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## **"WE'LL GET TO THAT LATER"**

**By I. Parker Maxey**

Author of  
Ministerial Ethics & Etiquette  
The Cornerstone of Living  
Man's Ascent to God

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DEDICATED

TO

All those students across thirty years  
of teaching who sat in my classes and dubbed me  
with the title:

"WE'LL GET TO THAT LATER."

\* \* \* \* \*

FOREWORD

One of the more sobering and startling realities of life is the fact that every moment of our existence here on this earth is lived in the very Presence of God. This is graphically illustrated in the life of Jacob when he was fleeing from his brother Esau. He had left his home in Gerar and had reached Bethel when darkness overtook him and he lay down to sleep. That night he had a vision of God and cried out in wonder, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not" (Gen. 28:16). Jacob had never been for one small division of a moment (as A. W. Tozer put it), outside the circle of that all-pervading Presence Jacob did not realize this until that night.

Today, as it has always been, God is present at every point in space. Man cannot conceive of a place where God is not. His Presence should be the most celebrated fact of mankind. God's Presence and the manifestation of that Presence, however, are not the same. Whether we are conscious of His Presence or not, that should be our faith. We read in Psalm 139:7-10: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

As you peruse the pages of this book the author's desire is that you will be made conscious of the fact of the overshadowing Presence of God in every experience and circumstance presented. "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (II Chron. 16:9).

P.M.

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## INTRODUCTION

### 01 -- WHY THE TITLE OF THIS BOOK?

I am now past seventy-nine years old and if I don't "get to that later," by writing it down in this book (whatever "that" is) the chances are pretty certain that I will never get to "THAT." However, this is not the real reason for the unusual title of this book--read on!

In the thirty years I taught doctrinal and Biblical courses in a four-year Bible college, in order to create interest in the classroom and to hold the attention of the students, I often used illustrations out of my past life and out of the lives of others I knew and grew up with. As a result I have been requested over and over again by my students to put down in writing some of those personal experiences and illustrations I used to clinch a point I wanted them to grasp. This book is the outcome of that request and contains a number of those illustrations and stories.

\* \* \*

### 02 -- TEACHING THAT CREATES INTEREST

Oftentimes students are heard to say, "I hate history," "I hate English," and on and on, but to sum it up they just say, "I hate school!" The fact, though, is that God has so constituted the human mind that it craves knowledge. It is not history, English, geography, arithmetic, spelling and the like that students hate. It is the experience they had in the classroom where these subjects were taught.

Years ago, before I started teaching in a Bible college, I read a book called *The Best Teacher I Ever Had and Why*. (I have no record of the author or publisher of this book.) The best teacher was the one who devised ways to make a class so interesting that the student was anxious to get to that class and hated to miss even one session, and at the end of class time wished the class could go on.

To be that kind of a teacher and conduct that kind of a class takes a lot of ingenuity and pre-planning and that translates into hard work to which the average person is allergic, including teachers.

In my years in the classroom I did make a real effort to create interest in the subjects I taught. One thing I did learn in teaching is that if one wanted to have any measure of success, he or she must not let the class get out of hand.

One of the classes I taught was an introductory course in theology a basic doctrinal course. This is one of the most interesting and attention getting studies offered in any college. It has been termed "The Science of Theology" and seeks to discover through legitimate means, both objective and subjective, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. As it has been said, "It may be contended that all science ends in theology," and thus theology becomes the "Queen of Sciences." It deals primarily with the study of God the ultimate source of all reality. All sciences in their search after truth find their ultimate in God and in His personal relationship to the universe.

I had this course well outlined, knew what I wanted to teach the class, and knew what the course contained from beginning to end. I also knew that the amount of material we had to cover would be hard to do in a one-year, three-hour class, and I could not allow too many interruptions or side trips if the course was to be covered.

When I met a new class at the beginning of the fall semester, during the first session I warned them, I invited them, I did my best to stir their curiosity. I called their attention to an invisible hook that was fastened to the wall just outside the classroom door. I instructed them next time you come to class be sure, just before you enter the door, hang your feelings on that invisible hook please! Leave your feelings outside. One of the best ways to learn is to ask questions. I invited them to feel free to ask questions in class--whatever. I warned them--your question may be absurd, be way off in left field, be silly or stupid and senseless. Ask it anyway. It may bring on laughter, even embarrassment, But remember this, everyone in the class will be glad you asked it. They wanted to but didn't have the courage. That's the reason for the invisible hook.

\* \* \*

03 -- "WE'LL GET TO THAT LATER"

I promised them I would answer any question anyone would ask. My answer would be one of three: (1) a forthright, clear, intelligent answer; (2) a reference to Deuteronomy 29:29, with emphasis on the first part of the verse, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God," and you have asked about one of those secret things the answer to which is known only by God; (3) we'll get to that later.

Now there are two reasons a teacher would say to a student who asked a question, "We'll get to that later." Number one: Students who have not studied, or just for orneriness, are always trying to sidetrack a teacher. They think up a good question, hoping the teacher will take off on that and use up the class time they had not prepared for. I very seldom let myself get caught on that trick. Number two: A student often asked a question that I knew would be covered later on in the course, so, "we'll get to that later" expression fastened itself on me and I will go to my grave with many of my former students accusing me that I never did "get to that (whatever it was) later." I refuse to accept the accusation. By the time we did get to "that," the student either forgot he had asked his former question or failed to make the connection. Occasionally I never had opportunity to fully tell the details of illustrations I gave. Now I am finally "getting to that later."

As you peruse the pages of this book my prayer is that those unusual personal experiences along with other incidents and illustrations will be a blessing and encouragement to your heart, create a real desire to live close to God, assist you in keeping a strong faith in Him and a readiness to meet Him at His coming and to warn those who may put off the day of their salvation until it is too late!

\* \* \* \* \*

## SECTION 1 -- IN THE CLASSROOM OF LIFE

### 04 -- GOD PROVED HIMSELF TO BE MY HEAVENLY FATHER

Imagine, if you will, the most ideal earthly father. As a father, what would you expect of him? What should a child have a right to expect in a father? Surely a child would expect from him food, clothing, protection, guidance, counsel, a place he could call home, and above all, a child would want a father to be one who would love him. As our Heavenly Father, God is far beyond what the most ideal earthly father could ever be. The Scripture bears this out.

The best news about this is that we have a perfect right to look upon God as our Heavenly Father, for it was Jesus who revealed to us that right. He talked about "your heavenly Father"; "thy Father which seeth in secret." He taught us to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." A child, when praying the Lord's prayer, got it a little mixed up but wasn't too far wrong when he prayed, "Our Father which art in heaven, how'd you know my name?" My fear is that we do not look in a personal and practical way upon God as a father who knows all about us and our needs. Let me illustrate this as I did so often in my classes when I was teaching in our Bible college.

\* \* \*

## 05 -- MY HEAVENLY FATHER CARED FOR ME IN MY MATERIAL NEEDS

I went through my college years and even ever since then by putting my faith in the familiar passage found in Matthew 6:31-33, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." As is indicated, "these things" referred to in verse thirty-three include food, shelter, clothing--the material things of life.

Illustration #1. Because of severe bleeding from the lungs it was discovered that I had an advanced case of pulmonary tuberculosis. I was attending college and in my sophomore year but soon found myself in a state tuberculosis ward. It could rightfully be said that I went from the classroom to a hospital ward with what, at the time, was thought to be a terminal case of tuberculosis.

This was sensational news in the college I was attending and during my first days of confinement I received very much attention. Many, many cards of sympathy came in the mail. I received gifts of various kinds (a radio from the student body, books, flowers, money, etc.). Visitors came in a stream.

For my first few weeks in the hospital and on through the first three months or so (I was bedfast for two years) visitors, sympathy and get well cards, letters and even money (never large amounts) kept coming. During the latter part of those first few months, however, things began to slow down and then the time came when most all of the attention I was getting ceased. Out of sight, I was soon pretty well out of mind for most. How true this is in the world in which we live. Naturally there were a few faithfuls who never forgot me. With what little money that was given me occasionally I was able to get the daily newspaper, shaving materials, and the like. But even that help stopped temporarily.

It was then I received a letter from a friend with whom I had attended college. He, Truman Hofstetter, was then living in Madras, Oregon and working in a bank. He had heard about my being admitted to a tuberculosis ward. His letter was brief. It went something like this: "I felt the Lord wanted me to write you. My salary is rather small (those were Depression years) but I feel I should send you some spending money from time to time to get things you need and would otherwise have to go without." In the letter were two dollars. My friend sent this amount on a regular basis all through my remaining hospital days. It always came just when I needed it. Right when it looked like my source of needed money had dried up, my Heavenly Father kept on providing it through a channel I would have least expected.

Illustration #2. I was in my sophomore year in college. I had returned to school after the two years in bed and after having survived a severe case of tuberculosis. An older brother and sister paid for my board and room in a private home. Tuition and books for the courses I was taking were provided through a state rehabilitation program. I had no income, however, and was physically unable to work to earn money for personal needs. My first semester back at school I could attend only morning classes since I still needed bed rest during the afternoon. At one time I

was desperately in need of money to buy some items of clothing, shaving materials, toothpaste, even postage stamps.

One afternoon while I was resting in bed, two preachers came to visit me. Their visit was a great boost to me spiritually and while they prayed, heaven came down upon us. When they arose from praying one preacher said that while he was praying he felt God was telling him to leave me all the money he had on him. This moved the other preacher to do likewise and they both did that very thing. Little did they know my needs. But my Heavenly Father did and He used these men to provide them.

Illustration #3. I gradually grew stronger and by the next year in school I was able to earn part of my way. God had opened up a job that I could handle in the college print shop. This job made it possible to live in the college dormitory and eat in the school's dining hall. It still did not afford me ready cash for personal items. We had started the fall term. I was badly in need of shoes. The soles on the only pair I had were worn through. During the summer months I had been cutting out cardboard and putting them in my shoes as an inner lining to "keep my feet off the ground." I was able to get by this way during the dry summer months but now fall and winter with wet and cold weather were coming on. One night I prayed, "Dear Heavenly Father, You know I need better shoes with this wet, cold weather coming on. I don't know how, but I know You will provide me with a pair."

It was but a day or two after that I got a letter from a woman, an older woman who had never been married. I didn't know her nor she me. She had heard about me through a friend of hers. In the letter was money for shoes. She wrote, "For the last three nights I have had a dream and each dream was about a pair of men's shoes. It seemed strange to me that I, a maiden woman, should be dreaming about men's shoes. But every time I had the dream you were in the dream, so I am sending you this money for shoes."

Once again my Heavenly Father had met my need!

Illustration #4. It was during my junior year in college. I came down with scarlet fever and the school authorities (fearing a scarlet fever epidemic would break out in the dormitories) told me I would have to leave the campus until I got well. I had no place to go. At that time none of my family was in a position to assist me. I knew of a dear old couple in a town thirty miles away. I called the pastor in that town and asked him if he would contact this couple (they had no phone) and ask them if they could help me out and give me a home until I got over the scarlet fever. They gladly and graciously consented. I was taken to their home, arriving after dark. The next day the authorities, learning about my being there, came to the house and informed this couple and me that we had broken the law because I, having a communicable disease, was transported across a county line. According to the law we were put under a strict quarantine. We were not allowed to leave the property under any circumstance.

The next morning after breakfast my dear hostess announced to her husband and me that we had eaten the last bit of food that was in the house. There was no phone to let anyone know of our situation. This dear old couple were mature and godly people. It was like Heaven on earth to be in their home. At the family altar that morning I heard from the lips of that dear lady one of the most

simple, earnest, believing prayers I have ever heard in all my life. "Father," she began, "You know we did not intentionally break the law. We didn't know it was against the law to bring this young man across a county line into our home. And now, Father, we have promised to take care of this young man and You know there is no more food in this house and we have no way of getting more. Father, You have never failed to meet our need. Please, Father, I should have some food here around eleven o'clock this morning so I will not be late for dinner. Thank You, Father. I know You have heard my prayer." The prayer was so simple and so childlike in faith I knew here was a person who was in talking relationship with her Heavenly Father.

You will not be surprised when I tell you that at eleven o'clock that very day we heard a man calling from outside the yard fence. He was calling us to come and get the groceries he was delivering. What a supply he brought--enough to last as long as the quarantine was on! He said that God had put it on him that very morning.

Friend, are you acquainted with this Heavenly Father?

\* \* \*

## 06 -- WHY GOD HEALS SOME AND NOT OTHERS

There exists much confusion about the matter of divine healing! Some would have us believe that divine healing is in the atonement the same as salvation from sin. These imply that if one prays for healing and is not healed his faith is faulty. Others teach that physical healing is in the atonement but not the same as salvation. It is true that all benefits that come to mankind come as fruit from Christ's death on the cross. Salvation from sin will come without exception to every soul who will meet the conditions that are laid down in the Scriptures. The Bible also reveals the fact that God can and does miraculously heal from sickness, but not always. If God's will is to heal all sickness and disease, then something was missing in the Apostle Paul's faith when he left Trophimus at Miletum sick (2 Tim. 4:20).

Whatever a person's belief is about divine healing of the body, the undeniable and apparent facts are that some are healed miraculously and some are not. Eventually all mankind die, for ..... it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

A young woman was diagnosed as having breast cancer and advised by the doctor to have it treated immediately. If so, she could no doubt still enjoy years of living, but if she lingered it would get beyond medical help and she would soon die. Instead of accepting the doctor's advice she said, "If I can just get to where I know there are godly people who know how to get hold of God in prayer, certainly God will hear their prayer and I will be healed." She went. They prayed. The Scripturally prescribed way to pray for the healing of the body was followed. God blessed them beyond measure. She, along with others, took this as an indication God had healed her and testified to being divinely healed. But she progressively grew worse and was soon taken in death. Just prior to her death she sent for me to come to her hospital room. She had heard about God raising me up from what would have been sure death by tuberculosis. She was puzzled. Naturally she didn't want to die of cancer. That was only human. Hadn't God heard them in that prayer meeting where they prayed for her healing? Why hadn't God healed her? The mighty blessing they

experienced in prayer was certainly an indication God had heard their prayer and the case was in His hands--but was that necessarily an indication of healing? Very apparently not. God chose to lift her out of a physical body of suffering and in His time prepare for her a resurrected, glorified body free forever of sickness!

I lay in a State tuberculosis ward with pulmonary tuberculosis and was given up to die by my doctor. People came to my bedside and told me if I could believe God, if I just had faith, I could be healed and would not have to lie there and die. I didn't want to die when I was only nineteen years old! Those poor "Job's comforters" never told me how nor helped me to have that kind of faith they said I must have to be healed. They left me totally heavy with discouragement and wondering why I couldn't have that faith. If it hadn't been for a group of faithful praying people who prayed through and touched God for my healing--it proved to be God's will that I not die with tuberculosis--I would have been dead at that early age.

A dear saint of God developed a fast spreading type of cancer and not knowing what her trouble was went for an examination. This older, seasoned and matured saint of God said to the doctor, "Doctor, please examine me and tell me exactly what the problem is. You see, doctor, I am a Christian and it won't upset me whatever you find." On examination he found her trouble to be a fast growing, deadly type of cancer and told her she only had a very short time to live. She said in a sweet, calm way, "Thank you, doctor," and went back to her home, got down on her knees and prayed, "Father, You heard what the doctor said and if You want me to die with this cancer it's all right with me. I am yours to do or die! But if You are not through with me on earth it will be no great thing for You to take this cancer away. In a few days there was no more pain. On checking back with the doctor she learned that the cancer was completely gone.

If we could live like this dear saint of God lived I don't feel there would be so much confusion about the problem of the divine healing of the body! When we totally give ourselves to God we become His property and we must continually seek Him for His will to be done in and through us. If that includes the divine healing of our body, to God be the glory! If not, to God be the glory! If we are totally given over to be God's property shouldn't we be able to believe God will handle His property in a way that will be best for us and for His honor and glory? This should be our faith!

This certainly does not mean that we should ignore the Scriptural way presented in God's Word to appeal to Him for the healing of our bodies (James 5:13-16), but having obeyed His Word along this line, we should be content to leave the results in His hands!

The "Law of God's Sovereign Will" stands supreme above all other laws. We read in Ephesians 1:11 where God ". . . worketh all things after the council of his own will." There are some who teach that if we have the kind of faith we should have, the sick will be healed. To prove their point, they quote the Scripture in James 5:15, ". . . the prayer of faith shall save the sick." They infer from this Scripture that it is the lack of our faith that keeps God from healing. It is dangerous, however, to suppose we can exert a kind of faith that takes a higher position than the law of God's Sovereign will. Such could only be a pretended or feigned faith. It would be putting the human will above the supreme will of God. Having sought God by faith for the divine healing

of a sick or injured body we must be content to leave the results in the hands of a Holy God who doeth all things according to the council of His own Sovereign will!

\* \* \*

#### 07 -- PREPARED AHEAD OF TIME

It occurred when I was pastoring the Church of the Nazarene in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. One Monday morning while in prayer, in June 1954, a strange question came to my mind. What would you do if you lost one of the members of your family while you are living here in Scottsbluff, Nebraska? There would be the funeral arrangements to make, the funeral service, the burial, etc. When that question came to mind there came also a detailed plan of what to do concerning all the different arrangements that would have to be made.

On Wednesday of that week I went with one of the men of the church to see about purchasing a Sunday school bus in a neighboring town. While passing a cemetery it brought to mind Monday's experience and I related it to that man. Later he became a witness to the accuracy of my vision and the detailed plans revealed to me.

On Friday of that week our oldest son, a lad of twelve years, went to visit on a ranch twenty-five miles out from town. In the early afternoon of Saturday I was in my study in the church preparing for the Sunday services. I felt a strange heaviness. Then I thought I heard the church door open and my son's footsteps coming into the sanctuary. I thought, how strange, my son is twenty-five miles from here out on a ranch. Was he brought back to town and is he coming in to see me? Then the phone rang. "Your son has had an accident; could you come?" I hurriedly went to the parsonage to get my wife. She had received the call also. I told her while we were driving out the twenty-five miles that our son was already gone, although this was not conveyed to us over the phone. When we arrived at the scene of the accident (our son had drowned) the doctor was there by the rescue unit. A large crowd had gathered. The doctor said he had done all he could but the lad was already gone when he had arrived. They were all standing there awaiting our arrival. The doctor asked me what we wanted to do with the body. Without thinking I gave specific orders just where to take the body, etc. God had prepared me to face this tragedy. On the way back home Wife asked me how I was able to give such definite answers without hesitation. It was then I told her about the past Monday, about the church door opening and our son's footsteps coming into the church, and that God had prepared me ahead of time.

How wonderful God is to succor us and prepare us for events we are called upon to face!

We took our son's body to Emmett, Idaho for burial. This was all revealed to me in that Monday's vision. We consider Emmett our home base.

When we got back to Scottsbluff I came face to face with the aftermath of our loss and the sorrow that always accompanies an experience like that. I was tormented for six months with the "ifs" in the case and couldn't seem to rise above them. It was the "ifs" that tormented me with the torturing thought that I was to blame for my son's death. Why had I let him go out to that ranch on that weekend? Bruce was a great lover of music and quite gifted on the piano. On Saturday night

there was a music concert in Scottsbluff. Why hadn't I thought of that and reminded Bruce? He probably would have wanted to stay in town that weekend. On and on the "ifs" went. I seemed powerless to shake them. I struggled under this load for six long months.

One day an out of town couple we had known for a number of years stopped by for a short visit. Up to that time I had not told a soul of my inner battle. But now I dared to unburden my heart to these people in whom I had utmost confidence. They were both (husband and wife) preachers and elders in the church. The woman sensed the problem and said to me, "Brother Maxey, you have allowed the devil to obsess you at this point. You need go no longer under this load." We knelt to pray and in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ commanded the devil to release his hold. Immediately deliverance came. The sorrow of the loss was still there but the "ifs" and the torture of thinking I was responsible for my son's death were gone and my soul rested in our wonderful Lord.

As I thought back on those days prior to our son's death I recalled one thing especially that stood out in my mind. Bruce was a gifted pianist for his age and for days prior to his death he would play over and over from his sheet music a rendition of "The Holy City." In my mind I still recall the words of that song as he played:

Last night I lay a-sleeping  
There came a dream so fair,  
I stood in old Jerusalem  
Beside the temple there;  
I heard the children singing  
And ever as they sang,  
Me tho't the voice of angels  
From heav'n in answer rang.

And then me-tho't my dream was changed  
New earth there seemed to be,  
I saw the Holy City  
Beside the tideless sea;  
The light of God was on its streets,  
The gates were open wide,  
And all who would might enter,  
And no one was denied;  
No need of moon or stars by night,  
Or sun to shine by day  
It was the New Jerusalem  
That would not pass away!  
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna forevermore!

Jerusalem, Jerusalem,  
Sing for the night is o'er;  
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna to your King!

Did our boy have a premonition of what was about to happen? He seemed to be obsessed with playing "The Holy City." To say the least, it was a fitting prelude to his home going!

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#### 08 -- HE DIED THAT SAME WEEK

I was scheduled to be at the Bible Missionary Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana to represent our Bible College and to raise money to help in the operating expense. It was one of those regular annual "tour" services. While in prayer just prior to the service I felt strangely moved upon that I should lay the regular "money-raising" service aside and go in for an evangelistic service. I spoke to the pastor, Brother Dwight L. Grant, about this. I suggested to him that we would take about ten minutes at the beginning of the service to pass out pledge slips to the people and ask them to fill them out with the amount they would give during the coming year. The pastor agreed to this.

That night I preached an evangelistic message and at the close gave an altar call. One young man was under deep conviction and responded to the call. He wept and prayed desperately, confessing his sins and it was not long until he was genuinely saved and gave a clear testimony of his salvation.

We were not long in finding out why God had ordered that change in the service. Early in that week, this young man was killed in a tragic accident.

That experience made us feel more than ever how important it is to keep in close touch with the Spirit of God and be ready to make whatever adjustments necessary to keep in step with His leadership!

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#### 09 -- HE MEANT BUSINESS

"That cat moved me to get something for him to eat!" That was what a man said to us when a friend and I visited him in his machine shop one cold, winter day in a city in Pennsylvania. It was an extremely hard winter for animals to keep alive in that part of the world.

We found this man in his shop by a little gas heater where he would sit and eat his lunch during the noon hour. By sizing him up you wouldn't have thought that big, rough machinist would have cared anything about a stray cat just like a lot of people have looked upon God as some distant, austere Person who cared nothing about them.

As we listened with interest, he told us his cat story. We could see a man, rough appearing on the outside, but with a tender heart that could be touched with the struggling efforts of a stray cat to stay alive.

He had made sure that his shop was closed up tight enough when he locked up every night so no animal could get in. One morning, however, when he opened shop, there inside was this cat. It was so thin he wondered how it was still alive. He had left a small jar of cream that he had for his coffee sitting on the floor beside where he sat to eat his lunch. There was some cream left in the bottom of the jar but there was no way the cat could get his head into the jar to lick up the cream. The cat didn't seem to have noticed his presence but was sticking his paw down into the jar and then drawing it out and licking it off. He kept this up until the cream was all gone. While that big man watched he was moved with the impulse to go and get some milk and cat food to help that cat in his effort to stay alive, and he did that very thing!

I listened to that man tell about his part in aiding a helpless stray cat in real need and thought how often God has looked down upon poor, helpless humanity in their extremities when they manifest a determination to keep alive spiritually regardless. We have often heard it repeated, "God helps those who help themselves." This is not found in Scripture but it is true that God often holds back a blessing or help to see if we really mean business.

Too often we stop at the halfway mark and fail to wait upon God until we are able to lay hold of the promise found in Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

God grant us a faith that will not waver in the midst of life's testings, but learn to hold steady as we lay hold of His never failing promises. (Read Matthew 6:24-34.)

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## 10 -- ONE TIME I PUT OUT A FLEECE!

We know Gideon used a fleece to determine the course he should take. I have heard it said that it is not good to rely upon a fleece to determine God's will. As a rule I agree, but if one does put out a fleece it should be such that no other individual would have knowledge of it that would make it possible for them, or himself also, to bring it about.

It was in the year 1965. The original editor of the *Missionary Revivalist*, the official paper of The Bible Missionary Church, Rev. Spencer Johnson, was resigning that position and the General Board of the church would be electing someone else to take up this duty.

Rev. Elbert Dodd, one of the General Moderators, would be presiding at the meeting of the General Board where they would be electing a new editor and he had told me he was presenting only one name, mine. At that time I was an official in Bible Missionary Institute (a four-year Bible college), a full-time teacher and pastored the local Bible Missionary Church. It hardly made sense for me to accept any further responsibility, but if this was something in God's providence for me I would not feel good about turning it down. What should I do if I were elected?

The afternoon of the day the General Board would be considering a new editor I went to the church where I pastored and locked myself in to spend the afternoon waiting before the Lord. I had no connection with anyone outside and there was no phone in the church. I put out a fleece. As

far as I can remember it was the only time I ever did that. I prayed, "Dear Lord, I desperately need direction. Please, if You want me to accept this position, let it be by ballot vote, and let it be unanimous."

After it was all over I was told what happened. It was around five o'clock in the evening and the General Board had one more item of business to take up after the long afternoon session--the election of an editor for The Missionary Revivalist. Brother Dodd presented my name to be voted on and assuming that a ballot vote would not be necessary, proceeded to take the vote by saying, "All those in favor of Brother Maxey please indicate it by the uplifted hand." And then he stopped suddenly before the vote could be taken that way and said in essence, " I feel strangely checked. I feel this should be a ballot vote." The ballots were passed out and the vote was unanimous.

When I was asked if I would accept this responsibility and the procedure of how I was elected was related to me, I felt clear to accept. This position I held for twenty-four years. At each General Quadrennial Conference from then on I was re-elected to this position by over 90% of the voting members. Thus I continued in this office with the blessing of the Lord and the approval of the people.

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## 11 -- HOW GOD USED A THIEF

The steps of a good man are ordered by  
the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.  
Psalm 37:23

Everyone knows it's wrong to steal--even a thief knows that. It is a violation of the eighth commandment. "Thou shalt not steal."

God makes it clear in His Word that He works in behalf of mankind, or if it suits you better, rules over free agency in four distinct ways: by a permissive will, a preventative will, a directive will, or a determinative will. The following account is a good illustration of God working in my behalf through His permissive will.

I was dismissed from the hospital with an arrested case of pulmonary tuberculosis exactly two years to the day from the time I was admitted. My left lung had been artificially collapsed and kept collapsed by periodical refills of air in the left lung cavity. It was the month of November. A dear old couple who lived in Boise, Idaho where I had been hospitalized agreed to make a home for me where I could be near medical help and where I could go in for "air refills" to keep my lung collapsed.

By the coming summer I had to find another place to live and the only place open was where my father lived. He had married after Mother's death and at that time lived in Donnelly, Idaho where the altitude was around a mile high. With my left lung totally collapsed and my right lung permeated throughout with tuberculous scar tissue, I was extremely short of breath.

A tent had been pitched for me to sleep in near the house where I went for meals. The least bit of exertion just rolling over in bed--would cause me to gasp for air. Just to walk to the house for meals, not over fifty to seventy-five feet, would take me a considerable time and was almost more than I could handle. At times I felt panicky for fear I could not get my breath.

Although God had providentially opened this door in that high altitude for me to spend the summer and further my physical recuperation, I just knew (at least I concluded) that I had to get out of there. After all, at that high altitude I had to struggle so hard to even breathe. So I wrote my older sister, a school teacher, to ask if she could provide a place through the summer months for me to live down in a lower altitude. Sister, a very sympathetic and liberal-hearted person, had saved barely enough money to get herself through until fall when her teaching salary would begin again. However, by much self-denial and frugality she figured out a way to keep us both and sent for me to come.

One day before I could get down there, Sister was shopping at a local store. She started to make a purchase and discovered that her purse, which had hung over one arm, was gone and all her money with it. A thief had at the right moment cut the purse loose from the strap. That stopped my plans immediately for leaving the high altitude and left Sister having to seek help herself to survive the summer months.

God worked through His permissive will to keep me in the place He had providentially put me. It proved to be the very best place I could be at that time--up among the pine trees where the air was pure and unpolluted by city smoke and dust. Little by little my lungs continued to heal and my breathing became easier.

Through this experience we learned the hard way that it does not pay to force the providential leadings of God!

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## 12 -- THE LESSONS I LEARNED IN A WHEAT FIELD

One summer I took my vacation time by joining a wheat harvest crew. I learned many a lesson while operating a one-man combine. Friends of mine who ran a custom combine business had at their disposal three self-propelled combines, enough grain trucks to keep these machines continually on the move and crew enough to run the equipment.

To start with, I knew nothing about running a one-man-operated combine. I had to learn how to adjust the machine to thresh the wheat without cracking the kernels or blowing wheat out the back end along with the chaff. The threshed-out wheat was to go into a bin fastened on the side of the combine and the chaff was blown out behind. When the bin got full, a truck would pull under the bin and I had to learn to push the right lever to empty the bin into the truck while I kept moving ahead threshing out wheat.

At first I really had trouble keeping my machine working at its top capacity. The men I worked for were paid so much an acre and the more acres cut the more money in their pockets. Naturally, they were interested in keeping the combines running at full capacity. All three combines had the same productive capabilities but, for the life of me (to begin with) I could in no way keep my machine up with the others. When I tried to keep pace my machine would get plugged up and I would have to pull out of line and unplug it, which took time and a lot of effort. Sometimes one of the other fellows would have to stop and help me, further slowing down the harvest. My job (temporary as it was) was in jeopardy. I soon learned the secret, however, and when I did I could keep up with the best of them.

I learned that you operate those machines by sound! In almost every ready-to-harvest wheat field there are tiny patches of green wheat and those patches, if you didn't know what to do, were mainly responsible for plugging a machine. There are places where the wheat is thinner than in other places. All these factors were related to how fast you could keep going. Behind the cutter bar was either an auger or a canvas shelf that moved the wheat into the center and up toward the drum where the wheat was actually threshed out. When the machine was running at full capability there was a certain pitch to the hum of that drum. With your hand continually on the throttle you would keep your ear tuned to the sound of the drum. If the sound lowered you would immediately slow down until it came back up to pitch, then step your speed up again.

We read in John 4:35, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." In Matthew 9:38 we read, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

These passages tell us the harvest is ripe now--the harvest of souls. We read in Isaiah 6:8, 9, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not."

Although the harvest is ripe, very few hear the voice of the Lord calling them to harvest. Isaiah didn't "hear" until after he experienced the purging fire upon his lips, "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isa. 6:5-7). It was after this sin purging that Isaiah heard the Lord calling him to harvest.

It has been said that God is on a twenty-four-hour broadcasting system calling for laborers into His harvest field, but the multitudes are having "hearing" problems. As in wheat harvest, we harvest by sound the sound of the voice of the Lord.

I faced other problems in running the combine placed in my hands. My particular machine was what they called a "canvas" job. Behind the cutting bar a canvas shelf from either end of the cutting blade rolled the cut wheat toward the center to where it was conveyed up into the drum.

This canvas type machine was used mainly to harvest "down" grain. A storm would come through some parts of the country when the wheat was still growing and would lay the wheat down. When that "down" wheat became ripe and ready to harvest, the cutter blade had to be put down practically on the ground to pick it up. With the cutter bar down next to the ground there was always the danger of picking up a large rock bigger than a man's two fists, or a skunk, of which there were always some in every wheat field. You wouldn't want either one to get up into the drum of your machine. The rock would possibly tear the drum up and the skunk well? Cutting "down" wheat was intense work, for you had to be constantly watching lest you picked up a rock or skunk and if this ever happened, just the minute they appeared on the canvas, you would have to shut the machine down or suffer the consequences.

There are some valuable lessons to be learned from harvesting wheat with a combine machine. When a large rock (hardhearted carnality) gets into the church machinery it can tear a church to pieces. There are those times when about the only thing a person can do is to shut the program down until you can get a red-hot, intercessory prayer meeting going that will run the devil out and either eradicate or at least subdue carnality.

At times "spiritual skunks" with their gossiping, grumbling, and backbiting can so pollute the spiritual atmosphere of a church until it will nullify the harvesting of souls for the Master.

God help us to be good harvesters!

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### 13 -- DIVINE ENABLEMENT

I was fearful I could never succeed in getting the job done. When I was elected to help pioneer a Bible college in Rock Island, Illinois one of my jobs, along with others, was to go out and tour the local churches of our denomination to raise money to support the school financially.

The years I was president of the school I toured all the churches at one time or another and was more or less acquainted with the financial capabilities of each local church. To raise money in order to help operate the school financially we would take the total amount needed and allocate out on a piece of paper the amount each church would be responsible for, based on their financial ability to give. This would give us somewhat of an idea to guide us in raising the needed finance. The churches were not under a budget system in supporting our Bible school. We depended on inspirational giving to meet the need. Of course we could not tell for sure just what each church could or would underwrite at the time. Some would do more and some less than we had calculated.

Someone would visit each church at least once a year to underwrite the year's budget. Several of us worked at this job. In the beginning I went out with much fear and trembling to visit the churches assigned me. Most of the time I went alone during the first years of the school's existence. Some of the time the district leader would go with me and occasionally we took a group of young people from the school.

On one of these money-raising tours I was out alone. Early one morning I left Medford, Oregon and was to be in Homedale, Idaho that evening for a service. I was traveling in a VW Fastback. As I started out I began quoting the first Psalm, stopping to meditate on each phrase as I came to it. I was getting blessed and weeping in the wonderful presence of God. When I came to that last phrase in the third verse . . . and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper," it fairly leaped out at me. I was so burdened about raising money and felt so inadequate for the job and now God was using that very Scripture to assure me that He would help me and I would literally be prosperous in getting the job done. It was so real--the assurance that I would be a successful money raiser--I was blessed almost more than I could contain. Looking down at my speedometer I was doing ninety miles an hour! Of course I was surprised at the speed and slowed the car down, but let me tell you the sequel to that: from that time on I toured many, in many times to raise money for Bible Missionary Institute and at different times on every district of the church. The records will bear out the fact that never one time did I fail in underwriting the amount needed at that particular time. All glory and praise be to Him that doeth all things well!

While we give God the glory for all that is accomplished in kingdom work there is a part that man must play in cooperation with divine enablement. Brother Elbert Dodd, one of the former General Moderators of the Bible Missionary Church, gave me some invaluable guidelines to follow in raising money. One was that in conducting a service you guide people's minds in the direction you are endeavoring to move them to action. I cite one example. One time before going to the platform to participate in a money-raising service, I slipped down to the basement to pray. While in prayer I felt keenly impressed that there would be three people in the service that would give a thousand dollars each toward the annual operating expense of our Bible college. During the preaching part of these services I endeavored to bring an inspirational message, gearing it toward the type of kingdom work we were involved in and the theme of giving. At the end of the service we presented the need and gave the people a chance to fill out a pledge slip as to how much they would contribute during the coming year.

In this particular service I mentioned to the people that I had felt God had indicated to me that at least three people would give a thousand dollars each. Immediately a man spoke up and said, "I'll give you thirteen hundred." And almost as quickly as that man responded, two others indicated they would give a thousand each.

Experience in raising money would tell me that if the thought of giving a thousand dollars had not been projected into their minds, more than likely they would not have contributed that amount.

How we thank God for the divine inspiration He gives to both speaker and giver!

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#### 14 -- A BIG HOUSE BUT NO FURNITURE

In the fall of 1957 we moved to Odessa, Texas to pastor a Bible Missionary church that had been recently started there. That same fall we were elected to be one to help pioneer a Bible college in Rock Island, Illinois. The Bible Missionary Church was in its beginning years and I had

expressed to the leaders of this new movement that God had put a call on me to this phase of the work. The school was scheduled to begin in the fall of 1958. To start a Bible college where young people could prepare for Christian ministries was primarily a faith venture.

The first day of July in 1958 we loaded what earthly belongings we had on a four-wheel trailer and headed the thirteen hundred miles from Odessa, Texas to Rock Island, Illinois. The general treasurer of the B.M.C. sent us a check for seventy-eight dollars and with this amount we were expected to move ourselves and all our possessions those thirteen hundred miles. This amount of money was absolutely all we had to rent the trailer, buy gasoline for the car and food for our family of Wife and me and our five children. We made the trip on that money, including the rent for the trailer. We got help along the way by stopping off in Duncan, Oklahoma, Oklahoma City and Joplin, Missouri to visit friends and relatives who put us up and fed us while with them.

The church had made us no promise of income, only that they would do the best they could to provide a place for us to live and help us buy groceries. I fully expected that I would have to get a job on the side. We were committed to whatever it took to pioneer a new work. When we drove into Rock Island we then learned that a large two-story house had been rented in Monmouth, Illinois for us to live in. It had been arranged for us to pastor a newly organized church in that town and drive back and forth to Rock Island where the school was to be located. There was not enough income from this new church to support us so Wife, being a nurse, was able to get a job in one of the hospitals in Rock Island. One thing that made it possible for us to move on such a small amount of money was that we had no household furniture of our own to move. We had previously sold all our own furniture when we moved to the furnished parsonage in Odessa. But now we were up against the problem of moving into a large two-story house with absolutely no furniture outside of some mattresses and bed springs minus the bed frames, and no money to buy any. We had a hot plate for our stove, orange crates for seats and table, and a big empty house to rattle around in with not even a chair to sit on.

We had not been in this house very many days until a family who lived in Monmouth planned to spend the winter down south and asked us if we would like to use their furniture in this big house while they were away. It would save them storage expense and provide us with the needed furniture. It was in this way God furnished the large house we were living in with all the furniture we would need including a kitchen range, tables, chairs, a davenport and easy chairs plus bedsteads. A person doesn't have to own things to enjoy them. It was God's way of supplying our needs at that time, for where He guides He provides. Glory to His matchless Name!

One more time, as numbers of times before, we proved the truth found in such Scriptures as Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." We went happily on our way praising God and singing:

I care not today what the morrow may bring,  
If shadow or sunshine or rain.  
The Lord, I know, ruleth o'er everything,

And all of my worry is vain.

Living by faith in Jesus above;  
Trusting, confiding in His great love;  
Safe from all harm in His sheltering arm,  
I'm living by faith and feel no alarm.

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## 15 -- OUR MIRACLE HOUSE

Moving to Illinois to help pioneer a Bible college, we first moved into a house in Monmouth forty-five miles south of Rock Island. We were to pastor a newly organized church in that city and drive back and forth to Rock Island to work in the college. Winter was coming on and it proved to be wisest to move into Rock Island where we would be working all week. Wife was already driving to Rock Island Monday through Saturday. Being an R.N. she had gotten a job in one of the hospitals to help with our living expenses. It would be less traveling for us to drive back and forth from Rock Island to Monmouth to pastor the church there. The only problem was that, with a family of five children, we could not find a house to rent in the Rock Island area. House owners were just not renting to families with that many children. It was not reasonable, not even good sense, for us to even think about buying a house. We had absolutely nothing in the way of finances that would give us any idea even to think of such. Be that as it may, that very thought entered my mind. I could not get away from the fact that God wanted us to buy a house in Rock Island. One day I picked up a Rock Island newspaper. In it was listed for sale for the first time a large two-story house. It was an older house, well built and well kept, in which an old couple had raised their family. They were having to give it up as all their children were grown and gone and they were getting to the age where they could not live alone.

I met the realtor early one morning and he took me through the house. The dear old couple were still living in it and they sat in the living room waiting while we toured the premises and the house. I felt it was exactly what the Lord wanted us to have. Returning to the front room and before leaving, I asked if it would be all right to pray. The man and his wife thought that would be fine. They seemed to know all about this praying business. So we knelt down, all but the realtor. This was something new to him. Immediately I felt that peculiar presence of God. As I prayed and reminded the Lord of the wonderful years this dear couple had lived in this house raising their family the hard times, the happy times they got blessed and I got blessed. I closed the prayer something like this, "Lord, I don't know how it can be done, but I believe it would please You if somehow You could help me buy this house from this dear couple so I can raise my family in it." When we got up from kneeling the man said to me rather excitedly, "We want you to have this house." They had it priced at \$12,000.00, but I had absolutely no money even to put down on it. Other prospective buyers would have given them cash on the spot for it, but they turned them all down. They both were convinced that they should sell it to me.

We put up one deal after another in an effort to buy it. We first proposed they go a second mortgage and we would get a finance company to go a first mortgage. That was unacceptable to their children and we could well understand why. It would take at least ten percent down to swing

the deal. I phoned a friend in Texas to see if there was any way he could help me. I didn't think he personally could, but he might give me some leads or ideas how I could finance it. That very day the Lord had helped him make a big sale and he had the money and said, "I'll wire you the twelve hundred dollars for the down payment and you will not need to pay it back until the first mortgage on the house is paid." By that time FHA had approved a loan with small payments and low interest but when I told them I had borrowed the twelve hundred dollars for a down payment they threw it out, not allowing secondary financing.

With the twelve hundred dollar down payment, we were finally able to work out a deal with the owners and a finance company. The Bible school was eventually able to pick up the down payment as part of our remuneration and with God's help we were miraculously able to pay the house off in record time--principal and interest.

We have now lived in this same house for thirty-five years and inflation has raised the price of the house considerably beyond the original cost. Across the years we have raised our family, made many improvements in the building and have been able to meet all our obligations. To look back on it now it can only be accounted for as the miraculous workings of God.

But I must tell you more about this house that is located at 4414 10th Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois 61201. It has five floor levels. When you are working in your garage you don't usually run up into the basement to get something you need but you do at this place. From the street level you must walk up twenty-three steps to get to the front door. You can enter the garage from the street level. A stairway inside the garage will take you up into the basement. The basement is the second floor level. This floor contains the furnace, tool room, laundry room, toilet and recreation room. The third floor level contains the living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom and another small room that could be used for an office or bedroom. Four bedrooms and a bathroom are on the fourth floor level and there is an outside door in one of the bedrooms that opens out onto a railed-in porch. Going on up another flight of stairs puts you into a finished attic. It can be used for whatever. We used it for a storage room for suit cases, another storage room for camping equipment, yet another room for a catchall and space enough for a large bedroom and all this besides several bookshelves.

Across the years while our family was growing up we took in numbers of other young people and made a home for them also. For years, the house at 4414 10th Avenue was like Grand Central Station; at least it seemed that way. At one time we had six cars parked around the place. Many and interesting "goings on" could be recorded if space would allow.

For my wife and myself, the passing of the years has "cleaned our nest out." To be left alone in that size house was no longer practical, or, for Wife, possible to keep clean. Our children did not want the house to pass out of family hands. Our oldest son, Ross, purchased the house from us and made it possible for Wife and me to move to a smaller place, a condominium not far from the "home" place, to await our final move to the "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

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## 16 -- A STRANGE PROVIDENCE

I was asked by the General Board of the Bible Missionary Church to go to Africa during the summer of 1978 to conduct a summer Bible school for a group of national pastors. It had been recommended to the Nigerian, A. A. Alalibo, superintendent of a group of churches in Nigeria, that he request to affiliate with the Bible Missionary Church of America. Our literature was sent upon his request and he sent back word that he had joined us.

Twice, leaders of the Bible Missionary church visited this work, were thrilled at what they observed, but still didn't know exactly what this man and his people really believed doctrinally about the plan of salvation. Hopefully, if they would open the door for me to go there and conduct a summer's Bible school, I could find out exactly who had joined us were they Pentecostal Charismatics, Calvinists, Wesleyan Arminians? Their leader, Evangelist A. A. Alalibo, sent word for me to come. We had previously asked him what subjects he would like to have taught. But he did not, in his invitation, make any mention of this. To be prepared I packed two large suitcases full of teaching materials, both basic and advanced doctrinal material, that I intended to use in conducting classes, and checked them through to Lagos, Nigeria along with two other large suitcases of personal items for Wife and me.

Just before leaving the States I was with my son Ross in a tent meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Sitting in his study one day I noticed he had outline studies on the Pentateuch, the Synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of St. John and the Book of Acts. It would be no problem to slip these outline studies into the suitcase with my personal things. I had a sudden feeling that I should take these along with me. Ross gladly consented.

When we arrived in Nigeria the two cases containing the teaching material I had prepared did not show up. At first I was quite beside myself and frustrated, wondering what I would do without my teaching material. Brother A. A. Alalibo had said nothing to me about the subjects he thought would be best for me to teach. At the first session I gave the men an introductory lecture on the doctrine of salvation. I supposed I would just have to go ahead and teach those subjects I had planned and prepared for.

At the close of that first session Brother Alalibo came to the front of the class and began handing each man a sheet of paper. On this sheet appeared the schedule for the class sessions a two-hour session in the morning and a two-hour session in the afternoon, Monday through Friday. Included in the schedule were the subjects he wanted me to teach. He said to me, "Brother Maxey, I have not told you what subjects I felt it would be best to teach in this summer school but here they are. I would like to have you teach a class in the Pentateuch, the Synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of St. John and especially a course in the Book of Acts." As you can see, I had outline studies of these very subjects in my own suitcase. Besides that, I had a Thompson Chain Reference Bible to assist me. These subjects, in fact, were the best ones I could have taught in order to learn what these men knew and actually desired in the way of doctrine and personal salvation. God knew this and withheld from me the material I personally felt I should be teaching. Without my being aware of it God in His providence provided what was best for me to teach those men to accomplish what I was sent there for. There were forty-two pastors and assistant pastors in that summer school.

But this did not end the story. When I went to the last session prior to my returning to the U.S.A., there in the classroom stood the two large containers with the material I had prepared and sent. None of the material was lost, including valuable textbooks and all syllabi I had prepared to hand out to the students.

I hadn't needed them at the time but I hadn't permanently lost them. God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform!

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## 17 -- THEY DIDN'T GIVE GOD A CHANCE

One of the chief sources of temptation known to man is the apparent slowness of God. If God would only do something now! Where is God? Why doesn't He reveal Himself? When it is all said and done, however, and we look at our "distressed situation" with a hindsight as compared to our "short-sighted" foresight, we are chagrined to acknowledge that God was not late. How many times have people missed it by running ahead of God just before He would have answered their prayer and met their need!

The following account makes this truth painfully apparent.

A fine young couple were led of the Lord to move to Rock Island where the young man planned to prepare himself for the ministry. They moved into a trailer house and the young man applied for a job. They had enough money to pay the rent a couple weeks or so in advance. The young wife had secured a job that would provide the necessary living items food, fuel, gasoline for their car, etc. The Quad Cities at that time was one of the largest industrial areas in the U.S. The wages the young men were able to make were more than adequate to finance their way through school, plus afford them a good living. Some of the young men were able to get work almost immediately when they arrived in the area. Others waited some two or three weeks before landing a job, but few in those days failed in securing a high-paying job. This young man put in an application in several places. He had come to town owing back bills and creditors were on his back. Pressure was on and job openings did not come to him immediately. I called on this couple on a Wednesday to encourage them to hold steady. They were both discouraged and ready to leave and go back where they came from. In fact they planned on leaving the next day.

I reasoned with them: Hadn't God called him into the ministry and hadn't He led them to come to the Bible school at this time? They were sure about that. Wasn't their rent paid through the coming Friday? "Yes." Didn't they have enough to eat? "That's right." Why didn't they stay until the rent was up? That would be just two more days. "You don't have to leave before then at least!" I assured them that if God had led them to Rock Island to go to school he would not fail them or be late for it is a well proven fact that "where God guides He provides." We prayed together.

Sad to say, they pulled up stakes and left early the next morning, Thursday. The very next day one of the best and highest paying jobs ever offered one of our young men opened up. The hiring company did their best to locate the young man but he was clear across the country by then and no one could get ahold of him in time to bring him back.

Eventually the couple suffered marital problems that kept growing worse until it ended in divorce and loss of spiritual victory. They got in a hurry and missed the opportunity of their life. Was God late? NO! He was there with the promised help, but they had let the devil and human circumstances rob them.

This young couple are not the only ones who have run out on God before He had a chance to come to their aid. Perhaps most everyone at one time or another has taken things into his own hands and spoiled what God could have and would have done for him. We have only to cite some of the Bible patriarchs such as Abraham and Moses as examples. In the New Testament we have John Mark for an example.

Those that get off the track with God suffer for it. Some who have done so have eventually gotten back on. Others who have gotten off have forever missed it. If you are one who has stepped aside from God's will for your life take courage! God is a God of a second--even a third and fourth--chance.

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## 18 -- FELLOWSHIPING A SHADE TREE

One rather warm day I stood in the welcome shade of a Chinese elm tree. It stood tall and provided a solid shade from the heat of the sun. This particular tree was standing on the campus of my alma mater. A number of students and faculty members could be seen passing to and fro across the beautiful campus seemingly unaware of my presence under that shade tree and certainly unaware of the conversation that tree and I were having. You see, that tree and I knew something of which others had no knowledge. About all those then present knew was that it was a beautiful tree and provided a solid shade for anyone who wanted to pause and enjoy a few minutes of protection from the direct heat of the sun.

About thirty years prior to that time we almost lost that tree. My brother and I were the campus caretakers. We kept the campus up, mowing and irrigating the lawn, caring for the shrubbery and trees. That elm tree, small enough then for one person to easily handle, was planted during that time, but we almost despaired of getting it to stand. When even the smallest wind would blow the tree would fall over and we would have to stand it up again. We finally staked it up. Even then when we irrigated, the ground would become softened. At the slightest breeze, the stakes would pull out and we would find the tree flat on the ground again. Many mornings we came to the campus only to find the tree lying on the ground. We didn't want to lose the tree because the Chinese elm trees, when they get to any size at all, make a more solid shade than most other types of shade trees.

While I was standing there in its shade, the tree and I were talking over those early experiences and rejoicing together at what a beautiful shade tree it had become and how it had been such a blessing in shading many a person from the direct heat of the sun. Only the tree and I knew the secret of why it had attained that stature.

Let me tell you how it all came to pass. One day when we arrived on the campus our tree was lying flat on the ground. We had had enough! But before we gave up and hauled the tree off, we decided we would lay it aside and dig a hole about four or five feet square and deep enough to get it into the ground further down, put new dirt around it and give it one last chance. When we had dug down less than a foot we found the reason why the tree was unable to stand. Not far under the surface was a thick layer of shale that kept the roots from getting deep enough into the ground to keep the tree from falling over. We determined to dig down through that layer of shale if possible. It was extremely hard work but we never quit digging until we had dug clear through at least a foot and a half of shale and into soft dirt below it. We then hauled in new fertile soil to replace that hard, almost impenetrable shale, replanted the tree and from that time on it stood and began to grow like it should. Its roots could now go down deep enough to enable it to stand against the storms that at one time it was unable to withstand.

In the history of victorious, mature, Spirit-filled saint, without exception, there was a time when they had a real problem of standing victoriously. But there came that day when they dug down below a self-centered, carnal heart and found a remedy for a spiritually up-and-down life in the cleansing blood of Christ. They are standing victoriously today as witnesses to a work of grace they experienced in past days that made it possible for them to mature into victorious, blood-washed saints!

\* \* \*

#### 19 -- IN HOUSTON WITH NO WAY TO GET HOME

While I was president of Bible Missionary Institute we were trying to raise money to liquidate a debt on the school. A plan had been devised, "The 300 Gideon Plan," to inspire our people to pay off this debt. We were hoping to get at least 300 people to pledge a thousand dollars against the debt. I was traveling from one district to another to present this plan to pastors when they would all be meeting at their district's annual preachers' meeting. For this reason I flew down to Houston where the Louisiana-East Texas District Preachers' Meeting was being held. The school's business manager told me he could get me a ticket down there but there was not enough money for a round trip. We hoped while I was there that the district would raise an expense offering so I could get back home.

When I arrived I was cordially greeted by the district leader. He had been informed that I was coming and that I would be meeting all the pastors to present this plan. I had not been put on the program as a speaker in any of the services and when I arrived the district leader told me that they were in a real financial crunch and it looked like it would be all they could possibly do to raise money for their special speaker for that convention. He expressed his regret that they would not be able to do anything toward my expense getting down there and back because of this. I did not tell him nor anyone else that I had only a one-way ticket there.

I do not recall exactly what happened with the program for the morning service the day I flew down there but I was asked to fill in as speaker for that main morning service at 11:00 a.m. I prepared my heart and mind the best I could on a very short notice. While the preliminaries were going on I asked the district moderator at what time I should let the service out and he told me not

to go past 12:00 o'clock noon. They had a very heavy schedule for the afternoon and needed to be out in good time to get back for the afternoon services. By the time the preliminaries were over and I was put up to preach there was only about twenty minutes left. It was one of those times when God had me in gear and under the anointing almost immediately and I was right into a very interesting part of the message when twelve o'clock straight up arrived and I abruptly stopped and sat down saying that I was sorry but my time was up.

During the noon break the pastors and people insisted that I be given time to finish my message as soon as they returned from noon lunchtime. Public sentiment ruled that it should be so and God in His mercy let me hook up where I had left off and by the time I finished the glory had struck. There was nothing to do but pass the plates. I was handed the offering and had a brother rush me to the airport with enough money in hand to purchase a ticket. I was able to catch a flight back home, which I badly needed to do that day!

To God be the glory!

\* \* \*

## 20 -- ROBBED IN AN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

I flew from Port Harcourt to Lagos, Nigeria one morning, arriving at the international airport before noon, and I was to take a flight out of the country around midnight. There was nothing to do but to sit in that extremely hot airport until time to check in for the flight.

It was around 10:30 p.m. before my particular airline check in stations opened. A long line had already formed and I had gotten into that line the best part of an hour before the station opened so I would not be back in the line so far. The hour standing in line and waiting further exhausted me as I was already exhausted and weak from not having eaten since an early breakfast.

In the first line at that time they checked your ticket and then sent you to another line to check your luggage and if it was overweight you were sent back to the first line to pay an overweight charge. When I got to the counter in the second line I did have overweight luggage. The man taking care of the luggage, however, decided to waive the overcharge and sent me on to another long line where I had to wait in turn to pay an airport tax. From there I went to another room in the airport where they check your passport. Again I had to stand in line to await my turn and then go to even another part of the airport where they check your declaration card. The declaration card is handed to you as you fly into the country. On it you write down all the money and other valuable items you may have like a watch, or camera or jewelry and the like. When you are leaving the country they check this card and question you. What you spent is deducted from what you have left and it is supposed to balance out. In later years this was discontinued. For my own protection I had put several American bills--some five, ten and twenty dollar bills--throughout the leaves of my Bible to use in an emergency.

As I approached the declaration desk a man posing as an airport official asked if he could help me. It was midnight by then and I was totally exhausted. I should have known better than to have anything to do with this man. He was actually a thief posing as an official. I looked for my

declaration card to hand him when I discovered I had left it way back where they had checked my passport. When I told this man that he said, "No problem; just step out here, I'll take care of you." He took me to where we could sit down. He then asked me to show him how much money I had. I showed him the three hundred dollars of travelers' checks plus twenty-five dollars of American money. He grabbed them from me and getting up said, "I'll be right back," and left. It was a few minutes until I caught on that I had been robbed.

After checking declarations, the next step is to go through security and then to the gate where you board your plane. After that thief robbed me I went to the police at the security entrance and told them what had happened but they could do nothing, the thief having gotten away. I then requested the police to get me through security immediately and they did. I went at once to board my plane which was in the final process of loading.

It was a strange providence. If that thief had not robbed me I would have checked my declaration at the proper place and then gone to the end of an unusually long line, all of whom were waiting to pass through security. This line was moving very slowly. If I had done that I would have missed my plane.

When I got home I went to the bank, reported the theft and was reimbursed the full amount of the stolen travelers' checks. All I lost was the twenty-five dollars of U.S. currency which was minor in the event I had missed my flight.

What a strange providence indeed! God used a thief to get me through on schedule. It is true as we read in Psalm 76:10, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee..." A Sovereign God can cause evil intentions to work for His glory and our good!

\* \* \*

## 21 -- HOW TO TIE YOUR SHOESTRINGS

In my teaching, in order to drive home the importance of building into our lives right thinking and thus good habits, I would observe how those students who had shoes with shoestrings tied them. Some had the bow tied with a square knot and some with a "granny" knot.

You may wonder what the difference is. A granny knot, a double knot, unlike a square knot, crosses the ends the wrong way and forms an awkward, insecure knot. If one ties his shoestrings with a granny knot the bow ends of the knot lie parallel to his foot and the knot looks untidy and has a tendency to come untied, while a square bow knot lies neatly across the shoe and will stay tied. (Note accompanying illustration.)

But why bring that up in a theology class? Well, incidentally, it does teach one how to properly and more neatly tie his or her shoestrings. And even though it served as an attention getter and created interest, it did, at least hopefully, help to make the main lesson I wanted to get across stick better.

When a child is old enough to tie his own shoestrings he first has to think how to do it and then practice doing it. How he learns to tie his shoestrings, whether with a granny knot or a square knot, soon becomes a habit he will continue automatically without thinking.

There are some very important lessons we can learn from this. It is true thoughts tend to become acts. Acts repeated become habits and out of habits character is formed. It does make a difference how one thinks! "For as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

How true it is--desires (what one sets his mind on) determine decisions, decisions determine direction, direction determines character, character determines destiny. An anonymous writer has well expressed the intimate relationship between belief, activity, character, and destiny in the following lines:

"Sow a thought, reap an act;  
Sow an act, reap a habit;  
Sow a habit, reap a character;  
Sow a character, reap a destiny."

Every morning when one puts on his shoes and ties them, he does it the same way--always the same shoe on the same foot first (whether right or left) and ties them always the same way whether with a granny knot or a square knot. And he does all this automatically without thinking. He does it by the force of habit.

A great percent of our actions are done by habit, including the pattern of our thinking as well as actions in about every phase of our lives.

When you are young you can more easily break bad habits. I had a boy scout troop in my first pastorate. I taught the boys how to tie various kinds of knots, including the square knot. One observing lad said to me at one of our weekly meetings, "Mr. Maxey, you tie your shoes with a granny knot." He was right and it took me about two weeks every morning concentrating on tying my shoes with a square knot in place of a granny for the new habit to take over. Now I tie them correctly by force of habit without thinking.

How very, very important it is to build right habits into our life and to turn as much of our life as possible over to good habits! A successful life depends on it.

How many people are bound by bad habits? It is impossible to live a satisfactory Christian life apart from the good habits of consistent reading of the Bible and a daily devotional time as well as a consistent habit of thinking good clean thoughts.

You can add to this many other things where habits influence one's life for better or for worse!

A good percent of our life flows out of habits we have formed. Are you "tying" your life up with good, character building habits?

\* \* \*

## 22 -- HELD UP AT THE POINT OF A DAGGER

I went into a "hole in the wall" barber shop to get my hair cut one day in Georgetown, Guyana, South America. It was in the middle of a city block--a room no bigger than about ten feet by ten feet. During closing hours the whole front wall was pulled across the opening but during business hours this was pushed back and there was a half wall about waist high behind that with a door to let one into the shop. An East Indian was the barber and he could give a man a perfect haircut using a comb and razor.

While the man was cutting my hair I noticed he had a wide, ugly scar on one side of his face running from his ear down to his mouth. He told me that he had been robbed and cut across the face with what they called down there a "choke and robber." The "choke and robber" would hold a person up and rob him and invariably would cut the victim with razor sharp knives or a dagger-like short, two-edged sword.

There were two of us. A young man from the U.S. who was there teaching in our summer Bible school and I had gone into this shop for much-needed haircuts. The barber had cut my hair and while I was waiting for the young man to get his cut, two rough-looking men came in. One sat beside me on a backless bench and the other, after entering, clicked the half-door shut and stood against it facing inwardly toward me and the man on the bench beside me. I was busy writing a letter while I waited when all of a sudden I heard the standing man say "freeze." Looking up, I saw he had a sharp two-edged dagger pointed right at me, only three or four feet away! The barber had just laid down his razor. He was petrified with fear.

I had known about these "choke and robbers," having been in Georgetown, Guyana a few years earlier when Wife and I had gone there to set up a Bible school. I was told that a good defense mechanism to scare them off was to make as much noise as possible. With this in the background of my mind, as soon as the man said "freeze" and I looked up and saw him with the dagger moving toward me, I automatically got to my feet and began screaming at the top of my voice. God must have put a P.A. system in me, for my screaming stopped traffic for a half block both ways. I screamed, "Help, help, choke and robbers," over and over. This so startled the would-be thieves that the man with the dagger turned and tried opening the half-door to get out but not succeeding to get it unlatched, he jerked it off its hinges and took out as fast as he could with his accomplice right behind him and me behind them still yelling, "Get them, there they go, choke and robbers!" They got away and no one, including the police, made a move to help. Only after they got away did anyone come around, and then only to ask, "Did they get anything?"

It was only the mercy of God that kept me from getting cut and jabbed with that thief's dagger before he took off.

In most foreign countries one must take special caution against pickpockets and thieves of all kinds! The fact is, we should not have gone in that barber shop. There were other shops available in a safe place. No doubt these "choke and robbers" had been keeping their eye on us and saw a chance, they figured, to rob us.

Both common sense and God's protection are needed in many foreign countries where missionaries go to carry the gospel! We have the promise in Matthew 28:19, 20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

\* \* \*

## 23 -- CHANGING IDENTITY

Even so ye . . . outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. -- Matthew 23:28

It is characteristic of some people to identify themselves with whatever crowd they happen to be with. With a worldly crowd they seemingly have no problem fitting in with where they go, how they dress and how they talk. The same thing goes when they are found in the midst of spiritual people. They know the language and they can adjust their appearance and language to fit in.

A good illustration of those who are one thing one day and something else the next day is the following, somewhat humorous story. I do not know the origin of the story, where it came from, nor can I vouch that it actually happened, but it illustrates this problem of constantly changing identity.

A man had a pig he wanted to sell so one day he put the pig in a sack and headed for the market. Halfway there he set the sack down outside a friend's house and went in to rest. While he rested some mischievous boys looked in the sack and, seeing the pig, took the pig out of the sack and put a dog in, tying the sack back up.

When the man came out he picked up his sack and went on to market hoping to sell his pig. However, he found the dog in his sack instead. Disappointed, he headed back home with the dog in the sack and while he again rested at his friend's house, those same boys took the dog out of the sack and put the pig back in.

When the man got back home, lo and behold, he had the pig he started out with.

In much disgust he spoke his mind to his pig, "Little pig, I wish you would be what you is and not what you ain't!"

How disgusting is that person who is always changing his identity to fit whatever crowd he is with at the time. He really doesn't fit anywhere. The devil loves that kind. Are you one of them?

\* \* \*

## 24 -- I THOUGHT HE WAS AN ITALIAN

In 1922 we joined the Church of the Nazarene and Father moved us to Grandview, Washington where he became pastor of the church. Father was aware of the fact that an idle mind (or boy) was the devil's workshop and the secret of keeping boys (as well as girls) out of trouble is to keep them occupied. I have often said that Father could find more to keep his boys busy while we lived in town than most farmers can find for their boys to do on a forty-acre farm.

On the west side of town was a four- or five-acre plot of ground within the city limits that was nothing but an eyesore. It had been allowed to grow up in tall weeds. Father got a better idea for that land besides letting it remain an ugly weed patch. He went to the "city dads" and proposed that they incorporate it into city property and make it a city park. He then requested that his boys tend the park mow and water it. In time this all took place. By that time I was going on nine years of age. My brother was twenty months older.

It was no big job for boys nine and eleven to keep the grass and trees watered. But how could boys that age keep that much grass mowed? Again Father came up with an ingenious plan. He persuaded the city to buy the largest lawn mower obtainable (a reel mower). There were no power lawn mowers in that day. If my memory serves me right, we got a mower that would cut a twenty-four inch swath. We had the shafts taken off a one-horse buggy and fastened on the front of the lawn mower. We then took the seat off a hay mower and had it welded on top of the lawn mower facing backward. With the shafts fastened to the mower we could hitch a horse up to pull it. Our neighbors owned an old, gentle stallion that they let us use. I rode the horse and brother rode the mower with an oil can in his hand to keep the mower oiled up. I knew right where to make the horse walk so we could mow the grass in straight lines.

Needless to say, we two boys were the talk of the town. We had many onlookers while we were mowing. One day a man stopped by. We were taking a break to let the horse rest. This man was lavish with his praise to brother and me and then he ended his conversation by saying, "That is quite a horse you have there." No one had ever explained to me what kind of horse a stallion was. When I heard the word "stallion" I thought they meant to say "Italian." So I merely answered the man by saying, "Yes, he is a fine horse; he's an Italian." The man left in a hurry with no comment. About a block away he met my father as he was coming to see how we were doing. I watched. I could see them talking together and then bending over in laughter. I had a feeling that they were laughing at me and my Italian horse. At that time in my life I had not been told about the "birds and bees," so the difference between a stallion and an Italian was unknown to me.

If you go to Grandview, Washington today you will see a beautiful park with huge trees. Just remember if you do so that those trees were planted by two brothers, a nine- and an eleven-year-old, who first tended that park.

Let us mention some lessons we can gather from this "park" experience. First, Father kept us occupied and out of trouble we might have gotten into. Children left to themselves will sooner or later start doing wrong things and often get into deep trouble and sin without the parents knowing it. They start a downward course of wickedness and evil that may even foster a criminal life. Father kept his children occupied and even in the playtime he allowed us, he knew where we were and what we were doing. Besides this, the city paid us well for our labors even at that young age.

I learned how to cut a perfect straight line across those few acres of grass as we mowed it. I have often asked my students as well as others I have talked with, "How can you be sure to mow a straight line or plough a straight furrow across a field?" I have yet to get the right answer. The "stock in trade" answer is, "Get your eyes on a pole or some object across the field and go straight for it." But that is not the right answer. That will not always guarantee a straight line. If, however, you can sight two objects across the field, one farther beyond the other, and keep them in perfect alignment you can be sure that you will cut a straight line across the field.

To align two objects on the far side of a field and keep them in perfect alignment to guarantee ploughing a straight line is a good illustration of what God has provided in His divine grace to secure to us a place in Heaven. It takes more than just a title to a mansion in the skies to make Heaven. A "born-again" experience gives one a "title to a mansion in the sky," but there must also be a fitness--"holiness, without which no man can see the Lord." There must be a cleansing of the heart from the very nature of sin in order for the divine grace of God to plant in the heart a perfect peace that can look forward to the end of this life and to a holy heaven with absolutely no qualms of fear. As wonderful as the forgiveness of our sins is, with the nature of sin still resident in the heart there yet remains a certain amount of the fear of judgment! Thank God for the provision that has been made in the death of Christ on the cross to cleanse the heart from the very nature of sin (Eph. 5:25-27).

This whole affair concerning the putting in of a city park in Grandview, Washington was Father's ingenious idea to keep his boys out of trouble and help them make it to Heaven someday!

Most parents fail their children in this area, and their children often never learn the discipline and the rewards of hard work. So many children and young people, left to their own devices, have not only missed the best in this life but in the life hereafter.

How are you doing, parent?

\* \* \*

## 25 -- JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

It has been said, and not without foundation, that a great many people get the major part of their exercise by jumping to conclusions before all the facts are in. And this often happens to the chagrin of the "jumper."

I traveled several summers with a college male quartet. One morning while touring out on the west coast, by pre-arrangement, we quartet fellows were to meet our sponsor who traveled with us, a teacher and an official of the college. We had agreed to meet at the home where he had spent the night. This was the home of a young lady who was a student at the college but was home for the summer months. We were to meet there and practice some of our songs before travelling on to our next engagement. When we arrived at this home I looked into the bedroom where our sponsor had slept and noticed his suitcase was open and had not been packed. At an opportune

time when it would not be noticed, I slipped into this bedroom and obtaining needle and thread, sewed the professor's pajama legs closed about halfway down.

It was not until after the following night when we were again in the car and leaving town, that our sponsor handed me a package all done up neatly and addressed back to this young woman where he had stayed.

Whatever happened the night that had just passed we will never know for sure. All we know is what our beloved sponsor said. He told us that the young lady back where he stayed the night before had sewed his pajama legs together and he had ripped them badly trying to get them on. And now he was mailing them back to her to be mended. He handed the package to me to mail for him. I dutifully obeyed. It was not until we had traveled about fifty miles down the highway that I dared ask our sponsor, Sir, about you mailing your pj's' back to that young lady--what if it wasn't she that sewed those legs closed?" The truth came out, of course, and I was told that I would have to make an explanation and apology to the young lady. I flatly refused. I was not the one who had "jumped" to a wrong conclusion.

How much heartache, misunderstanding, turmoil, trouble, and to say the least, embarrassment, in homes, in churches, in business places, and between people, could be avoided if people would wait until all the facts were in before they "jumped to a conclusion."

One of the great sins among church people today is to tell something you heard to a bosom friend when you do not know all the facts of the case. That friend has a bosom friend to whom they pass the "half-truth" on, etc., and thereby frictions and tensions build up in the church body. People get needlessly hurt and many times beyond repair!

\* \* \*

## 26 -- THEY WERE SURE SHE HAD PRAYED THROUGH

A group of women were praying together around the altar in the front of the church when a woman they had been praying for a drug addict entered the building. It was during cold weather and the woman stopped at the back of the auditorium by an open flame gas heater to warm up. She was dressed in a pair of trousers and not realizing it she stood with her back too close to the open flame and her trouser legs caught fire.

Feeling the "sting" of heat on her legs and then seeing her trousers were on fire she panicked and came stomping down the aisle shouting at the top of her voice, "FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!" Thinking the woman had at last gotten saved they began shouting the victory, that is, until they saw her trousers on fire. They were able to quickly extinguish the flame but were disappointed that her trousers had caught on fire in place of the holy fire of God meeting her soul's deep need!

It wasn't the first time a shout of victory was triggered by a false alarm! Neither was it the first time people have jumped to a wrong conclusion before all the facts were in!

\* \* \*

## 27 -- INSTINCT

In a basic doctrinal course, one thing we consider is the grounds for our belief in the existence of God. The knowledge of the divine existence is derived from four sources: man's inward feelings, the testimony of nature, the testimony of Scripture, and the personal experience of God's true people.

It is impossible for man to stamp out that inner feeling he has that God does exist. There is within man a universal something, an innate idea, an intuitive sense, or, call it instinct if you choose, which despite his depravity, willfulness and sin, has persisted through the ages, telling him that his relationship is not wholly with the animals--he has capacity for the knowledge of God, yea, for the indwelling God Himself.

To impress upon the students' minds the idea of this inner feeling we sometimes call instinct, and to add a little humor to the class, I would tell them about Mother Skunk and her two sons--one named "IN" and the other "OUT." As the story goes, Mother Skunk would let one of her sons outside to play one day and the next day the other one would have his turn outside. "OUT'S" turn came one day and when it was time for him to be back he didn't show up. After some time Mother Skunk sent "IN" out to find "OUT" and bring him back in. "IN" was gone a long, long time but finally they both came back in. The next day it was "IN'S" turn to go out and when it came time for him to be back in he didn't show up. Mother Skunk and "OUT" waited and waited and finally Mother Skunk sent "OUT" out to find "IN" and to bring him in. "OUT" was back with "IN" in the matter of minutes. Mother Skunk was surprised and said to "OUT," "How were you able so quickly to find 'IN'?" "It was easy," said "OUT. 'IN'-stinked."

Need more be said?

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## SECTION 2 -- EXPERIENCES TRAVELING HIGHWAYS, RAILWAYS, AIRWAYS

### EXPERIENCES TRAVELING THE HIGHWAYS

And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Isaiah 49:11

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## 28 -- THREE MIRACLES IN ONE TRIP

### MIRACLE NUMBER ONE--DELIVERED FROM SUDDEN DEATH!

While helping to pioneer a Holiness Bible college in Rock Island, Illinois, my family and I spent our summers on the road going from church to church raising funds to finance the college or else preaching in camp meetings or holding revival meetings.

On one occasion we were in the Northwest winding up our summer's travels. The time had come for us to head back to Rock Island, a seventeen-hundred-mile trip, to start another school year. On this trip we had our two youngest children with us. Before we started our journey we prayed together and asked God to get us home safely and in doing so we petitioned God, "Please, Lord, let it be in a way we will see Your hand in it. Reveal to our children that You do care for Your own and You can make a way when it seems there is no way." We wanted our children to grow up with a strong faith in God.

In those days there were only two-lane roads no freeways. On the way out of Idaho we came to a long shallow curve. The lane we were in was on the outside of the curve. Looking ahead we saw a car coming in the other lane at a terrific speed and suddenly we noticed him crossing over the center line into our lane. We could see that he was slumped over, evidently asleep or passed out. There was no way to avoid a terrible head-on crash. I barely had time to pray, "Father, receive our spirits." I cannot tell you what happened. The Lord or one of God's angels surely touched the steering wheel of that car. I heard a loud swish that shook our car. I could hardly believe that we were all still alive and that the car had passed us without a scratch.

For awhile I shook so much I could hardly drive. We were all aware that we had been divinely delivered from sudden death. God had heard and answered our prayer. He had made a way for us through a death trap!

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#### MIRACLE NUMBER TWO -- OUR MIRACLE TIRES

We were traveling in a four-door Datsun. It had two good tires on the front. The back tires and the spare were recaps and it was questionable if they would make the trip. We called them our "may-pops"-they could blow out at any time! The children knew this and our daughter, Keren, was quite upset and nervous and said to me, "Daddy, what if they do blow out, what will happen?" Keep in mind that we had prayed that God would get us home in a way they would see God's hand in it.

We were not presumptuous in depending on the three recap tires to get us home. We stopped in towns along the way to see if we could replace at least two of the recaps with new tires. But there wasn't a place that had tires to fit that Datsun. We lost a lot of travel time hunting for tires.

We had made it into Wyoming and had spent time in both Green River and Rock Springs combing out every possible place for tires to no avail. It was a long desert stretch from Rock Springs to Rawlins. Coming out of Idaho one of the recaps had started throwing off chunks of rubber so we stopped and put the spare on in its place.

Leaving Rock Springs we had not gone far until the spare we had put on started coming apart with pieces of the tire flying off and thumping the fender. It kept this up for some distance and finally blew out. There was nothing to do but to put the tire back on that was still up but had

already lost part of the recap. We drove on into the heart of Wyoming, miles past any help and absolutely nothing in sight ahead. And then it happened. That tire blew. We were stranded.

We sat there wondering what we could do. It seemed a hopeless situation. Why had God let us get out there stranded? We had definitely felt clear that we should just keep on going and somehow God would get us home. Had we been mistaken in this? Tires don't grow on desert sagebrush. We were in high altitude and it gets very cold in Wyoming at night. We were not equipped to spend the night in our car in a place like that.

No one said a word we were all too shocked to talk. Before we had time to think, however, a car pulled up behind us and stopped. A man got out and came up to our car. He was a distance behind us but had seen the tire blow out. I told him we had no spare. His home was not far from where we had stopped. He owned a ranch out in that desolate country and told us that just up the road not over two or three miles was a service station just over the hump where it was out of our sight. He knew they had some tires there for sale. He took me in his car with one of the blown-out tires and rim just in case they happened to have a size of tire we needed. When we got to the station what do you suppose? You're right! There on the tire rack were "our" two brand new tires, the exact size to fit our Datsun. By the time the attendant had a tire on the rim I brought, Paul, driving our car ever so slowly on that flat, had arrived. It was not long until we were happily and blessedly and rejoicingly on our way. Late that night we made it to Denver where Lee, one of our other sons, lived.

God had not failed us even though He allowed us to get out there at the very extremity of our need. He knew where the tires we needed were and He got us to them. Glory to His matchless Name. He was our El Shaddai. He kept the "may-pops" going just long enough.

Even in a desert place God can supply our needs! But this is not all READ ON!

\* \* \*

### MIRACLE NUMBER THREE -- OUR MIRACLE FAN BELT

After a short rest and visit we left Denver the following day toward evening planning to travel on home to Rock Island through the late evening and night hours.

Just as the sun was about to dip below the western horizon the fan belt on the car broke and the motor began to heat up. By then we were again in a desolate stretch of country between Denver and the Nebraska border. We stopped at the entrance of a long lane leading into a ranch yard. When the motor cooled down some we drove down that lane. A rancher came out to talk with us. He told us there was no way he could help us. The sun was setting and his Sabbath was about to start. It was Friday and he was a Seventh Day Adventist. He started to walk away. We prayed. He came back and said that since our situation appeared to be an "ox-in-the-ditch" predicament he felt he would not be a Sabbath breaker if he tried to help us. I felt the same!

There was a little town just a few miles from there in the direction we were traveling. Out of sight from the highway, a traveler could pass it by and never know it was there. Only a small

sign and arrow pointed in that direction. The farmer offered to tow our car to that town with his pick-up truck. He knew where there was a garage on one of the back streets that he was sure handled extra car parts. When we got there it just happened (?) to be open and when they learned of our trouble a woman came out with a fan belt in her hand. She said to us, "This is certainly a strange coincidence. Here is a fan belt for the very year and model of your car, a Datsun. It came in the mail just today. We never even ordered it and we wondered why it was sent to us." This gave us a wonderful opportunity to testify. They installed the belt free and charged us only the price of the belt.

God's hand in this incident is too evident to doubt. He had the fan belt exactly where we needed it. It is no coincidence that He had the belt (a belt ready to break just any time) break in front of a lane that led us to the man who could get us to exactly where God had the belt sent on the very day we needed it. We never would have found it on our own.

One more time God had worked ahead to meet our need at the point of our extremity. Isaiah 65:24, ". . . before they call, I will answer...."

\* \* \*

## 29 -- WHEN THE WRONG WAY WAS RIGHT

How could the wrong way be the right way? Read on and you will find out.

We had been to the General Assembly of The Church of the Nazarene which was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1944. At that time we were pastoring a church in southern Idaho. A friend of ours from Idaho purchased a second-hand Electra Buick while attending the assembly and invited Wife and me to make the return trip back to Idaho in this car. If we would cash in our return railroad tickets and give him that money, he agreed to get us back and would assume all expenses on the trip. The route back he chose would take us through North Dakota, a part of Montana, down the eastern edge of Idaho, where we would finally pick up Interstate Highway 30 at Pocatello and then on west to our destination in the Boise valley. There were no freeways in that day but there were good two-lane highways.

The trip proved to be very hectic, time-consuming and expensive. We had planned to make the drive non-stop, thereby saving overnight motel expense and food expense. The Buick of the year and model we were making the trip in was large, comfortable to travel in and had power to spare -- ordinarily. I say "ordinarily" for we soon found out as we started our journey home that we had trouble on our hands. That big, roomy, supposedly powerful automobile had hardly enough power to pull over even the slightest incline, and in no way could it be coaxed up even to normal speed.

All the way through North Dakota, Montana and eastern Idaho we stopped many times at many garages hoping to find the cause of the trouble and get it fixed. At one garage the mechanic said our trouble was the spark plugs. New ones were put in. At another garage it was a plugged-up radiator causing the car to overheat. That was taken off and cleansed. At another garage it was the timing. That was checked. Still another place it was a clogged gas line. The gas lines were blown

out. Then it was a faulty coil. A new one was put on. But all these expensive things were to no avail. Our trouble was still with us. By the time we got to Billings, Montana we were so weary we were forced to spend the night in a motel. The expense of the trip was becoming astronomical to that young man who had promised to get us home with no more expense to us than the money we gave him from the sale of our railroad tickets, which was all the money we had.

It was the middle of the night when we arrived at Pocatello, Idaho and Highway 30 that ran east and west from coast to coast. I was at the wheel. All the others were sound asleep. We had finally arrived at the last leg of our journey home. As senseless and foolish as it was, it never seemed to dawn on me that Highway 30 could go east as well as west. Just to be traveling on #30 and be that near home-great! The only problem was that I turned east instead of west. By daylight I had reached Montpelier nearly a hundred miles in the wrong direction. Everyone was wide awake by then. Had we been Israelites in Old Testament times, I would have been stoned to death. We all got out of the car and sat on the curb there in the city. We felt like crying! There was nothing to do but get back in the car and head back the right way.

It was while on that "wrong way stretch" traveling back in the right direction that we passed a small, private garage alongside the highway and felt strongly impressed to stop. The man was open for business and on meeting him we were immediately impressed that here was a man who knew his business about cars. After listening to our story he raised the hood of the car, pulled off the wire that went from the coil to the distributor, put in its place a new wire and told us with an air of confidence that our trouble was solved. He charged us fifteen cents, the price of the wire. And sure enough that powerful Buick motor came alive and we sailed on home at full highway speed and with power to spare.

That one wire that the mechanic replaced had been the trouble from the beginning. What was the trouble? On the end of the old wire was a gadget designed to eliminate static noise from the car radio. It had gone bad and was not allowing enough electrical current through to the distributor to operate the motor at full power.

How many Christians have you met that manifest no spiritual Holy Ghost power in their lives? We read in John 7:37-38, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Is the Spirit of God flowing freely out of your heart to the lost world around you? Or is there something hindering His flow through you?

Many are Christian today only by name. They lack spiritual power. Maybe you are one of them. There is a cure!

\* \* \*

### 30 -- STOPPED JUST IN TIME

We were on the way to our second pastorate. At that time we had three boys and were expecting our fourth child. Traveling was not the best thing to be doing under the circumstances. Besides that, our car was heavily loaded and pulling a heavily loaded two-wheel trailer. As has

always been our habit, we prayed for God's protection before starting out on this journey. This time, however, we felt especially impressed to ask God to warn us ahead of time of any trouble that might happen or that might endanger our lives.

We were traveling along about 50 m.p.h. when all of a sudden I felt a fear and my right foot began to tremble and become powerless to press the accelerator. I felt strongly impressed to stop the car and trailer immediately and I did. Our sudden stop startled Wife and she asked, "Why did you stop?" I could only tell her that I felt God had ordered the stop. When I got out to look around, all but one of the lug nuts on one of the trailer wheels were gone and that one was ready to fall off. God had ordered our "stop" just in time. Once again we thought of that Scripture in Psalm 37:23, "The steps [this time it was the 'stops'] of a good man are ordered of the Lord ..."

\* \* \*

### 31 -- I DARED TO PICK HIM UP

I was on my way from Odessa to Monahans, Texas. I saw a hitchhiker quite a distance ahead standing by the road and felt strangely impressed to stop and pick him up. I hardly ever pick up hitchhikers. It is not safe these days. He was a man past middle age standing there with his luggage a cardboard box tied together with a rope smoking a cigarette. I had made up my mind that he was one man who was going to hear the gospel story. When I stopped the car I said to him, "If you will throw away your cigarette and not smoke in my car I will take you as far as I am going." He gladly complied with my request and got in the front seat beside me putting his "luggage" in the back seat.

I prayed for God to give me an opening into this man's heart. It was very evident he was a poor man and I asked him where he was headed. He was in poor health and on his way to Phoenix, Arizona to live out his last days with a married daughter. And then he volunteered, without further question, the following story:

\* \* \*

### 31 -- HE WAS A TYPICAL DROPOUT

As a young man God had called him to preach. He enrolled in the college at Wilmore, Kentucky under H. C. Morrison, an old-time holiness preacher, and gave himself zealously to the study of the ministry. I do not recall whether it was during his first or second year in school that he fell in love with a very attractive young woman and they were soon married. She joined him in his desire and purpose to fulfill the call into the ministry. It was not long, however, until children came along. To support a wife and growing family he was forced to drop out of school.

In his effort to make a living he was unable to enroll back in school. This discouraged him to the point he gave up his call in order to support his family and make it financially. He eventually moved his family to Odessa, Texas, the heart of the Permian Oil Basin. The oil boom was on. He was able to make "big" money -- enough to lay aside quite a huge bank account. And then the boom was over and there was no job to be had. He was older now and in the meantime his family --

several children had grown up and left home. His wife died and with no job, his bank account dwindled away to nothing.

At that point in his story he stopped and said, "Mister, I was desperate and prayed God to help me and give me a break!" I had not said a word up to that time and at that point I felt God say to me, "It's time for you to say something!" I interrupted him and said, "Sir, did you really pray and have confidence that God would hear your prayer?"

He was a broken man both in body and spirit and in more or less self-defense said, "I always told my children that one of these days we will all be together in Heaven. It is like we are all headed for New York City. You are headed there on one road; Mom is coming in on another road; I'll be going in on another road. We are traveling on different roads but they will all finally bring us together in Heaven."

I said to him, "Mister, you know that is not so. There is only ONE road to the City of God and unless you are on that road you will never enter Heaven! You are a dropout from the ministry. You have missed God's plan for your life and you know it. But let me assure you, God is merciful and longsuffering and it is not too late for you to make peace with God."

I pulled my car over beside the road. The man was weeping uncontrollably and it was not long until he prayed clear back to God and victory. It was too late now for him to go back and fulfill a God-given call. How sad! But how merciful on God's part to redeem his soul from eternal damnation.

It is far better not to become a "dropout." Having become one, however, it is far better to face up, humble down and accept the mercy and forgiveness of God than to go on and lose your soul in hell.

Young people need to take heed. There is only one life and it will soon be past. Youth is the time of preparation. Better to stay single until your days of preparation have been fulfilled than to marry and "blow" your chance to prepare yourself for life's calling.

\* \* \*

## 32 -- THE TRAGIC END OF A "DROPOUT"

A call of God to preach the gospel is a call, first, to prepare for that calling. It was Dr. J. B. Chapman who said if he was called of God and knew he had only ten years to live he would spend the first five years in preparation. He felt he could accomplish far more in kingdom work in five years with adequate preparation than he could in ten years without it. That has proved true over and over.

When a person receives a call after he has reached adulthood, there is always the temptation to pass up the necessary preparation time. For those who have taken time to prepare themselves, it has proved the right thing to do.

A young married man came to the Bible college where I taught, to prepare for the ministry. God had definitely called him into the ministry after he had gotten married and established in a good job. He was "burning up to preach the gospel." I don't recall whether it happened during his first or second year. A church opened up. It was one of those "chance in a lifetime" opportunities! He was older than the average run of young men preparing for the ministry and felt he just must get out into the active ministry as soon as possible. He left school and took this "one chance in a lifetime." He did this against the advice of a number of older and wiser brethren. We feared for this man and rightly so. As zealous as he was for God and souls he was ill prepared to face what was ahead of him. We knew it but he didn't realize it. This "chance of a lifetime" proved his undoing.

It was not long in this new assignment less than a year when he became a "dropout." Problems and situations came and he was too inexperienced to face them. It so overwhelmed him he gave up and quit. He went back to where he had come from in a totally disillusioned, backslidden state and got a job. Not long after he had returned to his home country he was killed in a tragic accident.

From all that we know about this young man we could sum it up by saying, "Here is a young man called of God into the ministry and enrolled in school. He soon dropped out of school, dropped out of the ministry, dropped out of a victorious Christian experience, dropped into hell!" How sad! Had he stayed in training the necessary years to fully prepare for his calling his story, no doubt, would have been different.

\* \* \*

### 33 -- THE MISSING PURSE

Wife and I had stopped at a McDonald's in Henderson, Kentucky. We were traveling from down south and were headed home to Rock Island, Illinois. We had been traveling for some time and stopped mainly to get out of the car awhile and get something cold to drink. We did not tarry long and were soon on our way again. All went well and we made our way up through Indiana to Interstate 74 and on into Illinois. Between Danville just inside the east border of Illinois and Champaign-Urbana, Wife all of a sudden said, "Honey, I left my purse down there in Henderson at McDonald's." That was miles and miles back. I immediately began having thoughts but never verbalized them -- thoughts that men have about their wives when something like that takes place.

We decided to stop at McDonald's in Urbana and see if the manager there would phone back to McDonald's in Henderson to ask if the purse had been turned in. We found the manager very congenial and willing to do what he could. He learned that the purse had been turned in and was being held there in the Henderson McDonald's. The manager there was willing to hold the purse until we could send someone to pick it up for us. We knew a family that belonged to the Bible Missionary Church in Evansville, Indiana (just across the Ohio River from Henderson) and phoned them when we got home. They got the purse and mailed it to us.

Stopping at Urbana and making the phone call delayed us over an hour. When we arrived home we learned that the worst hailstorm known to the area had struck and had passed through just

an hour prior to our getting there. Millions of dollars of damage was done. Large numbers of houses had their roofs so damaged they had to be re-roofed. Cars exposed to the storm were badly pitted. Had we not been delayed we would have been right in the middle of that storm.

God, through a strange providence, had held us out until the storm had passed by. This whole experience reminded me of that song written by Mosie Lister, " 'Til the Storm Passes By."

In the dark of the midnight have I oft hid my face,  
While the storm howls above me and there's no hiding place.  
'Mid the crash of the thunder, precious Lord, hear my cry;  
Keep me safe 'til the storm passes by.

Many times Satan whispered, "There is no need to try,  
For there's no end of sorrow, there's no hope by and by."  
But I know Thou art with me, and tomorrow I'll rise  
Where the storms never darken the skies.

When the long night has ended and the storms come no more,  
Let me stand in Thy presence on that bright, peaceful shore  
In that land where the tempest never comes, Lord, may I  
Dwell with Thee when the storm passes by.

Chorus

'Til the storm passes over, 'Til the thunder sounds no more, '  
Til the clouds roll forever from the sky  
Hold me fast, let me stand in the hollow of Thy hand.  
Keep me safe 'til the storm passes by.

\* \* \*

### 34 -- TRAVELING BY FAITH

During the thirty-year period I was connected with Bible Missionary Institute I took a three-semester leave to enter the field of evangelism. At times it was a close run financially and I purposed to travel from revival to revival by trusting God to supply traveling expense without charging a gasoline bill on credit cards. I left Rock Island one time for the next scheduled revival in Odessa, Texas, a thirteen-hundred-mile trip. It was on a Wednesday and I made it to Duncan, Oklahoma in time to attend mid-week prayer meeting.

When I arrived there the gas tank was on empty and I was out of money. The minute I showed up the pastor asked me to preach for him and offered to put me up overnight. I was well known by the Duncan church people, having previously held an extended revival in that church. The pastor was under no financial obligation to me and the church had a policy not to take up an offering for preachers that happened to stop by on their way through the country and were asked to fill the pulpit. This particular church was "plagued" or if you would like it better, "blessed" with

many a "passing by" preacher. The plain fact of the matter is that a pastor who invites a visiting preacher to fill the pulpit for him is under no obligation to ask his people to contribute to an offering for that "passing by" preacher. Neither preacher nor people had any inkling I was flat broke and had no gasoline in my car.

That night I felt an unusual anointing and when I finished the message both pastor and people were moved upon by the Spirit and the pastor said to his people, "I know our policy concerning special offerings to preachers who may stop by and are asked to preach. I feel, however, we have been unusually blessed and I will ask Brother 'Usher' to stand at the back of the auditorium with an offering plate. If you would like to give something to Brother Maxey, fine; if not, no obligation."

God had overruled a local church policy to supply this poor preacher with means to get on to his next appointment and everyone felt good about it especially the one who received the offering. It was not a big offering but enough to get me on to Odessa. Praise God!

\* \* \*

### 35 -- WAS IT A PROVIDENCE OF GOD OR A TRICK OF THE DEVIL?

While I was pastoring in the state of Montana the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.) was quite active in that state. The State W.C.T.U. president lived in the town where I pastored (Sidney) and the local president of that organization was a member of my church. One time a carload of women, including these two, drove to Helena, the state capital, at the time the state legislature was in session. They went to lobby against the heavy liquor traffic in the state and to curb the sale of intoxicating beverages in every way and in every place possible. They certainly represented a just cause and were to be commended for their efforts to keep down the abominable liquor traffic.

It is a long way from Sidney to Helena with a lot of wide open country. On the way home from this meeting the ladies took a back road that passed through long stretches of sparsely inhabited country but was much shorter than the regularly traveled highway.

While the ladies were out on one of those lonely stretches and close to sunset their car stopped running and they were unable to get it started. Hardly any traffic passed that way, especially after dark. The ladies were helpless, not knowing much about the mechanical operation of an automobile. The only vehicle that came along was a beer truck driven by a young man. He stopped to give assistance. They were hesitant at first to even talk to the man but finally consented to accept help from him. He was unable to get their car running. The only way he could help them was to tie on to their car and tow them over the lonely miles of road to their home. Otherwise the ladies would be stranded, possibly all night. They accepted the young man's offer even though they were greatly chagrined to be seen coming back from an effort to curb the sale of intoxicating beverages being towed behind a beer truck! What else should or could these ladies have done?

One would be slow to fault these ladies for allowing what they did. Since they were on their way home, however, from an all-out effort to curb the horrendous liquor traffic, to allow

themselves to be towed home behind a beer truck was ironical to say the least. Some may not agree with me in this but I would have to say that the offer of the young man to pull them home behind a beer truck was a trick of the devil rather than a providence of God sent along to help them. How often in life has it happened when an apparent way through a difficulty or emergency has presented itself only to be revealed that it was not of God but allowed by Him to test our integrity. The devil wouldn't like anything better than to make them dependent on a beer truck to get them home those who were in an all-out battle to stop that kind of traffic. Surely they had more than themselves to consider. Their influence opposing a wicked traffic was at stake.

Wouldn't it have been much better if these ladies would have shown a real interest in this young man by kindly and graciously thanking him personally for his concern, and for his offer to help them by towing them in, and then explained to him why they could not accept his offer? They certainly could not feel good about being towed in behind a beer truck since they were opposed to the business he was in and doing all they could to curb it. They dare not compromise their influence. They could then have kindly requested the young man to send them back help as soon as he would be able to contact help. In the meantime perhaps God would send someone else along that could help them. In any case, they would trust God for the kind of help they would feel free to accept and thus honor Him and would not embarrass themselves nor hamper the cause they represented. With this they could have assured that young man they would pray for him and hope to see him again in a different and better kind of job.

After all, there are far more important things in life when a moral issue is at stake than even our physical comfort and safety (Matthew 10:39).

\* \* \*

### 36 -- IT WAS MORE THAN LUCK

Luck doesn't figure in a Christian's life. What some people would call luck, a Christian would account for as the gracious overruling providences of a loving and benevolent God. The Scriptures bear this thought out. We read in Psalm 37:23, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way."

It was in February, 1992. We had our car serviced and checked over thoroughly before we headed out on a long trip. Our first day out Wife and I drove eight hundred three miles according to our odometer. The next day we drove eight hundred thirty-two miles. This put us in Winnemucca, Nevada by the second night. Stopping at a Motel 6 to get a room I said to the attendant, "Do you have a room for two crazy people?" She said, "What do you mean, 'crazy'?" I said to the lady, "I am seventy seven years old and my wife is seventy-nine and we have driven eight hundred thirty-two miles today." She answered me by saying, "You surely are crazy, but I do have a room you can have for the night."

The next day we drove on down a short way to Fallon, Nevada where we were in revival services for ten days. Following those ten days we headed north into Idaho, going back through Winnemucca. By the time we reached Winnemucca we had driven our car around eighteen hundred miles since leaving home in Rock Island, Illinois.

Going north out of Winnemucca there is an uphill grade and when I accelerated the car it blew a fog of smoke out of the exhaust and immediately the red warning light came on. I stopped the car and just across on the other side of the highway and heading into town I noticed a pickup truck had stopped. I made a "U" turn and pulled in behind the pickup. A young man had gotten out and was standing there. He saw I was in trouble and had stopped to see if he could help. When we checked the oil stick in my car there wasn't a drop of oil on it. The young man, Jerry Harper, a resident in that area, knew where to take us for help. By coasting back down into town and then being towed a short distance by a wrecker we were able to get to a garage that could take care of our problem. Jerry had picked up his wife, Nancy and newly born son, Joseph, and stayed with us until he was assured we had gotten to the right place where we could get help. He assured us he would see to it that we were not left stranded and if by chance our car problem was major and a length of time would be involved in getting it fixed, he would even see to it that we would have a place to stay.

Our problem? When we had our car serviced before leaving Rock Island, Illinois, the new oil filter was put on cross-threaded. When we suddenly accelerated the car going up the hill out of Winnemucca the filter finally let loose, blew oil all over the motor and under part of the hood, losing all the oil. We had caught it in time, however, so that no injury was done to the motor. Everything under the hood had to be steam cleaned, the serpentine belt had to be replaced with a new one (we were driving a 1988 Olds) and an oil filter and fresh oil put in. We were not delayed very long and were soon on our way rejoicing.

On this trip we had driven through long stretches (hundreds of miles) of desert country where there would have been no help if anything like that had gone wrong.

Without doubt God was watching over us. It was more than "luck" that the filter let loose where it did. It was more than just "luck" that God had a young man who knew just where to take us for help right there where and when we needed him. It was not just "luck" that we were stopped in Winnemucca where they had the parts and labor to meet our need instead of being stranded out on a lonely stretch of highway miles and miles from help!

God does watch over His own. To God be the Glory!

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## EXPERIENCES TRAVELING BY RAIL

### 37 -- EVEN THE RAILROAD PREACHES THE GOSPEL

When you look at a map you always turn it so North is at the top and South is at the bottom. East, then, is to the right and West is to the left. I have my own idea why maps are always laid out this way even though I cannot tell you for sure. But that's the way it is.

A number of years ago when railroad travel was widely used, I purchased a clergy railroad ticket from Rock Island, Illinois to Kimball, Nebraska. In those days the railroad

companies issued a clergy coupon book to preachers for a few dollars, containing enough coupons, as a rule, to last for a year, depending upon the number of trips one would make. With one of those clergy coupons a preacher could purchase a first class ticket for half price. It was an economical way to travel. Many preachers, especially evangelists, took advantage of railroad travel because of this. There was no advantage cost wise to buy a round trip ticket so on this occasion, although I was planning on making a return trip from Kimball back to Rock Island, I purchased only a one-way ticket.

I had made a reservation to return on a certain day and when I went to the ticket agent to buy my return ticket he did not charge me as much as I had paid for my ticket out, although it was the exact same journey, only this time I would be traveling east instead of west. I spoke to the ticket agent about this difference and wondered if he had erred in undercharging me or if the agent in Rock Island had overcharged me. He assured me that the agent in Rock Island had not overcharged me and that he had not undercharged me. He said, "Mister, I cannot explain to you why, but it is cheaper to travel east on the railroad than west." And I assumed from what he said that it was also cheaper to travel north than south. I never made any further inquiry about this railroad policy and can only vouch for the truth of it from what that ticket agent told me.

Now I got to thinking about that and began to get blessed in my soul. Here was the gospel in a nutshell. As one has put it, we are "fast" passengers through this life, traveling from time into eternity. There are only two destinations possible heaven or hell. To travel east is to travel toward the rising sun, but if you travel in the opposite direction (west) you go away from the light of the rising sun. We read in Malachi 4:2, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; There is a price to pay whichever direction you go in life, but like it was in past days of railroad travel, the cost is less in the long run to be a Christian and head into the light of the rising sun, than to reject the light and end in hell.

How does this apply when we travel either north or south? Well, heaven is up and hell is down. Now we never say, "I'm headed down north,." Neither do we say, "I'm headed up south." We talk about Australia as the continent "down under." We talk about "up" north and "down" south. We read in Revelation 21:2, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." It was coming down through the empty space in the north (Read Job 26:7; Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 10).

I would rather be headed up toward the holy city, New Jerusalem, than to be on the descent down into hell. Jesus came down from heaven to earth, died, and descended into Hades that we might be redeemed and make the ascent with Him up into heaven.

In the constellation of the heavens the Southern Cross is in the southern hemisphere and to pass it you must go south or down. An unrepentant and unbelieving soul will of necessity have to pass the cross on his journey through life. It is a fearful thing to reject the benefits of the cross; it's a fearful price to pay a far greater price to pay to go south (down), than north (up).

You, reader, may be traveling in the wrong direction!

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## 38 -- A ONCE IN A LIFETIME EXPERIENCE

I got off the train in Inglewood, a station on the southern edge of Chicago, and went to a nearby restaurant. It was toward the end of the day. I had been on the train since early morning without anything to eat. I had come up from down south and was to catch a train headed west. I had barely enough time to grab a bite to eat between trains. The waitress took my order and unusually soon she brought my food. While I was eating a man came and stood by my table and said to me, "Sir, I need to talk to you." He was dressed in work clothes, a perfect stranger to me. I said to him, "Mister, I am in here between trains and there will be no time for me to talk to you; I'm sorry." He went to another part of the large restaurant and sat in a booth by himself. After he left the waitress came to me and said, "Sir, your meal has been paid for." I said to her, "I don't understand. How can that be? I am a stranger here. This is the first time I have ever been in this restaurant." She said, "I can't tell you why but that man sitting over there in that booth (and she pointed way across the large restaurant) paid for your meal." It was the man who wanted to talk to me.

When I found that out I gulped my food down in double quick time. I knew I would have to go to that man. When he saw me coming he began to weep and said, "Mister, what makes you so different from all these other people here in this restaurant?" I scooted in the booth beside him and put my arm around him and said, "Sir, it isn't me. It is God. He loves you. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to save you and bring peace to your heart and give you eternal life and a hope of Heaven." I began to pray and he prayed and soon Christ came and saved him.

While we were praying it got quiet in that large restaurant and when we finished and looked up a man and his wife were standing there by that booth weeping. They said, "We have been listening and we too need what this man has just found." It wasn't but a very few minutes until they were happy finders. I had to hurry; my train was soon to leave. I had some gospel tracts and gave some to the man and the couple and with parting words of exhortation I ran to meet my train. As I was leaving the restaurant the waitress ran to say to me, "Sir, I was asked to tell you that any time in the future you come to eat in this restaurant your meal will be free."

Before I left the man I got his name and address and gave it to a pastor of a holiness church there in Chicago. He was unable to locate the man nor did I ever hear from him again. It was a chance meeting. Eternity will reveal the outcome! It is ours to be faithful!

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## EXPERIENCES TRAVELING THE AIRWAYS

### 39 -- THE AIRPLANE WAS ON FIRE

It happened during the days of the propeller-driven planes. I had purchased a ticket on United Airlines from Rock Island, Illinois to Boise, Idaho. My ticket was United Airline's promise to land me safely at my destination. The flight out of Rock Island was on a twin engine aircraft. On a beautiful moonlit night, in the fall of the year, we flew west. The weather gradually worsened until we landed in Denver in a regular blizzard. The snow was falling fast and the wind was

whipping up the snow something fierce. The storm had just begun in Denver so there was not much accumulation of snow as yet on the ground. I sat in the plane and, to say the least, was quite nervous as I watched them load the belly of the plane with freight and then saw a full capacity of passengers come aboard. I had been transferred to a four motored craft -- United's largest commercial plane, at the Omaha, Nebraska airport.

Before take-off the pilot set the brakes on that huge aircraft at the end of the runway and tested each one of those four motors two on each wing. I was sitting where I could observe all four. My imagination went back to some of those outstanding church services I had been in. When the pilot revved up the outside motor on the right wing until the whole plane fairly shook and trembled I thought of the time when an old-time saint of God would get up and testify until the glory fell and the shouts of victory rang. I could imagine the pilot saying to that motor, "That's wonderful, you out there, you can quiet down now. We would like to hear the outside motor on the left wing testify." Again as that motor was revved up it also made that great craft tremble and shake and all but take off. In those testimony meetings when one saint would finally sit down another would get up. Again the glory fell. It was likewise with the two inner motors. We had sat through a completely victorious testimony meeting.

In those days the pilot's ear was trained to detect any questionable sound coming from any one of those powerful motors and if there was a question about any one of them he would ground the plane and not risk a "take-off." On this particular flight the testimony service of all four motors was wonderful. Each motor tested perfect so, in spite of the storm that was raging, the pilot got a signal from the tower to proceed. (Wonderful when heaven answers back that all is well.) That powerful flying machine was swung around in position at the end of the runway and seatbelts were securely fastened by each passenger. That time I fastened mine extra tight. Full power was turned on and we were pinned to the back of our seat as the plane continued to pick up speed. It was headed down the middle of the runway right into the face of that winter storm. The plane seemed to fairly leap into the air and reeled and rocked from the fierceness of the oncoming wind and falling snow. Up and up, higher and higher we climbed until all of a sudden, it seemed, our flight became smooth as glass and we were out of the storm, having mounted above it all. Up above, it was a beautiful moonlit night. From our vantage point we could look down upon the storm.

It was then I looked out the window and the cowling on the two motors to my right appeared as if they were literally on fire. I looked out to the left side and the cowling on both those motors looked the same. My heart came up into my mouth and I called the stewardess. When she came I pointed out to the motors and said, "Look, we're on fire! We need to pray!"

She was a lot calmer than I thought she ought to be under the circumstances. She explained to me, "Mister, we have just pulled above a fierce winter storm. The pilot has had to keep full power on for over the first ten minutes of our flight. The cowling on those motors are not really on fire. You can see they are red hot but we will be all right. As a general rule the pilot is not allowed to keep full power on for over a couple of minutes, enough time to get the craft airborne, and then power is cut back. But sir, we have come through quite a fierce storm and the pilot had to keep full power on longer than ordinary to get us above that storm, causing those motor coverings to get red hot. He has already cut the power back and there is nothing to be troubled about." I was able to relax when I observed what to me looked like fire leaving those four motor coverings.

This all reminded me of those times when the church faced seemingly insurmountable difficulties and fierce attacks from the enemy. At those times old-time saints would keep the prayer chambers red hot with their groanings and prayers and intercessions until God came on the scene.

True to their promise the United Airline Company landed me safely at my destination. And just as sure as we will stay aboard the Old Ship Zion, and keep the prayer rooms red hot with victorious intercessory praying, she will land us safely on the shores of eternal bliss, having weathered all the storms encountered on the way! Praise God forever!

\* \* \*

#### 40 -- FLYING WITH ILLEGAL TICKETS

My daughter, Keren, and I landed in Lagos, Nigeria at 8:30 p.m., November 5, 1992. Gary, my son, Provost of Wesley International Bible College in Owerri, Nigeria, met us at the International Airport. We spent the night in the home of Brother and Sister Obasi the three of us in one room with two double beds. It was dark. There was no electricity. It was hot. We were miserable. We got no sleep!

By 6:00 a.m. the next day we were at the domestic airport to book a flight to Port Harcourt. Gary got us booked on what was supposed to be the first flight of the day to Port Harcourt, leaving at 8:00 o'clock. It was raining. We three walked out a long way to our waiting plane, a two-propeller jet prop. Waiting to board we stood under the wing to keep dry.

After standing under the wing of our supposed flight way past time for takeoff, we were informed that the plane had to be grounded because of mechanical problems. Back to the ticket office we went, collected our luggage that had been sent out, collected our fares and Gary paid the fares to get us booked on another flight, a larger jet plane. It was another struggle to be sure our luggage was also being transferred. We were given new tickets. They were actually illegal tickets that were sold to us but we were not aware of this. They didn't even have our names on them. Then all three of us made our way out even farther than before to our waiting plane. Already a large crowd had gathered but no one was boarding. Soon we saw the crowd dispersing and learned that that plane was also grounded for mechanical reasons.

By that time we had lost track of our five heavy pieces of luggage. Keren and I decided to take our carry-on luggage and go to the airport waiting room, relax and claim Romans 8:28 and just wait until another flight could be booked. We still held the illegal tickets which had been sold to us. Gary disappeared. We didn't know where he went.

By this time it was getting on toward 11:00 o'clock. There was a flight scheduled for 11:00 a.m. and another for 12:00 noon. We heard the 11:00 o'clock flight being called and many people left the waiting area. All of a sudden a man came, grabbed our carry-on luggage and told us to hurry. He said, "Your flight is loaded and ready to leave," and began running to the waiting plane. The jet aircraft was sitting out on the ramp at least two city blocks distant from us. Keren ran after the man and I came along as fast as I could. When I arrived at the plane Keren had already boarded

and I followed and boarded. They didn't seem to notice our illegal tickets. But where was Gary? What had happened to him?

In the meantime Gary had gone to the airline manager's office to talk to the manager and get things straightened out for a flight to Port Harcourt. When the manager found out that we three had illegal tickets he told Gary he would have to go and get the tickets Keren and I held so he could issue us legal ones. He further told Gary that there was no way he could get us on the eleven o'clock flight but he could get us on the noon flight. Gary left his ticket with the manager and went to the waiting room to get Keren's and my tickets but when he got to the waiting room someone (it must have been an angel or someone appointed by God or he would never have known what had happened to us) told him we had left to board the 11:00 o'clock flight. Hearing this Gary took off running to catch us and tell us we couldn't go on that flight but would have to wait for legal tickets and then take the noon flight.

By the time Gary got to the plane Keren and I were already on board and the pilot had the jets revved up for takeoff. When Gary started to board they wouldn't let him he had no ticket. His ticket was back at the manager's office. He tried to explain, "My dad and sister are on that plane. They do not have legal tickets to make this flight." No one would listen to him and as he looked up at the top of the steps the stewardess was standing in the entryway to the plane and motioned him to come on up. He dashed up the steps and entered the plane and before he could make any explanation immediately the stewardess closed the door, the steps were rolled back and the plane moved out to the end of the runway for takeoff. There was a seat or two unoccupied so there was nothing to do but settle down and enjoy a flight that neither he nor Karen and I had really had any right to be on.

But now, where was our luggage? The last we saw it, it was on a cart with a lot of other luggage stuck in a mudhole they seemed unable to get out of. It had been raining all morning.

It could only have been a providence of God. Gary had put down money for our tickets and overweight luggage but none of us had tickets for that flight and Gary's ticket was back in the manager's office.

We had a pleasant flight to Port Harcourt, around an hour, and as the custom is, when a domestic flight lands they off-load the luggage right at the airplane for passengers to claim. And, wonder of wonders, all three of us went through on a flight we had no right to be on and all our luggage was on that flight.

It was certainly a providence of God! Best of all I felt perfectly at ease and relaxed. Romans 8:28 proved true one more time and also Isaiah 26:3, 4, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."

\* \* \*

In many of the third world countries the airlines tend to overbook the flights and, as a rule, do not give seat assignments. When the flight is called there is a mad dash to the waiting plane parked always a good ways out from the airport building. If one doesn't get out there among the first he might not get a seat on that flight. Twice Wife and I would have been left behind if we had not been of the white race and from the U.S.A.

The first time was when we were leaving Guyana, South America to come home after a nine-week stay, and had, supposedly, reservations very far ahead of flight time and had it confirmed close to flight time. If we missed that particular flight out we would have had to return the twenty-five miles back into Georgetown, book another flight and for the next several weeks all outgoing flights had been booked and overbooked. We were in no shape physically nor psychologically to have had to do this. Before passing into the boarding area, the flight list we should have been listed on was checked and our names were not even on the list for that flight. Brother Wayne Stracener, the missionary in charge of that field, checked with the manager of the airport. A phone call was made back to the airline office in Georgetown to check why our names had been omitted. Before that could be checked our flight was called and every seat in the plane immediately filled. The airport manager ordered the plane to wait before taking off.

I do not know what all took place behind the scene but as we waited I noticed, as I looked out, two people got off the plane and came back into the airport. After that Wife and I were ordered to go out and board. As we were leaving the airport Brother Stracener told us had we been natives we would have been left behind but because of his and the airport manager's intervention they bumped two natives off that flight in favor of us.

Our second experience happened in Lagos, Nigeria. After purchasing tickets we waited for the call of our flight from Lagos to Port Harcourt. The flight was postponed several times. When we were finally ordered to load another announcement came that there would be yet another delay of at least twenty minutes, but, almost immediately after that we were ordered to load. Wife, thinking she had time, had gone into the ladies' room. I sent word for her to come at once but then the mad dash to the plane had been made and when we boarded, only one seat was left and it was clear in the back and had no seat cushion. We both made our way clear to the back. When we discovered there was only one available seat, instead of putting one of us off, the stewardess gave one of us her seat. I didn't notice what she did on takeoff. This is something that would never have happened in the United States. We made the flight and were happy to get to our destination on time.

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### SECTION 3 -- EXPERIENCES IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

#### 42 -- CHURCHES THAT SURVIVE IN SPITE OF THEIR PASTORS

I marvel at times at the patience and longsuffering a church has with its pastor. R. T. Williams, former General Superintendent of The Church of the Nazarene, once stated that most, if not all, problems that develop in a local church are either pastor caused or pastor related.

My first church was a home mission church and it's a wonder it survived and grew like it did! I was young and zealous, but green and quite ignorant concerning all the ramifications of pastoring a church. I admit that at that time I could never have been convinced that I was as ignorant as I was. I was a college graduate with a post-graduate degree. I guess you could say I was ignorant of my ignorance but zealous for God's cause and determined to have a spiritual church and a growing church.

\* \* \*

#### 43 -- I ALMOST SPLIT THE FIRST CHURCH I PASTORED

I considered that one of the marks of a Christian and of being spiritual was faithfulness to the means of grace, the minimum being faithful attendance at the Sunday morning Sunday school and preaching services, the Sunday night evangelistic service, and the mid-week prayer meeting. I was taught this and still believe this as a general rule. I had a small group of wonderful people to pastor a group of fifteen to begin with that soon grew to around one hundred. In that small beginning group at least half were farmers. Although not flush with ready cash they supported us well with what they had and were faithful-faithful with the exception of attending mid-week prayer meeting. They (the farmers) never came. It was my duty, I sincerely believed, to see to it they did attend for their own spiritual welfare. The method I went about to get these offenders to attend was not the best, as I later realized. It must have been my sincerity in what I was doing, or my stupidity, that saved the day for me, my people and the church.

I used the pulpit exclusively to begin with to solve the problem. I came at them from every angle I could think of. I gave them John Wesley. I had read that John Wesley taught that to attend the Sunday morning worship service, the Sunday evening evangelistic service and the mid-week prayer service was the very minimum a Christian could get by with and keep from backsliding. And besides this, daily Bible reading and personal devotions plus the reading of good, edifying devotional books was necessary. I gave them my interpretation of the Bible about faithfulness to ALL the essential means of grace. I persisted in this. I got it in somehow and somewhere about every service. Matthew 6:33 was a favorite text. This went on unremittingly far too long!

It got to be noticeably and embarrassingly very apparent to everyone. Two groups sat before me the "sinners" (those who attended only on Sundays), and the "saints" (those who attended Sundays and the mid-week service). The "saints" began to really wonder about the "sinners." I caused them to start looking at each other. Confidences were being shaken. Surely the "sinners" had heard the truth and were not walking in the light and I, their pastor, had been faithful to preach the unvarnished truth. I had split my church right down the middle. Why some of my good people didn't leave me I'll never know for sure, but God was patient and longsuffering and the people were tolerant.

While praying one day the faithful Holy Spirit opened my eyes and let me see what I was doing to my people. I was really hurting both the "saints" as well as the "sinners."

What did I do? I started earnestly to really pastor my people. I called on them personally and privately people on both sides of the issue. I begged their forgiveness for attacking them from

the pulpit. At best, that is what it looked like although I was sincere at heart. I got up early and went out to the farms and helped the farmers with their early morning chores and prayed with them. I listened to what they had to say. They were hardworking people. My heart went out to them. They were struggling to make ends meet. They worked early and late every weekday. I expressed my confidence in them and my love for them. They had been faithful in supplying the parsonage with meat, eggs, milk and vegetables from the farm. I did not compromise my position on the necessity of being faithful to the means of grace in order to be victorious in their Christian experience. I reasoned with them on a one-to-one basis and was careful to listen to what they had to say. God brought the church together in a marvelous way. The farmers began to show up on prayer meeting night. The church began to grow in numbers and in spirit. Sinners were getting saved and believers sanctified wholly. All praise be to God!

I wonder at times how often we as preachers unconsciously try to convince people of some truth by our own efforts and methods instead of relying on the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit to apply the truth to their hearts in His own time and way?

\* \* \*

#### 44 -- KEEPING A CHURCH UNITED

A division came over the matter of getting a church parsonage. Believe it or not, a preacher and his family are human beings and need a house to live in. My first pastorate started out as a home mission project. A small group of people bought two good-sized lots in a small town. On the corner lot a basement was dug, cement walls poured, and a roof was put on. Half of the basement was used as an auditorium and the other half for the parsonage. There was just Wife and me to begin with.

It was not long until we had to move out of the living quarters in the basement for two reasons: our family was growing and our church was growing. We moved into a tiny rented house. One day the question of getting a church parsonage came up. At that time a new highway was under construction and to make way for it houses would have to be moved off the proposed right-of-way. Should the church buy one of those houses being sold at a bargain price and move it on our second lot or should we build a new house?

When we met the church board to decide the issue one brother very excitedly related a "vision" he had from God of buying and moving one of those available houses. He was very positive he had heard from Heaven and that it was God's will without a doubt. Following that "revelation account" silence reigned. It took a while for the second brother to get up courage to relate his vision." He too felt so definitely that he had heard from Heaven and the instruction he got was not to buy a house to-be-moved but build a new house and thereby have a parsonage of our own planning that would be more what the church would really want a parsonage to be. When the vote was taken it was fifty-fifty! What could or should a young pastor do in a situation like that? At that point I adjourned the meeting. I was really afraid to open it up for discussion but advised that we take more time for consideration.

I did some fasting and a lot of praying the rest of the week. I could not afford to have the church split over the matter of a parsonage, and I was their leader. By the end of the week it was very clear to me what I was to preach to my people on Sunday morning. My text was Psalm 133:1, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" I preached to them what God told me to preach. The matter of securing a parsonage, in the final analysis, was not a life or death matter keeping the unity of the Spirit in our midst was! I testified to them that Wife and I had been praying and we were willing to live in a tent on the empty lot beside the church if it took that to keep the church united, but we were not willing to see the church divided over a parsonage. I made it clear that this was in all due respect to all who had differing views of how to go about securing a parsonage for the preacher to live in.

God honored that service with an unusual visitation. Both sides were melted together and more strongly united than ever. It was not time to press an issue that potentially would divide us. As time moved on it became providentially clear to all that the right thing was to build.

A good lesson to learn here is that time, patience, the grace of God, and maintaining unity at all cost, solve the greatest percent of church problems if all are willing to keep humble and abide God's timing.

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#### 45 -- SECURING BUILDING MATERIAL -- A MIRACLE

The time came for the church to build the basement part of the new parsonage. It came to pass as a double miracle securing finances and buying building material. It was in the early days of World War II. Money was scarce and hard to come by, but it was a day when a dollar was a dollar. The two of us, Wife and I, could easily buy groceries on five dollars a week. A rather wealthy old sinner man who lived in that vicinity began attending services in our little, humble basement church. He took a real interest in me personally and offered, unsolicited, to loan the church enough money to build the basement part of a new parsonage at a ridiculously low interest rate and at ten dollars a month payments, including principal and interest. And he gave us the privilege of paying it all off as quickly as we were able. If this basement was built, Wife and I could move out of the house the church was renting. The rent money was more than enough to make double or more payments on the loan.

There was only one problem. There was no building material available for money to buy. During the war the government had "frozen" all building materials for government use only, so the church board vetoed any borrowing of money. If we secured the offered loan all we could do was let it lay in the bank and pay interest on it.

As I continued to pray I felt strongly impressed that then was the time to go ahead and borrow the money. Had not God sent this man along right at that time for us to go ahead and build? This became such a strong conviction that I was sure God was in it. I persuaded the board to let me go ahead, which they did very reluctantly. It was not a huge sum of money and if worst came to worst any one of the three or four families in the church could have easily handled the note.

I had no personal trepidations in proceeding to borrow the money. Although it is not wise to follow impressions alone I not only felt impressed to go ahead but felt strongly that we would grieve the Lord if we didn't. The very day our sinner friend and I walked out from the bank where we transferred the loan money from his account into the church's account the government released the "freeze" on "little mills" lumber and building material. In Idaho there are numbers of small lumber mills as well as major ones. This release only lasted two weeks after which the "freeze" was put back on. We had drawn up a materials list that we would need to put in the basement, put the sub-floor on for the upper structure and a temporary roof on the basement part where it would be ready for us to move into. During the two weeks we purchased, hauled in, and stacked on the lot all the material we needed except for some plumbing pieces it would take to plumb the house for occupancy. The day we bought the last materials we needed the "freeze" was put back on. The neighbors marveled when we began to build.

\* \* \*

#### 46 -- WHERE GOD GUIDES HE PROVIDES -- ANOTHER MIRACLE

I have learned in life that when and where God guides or leads, if we continue to obey, He will not leave us stranded along the way. Isaiah assures us of this as we read in chapter 49:11, "And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted." Mountains are God's ways and we were up against a mountain when it came to getting ALL the plumbing material we would have to have.

We secured a plumber to do the rough-in work and when he came to look over the job and materials, we lacked three or four pieces of plumbing that were essential to complete the job. He told me if we could secure these necessary pieces he would do the work free of charge. I cannot vouch for this, but I am sure he felt safe in offering his service free knowing we would not be able to secure what was missing. Those particular pieces were "frozen" items on the government list and had not been nor would be released for public purchase.

In prayer one day I felt directed to go to a wholesale plumbing outlet in a certain city not too far distant. This I did and when I presented my need to the clerk he all but laughed at me. People were coming and going. I backed away and stood there silently praying. I waited until only the clerk and I were there alone. He looked at me and again asked, "What is it you need?" When I repeated my request, without a word, he left. I waited and prayed. After quite considerable time he returned with every piece I needed, laid them down and made out the bill saying, "I don't know why I am selling these to you but here they are!" I paid for them without a word, testified to the man and left. When I called the plumber he was much surprised that I had secured the pieces he would need, but he kept his word.

While we were building the neighbors came around and said to me, "How come you can build and we cannot!" This gave me a wonderful opportunity to testify of God's great redemptive program and His sacrifice to save us from eternal loss. And then, of course, I related to them God's perfect timing in helping us secure the building materials.

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## 47 -- WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY -- A MIRACLE

It was in my first pastorate and during war days. I had offered to enter the armed service of our country. My brothers had been called to enter the military services and I felt I should at least offer to do my part in the great conflict our country was in. When I volunteered I was rejected on the basis of a 4F classification and also as being pastor of a church and married and having one child at that time.

I had a problem. New land that had been a vast expanse of desert was being turned into farmland and families by the dozens were moving into that country. This was in the area where I was pioneering a home mission work. To begin with we had dug a basement, roofed it and were worshiping in it but we soon had the upper structure added and the congregation was growing. The problem was that we had no way to heat our church auditorium and it was impossible to buy a furnace as the government had frozen all building materials, including heating units. I was told I would just have to wait until the war was over to get a furnace to heat the church building. After I had run down every lead possible with no results I decided to write directly to Washington, D.C. to the man who was in charge of building materials for the whole United States.

My appeal was that my country had turned me down from entering the armed services and sent me back to pastor my church and I was in a country where new land was being developed and families were moving into the area by the dozens and at least needed a church they could attend.

I waited, but not long. When the answer came I had in my hands papers from Washington, D.C. giving me permission to buy a furnace for my church. There was no way a furnace company could turn me down. We purchased at cost one of the best furnaces made in that day.

The impossible had been accomplished!

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## 48 -- WE SOUGHT HELP FROM THE POPE IN ROME

The Bible Missionary Church pioneered a Bible college in Rock Island, Illinois. A seven-acre plot of land was offered them if they would come there to establish a proposed four-year Bible college in which to train young people for Christian ministries. The land would be a gift to the Bible Missionary Church. This offer was accepted.

In the fall of 1958 a building program was started on the donated land and that same fall a four-year Bible college was instituted. During that first semester, classes were held in an old vacated public grade school building out a ways from town, awaiting the construction of permanent buildings on the donated ground in town. By second semester the building program had progressed enough to move the school to its permanent location. At first school and church were combined in one building, but by 1960 attendance had grown until a church building was needed to accommodate the growing congregation.

The Catholics were building a large church in their Rock Island parish and had turned their old church building into a recreation center. When we inquired about purchasing this old church building we ran into two barriers. The first one was finance. The parish priest at that time, Monsignor Jordan, looking at us from his standpoint, just knew we were too small a crowd to raise that much money. Their buying price was \$32,000.00. According to Priest Jordan we didn't have enough heads of families to even consider it. "How can you, being such a small group, handle it?" he asked. I told him our people are Bible Christians and tithe their income into the local church where they are members and also give, beyond the tithe, offerings that for the most part equal another ten percent of their income. He was having financial trouble in a large parish to keep his big building plans going. His "Bingo" program and similar means of raising money weren't bringing in all that was needed. He said to me, "Maybe I had better get you to come to my church and present the tithing program!" He actually wasn't very serious about that but I told him I would be glad to come and preach to his people, but tithing would only be a minor part of the message. He decided it wouldn't be for his best interest to have me come!

When we went to the bank, whose officers were mostly Catholic men, we had no problem borrowing the money. By that time our Bible school had been in operation for two years and we had proven ourselves a group of financially reliable people.

The second barrier in buying this church was of a different nature. The Catholic priest didn't know if he would be allowed to sell it to Protestants. They were using it as a recreation hall for their young people but needed the money a sale would bring. When Monsignor Jordan inquired of his superior officer, the Bishop of the Peoria Diocese, he was himself not sure. To be safe he contacted Roman Catholic authorities in Rome. No doubt it was one of the Catholic cardinals who was over one of the congregations in Rome that had that authority from the Pope and who finally gave the "go-ahead" permission.

No! Protestants do not need the help of the Pope in Rome in their labors for the Master unless, that is, in matters pertaining to property or the like that they would like to purchase from the Catholics!

\* \* \*

49 -- WHATEVER I SAID WOULD BE IT

He was a member of the church I pastored, a vibrant Christian, a man well along in years and living alone. Spiritually, he was a bright spot in the church and his testimony never failed to "ring the bell."

He was married when he was a young man before he and his wife became Christians. They had several children but as time passed they were divorced and each remarried. Children were born to the former wife in her second marriage. One child was born to him in his second marriage. Her second husband died leaving her alone, now advanced in years. His second companion left him for at least another marriage and in time he, in advanced years, was left alone.

He came to me, his pastor, one day and told me that he had been praying and since his first wife was alone and lonely and he also was alone and lonely, would it be all right if they would remarry and finish up their life together? She was, after all, his first love. He further said to me, "Pastor, whatever you say, that will be it!" He was not a man ignorant of the Word of God, for he had been habitually reading the Bible through every few months from Genesis to Revelation for quite some time. He had read everything the Bible had to say about marriage and divorce.

What kind of an answer could I give him or would I give him? Whatever I would say to him, that was what he would do. Here were a lonely woman and a lonely man both awaiting my answer. Would my answer have to be one that would continue to shut them up to aloneness until death was their lot? I said to my dear brother in the Lord, "Please give me at least two weeks to pray about this."

After two weeks of praying and seeking God for the right thing to tell this dear brother, I went to him and told him that all I could say was what I felt God wanted me to tell him. I did have words from God for him.

I first called his attention to Romans 14:22-23, "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth . . . for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." I then called his attention to the passage over in Hebrews 10:38-39, "Now the just shall live by faith . but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

I said to this dear brother, "At this moment you are a man of a bright, clear faith in the saving, sanctifying and keeping grace of God. Above everything else and whatever it may cost you in this life, you must keep a clear faith in God as your personal Saviour and Sanctifier. If there would be anything in your personal life that would cause you to draw back from a clear faith you would endanger your immortal soul-to draw back from a clear faith is to end in perdition (damnation). If going back to your first wife would put any kind of a cloud over your faith it would not be worth it. If you can go back to her and still maintain the clear faith you now have, you would be safe. Whether you can or not will be up to you." He said to me, "It looks like it is my time to pray." I soon moved away from that pastorate. Later I learned that they had gotten together and had not lived that way long until God called the wife in death. From all reports I have heard they both maintained a vibrant Christian experience through to the end. By now the man himself has made the crossing into the world beyond.

\* \* \*

## 50 -- THE MEAL WE COULDN'T EAT

One meal my wife cooked we had to throw in the garbage. A sinner friend of mine his wife was a good Christian and member of our church went duck hunting out of season. To share his hunt, and possibly to ease his conscience, he stopped by the parsonage and gave us two of the ducks he had killed. If the preacher accepted then he would feel better about eating some himself. At least it appeared that way.

My wife questioned the whole business but I reasoned, the ducks are dead and we were not the ones guilty of shooting them out of season. Why waste the meat? Go ahead, stuff them with dressing, put them in the oven and roast them. That was the best way to prepare wild ducks for eating and Wife was an expert at it. Besides that, we could stand a boost about that time in our food larder. So Wife, with doubts, although faithfully obedient to her husband, went ahead, prepared the ducks and put them in the oven to roast.

In the meantime I was in my study endeavoring to prepare for the coming Sunday's messages. I say endeavoring, for I was mostly wrestling with ducks shot out of season. It was a losing battle and I finally gave it up and went over to the parsonage which was next door to the church. By that time the ducks, stuffed with dressing, had been roasted to perfection and were ready for consumption. I said to my wife, "Honey, I am very sorry that I have put you to all the trouble preparing ducks for us to eat, but they are going to have to go in the garbage," and in the garbage they went.

I then hurried over to the home of my friend to make my confession. When I knocked on the door it scared his wife something awful. She was hiding behind their cookstove working to get ducks ready for them to eat and supposed I might have been the game warden. Mainly, however, she was having a real battle over her pastor. She knew we had accepted two ducks her husband had given us.

When I told her I couldn't get a message to preach Sunday until those two ducks that her husband gave us went into the garbage, she came out from behind the stove shouting. Their ducks went into the garbage. We explained it all to her husband and surprisingly he was happy about what we had done. In fact he was a little puzzled and, I think, somewhat disappointed in me that I had accepted his "gift" in the first place.

We read in I Timothy 5:22, that you are not to ". . . be [a] partaker of other men's sins: [but] keep thyself pure." By accepting ducks shot out of season we were partaking of this man's sin by our influence of a bad example for others to follow, by inference that came in consequence of a bad example, and by upholding a man in his sin.

I was thankful I had heard and heeded the voice of God to me in this case for my own soul's sake, for the sake of this man and his wife and for the influence of my own ministry.

\* \* \*

## 51 -- I KICKED HIM INTO VICTORY

He was a whiner. When he testified he gave more glory to Satan than to God! The devil this, the devil that and I have grieved God, etc., etc., went his dampening, defeating testimony in our services.

One day I visited him in his home upon his invitation to "please come and help me." He and I were kneeling at the sofa in the front room. His wife was in the kitchen kneading bread dough but could see us from where she stood.

I was praying along with him and then decided to stop and listen to him pray. He was whining out a sickly prayer telling God why he couldn't get through and keep a real experience. I backed away and just listened and watched. I noticed his wife also watching. I can't tell you why but suddenly I got the urge to stand up and kick him in the "seat of the britches." And I did that very thing.

It startled him! His wife ducked out of sight. He swung around and said, "Why, Brother Maxey!" But this was the very thing God used to jar him out of his half-hearted living and periodical seeking.

I urged him "Be a man, not a constant whiner and sympathy seeker." I assured him that God had made a covenant with man to redeem him from sin and to sanctify him wholly and now he must get down to the serious business of making an all-out covenant of total honesty and surrender to God. We can count on God. He will not break His covenant with us. We read in Psalm 89:43, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." We must pray it clear through until we have it absolutely settled that with His help we will not break our covenant with Him. And then we must believe God will do what He promised to do!

It was not long until this man had found a vital and settled, saved and sanctified experience of divine grace in his heart! He stood firm from then on and became an example of a steadfast man of God.

\* \* \*

## 52 -- THE SIMPLE FAITH OF A LAYMAN

Frances was a trucker by trade, a member of the church I pastored. He owned his own truck and made a meager living by doing custom hauling for whoever would hire him to haul whatever they needed hauled. He was a hard worker and although he lacked much in formal education he was a man who loved his Lord and had a ready witness to a vital Christian experience. He was a man of strong, simple faith in God. Besides that, he was a very generous man and loved to serve others in every way he could.

One day a preacher who pastored the Holiness Methodist Church\* in the town where we lived (Sidney, Montana), and where I pastored the Church of the Nazarene, was called to pastor a church in a town in the middle of the adjoining state, North Dakota. This preacher had no means to move himself or money to hire someone to move him. Frances, hearing of this preacher's plight, went to him and offered to move him without charge. He came to me to help him in this undertaking. He said to me, "Brother Maxey, God will not let me down. He has assured me that if I would move this preacher brother without charge He would supply me with a pay load on the way back home."

We had the truck loaded with our brother's household furnishings late one day and very early the following morning we headed out. By mid-afternoon or even later we had made it to our destination, unloaded the truck and started back. When we got back on the highway and headed

back west toward home, I said, "Frances, where are you going to pick up that pay load you told me God promised you?" All he said was, "God will let me know where it is!"

Every time we passed a farm he would slow down and pray. We had gone past only a very few farms when he turned into a lane leading into a farmyard and said to me, "Here is where I will get my pay load to take back to Sidney." The farmer met us as we drove in. He had been wanting someone to haul a load of grain to the grain elevators in Sidney, Montana where we lived. We were not long in loading the truck and happy on our way back home with the promised pay load.

But this is not all the story. When we started out on this venture we knew that one of the front tires on the truck was not in the best shape and we wondered if it would make the trip. We had no sooner gotten back on the highway with the load of grain when that tire began to lose air a little at a time. By then it was getting dark and quite a bit past closing time. In that part of the country all the businesses in the little towns along the highway closed fairly early for the night and, as the saying goes, they even roll up the sidewalks if they have sidewalks. I said to my friend, "We'll never be able to make it home with that tire" (We had no spare). His answer, "Brother Maxey, God will have help for us just where and when we need it." We had not gone much farther after he said that until we both knew we would soon be immobile. But about that same time we looked on down the highway. We could see lights. There was a service station all lighted up and a man all alone standing out looking up the road in our direction. The tire held up just long enough to get us to that station. When we got there the man said to us, "This is way past my usual closing time. I can't explain it but I just couldn't close. I felt like someone would come along that needed help and now here you are! It is plain for me to see that you are why I couldn't close on time and go home." While the tire was being repaired we had a rejoicing time at the wonderful providences of God.

After the tire was repaired and we were ready to hit the road again, my friend turned the wheel over to me. He had a wonderful relaxed sleep while I drove the payload on home.

Frances was amply paid for his trip and I was marvelously lifted in my faith by this layman's humbleness and simple faith in God's care for him.

To God be the Glory!

\*The Holiness Methodist Church of which our preacher brother was a member, is a small denomination of holiness churches of around 25 congregations scattered throughout Montana, North and South Dakota, Minnesota and Illinois with headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The preacher we moved, an older man, later became the General Superintendent of this group of churches. He has since been promoted to a better world!

\* \* \*

53 -- WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE?

We planned a baptismal service in a lake. There were several candidates who chose immersion as the mode by which they should be baptized. One young woman was mortally afraid of water but insisted that I baptize her by immersion.

Quite a large crowd had gathered on the bank of the lake. I had surveyed the passage in and out of the water where we had chosen to do the baptizing and made sure all was well and safe at that particular place.

We sang some appropriate songs, had the candidates testify and, with an assistant standing beside me in the waist deep water, I proceeded to baptize. People on the bank were taking pictures and among them was one with a movie camera. When it came the turn of this particular young lady who was so afraid of the process, she automatically and without thinking resisted my efforts to immerse her and in so doing I did not get her clear under. The top of her head still showed above water. Before she could leave the water I said to her so only she could hear, "I am sorry, but I did not get you totally immersed." Then I proceeded to baptize her again and saw to it that she went clear under. Some that stood on the bank and did not realize what had happened criticized me quite severely for a "double dunking" and further terrorizing an innocent person. I realized, however, when this young lady, being a very conscientious person, saw the movie picture that was then being taken, seeing she was not totally immersed, would never be satisfied unless she was again baptized and put clear under.

When the movie film was developed and people had viewed it, I was vindicated and the young woman was happily satisfied.

\* \* \*

#### 54 -- YOU CAN AT LEAST SAY "THANKS"

While I was pastoring The Church of the Nazarene in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, once a month I would give an illustrated message on Sunday mornings. We had around one hundred children coming to Sunday school. At its close we would bus them all back home except on that one Sunday. On that Sunday we made an effort to get not only the children but their parents to stay after a short Sunday school session to hear and see the illustrated message. This proved quite effective in our outreach.

It was Thanksgiving Sunday morning and I gave an appropriate illustrated message for the Thanksgiving Season, emphasizing the need of being thankful and expressing our thankfulness to God and others for kindnesses received from them. At the close of the message I had all the children march up to the front. I gave them each a small gift. While they marched by I asked some of them to come up on the platform but let the others go back to their seats. I had detained only eleven out of around one hundred children. I then asked the crowd why they thought I had these eleven come up on the platform. You guessed it -- or did you? They were the only ones out of that group of one hundred that said "thank you" when I gave them their gift. The point was well made!

It was somewhat embarrassing for those who failed to say "thank you," especially just following that message.

\* \* \*

## 55 -- A SIX-YEAR-OLD CHILD WANTED TO SEEK GOD

A young married couple were attending where I was pastoring. They had two small boys, the oldest, a six-year-old. This couple were not Christians. One Sunday morning there was an unusually strong moving of the Spirit on the service and at the close I had the congregation stand and sing an invitation song. While the people sang I walked down one aisle slowly, crossed over in the back of the auditorium to the other aisle and started back to the platform. As I passed where this couple was standing the young woman caught my sleeve and stopped me. She said to me, "My son here (the six-year-old) wants to go to the altar and get saved." The lad was weeping. She asked me, "Should I let him? I feel he is too young to know what it is all about." I encouraged her to let the lad seek God and said to her, "I am afraid if you do not let him go to the altar you will regret that you didn't. 'Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'" She didn't let the child go forward. That week the boy was killed in an auto accident.

We do not know nor can we always tell when a spiritual awakening may come to a child. Neither do we know when a child comes to the age of accountability. No doubt some come to that time at a very young and tender age. However, when a child senses the moving of the Spirit in his heart, that is certainly a time when we should encourage him to look to Jesus and believe Him to come into his heart.

It was a sad experience for that family to lose that child and especially following that Sunday morning service!

\* \* \*

## 56 -- BURY ME IN THIS DRESS

Siebrigje De Vries was a lovely young lady in her late teens. Sin had taken a toll on her and sinful habits bound her. She attended our church in Sidney, Montana and was a member of our Sunday school. On occasions she sought God. Wife and I spent many hours with her in prayer. But always our prayers seemed to go so far and no farther. She had a pleasant personality and we were always happy when she would come to our home. Her own people attended another holiness church in town but she preferred to attend the Church of the Nazarene of which I was pastor.

I was away from home down in the southeast corner of South Dakota. There was a city-wide revival being conducted up in Sidney where I pastored. Siebrigje was attending this revival. One night she was under heavy conviction and during the altar call a personal worker, noticing this, went to her to invite her to the altar. She resisted the invitation and rather flippantly said, "Just bury me in this dress I have on." She was dressed in a very lovely dress.

The next day I received a phone call from my wife who was back at our home in Sidney. Siebrigje had been killed that morning in a freak automobile accident. Her body had been so

mutilated her funeral would have to be a closed casket service. Her family was calling on me to conduct the funeral. As I prayed for direction and for the message I could not get away from the text in Proverbs 29:1, "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

When I returned home I felt I should go to Siebrigje's people and request that they get their pastor to conduct the funeral as the only message I could get was from the above text. I felt it would be almost too severe for the family to handle, but they insisted I go ahead.

It was a large funeral with the church packed to capacity and the churchyard also full of people.

We laid Siebrigje's body away in a lonely grave up in the northeast corner of the state of Montana to await the summons to resurrection and final judgment!

\* \* \*

## 57 -- CARNALITY IS A KILLER

Carnality caused a mother to kill her own child! Charles Colson, in *Who Speaks for God*, tells about the time when Eichmann the Nazi, the man who was the principal architect of the holocaust when six million Jews were put to death, was finally brought to trial. Questions were asked: "How is it possible for a man to act as Eichmann acted? Was he a monster? A mad man? or was he something even more terrifying? Was he normal?"

"Normal? The executor of millions of Jews normal? When Yehiel Dinur, a concentration camp supervisor, was brought to the trial to testify against Eichman, on seeing him whom he had not seen for eighteen years, began to sob uncontrollably, then fainted, collapsing in a heap on the floor.

"Was Dinur overcome by hatred? Fear? Horrid memories? No, it was rather, as Dinur explained later, that all at once he realized Eichmann was not the godlike army officer who had sent so many to their deaths. This Eichmann was an ordinary man. 'I was afraid of myself,' said Dinur. 'I saw that I was capable to do this. I am exactly like he. The fact of the matter is that Eichmann is in all of us.' " This is so as a result of the fall -- sin is in each of us.

This was so with the mother that killed her child. I was her pastor. Her first husband died leaving her with two children. A man about her age had lost his first wife in death leaving him with two children. These two met and married, combining their families into one. They moved to the area where I was pastoring and started attending church. They were both professed Christians. The woman, however, was plagued with a vicious temper. On slight provocation she would throw an anger tantrum. She realized this, faced up to it and began seeking God for deliverance. The four of us, Wife and I, she and her husband, spent time together in prayer for this woman's deliverance. The woman wept and said, "I am afraid of myself, what might happen if I cannot get rid of this violent temper."

While she was still seeking for deliverance but before she had prayed clear through to victory and deliverance from that sin nature that was causing her so much grief, they moved to another town and no longer attended where I was pastoring. The four children (his two and her two) were close to the same ages and one of the older ones (still preschool age) had a bad bedwetting weakness that the older child that age had conquered. The bed-wetting child would anger the mother when he would wake up wet. One afternoon she was outside when this child awakened from his nap wet and came out to where she was. Her temper flared. She picked this child up by his feet and holding him upside down dashed his head up and down in a nearby irrigation ditch nearly drowning the child. Then she slammed his head against the side of a bridge that crossed the stream and finally threw him down on the bank unconscious. The child died from the injury inflicted on him.

The authorities were called in. Her husband tried to take the rap for her but when the truth came out the woman was convicted of murder and sent to the Idaho State Penitentiary.

Yes! Carnality is a killer. Carnality in the soul will not necessarily make an actual murderer out of everyone but will cause one to do things he will regret and if not cleansed out by faith in the blood of Christ will send a soul to hell!

Thank God, He has a cure for the carnal heart! (I Thess. 4:3; 5:23, 24)

\* \* \*

58 -- ILL KILL YOU!

"Red" Thorson took one good look at his wife as they sat together in church on a Sunday morning. He had not noticed until then that his wife had taken off her jewelry and was dressed in a neat, modest dress. She had been a desperate seeker and happy finder of a pure heart. In her seeking, God had convicted her for wearing jewelry and her immodest dress styles. She obeyed this new light I Peter 3:3, 4: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." I Timothy 2:9-10: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair or gold or pearls, or costly array."

When her husband noticed her plain dress and the absence of jewelry for the first time, it angered him so desperately he leaned over and said, "I'll kill you for the way you are going." He then got up and stamped out, slamming the church door.

At the close of the service "Red's" wife told me what he had threatened and said, "He does not make empty threats; what should I do?" I told her not to compromise with him but go home, get him a good dinner and we would pray. When she got home he was fuming, but told her he planned on killing the preacher instead of her.

It was the next day, Monday. I was in my study. A large, heavy-set man was there in the room with me when suddenly "Red" appeared and, not noticing the man that was there, started to make a lunge at me. Seeing what was about to happen this large man jumped on him, threw him down and started praying. "Red" struggled to throw the man off his back and to get up but when I also got on top of him and began praying, it was not long until "Red" himself began to call on God for mercy. He prayed a penitent's prayer and soon prayed clear through to victory.

After that I often heard "Red" testify that, "If it hadn't been for the preacher who dared to preach the truth and my wife who dared to walk in the light, I would no doubt be in hell today." "Red" did not live long after that.

It pays to mind God regardless of what the threats or the consequences might be!

\* \* \*

## 59 -- THE "WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT?" QUESTION

It was my habit, after the first introductory session in a basic doctrinal course, to spend a session or two on seven foundational principles. The first and foremost is that Truth is the Essence of Christ -- Christ Is Truth Incarnate. Christ stands in history as the perfect personification of "truth." It would follow then, that the "key to truth is singleness of heart to be like the Author of truth."

Down through the days of my pastoral ministry and during thirty years as a teacher in a Bible college many times young people would come to me with the ever-present question of "What is wrong with it?" -- and there was an unending litany of issues that occasioned this question.

To answer their questions I had them turn to Song of Solomon 5:9-10, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." This Scripture, along with the verses that follow, gives one of the best descriptions of Christ to be found in the Bible. The last phrase quoted above, "the chiefest among ten thousand," literally means "Standard Bearer," and is referring to Christ. By becoming incarnate Christ took upon Himself a flesh and blood body like we have and His life on earth became a pattern for us to live by. His life, therefore, is our guide and answer to what is wrong or right in life. To illustrate this truth, I related the following story:

A young man who was raised in a Christian home went off to college and was soon caught up in the wrong crowd. In the early part of the semester his mother paid him a visit. She went unannounced and when she arrived on campus she went straight to his dormitory room. It was class time so the son was not in his room at the time. When his mother entered his room she was saddened and grieved with what she saw. On the walls of this boy's room were "pin up" pictures of nearly nude women. She had taken with her a large picture of Christ with the thought of helping him fix up his room. Without waiting to see her son she hung that picture on the wall in the midst of the pornographic ones he had put up and left to go back home with a heavy, burdened heart.

A few weeks later she paid a return visit. This time when she went to his room (again during class time), she waited his coming. When he finally came he was at first startled at her presence but, gaining his composure, said to his mother, "Mom, I knew you were here a few weeks back. When I came to my room and saw what you did, at first I was angry at you. But when I got to looking at that picture of Christ in the midst of those awful pornographic ones I had put up they just didn't fit together. I knew at once that either Christ's picture would have to come down or those other ones. You see what has happened the picture of Christ hangs there alone. I am sorry, Mother, for the road I was going down, but I'm so grateful to you for your faithfulness to me. It was the turning point of my life!"

And so it is in everyone's life. Put Christ in the center of your own life and keep Him there -- He will be your Standard Bearer. Whatever doesn't harmonize with Christ's presence in your heart or whatever takes the keen edge off His sweet presence within you, to you that is sin!

\* \* \*

## 60 -- BIBLE STANDARDS IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE GRACE OF GOD

Many of the questions that young people face are related to Bible standards of living. Is it true that there is a certain set of outward standards one must accept before he can claim to know Christ as his personal Saviour and Sanctifier?

Outward Bible standards of holy living are not the requirements for the saving grace of God, but the fruit of that grace! When saving grace reaches the heart the fruit of that grace (standards of holy living) will begin to appear. God does not have a double standard when it comes to living a holy life His Word is the universal standard for revealing His will for believers. If this is so, and it is, then the question arises, "Why the difference among the people of God at this point?"

We look to another one of those seven truth principles for the answer to this somewhat puzzling question: "Truth will be revealed commensurate, or proportionate to the piety of the recipient." Simply stated, this means that the more devout and godly one is and the more one hungers and thirsts after truth, in that same proportion will truth more readily be revealed. Salvation comes to one instantaneously in a moment of time; character is developed throughout a lifetime. Salvation comes by blood and by faith but this can all be lost unless followed by a life of personal application of a disciplined life of devotion and continued obedience. There is always something sensational about a "crisis experience." But that glorious experience bears no eternal fruit if it then withers under the scorching heat of application. The Christian must constantly avail himself of the abundant grace provided to maintain his salvation.

Now the simple fact is that some receive light more rapidly than others. Some have a background of more Bible knowledge and truth than do others. Some are naturally and humanly more enthusiastic and energetic than others. Some are by nature stronger and more "spiritually" healthy than others just as in physical birth one may be an "incubator" baby while another may be born more robust and lively. This is, no doubt, why John Wesley judged a Christian not by his opinions but said, "Is thy heart right with God as my heart is right with God? If so, give me thy

hand." If the heart is right the fruit of righteous living will follow as light is apprehended and obeyed.

It is true that some develop into the fullness of the stature of Christ more rapidly than others do!

\* \* \*

## 61 -- GOD TESTED AND THE DEVIL TEMPTED

I started my ministry in a home mission work. When we organized into a church we started out with fifteen charter members. My salary was set at seven dollars a week. My wife, a registered nurse, worked in a hospital seventeen miles away and I took a part-time job in a lumberyard in the little town where we lived.

In prayer one day I received a strong impression that both Wife and I should quit our jobs, trust God for our financial needs and go full time pastoring. The more I prayed the stronger the impression came until I felt I would grieve God and He would leave me unless I obeyed the impression. So we did, encouraged by a statement Oswald Chambers once made: "Every now and then, not often, but sometimes, God brings us to a point of climax. That is the Great Divide in life; from that point we either go towards a more and more dilatory and useless type of Christian life, or we become more and more ablaze for the glory of God."

I personally felt that when God called me to preach I was to go at it full time as soon as possible, and now at that time God was moving me to do that very thing, and much sooner than I thought possible! I feel and believe every man called of God into the ministry should forsake the secular world and pursuits and put his full time into that calling. We read in I Cor. 9:13, 14, "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait on the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

The first two months our faith and pocketbook were tested to the limit. It was back when a dollar was worth a dollar and Wife and I could easily eat for one week on five dollars. There was, however, tithe to pay and offerings to give, gasoline to run the car and other personal expenses.

At the end of the first month without our job incomes, we were short sixty-three dollars in being able to pay our bills. Right at that time a member in a sister church stopped by and said to Wife and me, "God sent me by to give you this." He handed me a check. We thanked him for it and he left immediately. When I looked at the check it was for twenty dollars but had written on it "tithe." As badly as I needed the money I took it back to him and told him I could not take it because it was his tithe and he had taken a vow to put his tithe where he was a member. He said, "God told me to give you twenty dollars." I said, "Then give me twenty dollars but not twenty dollars of your tithe money." This he did and in various ways and from various sources all our needs were met that first month!

The second month God allowed us to be tested to the point that I struggled with an awful temptation to go and ask for my old job back. We waited desperately before God in prayer and the assurance came just to hold steady that I hadn't missed God's leading in quitting my job nor were we merely following a false impression. God truly was calling me to give up secular work as a means of living. Help came in time and from then on I have not taken up secular work for a living, but have put my full effort into the ministry. There were occasions when I went out on the farm to lend a helping hand to some of our farm people when they got in a bind either at seed time or harvest.

We have learned in life that our obedience to God's will is many times put to the test and sometimes quite severely but not one time has God ever failed us!

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## 62 -- THE SEQUEL -- A WARNING!

Years later I was the speaker in a ministerial convention. In this meeting were several preachers of small churches who had to work at a job to put food on the table if they were to stay in the ministry. I was well aware of this but challenged them to aim at giving full time to the ministry and seek God's leadership in the matter. I testified to my own personal experience in that convention but warned them if they were working to provide food for the table not to quit their jobs on the strength of how God had dealt with me, but seek God's particular leadership for themselves. In spite of my warning, however, one preacher went back home and immediately quit his job on the strength of my experience. Sad to say, he was soon out of the ministry altogether. Had he continued to work but sought and waited God's timing for himself the story could have ended in victory!

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## 63 -- IT HAD ALL THE MARKS OF A HOPELESS SITUATION

When the Bible Missionary Church decided to establish a Bible school in Rock Island, Illinois, a local church was started. In two years' time this church had grown to an attendance of around one hundred seventy-five. At that time I was the pastor. The school personnel consisted of three other elders, two of whom were anxious to have a church of their own to pastor. This one and only Bible Missionary church in the area had purchased a Catholic church building, put in new pews and had expensive drapes installed. This was all done with borrowed money. Finances to make loan payments were no problem for that size of congregation. But that soon changed.

With two elders anxious to have a church to pastor, it was deemed the wise thing to start churches in two of the other cities in the area. In time a church was started in the city of East Moline and one across the Mississippi River in Davenport, Iowa. The outcome was the dividing of our people into three groups. This left me with around sixty in place of one hundred seventy-five.

It was an exciting adventure for the two new churches and enthusiasm ran high. But for the group I was left with, it was a different story. The psychology of being reduced from a fairly large crowd to a third in size had a discouraging, depressing effect. With this heavy, depressed atmosphere on the church, word was spread around that the Rock Island church was "dead." Because of this some of the remaining faithful ones left to join one of the other newly organized churches.

We were faced with a financial crisis. We owed on the church property, the pews, and the drapes, and the payments were more than the reduced crowd could handle. We were unable to pay our percentages that we owed the general church and the district. Even our utility bills and my salary went begging at times. It certainly appeared to be a hopeless situation.

I was taught and believed that when a church faces insurmountable problems it was the pastor's responsibility to find the way through and give the church direction in those times. I still believe this. The spirit of depression and discouragement had not only taken its toll on the church but it was almost more than I could hold up under. I did my best, however, not to reveal what I was inwardly battling but endeavored to promote an optimistic and encouraging front. Naturally I exhorted our people to pray and I, myself, went to praying desperately and seeking for God's way through our situation.

While in prayer, God impressed me with four things that I, as pastor, should do if I wanted my church to survive. In the human, those things seemed completely ridiculous.

The first thing was to ask our General Moderator, Rev. J. E. Cook, who was also a member of the church I pastored, to put on a foreign mission service and raise as much money as he could from our congregation for missions. As desperate as we were, our mission fields were in as desperate, if not more desperate, need as we were. Above all, I knew that we must not become so engrossed within our own little circle that we lost the vision of others. We must maintain a worldwide vision at any cost. Brother Cook held a missionary service with all the enthusiasm he could muster up and presented current needs on our foreign mission fields. He raised seventeen hundred dollars from our "bankrupt" crowd while we all shouted the victory.

The second thing God had instructed me to do was to ask the business manager of our Bible college in that area to come and present the needs of the school. To operate our school financially each local church was visited once a year to raise money and it was our turn to have one of those "school services." The business manager raised fourteen hundred dollars out of my crowd.

The third direction I felt from the Lord was that I should not draw my salary from the church at that crisis time but trust the Lord for my personal needs. In those days the church paid my salary to keep that load off the school budget even though I was president of the Bible school and taught a full load.

The school year was coming to an end and I needed to be out touring churches in interest of our Bible school. I met my church board and together we agreed to have Sister E. Lorena Maynard, an elder and a strong preacher as well as a teacher in the Bible school, fill the pulpit during the summer months when I would be away. Without having to pay my salary the church could pay her a

small amount for her services. This was the fourth thing I felt God directing me to have the church do. In those days when school was out most of the students returned to their homes across the country. Summer attendance at our churches became very small.

When the school year ended Wife and I, with our family, headed out. We pulled a little fold-up trailer which, when opened up, made space for us to sleep at nights when we were not at some church where we were entertained in the parsonage.

That summer we toured in the northwest part of our country from church to church and held a revival or two. We were always scraping the bottom of the barrel and would usually end up broke at the churches we went to. Enough money came in, however, so that we kept current with our bills-house payments, car payments, utility payments and our traveling expense. While on the road traveling we had a little camp stove and would stop and cook our meals. Motels and restaurants were financially out of the question. One time we were on the west coast in the state of Oregon. We had a night off so we stopped by the oceanside in a public camping area. All we had to eat was some potatoes and a gallon of milk to drink. Besides this we had fifteen cents and gasoline enough in the car to make it to our next appointment. We bought a large onion or two with the fifteen cents. That night we enjoyed a meal of fried potatoes and onions and drank the gallon of milk while we watched the breakers roll in on the beach. That was one of the best meals I can remember. We had enough to fill us up. The next night we had a good service and offering to catch us up financially and get us on to the next service.

The summer was soon past. Arriving back home, we took up our responsibilities both at the school and our church. One of the first things I did was to call for a meeting of the church board. When we met and the treasurer gave her report I could hardly believe my ears. All of our bills were paid in full, the church percentages were paid in full, my salary was brought up to date and there was a balance in the treasury of twelve hundred dollars.

To this day I could not tell you how this all came about. God honored our obedience and faith. But this is not all the story. The depressed, discouraged atmosphere was lifted from our people. Those who had left us because we were a "dead" church came back. Our attendance began to build and while I was still pastor we were once again running around one hundred seventy-five. It could only be accounted for by the mighty intervention of the blessing of the Lord! Glory be to His wonderful Name!

It pays to do the ridiculous when God orders it!

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## SECTION 4 -- EXPERIENCES IN PREACHING

### 64 -- WHEN GOD WITHHELD A MESSAGE

I have made it a practice to never enter the pulpit without earnestly endeavoring to get the mind of God for that specific service. In a particular camp meeting the time for the final service had arrived a Sunday night service. The tabernacle was full to overflowing. I was the preacher for

the hour. I had sought earnestly to get the mind of God and the message He would have me bring for that final service. There were many spiritual needs represented in that large congregation. The Spirit had been faithful down through the days of the camp but a number had resisted the Spirit's wooing and unless they responded in that service they would leave the camp without victory. Trying in every way I knew to be faithful to God and to those I would be preaching to, I could not feel clear about a message. I had a dozen or so sermon outlines in my Bible I thought I could perhaps use. None of them "came alive." During the preliminaries I slipped down to where my wife was seated in the congregation and asked her to go to our room and get me a certain sermon outline notebook and bring it to me. This she did while I kept praying desperately for a message for that hour. The time was fast coming that the service would be turned to me. The last special song was being sung. Just as they finished singing I stepped up to the pulpit and asked the singers not to leave the platform.

To make matters worse, or so it seemed, there was no particular strong moving of the Spirit on the service. I spoke to the crowd words something like this: "My dear people, I don't know what God has in mind for this service but there is one thing I do know. There isn't going to be any preaching from this preacher. God has withheld from me a message. Oh, yes, I could have preached any outline, but that would not be real preaching. I asked the singers to repeat the song they had just finished singing. The district moderator got uneasy and exhorted the people to mind God. They sang again with no particular moving of the Spirit. when they finished we could sense a "What is this all about?" kind of spirit. And then, all of a sudden, the Spirit swept over that crowd with mighty judgment-day conviction and many rushed to the altar. Such praying I have seldom witnessed and it lasted without letup for at least an hour. A number that had been holding back during the week prayed through. After a little break and some victorious testimonies, the Spirit again swept the crowd and another altar full of seekers sought in desperation.

The praying lasted another hour without let up. This happened the third time and by the time that service closed it was near midnight and some of the "hardest cases had gotten clear victory.

In over fifty years of preaching I have had a few times similar to that. God has never failed in those times to give outstanding victories. From the human standpoint those are hard services to face, but to try to preach when there is nothing from God to preach would more than likely end in fruitlessness. It pays to mind the leadership of the Spirit!

\* \* \*

## 65 -- WHEN A PREACHER FEELS LIKE HE HAS FAILED

Most preachers, if not all, and perhaps more than they would like to admit, face times when they come from the pulpit feeling defeated or, at least, that they have failed. However, in many of those times it had been proven that the message accomplished more than the preacher thought possible. At times a preacher has come away feeling satisfied that he has done quite well, and then there are times when he had a hard time and felt like he had "slugged it out" with all hell opposing him. Uncle Bud Robinson, a unique person in every respect and also a unique preacher, once came from the pulpit after preaching and a woman met him. "Brother Robinson," she said, "you have just preached a wonderful sermon!" "I know it," he said, "the devil has already told me."

When a preacher has really had difficulty preaching he probably has done more good than when he had it easy. This is a proven fact. I give one experience I had to verify this fact and hope it will encourage especially the younger men starting out in their ministry.

A number of years ago I was invited to preach the afternoon service in an Interdenominational Holiness Convention. Surprisingly, a larger crowd than usual turned out for that particular service. To say the least, I had a real hard struggle in preaching and felt like I had made a complete "flop." I left the platform whipped, embarrassed and totally defeated. In fact I left the convention and headed home, not altogether because of my failure. I had previously planned to leave at that time but after I had preached I was more than glad to get away! The devil hounded me all the way home and for several days to follow I could not seem to rise above that seeming defeat.

Several years later a man came up to me. I did not know him. He said, "Brother Maxey, I heard you preach one time." I asked him when and where. It was that time I had preached at the convention where I came away so defeated. I was afraid of what that man was going to say further. To my utter surprise, however, he gave me the following account.

He with a friend of his had attended that convention. He, personally, was in desperate need of encouragement and spiritual help and told me that at that time he was going through one of the most severe battles of his life. He wasn't however, getting the help he needed and said to the friend who was with him, "I do not seem to be getting the help I need here and I feel we should not stay longer, but let's wait until after the afternoon service before we leave." It was then he told me that the message I preached in that service was the very thing that had helped him in that dark hour, and he thanked me for being faithful to preach it.

I had not only unknowingly been a blessing to that man but he, without knowing it, had been a great help to me. To God be all the glory. After that man spoke to me I felt the devil sneaked away with his tail (if the devil has a tail) tucked under him!

When I was a young man starting out in the ministry, a preacher friend of mine, an older and seasoned veteran of the cross, told me what he had habitually practiced in his ministry. Whenever he came to the end of a message he would either kneel there behind the pulpit or bow his head in a brief prayer and commit the service and the message into the hands of God giving Him the glory for whatever good may have been accomplished. This is a wonderful thing for a preacher to practice even when one feels like he has failed!

\* \* \*

## 66 -- WHY SOME PREACHING FALLS FLAT

It was during the summer of 1960. I, along with a young ministerial student, traveled all summer long preaching in tent revivals, church revivals, district camps and touring from church to church in interest of our Bible college in Rock Island, Illinois. The young man was leading the singing and singing specials in these services.

In one of the revival meetings God was blessing in an unusual way. The congregation sang lustily. People responded audibly to the preaching. The altar was filled from night to night with earnest seekers. In the middle of the revival I had to be gone from one of the services to represent the Bible school at a district conference then in session in an adjoining state. The night I was away from the revival the young man who traveled with me did the preaching. Having missed that one night, I was anxious to get back to the revival. My first night back, however, was very disappointing, especially when I tried to preach. There was hardly any response at all and there were no seekers. The people seemed bored. I dismissed the service and we went to our room wondering what had become of the revival.

The young man and I were sharing the same room. It was furnished with twin beds and after we retired and the light was out, silence reigned for a while as we both tossed about, restless with the almost unbearable heat of that southern night. The young man broke the silence. He was struggling to make a confession. It was not easy to make but threw a lot of light on the kind of service we had just closed. He said, "Brother Maxey, that message you preached tonight, I preached it last night." I assured him that he was welcome to preach my messages all he felt led to but, please, not while he was traveling with me!

The following night we gained back the enthusiasm and spiritual momentum and closed the revival on a high tide.

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## 67 -- ONE OF MY MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENTS

It was the last Sunday of the Southwest District Camp Meeting of the Bible Missionary Church. I had driven to the campground just outside Duncan, Oklahoma arriving on Saturday afternoon. I was to have the Sunday morning Sunday school hour to represent our Bible college in Rock Island, Illinois. The evangelists in the camp were Rev. H. B. Huffman and Rev. Spencer Johnson.

When I arrived Reverend Huffman met me and notified me that I would be preaching that last Sunday morning main service and took me to an air-conditioned motel room to spend the night. The heat was terrible and I welcomed the air-conditioned room to stay in, but was very uneasy about having to preach the last Sunday morning service in one of the largest camps in the Bible Missionary Church. I had not been in the camp and was not "tuned in" to the Spirit's moving in the camp. Brother Huffman's request seemed odd and out of line with the usual! I found out later many others thought so too. Why would Brother Huffman, unbeknown to the leaders of that district (which I was not aware of), want me to take his place? It was his time and place to preach. I did not feel free at all to question Brother Huffman but felt somehow that it was all in divine order regardless of how some of the other men felt. This battle-scarred warrior was well acquainted with the leadership of the Holy Spirit and dared to follow what he felt was of the Lord. He very seldom missed it.

I spent the night in prayer and God, in His mercy and providence, tuned my soul in to the need of that hour and gave me the message! There were those, as I said, who felt that Brother

Huffman was out of order in asking me to preach in his place, especially since it was the last Sunday morning service of the camp. For the first few minutes when I took the pulpit there was a "stand off " spirit that could be felt but not for long. The mighty power of God moved in almost immediately and I felt His thumb in my back in a very unusual way. I had not come to the end of my message when the Spirit moved across that congregation and began to sweep that crowd with mighty conviction. All at once people rushed forward until the altar, platform and front seats were crowded with people weeping and crying out to God.

When that happened Brother Huffman, along with the leaders of the camp, took over and I sat down on the edge of the platform not noticing that a nail protruded out from the edge right where I was sitting. I wanted to get down between the platform and the altar to pray and when I scooted down that nail took out the seat of my trousers and there I was caught with people solid around me. I just sat down on the cement floor. My part of the service had definitely come to an end. When I noticed Brother Huffman looking my way I motioned for him to come. Learning of my predicament he got his VW "bug" and drove it up as near to me as possible. I was near one end of the platform and watching my chance I carefully slipped into the open door of the VW and off Brother Huffman and I went to the motel. Fortunately the suit I had on had two pairs of trousers.

That Sunday morning service was one of the most, if not the most victorious services of the entire camp. God does not always work according to the pattern we set for Him. God help us to be able to discern His leading, be ready to fit in where He may direct, and then be humble enough to step out of the picture when our part is over!

\* \* \*

## 68 -- "YOU PREACHED ONLY HALF THE TRUTH"

I spoke one Wednesday night at a mid-week prayer meeting on the passage in the fifth chapter of Mark where Jairus called upon Jesus to come and heal his daughter who lay at the point of death. In verse 24 we read, "And Jesus went with him." On the way "a certain woman, which had an issue of blood," interrupted him. Jesus stopped to give her recognition especially in response to her faith in His healing power. But in the meantime there came those from Jairus' house and said, "Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?" But Jesus proceeded on and raised the daughter from the dead. I gave as a theme for that message, "If Jesus starts with you He will not abandon you until your request is met." I felt good about how God helped me to encourage the people to keep a strong faith in God in the light of seemingly hopeless cases.

At the close of the service I was expecting the people to say to me (that is, if they said anything), "Pastor, you really helped me tonight." Instead, one man said in a somewhat derogatory tone, "You preached only half the truth. Why didn't you preach the whole truth?" I was a little puzzled and asked, "What do you mean, only half the truth?" His answer was simple and right "Jesus will not forsake you if you don't forsake Him!" Jairus could have lost faith and given up and said to Jesus, "It's no use, Master, my daughter is dead. No need to go to my house now!"

In 2 Chronicles 15:2 we read, ". . . The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you."

Don't give up on the brink of a miracle!

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## SECTION 5 -- MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCES FROM DEATH

### 69 -- WHEN THE DOCTOR SAID THERE WAS NO HOPE, A MIRACLE WROUGHT THROUGH PRAYER

Does it make a difference whether we pray or not? Will some things take place if we pray that would not take place if we did not pray? This author believes there are! There is no doubt in my mind that I would not be alive today had not some of God's saints prayed for me when I was in the jaws of death.

One August morning in the year of 1932 Father called me at daylight-time to get up! I had always responded immediately to the get-up call but this particular morning I couldn't move. I was literally pinned down with an attack of pleurisy. Any movement of my body sent sharp pains through me like I was being stabbed by sharp knives. I was taken to the hospital. What had actually happened to me, as I later discovered, was a combination of exhausting work during my growing years plus an "overdose" of the germs in my body that gave a chance for pulmonary tuberculosis to become active in my lungs.

For two weeks I laid in bed until the pain in my body eased. X-rays had revealed a clouded lung condition and the doctor diagnosed it as unresolved pneumonia and sent me home with the advice to stay out of school the fall semester. It was my senior year in high school.

During that fall I lived at home, ate well, felt fine, but actually did no work.

The second semester I was back in school and completed the entire year's requirements doing two semesters work in one. This made it possible for me to graduate from high school in the spring on schedule.

Through the following two summers prior to and following my freshman year in college I worked, putting in long hours. I was, however, constantly tired and had developed a dry, hacking cough. I would awaken in the morning as tired as I went to bed the night before. I reasoned that it was all part of the growing up process. In the fall I entered my sophomore year. I worked at a hospital nearby for my board and room. At the end of P.E. class one day in the early fall the instructor had us run three laps around the gym before showering and getting to our next class. While doing this running I felt something snap in my chest and I immediately started coughing up blood. I ran to my room in the hospital, laid down on my bed, hung my head over and bled into the wastepaper basket until the bleeding stopped. I was then up and going again.

A few days after that while shoveling coal into the furnace at the hospital I again felt something pop in my chest and blood flowed again. I did as I had done before, but this time it took

longer for the bleeding to stop. It didn't seem to bother me that much. I presumed it was something I would get over, so why bother anyone about it?

A week or so later while just sitting in class at school, suddenly there was a pop in my chest and bleeding started again. I left class immediately and went coughing and spitting blood over a block to the hospital. This time I was bleeding too much to go inside but tapped on the office window to get someone's attention. The head nurse was sent out and she put me immediately to bed and then worked on me to get the bleeding stopped. The doctor was called-the one that had taken care of me in 1932. He called a lung specialist. Chest x-rays were again taken. The 1932 x-rays were examined and compared with the new ones.

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## 70 -- THE DOCTOR TOLD ME THERE WAS NO HOPE

I shall never forget that day when my doctor came to my room and sat on the edge of my bed just the two of us alone! He was a good doctor and a Christian man. He was weeping. He began to talk to me but with great difficulty. He had misdiagnosed my case in 1932. The x-rays showed I was active then with tuberculosis. He begged my forgiveness for not calling in a lung specialist at that time. The new x-rays showed that the bleeding I had suffered was actually spreading the tuberculous bacteria throughout my lungs. On x-ray they looked like a snowstorm had hit them -- the left lung being far worse than the right one. Worst of all he told me, weeping, that now it was too late and there was very little hope, if any, that they could save me. He would see to it everything possible would be done. He called in another doctor, a wonderful Christian and an outstanding doctor, to counsel with. I was taken by ambulance to Boise, Idaho where one wing of a hospital ward was given over to a state-supported T.B. ward, and put under the care of a specialist. My Christian doctors saw to it I was given the best. The specialist would go all out to save me.

Suddenly in my life the bottom had dropped out and I was facing the probability of a slow death. I had been assigned a position on a male quartet, both vocal and instrumental -- two trumpets and two trombones made up the instrumental part. We would have been traveling and representing the school in the summer months. I was on the student council, was looking forward to a career in medicine, having signed up in a pre-medical course. Now, however, I was at the end of life on earth!

Back in that day there was no cure for T.B. outside of total bed rest and sometimes surgery or therapeutic pneumothorax, the collapsing of a lung. For me it was total bed rest. Even then, for ten months I would have spells of bleeding from the lungs. This would result in further spreading of the T.B. bacteria. At those times ice packs would be used and I would be drugged to keep me absolutely quiet.

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## 71 -- I WAS GIVEN THE DEATH SENTENCE

After ten months flat in bed but still bleeding off and on, the doctor came one day to my bedside. By the look on his face I sensed he had no good news for me. It was in early fall. He told me that they had done all that was possible to save me and at the rate I was declining I could not possibly live past the coming spring. These were dark days for me. Almost every day someone in that T.B. ward died. I had visitors come to see me knowing that they would be seeing me alive for the last time. They were informed by the head nurse and doctor that I would not be alive much longer. Those closest to me gave up hope for me. There were nights I would lie awake and hear the undertaker come to take away a body. But even in those darkest days God kept a hope alive in me that somehow I would not die.

There was a small group of saints who knew how to pray and vowed they would importune for me in prayer until they had the assurance my case was in God's hands! (See the article in this book, "Why Does God Heal Some and Not Others?")

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## 72 -- IT WAS A MIRACLE

One day during that time when all had given up hope of my recovery, the doctor came to my room. He told me if he could collapse my left lung where he was sure the bleeding was coming from, it might be possible to stop the bleeding. If that was the case, it just might give my body a chance to begin a recovery process. He said, however, "I am almost positive that can never be done because of the heavy pleurisy you have had in past days, but we will give it a try!" Only a small percentage of people, even those who have never had any lung problem, can get a total lung collapse. Heavy pleurisy attacks inflame the lining in the chest cavity and cause the lung sac to adhere to the chest wall, making a collapse impossible.

I am convinced a double miracle took place. Remember, some of God's saints were importuning for me in prayer. I believe God moved the doctor to try something he felt could never be done. To collapse a lung the doctor uses a long, hollow needle that is connected with a flexible tube to an "air-machine." He injects the needle between the ribs into the back and endeavors to get air between the chest cavity and the lung sac. When the doctor put the needle into my back and immediately got an air pocket he was so surprised and thrilled that he put in far too many cc's of air than he should have for the first time. That turned out to be the wise thing to do. As a result the lung sac began to tear away from the chest lining. Wheeling me back to my room the doctor and head nurse stood by my bed helplessly watching me writhe in agony while the tearing (separating) process was taking place in my left lung cavity. The doctor apologized and asked my forgiveness for putting in far too many cc's of air than he should have to start with. The separating process lasted at least for a half hour and then the lung had completely broken away from the chest lining and the pain ceased. A total collapse of the left lung was thus made possible. The injecting of too much air to begin with was, no doubt, part of the miracle.

At the moment the pain ceased a strange but wonderful feeling came over me. Up to that time the disease had such a hold on me I felt like I was in the vise-like grip of a multiple armed octopus and slowly being dragged down to death. But now I felt the grip of the disease was broken and I knew within myself that I would recover. The whole atmosphere changed. It was like a

breath from Heaven. It was at the very time this process was going on, we learned later, that the faithful praying saints broke through in prayer and the assurance had come that God had heard and they were shouting the victory for answered prayer!

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### 73 -- THE SEQUEL

True to the doctor's prediction, the bleeding stopped when the left lung was collapsed. They say the body abhors a vacuum and when a lung is collapsed with air the body tends to fill that space with fluid. The body also slowly absorbs the air and to keep a lung collapsed more air needs to be periodically replaced. My chest cavity, however, never filled with fluid. At first I had to have air refills twice a week, then once a week and finally every other week. This lasted for two and a half years when the doctor felt the lung had sufficient time to heal and could safely be let back out by ceasing to keep it collapsed with periodic refills.

I remained in the hospital fourteen more months under total bed rest while the healing process went on -- a total of two full years bedfast. I was up and back in school while that one lung was still collapsed, but getting stronger with an arrested case of tuberculosis. Now, fifty-six years later I am still going strong. The after-effects left me somewhat short of breath but have not substantially hindered an active life in the ministry. It was during this time in the hospital that God visited me with a clear call to the ministry.

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### 74 -- A MIRACULOUS ESCAPE FROM DEATH

It was in the summer of 1950. We had just closed a tent meeting in Sidney, Montana where I was pastoring. At midnight on that Sunday two carloads of young people from our church, and myself, left to attend a youth camp four hundred miles away in the mountains near Yellowstone Park. One of our fine young married couples had prayed through to spiritual victory the last night of the tent meeting. I had urged them to drive down and attend the night services of the youth camp to strengthen them and encourage them in their newly found victory. The young man loved to hunt and fish and agreed to come on down providing I could secure a cabin near the campgrounds where the youth camp was being held. I promised him I would phone back as soon as I arrived at the camp and let him know if a cabin near the grounds was available. He could fish during the day and attend the night services.

We drove through the night and until mid-morning on Monday to reach the camp which was located off Interstate 90, thirty-five miles equidistant from Livingston and Bozeman.

Having been through a strenuous tent meeting followed by the night drive to the camp, I was physically exhausted. Upon arrival at the camp I was soon asleep in my cabin. I awoke around 4:00 p.m. with an overwhelming sense of the presence of God. So overwhelming was His presence that I walked the grounds audibly shouting the praises of Him who had forgiven all my sins and had sanctified me wholly. I could not understand altogether this mighty manifestation of

God's presence and blessing on my soul except to feel that it was the foretaste of a mighty visitation of God that was going to be poured out on the coming week of camp. Little did I realize what was just a few hours ahead of me. I have since realized that when the blessings of God come in such mighty waves of glory He is conditioning His child for what is just ahead!

Upon investigation I learned that cabins were available near the grounds where the youth camp was being held, and true to my word, I sought for a phone to let my friend know. The nearest phone, however, was eight miles back down the mountain where a store was located. Two other pastors who had come to the camp (the camp manager and the buyer for the kitchen) had to make a trip out that night to the store where I planned to make the phone call. The three of us left the grounds in the camp manager's car, a fairly new, free-wheeling DeSoto. A free-wheeling car, as many will recall, would coast ahead without any compression from the motor when the accelerator was released.

All three of us sat in the front seat of the four-door vehicle, with me in the middle. The driver and owner of the car, an older man, had only an hour earlier arrived on the grounds after a several-hundred-mile trip and was very weary. By the time we left the camp around 8:00 p.m. it was beginning to get dark. A few miles down the mountainside as we approached a rather sharp curve in the road to the left, an oncoming car suddenly rounded the curve. We were in the outside lane and there was no guard rail. The lights of the oncoming car blinded our driver and his first reaction was to let up on the accelerator. When he did, the car, being free-wheeling and the road being on a downgrade, plunged ahead. A river about a hundred feet below us flowed parallel to the road and went straight on while the road curved away from it to the left.

Our driver, suddenly blinded by the lights of the oncoming car and not realizing how near we were to the curve in the road, just let the car plunge straight ahead. Realizing what was happening and just seconds before we made the plunge over the bank, I grabbed the wheel and turned it to the left. This saved us from plunging straight down into the river and threw the car into a more or less sideways plunge into the ravine below, nearly a hundred feet down. There were no trees or shrubbery on the bank to check our fall and very little slope to the embankment. How far the car fell before it hit we will never know, but when it did, it obviously hit upside down. As near as we could tell, it was then that the driver was thrown out, but the car, with the momentum of the fall, rolled over and over down the canyon floor over huge boulders for several hundred feet. It finally came to rest upside down. It was flattened down to the backs of the seats. The other man and I were jammed together under the dashboard. One of his feet looked like a piece of chewed-up meat hanging on the end of his leg. It was evidently sticking out as we rolled down the canyon. Our bodies had taken a terrific beating.

Just as we plunged over the bank, I knew that without divine intervention, this would be sudden death. I began to pray audibly that if it would be God's will, to please spare me so I could help my wife raise the four boys we had at that time. God had given me such wonderful victory that it would have been only glory to have gone on right then to the land that has no night. While that car was plunging down the embankment God allowed me to have a glimpse into the glory world. Words are inadequate to describe what God allowed me to experience at that time. I do not know how going to Heaven could be more real or blessed!

When the car stopped I realized I was still alive and had remained more or less conscious through it all. But I was pinned under the dashboard and unable to move. I could see a light flashing and wondered if the car was on fire. It proved to be one of the directional lights flashing on and off. The Lord gave me a definite assurance while pinned there that this would not be unto death, and before I knew it I was standing on my feet outside of what was left of the car. I was standing, but very bent-over because of the terrific beating my body had taken. There is no doubt in my mind that God sent an angel to lift me out of that wreckage.

I managed to walk around the car and saw my friend with his mangled foot and knew I would somehow have to get help. We were down in the floor of the canyon and no doubt would never have been discovered until the next day. I was surprised to find my friend alive and then figured that it was the driver that was no doubt dead. It would have seemed impossible for any of us, let alone all three of us, to survive a wreck like that! I made my way about three hundred feet up the canyon floor below where we had started the plunge. There the driver lay amongst huge boulders close to the bank of the river, stretched out and the picture of death. I was sure he was dead. Then I saw him move a little. I knew I would have to get up that steep bank to the road to get help. The bank up to the road was so steep that teenagers could barely make it up the next day. But somehow I am sure God's angel that lifted me out of the wreckage helped me make it up that steep bank to the road. My head had been cut and blood was smeared over my face. Two fishermen coming down the road in a car spotted me just as I reached the top. Soon there were several cars from both directions. A doctor and ambulance were called. My friend with the mangled foot was carried out farther down the canyon where the bank was not so steep. It was not until the ambulance came somewhat later that, with long ropes and a stretcher, the unconscious driver was lifted almost straight up to the road above.

In heavy shock and hardly realizing what was going on I was loudly relating what had happened and giving orders to help the two men in the canyon. I continued talking loudly until someone realized my condition and made me sit down and quiet down, although I was hurting so badly I could wish myself dead.

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## 75 -- PRAYER SPARED US FROM SUDDEN DEATH

At the time of the accident a woman back at the camp suddenly felt a heavy burden and ran across the grounds to get a friend to help her pray. They fell on their knees and began in desperation to pray with loud groanings! The one who first felt the burden said to her prayer partner, "I don't know what it is all about but those three preachers that just left the camp are in some kind of trouble." Later when we checked the time it was clear that they went to prayer at the same time the wreck occurred. These two women prayed on toward midnight when the burden lifted and they were assured, whatever the trouble had been, God had heard and undertaken.

After I had been quieted down and the brother with the mangled foot had been brought out of the canyon, it was decided to put us in a car and take us to the hospital thirty miles away in Livingston, I was hurting so badly by then I didn't want to move or allow anyone to touch me. I was put in a car, however, and just down the road a ways we met the doctor coming up. We stopped

and he gave me a heavy shot of morphine and I was soon out of pain and enjoying the beautiful moonlit trip to the hospital. In the emergency room while the doctor was sewing up the cut on my head I was blessed in my soul beyond measure and testified to the doctor of the saving and sanctifying grace of God and of the assurance God gave me at the scene of the wreck that this was not unto death. I asked him to please not worry my wife by calling her. They did not phone my wife that night even though I showed every sign of not living through the night. Why no one phoned my wife that night I will never know except I have given such a convincing testimony of assurance from God that this was not unto death.

By 2:a.m. they had all three of us sewed up and in bed. Through the night hours and until daylight my vital life signs were at critical levels --hardly life-sustaining. They took my blood pressure every 15 minutes. I should not have been alive. At daylight the vital signs returned to normal. Even then it was a day or two before the doctor felt it was safe enough to x-ray me and give me a further physical examination. It was a miracle I had no broken bones. My body had taken such a terrific beating during the wreck that, although miraculously I had no broken bones, by the second day my body began to turn black and blue pretty well all over from broken blood vessels.

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#### 76 -- PRAYER BROUGHT ME BACK FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH

It was not until Wednesday that I could walk without assistance and that day, as I was walking down the corridor, I passed a room with an open door. An elderly lady called me in and asked me, "Are you one of the preachers brought in from that car wreck on Monday night?" She had been admitted to the hospital against her protest and only to pacify her grown children who insisted she do so for a thorough checkup. There was no apparent physical reason for her being in there. When the word of the wreck and that three preachers were being brought in preceded us to the hospital one more dead than alive -- the Lord put a heavy burden on her. She was a praying saint and prayed that God would spare those preachers. It was the same moment the women at the camp felt the burden lift that the burden to pray fell on the woman in the hospital. She prayed on through the night and at daybreak the assurance came that God had heard and undertaken. At that same time my vital signs normalized. I sincerely believe I am alive today thanks to faithful praying saints!

As Christians we can rejoice in any experience we may be called upon to go through for we have the assurance that God will be with us. He promised in His Word, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). Whatever the experience may be His grace will be sufficient to see us through with strength to endure. We need not fear what the future may hold.

God does not always exempt His children from suffering. God did not deliver Daniel from the lions' den. The three Hebrew children were not spared from the fiery furnace experience. It is comforting for us to know why Job suffered as he did. We can thank God for the 200 million martyrs that kept their integrity and their faith in God in spite of their suffering and death.

How often have we been made to realize that God uses His saints to pray and intercede for others when they are in danger and need protection or special help from God in those times. When

God puts a burden on His redeemed ones how faithful they should be to be true to that burden and pray until that burden is lifted and they have the assurance God has heard and has undertaken.

It is comforting to know that God prepares His own ahead of time for the great moments that come to them in life, and when our time comes to pass through the valley of death He will be there to bear us safely through.

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## 77 -- GOD USED MY SICKNESS TO ANSWER A MOTHER'S PRAYER

John Davidson was dying. There was no doubt about it. He was lying under an oxygen tent struggling to breathe. Standing beside his bed I reached under the oxygen tent and took hold of his hand. Without opening his eyes he said, "It's the preacher. I knew you would come." Then, as I continued to hold his hand he began to exalt Christ in such magnificent, beautiful, heavenly language I stood totally amazed. Here was a man in his mid-fifties, a man who had not gone beyond the third grade, a man who had been saved only a very few weeks. In oratorical language he was exalting Christ equal to an Apolios. When he finished he gasped a time or two and was gone. His soul took its departure to a better world where there is no suffering. How did this come about?

In 1957 in the fall of the year we moved from Scottsbluff, Nebraska to Odessa, Texas. I had worked hard in cold weather to get the church property in Scottsbluff where we had pastored for a number of years in top shape for the next pastor. The long hours plus the cold weather had left me physically worn and sick with a bad cold.

On arriving at our new pastorate I immediately went to work getting acquainted with all the people, started a door-to door calling program and took on the burden of a building program that had been planned by the former pastor to enlarge the parsonage. Under this load and with my physical strength already at a low ebb, I was soon struck down with a high fever. Coming home from calling one Wednesday evening, instead of going to mid-week prayer meeting, I went to bed. My fever raged out of control and we called a doctor. He never got to me until late Saturday night. He diagnosed me as having "what was going around," gave me some "sugar coated pills" and took the last ten dollars we had.

The next day, Sunday, my fever went higher than ever. Wife phoned the doctor and he ordered us to his office. Upon examination (remember, I had in previous years been given up to die with pulmonary tuberculosis), the doctor was afraid and said I would have to go immediately to the hospital if I wanted to live. With no money, no insurance and being married to the best R.N. one could find anywhere, I talked the doctor into letting my wife treat me at home under his directions.

After two weeks, in spite of all the care Wife could give me under doctor's orders, my fever continued to soar every day to dangerous heights. The church people were praying desperately. As a last resort the doctor ordered me either to go to the hospital or face death there at home.

The hospital was overcrowded and I was put on a bed in one of the hallways. It was mid-afternoon and my temperature was dangerously high. By the time they were able to move me to a semi-private room around 8:00 p.m. my temperature was normal and although quite weak, I was completely recovered. I had been put in a room with this man, John Davidson, who was afflicted with asthma. He had been living in Ohio but because of his severe asthmatic condition the doctor had ordered him to a drier climate to avoid death. With a suitcase or two containing all his possessions, besides a smaller bag containing his medicine and personal papers and valuable items, he started hitchhiking to Arizona, planning to find a place to live and work in that warmer and drier climate.

He had caught a ride at Midland, Texas twenty miles east of Odessa with a man who said he was going on west and would take him to where he was headed. When they arrived at Odessa the driver said to John that he had several stops to make in Odessa but would take him to the bus depot where he could relax and wait until he came back to pick him up. He told John he could leave his suitcases in the car as they would soon be going on. John got out at the depot taking with him only the bag with his medicine and personal items. That was the last John ever saw of the man. Later on it was discovered that this man had robbed many hitchhikers of their possessions in the same manner. John waited in the Greyhound bus depot until near midnight, when he suffered a severe attack of asthma. Thinking he was either dead drunk or on drugs the police were called to come pick him up. When the police came, not knowing exactly what was wrong, they took him to the hospital where he was immediately admitted.

I was put in this room with John after a previous patient was dismissed from the hospital. At the time I was moved to the room with John at 8:00 p.m. he was fairly well recovered from the severe attack of asthma enough where we could talk together. He related to me his loss and present predicament. I witnessed to him of the grace of God. He was deeply convicted and gave his heart to the Lord then and there. He had never been saved-although in his middle fifties.

The next day I was dismissed from the hospital but kept calling back to visit and pray with John. In a few days he was well enough to leave the hospital. Since he had nothing and no place to live, the church rented a furnished house trailer, stocked it with food and turned it over to him. It was around the Christmas season. John began immediately to attend church and would testify to the saving grace of God, weeping and expressing his thankfulness to the church and his love to God. At last he had found what he had been wanting and hungry for all his life and promised that when he got strong enough he would go to work and repay all the church had done on his behalf. But that was not to be.

We had John at our house for Christmas and put some gifts under the tree for him. It was a moving experience for all of us. A day or two later I stopped by his trailer. One look told me I had better get him to the hospital immediately. His condition began to deteriorate quite rapidly. We saw to it that John was never left alone. Someone from the church was by his bedside continuously. It lasted only for a day or two and then early one morning around 5:00 a.m. I got a call from the hospital. When I arrived John was under an oxygen tent. I reached under the tent and took his hand. Without opening his eyes, he said, "It's the preacher, you have come." And then, as I have already related at the beginning, he, an unlearned man, began to magnify Christ his Redeemer

in heavenly language of which I have never heard the equal in all my life. When he finished he gave a short gasp or two and was gone. There is no doubt he made it to a better world. The mortician was called and they took his body to prepare for burial.

I went to his trailer and found among his personal items the name of a sister living in Ohio and was able to make contact with her by phone. I related to her the news of John's salvation and subsequent death. His loved ones, the few he had left behind, were poor people and not well physically and would not be able to come or give any financial aid to help bury John's body. They instructed me to do what I could toward his burial and to bury his body there in Texas. Then his sister shared with me this story. Their mother had raised them to believe in God. She was a praying saint of God and had often prayed, "O God, please don't let my boy, John, die and go to hell."

In answer to this mother's prayers God, by the providence of sickness, got me into that dying man's room to bring to pass his eternal salvation.

John's body was laid to rest in potter's field in a cemetery in Odessa, Texas.

Truly John's sickness was not unto eternal death but unto eternal life. He had gone to be with Jesus and to join his mother in that City with foundations whose Builder and Maker is God.

You who have unsaved loved ones, do not cease to pray for them in faith believing! God has those prayers and tears bottled up and will work through His divine providences to bring the answer!

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## SECTION 6 -- DETERMINING THE WILL OF GOD

### 78 -- HOW TO DETERMINE THE WILL OF GOD

Serious-minded young people are concerned about living in the center of God's will, and they should be. But how can one know he is living within the will of God? Can this really be known? In my thirty years of teaching in a Bible college this was one of the most frequent questions I was confronted with.

God's guidance often comes through an inner VOICE. This inner "voice" may come to one as a "hunch" or an impression to take a certain course of action or to refrain from going, or doing, or saying something that was intended. This, however, may or may not be the Voice of God. An impression may come from selfish desires or from negative forces outside us. That is why the Bible warns: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

Actually there are five ways available in which we can determine what God's will is for us in any given circumstance. One of the most common and familiar ways is through impressions or, as we have indicated the VOICE of the Spirit within us. In the classroom I dealt with the question

of impressions first by having my students read the book Impressions by Martin Wells Knapp. This book has been around a long time, having been copyrighted in 1892. It is still a good book to read along the line of Spirit guidance.

In more recent years a small paperback and inexpensive book has been written by Norman Grub entitled Touching the Invisible. This booklet is also extremely helpful in its teaching of how we can determine the will of God, especially the chapter on "How To Obtain Guidance."

Another way God uses to lead us is through His written Word, the Bible. It is never right to go against the written Word of God regardless of how "right" it may seem. "The Bible," as Norman Grub states, "is the inspired and infallible revelation of the principles of Christian living, and any individual guidance which does not conform to it is from a false source.

A third way to test God's leadership is through common sense (Is it reasonable and is it right?).

Providential circumstances are another way God uses. I have often said that we do not have to knock a door down -- that is, by human effort try to push our way through a providentially closed door to stay in the will of God. God makes the way for us in His time and according to His will.

Again, in earnestly seeking to know God's will it can be very helpful on occasion to seek the counsel of others. Older and more experienced people oftentimes are able to give invaluable insights of which one may not be aware. It is never right to let others make our decisions for us, but to seek counsel is wise.

No single one of these five ways that God uses to lead us is safe if it stands alone. It is especially dangerous to follow impressions alone. We are not only exhorted to try the spirits, as we have already mentioned, but we also read in Ephesians 5:17, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

Since impressions can come from God, Satan, our own imagination or the influence of others, it is essential that all impressions be put to a test to determine their source. It is a wonderful thing to know -- and we can know -- we, being led by His Spirit, are living in the will of God. The Scriptures make this plain. In Proverbs 3:5, 6, we have one of the many promises that God will guide us through life when we unreservedly turn ourselves over to His leadership: "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." Another scripture is found in Psalm 37:23: "The steps of a good man [and we could add, the 'stops of a good man'] are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

It can be a perilous thing to follow an impression that is not of the Lord, as the following cases will reveal.

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## 79 -- MISGUIDED BY A WRONG IMPRESSION

A lady in one of the churches I pastored publicly related the following experience in following a wrong impression.

She had a severe pain in her right jaw that would shoot up into her head causing considerable agony. She was a deeply spiritual person and earnestly sought God to show her the cause of this severe pain. It is a good indication of the depth of a person's devotion to God where they go to first for help when they get sick or in trouble of some kind-to God or the drugstore!

While in prayer this woman was "impressed" that a certain tooth was causing the trouble. As she tarried in prayer the impression deepened and a suggestion came to her that if she would go to a dentist and have a certain tooth extracted the pain would cease. When she went to the dentist he would not extract the tooth without first x-raying it. When he did he found a sound tooth and tried to convince the woman that extracting the tooth would not solve her pain problem and advised her to go home and give it some more consideration. She did so. But the impression persisted and she knew she must have that tooth taken out. Hadn't God revealed to her what she should do about it? She went back to the dentist and insisted he pull that particular tooth. He did but not without a signed statement that the woman would assume all responsibility for the results.

The dentist was right. Pulling the tooth did not rid her of the pain! The woman told us that it cost her fifty dollars and the loss of a tooth to convince her she had followed a false impression. Although a deeply spiritual and sincere individual, her impression that the removal of a healthy tooth would rid her of the severe pain was not reasonable. She had insisted on going contrary to what was proven to be good common sense.

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## 80 -- TORMENTED BY A WRONG IMPRESSION

A young man in the college where I was serving as president came to my office to make a confession. He was one of our more serious-minded students and a vibrant, victorious Christian. He was dating a young woman who lived off campus and who was also a student in our school. He had a job in the area on the swing shift, and had to report to work every day by 3:00 p.m. The school had dating rules that allowed students to date certain times during the week. Unless special permission was granted the students were to abide by this rule. Dating was not allowed during the afternoon hours of weekdays. When this young man came to my office he confessed that he had been leaving the campus after dinner on working days and going by his girlfriend's house to spend time with her until he had to leave for work. He explained to me that while he was praying and he did have a consistent prayer life-he felt strongly impressed that he should stop by his girlfriend's house. He wanted to be out in the open with what he was doing. In this he was to be commended.

When I explained to him, however, that what he was doing was in violation of the school rules, he readily agreed and promised not to go again by her house on the way to work. He really needed that time to study and felt relieved. He knew his girlfriend would understand.

It was not long after, he returned to my office to tell me that he was still going to his girlfriend's house every day and explained that he was doing it because of the strong impression he had from the Lord. He felt he would be grieving God if he didn't obey that impression. I explained to him that it was wrong to go against school rules that he had promised to abide by when he enrolled as a student. It should have been clear to him that he was following a false impression. He was not only in violation of the school rules he had agreed to keep when he enrolled, but God's Word declares that one is to be obedient to those who are in authority unless they are clearly in violation of a moral principle or the Word of God. I further told him that if he was to stay in school he could not continue doing as he was doing. He was in a quandary and fighting a real battle in his mind and heart. He explained that the same feeling, or impression he had to go to his girlfriend's house every day was exactly like the same feeling or impression that assured him he was saved. If he denied the impression to visit his girl every day he would have to deny his salvation. I spent time with him over this matter doing my best to convince him that to follow impressions alone could be very misleading and must be checked with God's Word and common sense. It must be in harmony with what is right. But I could not convince him that he was following a wrong impression.

He had confidence in me but I asked him to please go to someone else for further counsel and tell them his story. At that time there was an evangelist close by in whom he had utmost confidence. I suggested he go and see this man and granted him and his girlfriend a day off to go. The evangelist was far harder on him than I was in warning him of his false impression and the wiles of Satan who is able to counterfeit an impression and make it seem like it is coming from God. One must put impressions to the test.

Against my warnings and those of the evangelist this young man held on to his false impression and left school. He got into terrible spiritual darkness, backslid and was for a number of years out in sin. There came a day in his life, however, that he was awakened to the error of his ways, humbled himself, got back to God and victory and as far as I know is serving the Lord today.

Yes, it is wrong to follow an impression if it is contrary to God's Word, contrary to common sense, contrary to the counsel of godly people. Beware of following a false impression!

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## 81 -- WHEN A STRONG IMPRESSION TO FAST WAS WRONG

Young Christians especially need to be warned lest they become "hostage" to untested impressions. It seems to be easier for young people who are overly-conscientious to be caught in this trap. I knew a young person who every day at dinner time would get the impression that he should fast instead of eating. He did not want to grieve God so he would fast. He was so driven by this impression that he soon became so weakened from fasting it hindered his studies and everything else he undertook.

I, along with other teachers and staff members, did my best to reason with this young man and point out to him the dangers of following a false impression. We believe that our life should be orderly and planned in a way that would leave time and place for all that is essential: a time for

rest; a time for prayer, meditation and Bible reading; regular times when we should eat; a time to fast; a time for relaxation, etc. All our counseling did not seem to help him understand that he was following a wrong impression. This went on until the young man's health was in jeopardy and his mind seemed to be in confusion. God did honor his sincerity and prayers, but his usefulness was greatly hampered.

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## 82 -- WHEN A STRONG IMPRESSION TO STOP AND PRAY WAS WRONG

The devil torments over-conscientious people in every way he can. When I was in college I had a roommate living with me in the men's dormitory who loved the Lord and didn't want to grieve Him in any way. He was faithful in a daily consistent devotional life. To help meet his financial obligations to the college he was given a daily task of keeping the campus clean of trash. He had signed up to work one hour every school day from four o'clock until five. On Saturday he was to put in at least four hours. He had a real problem with this right from the start. Every school day at four p.m. he would leave our dormitory room to go to work. He would hardly get out the door when he would be right back in again. He would have the impression that he must spend some time in prayer right then or else he would be grieving God and would be in spiritual trouble. I tried to explain to him how unreasonable his "false impression" was. I pointed out to him that God is a God of order. How could a school operate, classes meet on schedule, business among men be carried on if in the midst of these activities God required us to interrupt them and take time out to spend time in prayer? A school could never operate, nor could we make it through life successfully either as a person or as a Christian unless there was order and sequence in our living.

The best and most victorious life is a methodically planned life with all the important things included in an orderly way as a part of the day's activities. Consistency in our daily planned lives -- that is successful living!

I urged my roommate to make out a daily schedule that would include time for personal devotions (Bible reading and prayer), class time, study time, recreation time. The secret of John Wesley's accomplishments, I told him, was based on a rigid daily schedule. This is where the name "Methodist" came from. John Wesley by his fixed disciplined schedule was able to accomplish in fifty years what most men would have needed a hundred fifty years to accomplish. The greatest waste of humanity is the waste or mismanagement of time.

One of the best ways to overcome the false impressions coming from the enemy is to live a disciplined, methodical life that includes the duties involved in living a Christian life. Numbers of over-conscientious people have been tormented by false impressions that an orderly life would rule out.

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## 83 -- IMPRESSIONS THAT PROVE TO BE FROM GOD

Impressions can be from God, but even then impressions alone must not be followed. But allow me to reiterate, impressions that go against the Word of God are always false impressions and should not be followed. Impressions that go against common sense or are contrary to providential leading are not to be followed. Impressions, however, that seem to be unreasonable may not be necessarily so. They could be and many times are from God. What are we to do with impressions that seem to be from God? We should take time to check them out!

Illustration #1. We were coming up to graduation time at Bible Missionary Institute in the spring of 1978. The commencement was to be on May 3. It was the custom to have one of the General Moderators of the Bible Missionary Church speak at the commencement service. These two general officers of the Bible Missionary Church took turn about from year to year. One year it would be Rev. Elbert Dodd and the next year Rev. J. E. Cook. This particular year it was to be J. E. Cook.

A month or two before commencement at a faculty meeting, the end school day events were discussed, including plans for the final service of the year the graduation service. Following that meeting while in prayer I got a strong impression that I would be bringing the commencement message. Along with the impression there came to my mind a message in much detail and the Scripture to back it up. I immediately wrote it all down and put it back in my files. The impression was so strong that I felt positive within myself that it would come to pass. I said nothing to anyone about it.

The Saturday prior to the commencement service which was to be the following Wednesday, Rev. J. E. Cook phoned the president of the school and told him it would be impossible for him to make it due to sickness. The president, B. M. Loftin, asked me what I thought he should do about a speaker. I did not tell him of my earlier impression but suggested that it would be logical to phone Elbert Dodd, the other general officer, and ask him to come if he could. He was in Idaho at the time but was planning on flying to his home in Duncan, Oklahoma on Monday. Brother Dodd, on receiving the phone call, agreed to come. He could fly from Duncan to Rock Island on Wednesday in time for the service. Wednesday, May 3 arrived. Those who were to be graduating along with the faculty were in the church where the service was to be held practicing for the evening's activities. It was 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon. B. M. Loftin was called to the phone. The expected commencement speaker, Elbert Dodd, was on the other end of the line notifying Brother Loftin he would not be able to be there due to inclement weather. The plane was grounded. B. M. Loftin came immediately to me asking advice on what we should do now. Even then I said nothing about my impression. He said we at least needed a general officer of the church. I was then one of the general officers, being editor of the Bible Missionary Church's official paper. This suddenly dawned on Brother Loftin and he said to me, "You are it." Immediately I asked to be excused for the service was only a very few hours away. I hurried home, got out the notes of the message God had already given me and took what time I had to prepare my mind and heart for the service. I was so thankful for the "impression" and direction I had already received that prepared me for that emergency.

Let's notice some things about that impression I had. It did prove to be from God. I could not be certain at the time of the impression whether it was a true impression or a fancy of my mind. It was not contrary to God's Word; it was not altogether without reason; it did prove providential

and I let providence do its work. I was thankful for the impression and the opportunity it gave me to be prepared when the time came.

Illustration #2. The Bible Missionary Church sponsors missionary work in the Caribbean Islands and in Guyana, South America. It was sometime in the latter part of 1973 while in prayer I was strongly impressed that the church I was serving would be asking me to go to their mission field in Guyana and pioneer a Bible school. I was then teaching full time at our Bible Institute in Rock Island, Illinois. Nothing was ever said to me about this, but the impression was so strong that I began mentally to set up a program of how I would handle this. I kept this to myself, not even sharing this "impression" with my wife.

In October of 1973 I was in the hometown of Rev. J. E. Cook, one of the general leaders of The Bible Missionary Church. I visited him at his home one day and the minute he saw me he said, "Brother Maxey, I have been wanting to see you. The General Board of the church has met and would like to know if you and your wife would go to Guyana, South America this coming summer and set up a Bible school for us?" I said nothing about my earlier impression, but right then I knew we would be going. I could hardly keep from acting very excited. I felt like saying to Brother Cook, "I already knew it!" But I didn't.

My earlier impression had given me a much needed head start in preparing me for the assignment and in June of 1974 we were on the field carrying out the job of establishing a Bible school.

Illustration #3. Wife and I were asked to return to Guyana, South America to conduct a summer school in 1977. This we did and one day while in prayer in the mission house where we were conducting school, I received a very strong impression that we would be in Nigeria, Africa the following summer. There had been no hint or indication that this would be so but I was so excited and sure it was true that I said to my wife one day, "You know something, honey, you and I are going to be in Africa next summer." Both of us from our childhood wanted to be missionaries in Africa. Neither one of us had a call from God but our heart was in Africa so much that when God took our oldest son at the age of twelve we took the insurance money that came from his death to build a "Bruce Alan Maxey" memorial chapel in southern Africa. By that means our son, although gone on to Heaven, would indirectly be preaching the gospel on that dark continent and we as well would be contributing the money to that end.

It was not very many days after I received that strong impression that I got a phone call from North America. It was our general leaders calling me, asking if Wife and I would go to Nigeria, Africa the coming summer to conduct a summer school if necessary arrangements could be made. An immediate answer was needed. That was the reason for the urgent call to us in Guyana. I did not hesitate to assure our leaders that we would go if arrangements could be made. I did not have to take time to pray and find the mind of God. God had already spoken to us and an immediate answer could be given with confidence!

How marvelous are the providences of God! Although we had indirectly been preaching in Africa since 1954 by furnishing a chapel, now we were to fulfill a lifetime desire even though we

were both past sixty years old. God's ways are past finding out. How we glorify God for His goodness and mercy! God does use impressions to prepare us for coming events in our lives.

Illustration #4. My first pastorate was a home mission church. I stayed there for seven years and during that time I had many calls to other churches. I never felt clear to move. One fall while in prayer, however, I was strongly impressed that my work at this place was done and I should move on. It was very clear to me that this was of the Lord. If God has called a man to a given place and he goes there and while there receives calls to other places of labor, his first consideration should be whether God is through with him in that place where God had called him.

In my school days I heard said by an older, experienced, seasoned preacher that one should never be the one that allows himself to become unemployed. If God was impressing a preacher that his work was through at one place he should not up and resign but hold steady where he was. If his impression was of the Lord, God would indicate when and where the next move was to be.

In my case I followed this wise man's advice. I did not resign my church at the time that impression first came to me. I felt confident that if my impression was from God another door would open. I did not have to wait long. In the early spring of the year, in a single day a number of opportunities came. It was made very clear to me which one I should accept. My impression was right that my work was ended where I had labored for seven years and I was given definite leadership from the Lord what my next move should be.

Illustration #5. We have quoted earlier in this section Psalm 37:23, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way." It was earlier suggested that the stops also are ordered of the Lord. There have been those times, and many of them, in my life when I did not have any particularly strong impression from the Lord just what course to take. The thing to do in those situations is to move ahead in the line of duty as providence leads in full confidence that if our course is not according to God's design He would providentially block our way or impress us strongly that we are on the wrong course.

To illustrate this we cite one instance. We were called to attend a wedding and also invited to have a minor part in it. The wedding was to take place several hundred miles from where we lived. There was nothing at that time to keep us from being there. However, both Wife and I had a strange feeling of doubt whether we should go or not. There being no apparent reason not to go I asked Wife to pack us a lunch to take along and, unless we had a strong impression from the Lord not to go, we would proceed.

We started out. We had traveled a hundred miles and the farther we went the heavier we felt. During the next fifty miles I kept feeling heavier and heavier, so I stopped the car and asked Wife what she was feeling. She was having the same experience. I suggested to her that we turn around and start back. If the heavy feeling still remained we would not be able to consider it in connection with this trip. However, when we turned around and started back, we immediately felt tremendously relieved of the pressure. We actually were getting so blessed in our hearts, that had we turned back around and continued on our journey to the wedding we would have felt we would be grieving God. Why did God stop us on that journey? We had no reason to give only that God had ordered a stop. It was not until years later that we knew of any reason in it.

There is one lesson in connection with this that we must not lose out of our life and that is that we must not get so determined in our ways that we will not let God change our course if He sees best.

In the light of what has just been said, one final word of advice and caution needs to be given. In the very beginning of this discussion of how to determine the will of God we stated that "there are five ways available in which we can determine what God's will is for us in any given circumstance." Having been diligent to "try the spirits" and finally having come to a conclusion on what action or course we should pursue, we should then move on in life following that which we, to the best of our ability, discerned to be the will of God. Whatever course we take, the enemy of our soul, Satan, will be there with a strong temptation to convince us that we have made a wrong decision. Drive on! We must not allow Satan to make us vacillating, unsettled, fearful of moving ahead positively in this life.

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## SECTION 7 -- A GODLY HERITAGE

My father, a holiness preacher, was born in Mount Vernon, Illinois on March 12, 1882. His father owned a whole block of business houses in the downtown area, including a furniture store which he operated himself. He was also a part time Methodist preacher.

When he was six years old my father went through a traumatic experience that influenced, at least somewhat, his later life. A tornado struck first in the center of town, completely destroying his father's place of business, and then lifted up and came down again out at the north edge of the town where the Maxey home was located -- a large two-story house. The house was lifted up into the air some distance and then dropped down almost exactly on its foundation. In the process a large tree was thrust through the house leaving one end sticking out the front door and the other end out the back door. The family was all home when that happened. My father narrowly escaped being crushed to death by the tree. He, along with his mother and a sister, was pinned under debris. It seemed to them hours before they were rescued. His mother was severely injured and never fully recovered. One of Father's brothers was stuck between two walls with a bolt run into his cheek. When the storm passed a daughter, Pearl, was missing. After a desperate hunt someone, looking into the fireplace chimney, noticed feet sticking down. They were Pearl's. She was dragged out but still alive. Supposing they were dead, three sons were taken to the morgue. On further examination, however, they were found to be alive. Miraculously none of the family died in the tornado. But because of the awful fear the storm left in his mind at that early age, my father vowed he would not live in that part of the country when he grew up. As a young man he moved to the state of Idaho and lived the rest of his life in the great northwest section of the United States.

Father became a Christian on October 15, 1899 and was baptized into the Methodist Episcopal Church, Southern Illinois Conference by the Rev. J. C. Kinison. During the years of 1900-1904 he taught in the public schools of Jefferson County, Illinois. When Father felt the call to preach he attended the McKendree College in Lebanon, Illinois for a year. He then transferred to Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, the college where Samuel Morris, the black boy from

Africa, attended and also died. Because of poor health Father never graduated. Later on in the year of 1914 he applied for admittance to Willamette University in the state of Oregon, but he was unable to attend. By that time he had a wife and family to support.

In his mid-twenties Father moved west and married my mother, Jessie H. Caldwell, in Montpelier, Idaho on May 5, 1910. They were united in marriage by Rev. Henry W. Parker (after whom I was named). Mother married at the age of 20, a young woman whose ancestors in earlier years migrated to Canada from Ireland and then to Michigan before moving west. Earlier in that same year Father received a local preacher's license in the M.E. Church in Caldwell, Idaho on June 7.

From 1911 to near the end of 1913 Father pastored in Glens Ferry, Idaho. Here their first child (a daughter, Veneta) was born on October 8, 1911. In his early ministry Father was a Methodist circuit rider. It was while he was on one of these circuits in the northeast corner of the state of Oregon in the beautiful Blue Mountains where he lived then that my brother, John and I were born. John, the second child, was born on December 29, 1913 at Imbler, Oregon about twenty miles north of the city of LaGrande. I was the third child, born in the little village of Alicel halfway between LaGrande and Imbler on August 24, 1915. My earliest recollection was while Father was pastoring in Ashton, Idaho near Yellowstone National Park where we had moved in 1916. While pastoring in Ashton Father added to his duties that of editor of the "Pocatello District League." Being true to the doctrine of heart holiness obtained in two definite works of grace, Father eventually found himself without a place to preach among the Methodists who no longer held to that doctrine. Anxious to keep busy in the work of the Lord, he moved on west to Port Angeles, Washington where he was ordained into the First Baptist Church March 24, 1918. That same year he met the General Committee on Army and Navy Chaplains and offered his services as chaplain to the armed forces of our country. However, the demand for chaplains had ceased with the termination of World War I.

From 1918 until the latter part of 1922 Father worked with the American Sunday School Union preaching and establishing Sunday schools in the western and northern section of the State of Washington. The work he was engaged in required many moves, from Port Angeles to Kent, from Kent to Cashmere, from Cashmere to Lakeside on the shores of Lake Chelan, and from Lakeside to Wenatchee. It was while we were living in these last two places that Father worked mostly in the Chelan-Okanogan area of the state in the interest of the American Sunday School Union. During these various moves a second daughter, Beatrice, was born in Port Angeles July 21, 1920. On September 9, 1922 a third daughter, Ruthelaine, was born while the folks were living in Lakeside, Washington.

Father was very energetic for the cause of the Gospel and for the doctrine of heart holiness and was always on the drive to open up a new work wherever and whenever he could. This was in the days of the Model-T Ford car and poor, sometimes impassable, roads. We crossed the streams by boat or ferry, which was at times very hazardous but always adventuresome and thrilling. Income was on the bottom and we spent many hunger-ridden days. There were days when Mother put food out for us children but she never ate-there just wasn't enough food for her to have some. A good share of the time Father was away preaching or opening up a new work. One winter in Wenatchee there was no money for rent, so Father moved us into a tent where we lived through one

winter with snow piled higher than the tent itself. But it was all for the Gospel's sake and we thought nothing of what some would term sacrifice. This is the reason it has always been hard for me to tolerate how preachers of this day drop out of the ministry when the going really gets tough. Father never gave a thought of anything other than to keep going full time in his calling to preach. All these years he was always on the lookout for a holiness group he could feel clear to join and in which he could raise his family.

One day while living in Wenatchee Father announced that we would be moving to Grandview, Washington approximately in the middle of the state, and he would be pastoring The Church of the Nazarene in that town. That was in the latter part of 1922. Father had come into contact with Bishop A. C. Archer of the Free Methodist Church who strongly urged him to join that group. At that same time Rev. Joseph N. Speaks of the Church of the Nazarene was superintending the Nazarene work in that part of the country. He also came in contact with my father. The Nazarenes as well as the Free Methodists were on fire with the presence and power of God, but at that time the Free Methodists ruled out musical instruments in their worship services. The Nazarenes allowed the piano as well as other musical instruments. Both Father and Mother favored the Nazarenes for that reason and were also in support of Northwest Nazarene College in Nampa, Idaho where the Nazarenes at that time operated a school from kindergarten through four years of college. Father anticipated having his children in a holiness school someday. Thus in 1922 we became members of The Church of the Nazarene and moved to Grandview, Washington. While living there a third son, Bruce, was born in Sunnyside, Washington, December 26, 1926.

After a four-year pastorate in Grandview where many interesting events took place, Father moved his family to southern Idaho where he became pastor of The Church of the Nazarene in Kuna as well as a Bible teacher in Northwest Nazarene College. Although unable in his earlier years because of ill health to continue his formal education, he did continue to study on his own initiative. He had taught himself, studying the Bible in seven different languages, made his own (unpublished) translation of the New Testament and had committed to memory the New Testament as well as parts of the Old Testament. I never knew him to open his Bible while preaching. He always preached without notes and quoted the Scripture from memory, word perfect. I never personally knew a man who had the determination, discipline and drive in life to continue his education on his own initiative when his health forced him to step out of formal college education. His educational accomplishments were sufficient to have earned him a doctorate degree in Bible and Theology. His expository preaching was recognized by his contemporaries as far above ordinary. His Bible teaching in college was unsurpassed. Father's purpose in moving to southern Idaho was not only to become a teacher in the college but to move his family to where he could put them in a Christian school.

At that time Northwest Nazarene College was seeking accreditation. Since Father did not have a baccalaureate degree, the college could no longer use him even though he was considered one of the best Bible teachers of that day. As a result, Father left Kuna and moved to Emmett, Idaho into a full-time pastorate and we three older children were enrolled in the Nazarene school in Nampa, Idaho. At that time I entered the ninth grade and attended there through high school, college and a post-graduate course, graduating not only from college with an A.B. degree and a Th.B. degree, but also the Master's Degree in Theology that was being offered then. This was prior to the time the Church of the Nazarene had established the seminary for the training of preachers at

Kansas City, Missouri and the Nazarene Church had designated its college in Nampa, Idaho as the school where preachers could obtain an accredited Master in Theology degree.

While Father was pastoring the Church of the Nazarene in Emmett, Idaho Mother gave birth to her seventh child, a girl. Avis was born in Samaritan Hospital, a Nazarene hospital in Nampa, Idaho, August 28, 1930.

Mother's death came suddenly in her forty-fourth year on May 29, 1934. She died of heart failure shortly after the birth of her eighth child, a boy, Gale, born April 18. Being left with a family of eight motherless children devastated Father. He was never the same. He married again but his most effective days of ministry were ended. He died at the age of sixty-eight in the year 1950. From this second marriage a son, Duane, was born and is today a holiness preacher.

Although Father was never quite the same following Mother's death as far as we older children knew him to be, he did continue on in the active ministry following his second marriage. The drive for the ministry never left him and he had a number of successful pastorates in which he witnessed the salvation of many souls. Waning health brought him to a comparatively early retirement and death.

Starting with my Grandfather Maxey there have been five generations of holiness preachers. Grandfather, Father, myself, three of my sons and two grandsons. Furthermore all of Father's descendants have found their place in the professional world as preachers, educators and business men. Some have followed the medical profession, others the fields of aviation, electronics, etc.

The records reveal that it is the descendants of Christian parents that are the backbone of civilization and Christianity. Take for example the history of the two following families:

In 1677 a licentious man married a licentious woman. From that union came 1900 descendants. Of these descendants 771 were criminals, 39 were murderers; only ten learned a trade and they learned it in prison. They spent a combined total of 1,300 years in prison and cost the state of New York nearly three million dollars. That is what two ungodly people in marriage did for the United States.

But look at the family record of Jonathan Edwards, the great preacher. This godly man married a godly woman. They had 1,344 descendants. Of this number 295 were college graduates, 13 were college professors, 65 were college presidents, 186 were ministers, 101 were lawyers, 86 were state senators, and three were congressmen. There were also 30 judges and one vice-president of the United States. Not one of these descendants was ever accused of crime. That is what two godly people in marriage can do for the world.

How thankful I am for my own Godly Heritage!

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And now we are at the end of We'll Get to That Later, but did we arrive at ALL that comes later in life? I'm afraid not. No one will reach the "omega" of his life on this earth until he comes to "the crossing." What lies beyond is that mysterious life after death. John W. Peterson expresses my own deep heart sentiment concerning the conclusion of this life here on earth and the prospects of the life beyond when he penned the words of this hymn:

Some day life's journey will be o'er  
And I shall reach that distant shore,  
I'll sing while ent'ring Heaven's door  
"Jesus led me all the way."

If God should let me there review  
The winding paths of earth I knew,  
It would be proven clear and true  
Jesus led me all the way.

And hitherto my Lord has led,  
Today He guides each step I tread,  
And soon in Heav'n it will be said  
Jesus led me all the way.  
Jesus led me all the way,  
Led me step by step each day;  
I will tell the saints and angels  
As I lay my burden down  
"Jesus led me all the way."

\* \* \* \* \*

THE END