will someday lose both their identity (if placed in things) and the things themselves.
11. A vicious cycle exists where people hunger and "need" more things. Some of the happiest people are in a state of "contentment" and have broken free from the trap of "things."
12. The *love of money* is the root of all evil, not the money itself. Money is a tool. Anything loved and given priority over God is an idol and must not be worshipped (or loved) in preference to God.
13. Test all things and people, to make sure you are not thinking of them or acting toward them as an idol. You must not place anything above God, or else you are worshipping a false God.
14. There is a God-defined order to spending your time, talents, energy and thoughts: God, your family, then other people.
15. Apart from God, nothing else matters. Be careful to not ignore God. Seek His Presence on a continual basis. Thank Him always. Abide with Him. The joy of the Lord is your strength.
16. We must learn to trust in and rely on Him for everything. We must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of people that diligently seek Him.
17. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness. His Righteousness is as a shield around us. We need the breastplate of righteousness. Get familiar with Psalm 91.
18. We must consider where we desire to spend eternity and know the reality of eternal things. Do we know what being apart from God for eternity would be like? Do we know what being in His Presence and service is like?
19. Happy is he who trusts in the Lord. Complete trust yields perfect peace.
20. When you are with God (in His Presence) abiding with Him, you shall be protected and sheltered by the shadow of the Almighty (Psalm 91).
21. People can affect us positively or negatively, if we allow them to.
22. With entertainment, television, movies and music, we need to be careful what we allow to affect us. The same goes for people.

23. Negative people can really dampen the mood. In most cases, it is best to stay away from them and their pervasive negative “poison” — Would you hang around a poisonous snake?
24. The negative person's “poison” can be gossip, slander, negativity, depression, attacks upon others, “woe is me” talk, defeatism, etc. Staying around them can be detrimental to your faith and your walk with God.
25. Being around positive people can uplift your spirit and be a source of encouragement. Listening to positive music and teachings can also be very beneficial to you.
26. People can try to control you through various means, whether you realize it or not, including rejection, abandonment or fear of either of these results. Also people use fear in general or fear of some undesired thing (s) or result(s). They can threaten to tarnish your reputation (using blackmail), or be overbearing, controlling or manipulative toward you. They can also try to make you feel like there is something wrong with you through intimidation and planting “seeds of doubt” into your life. Gossip (about you or others) is a real “killer” in many ways, and may be one of the deadliest and most harmful tools of the enemy. Anyone who engages in gossip is called a “talebearer” in the Bible. There are many serious consequences for one who bears tales (gossips). Usually it is a hurting person (emotionally) who feels inadequate in one or more areas of their life who resorts to gossip/tale-bearing. They do this to put others down and also try to make people agree with them about one or more things. Remember the Biblical principle that we reap what we sow. What do you think the end result will be of a person who gossips? Watch out for those who use duplicity, lies and who tell false reports. Con men use this tactic. Pray for truth and for all lies and untruthful things to be exposed. People have used religion (doctrines of men) to control people for many centuries. Many people desire reverence and worship from other people, which is reserved for God alone. Anyone seeking the attention and worship from others will fail ultimately. They may get temporary adoration and worship from people, but it will not go on forever, and the desire to receive worship and adoration will consume them.
27. God desires worshippers who long to worship, adore and serve Him. Only those who continually worship the true God will have everlasting peace and will experience the blessings of His wonderful Presence. Hunger and thirst after Him. It will be worth it.