

Faith Principles

By David Cartledge

Acknowledgements:

© Copyright for these notes rests ultimately with Rev Dr David Cartledge
OF CARTLEDGE MINITRIES

And

**Exclusive Distribution rights within Australia, including permission to grant
a license to make multiple copies for training purposes have been granted
by Cartledge Ministries to:**

**Christian Ministry and Training
PO Box 781
Nambour 4560**

Christian Ministry and Training may also grant permission for these notes to be used in
overseas training contexts.

Christian Ministry and Training is a Division of Universal Education and Training Ltd
ABN 75 090 720 086 CEO: Paul Truasheim Mob: 0412 614 584

<i>David Cartledge Study Topics In this Series include:</i>	
21 Principles of Interpretation	Leadership
Christology	Ministry Gifts
Church Life Principles	Nebuchadnezzars Vision
Evangelism	Person and Work of the Holy Spirit
Holy Spirit- Baptism and Gifts	Preaching
New Testament Survey	Song of Solomon
Old Testament Survey	Soteriology - Study of Salvation
Faith Principles	Tabernacle Truths

Copy Register for Faith Principles			
Permission to copy this particular volume of notes was granted to:		XYZ College	
For use at the following location(s):		ABC Campus DEF Campus	
For the following time period:		Eg January to December, 2005	
This information was recorded on:	Jan 23rd, 2005	By:	Paul Truasheim

Faith Principles

Table of Contents

Chapter One	Faith is a gift from god	Page 5
Chapter Two	Faith: A Spiritual Faculty	Page 10
Chapter Three	The Place of Rhema	Page 12
Chapter Four	The Confession of Faith	Page 19
Chapter Five	The eye of Faith	Page 24
Chapter Six	The Hand of Faith	Page 28
Chapter Seven	The Rhythm of Faith	Page 31
Chapter Eight	The moment of Faith	Page 33
Chapter Nine	Setting A Faith Goal	Page 35
Chapter Ten	Indecisiveness	Page 37
Chapter Eleven	Mutual Faith	Page 39
Chapter Twelve	Faith for Finance	Page 41

Chapter One

Faith is A Gift From God

INTRODUCTION

It is essential that God's people learn to live by faith. The Scripture is explicit that without faith it is impossible to please God. Every approach we make to God and every action of our lives must be on the basis of faith (Heb 11:6, Rom 14:23). There is no room for a spiritual life built on a foundation of human effort or good works. The just live by faith (Rom 1:17) and anything other than this is a return to bondage (Gal 5:1). It is faith which gives us victory over the world (1 John 5:4).

The Early Church faced great challenges in the area of faith and it is not surprising that this is still so. Satan knows that if God's people discover the tremendous power of faith in God, their lives and ministries will be revolutionised.

Hebrews 11:33 declares that the Old Testament saints "through faith obtained promises", and it is clear from John 14:14, and 15:7-8 that promise-obtainers glorify God. Many people are "prisoners of hope" (Zech 9:12), and have never learned to express true faith, and receive God's blessings.

Today much confusion exists regarding the exercise of faith. Many people get frustrated because they see little result from their attempts to believe God. This has resulted in a backlash of negativity in the Church, or the manifestation of cold and deliberate unbelief.

On the other hand, there is considerable false teaching on faith which has caused much presumption.

This series of studies on the Principles of Faith will seek to impart a tried and tested, balanced perspective of this vital Christian attribute.

Faith is a Gift from God, and in considering this basic aspect of faith there are a number of observations to be made.

1:1 FAITH IS NOT NATURAL TO MAN

There are numerous things which look like faith, and may be confused with it. There are substitutes for real faith which are really humanistic. That is, they are man generated and do not need God in order to achieve their end. The Bible makes it clear that God gives faith to man (Rom 12:3) and the fact that the unregenerate man does not have true faith is also emphasised by 2 Thessalonians 3:2, "all men have not faith". Only the converted receive faith from God and anything else, regardless of how dynamic it may appear, is not the quality which the Bible calls faith. Mind over matter, mental exercise, auto-suggestion, positive thinking, good feelings or other such techniques are not faith but pseudo-faith.

This issue needs to be clearly identified at the beginning of this study of faith so that true faith and pseudo-faith are not confused. The Human Potential Movement which promotes the use of 'positive thinking' and humanly generated 'self esteem' as mechanisms for changing both a person's personality and success performance, uses many of the terms used by Christians to describe the release and use of faith. This confusion has been responsible for many believers and churches using so called faith methods which are suspect.

The 'father' of the Human Potential Movement is Napoleon Hill. Most of the modern success, motivational and self esteem writers refer to or draw heavily from his ideas which were first

promulgated in the early 1930s. One of his most popular and quoted books is "Think and Grow Rich" (first published in Australia in 1938 by Angus and Robertson). All quotations referred to are from this edition.

In this book he uses such terms as 'faith, vision, decision, persistence etc'. In fact the entire chapter three is entitled FAITH. However Napoleon Hill's definition of faith is the very opposite of that described in the Scriptures. He states that, "faith is a state of mind which may be induced, or created, by affirmation or repeated instructions to the subconscious mind, through the principle of auto-suggestion". (page 43-44)

He also states that "All down the ages , the religionists have admonished struggling humanity to 'have faith' in this, that, and the other dogma or creed, but they have failed to tell how people have faith. They have not stated that faith is a state of mind and that it may be induced by self-suggestion". (page 47)

He goes on to declare that we must have faith in ourselves and in the Infinite. However his definition of the Infinite is revealing. "Faith is the only agency through which the cosmic force of Infinite Intelligence can be harnessed and used by man" (page 47). He also uses terms such as "The Universal Mind" or "a First Cause". (page 243) While Mr Hill does indeed state that Christianity is the greatest single force which influences humanity he also declares that people have perverted or misinterpreted this great force. He also declares that the so called 'miracles' of the Christ were nothing more than the power of faith as defined by Napoleon Hill, and he lists such non-Christian leaders as Mahatma Ghandi as great exponents of this faith. (page 54-55)

The most revealing moments in Mr Hill's book however have to do with the origin of "Positive Thinking". He states that "Long before I had ever written a line for publication, or endeavoured to, deliver a speech in public, I followed the habit of reshaping my own character, by trying to imitate the nine men whose lives and life-works had been most impressive to me. These nine men were, Emerson, Paine ,Edison, Darwin, Lincoln, Burbank, Napoleon, Ford, and Carnegie. Every night over a long period of years, I held an imaginary council meeting with this group whom I called my 'Invisible Counsellors'". (page 244)

He shared the process of these meetings as imagining these men to sit around his council table giving him advice on all the matters before him and states that he had a very definite purpose in indulging his imagination in these nightly meetings which was to rebuild his character so it would represent a composite of the characters of his imaginary counsellors. He believed that he needed to overcome the handicap of birth in an environment of ignorance and superstition and says "I deliberately assigned myself the task of voluntary rebirth through the method here described". (page 244-245)

He goes on to declare that "after some months of this nightly procedure I was astounded by the discovery that these imaginary figures became, apparently real" (page 247) He describes how each of them developed individual characteristics. He says "One evening Edison arrived ahead of all the others. He walked over and seated himself at my left, where Emerson was accustomed to sit, and said, "You are destined to witness the discovery of the secret of life. When the time comes that life consists of great swarms of energy, or entities, each intelligent as human beings think themselves to be.

"These meetings became so realistic that I became fearful of their consequences, and discontinued them for several months Some six months after I had discontinued the practice I was awakened one night, or thought I was, when I saw Lincoln standing at my bedside. He said, ' The world will soon need your services. It is about to undergo a period of chaos which will cause men and women to lose faith

and become panic stricken. Go ahead with your work and complete your philosophy. That is your mission in life. If you neglect it for any cause whatsoever, you will be reduced to a primal state, and be compelled to retrace the cycles through which you have passed during thousands of years.'

"After that I began to add new members to my cabinet, until it now consists of more than fifty, among them, Christ, St Paul, Copernivcus, Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Galileao, Copernicus, Homer, Voltaire, Bruno, Spinoza, Drummond, Kant, Schopenhauer, Newton, Confucius, Elbert Hubbard, Brann, Ingersol, Wilson and William James."

There is no question that Napoleon Hill is describing an occult experience and his nightly meetings developed into nothing less than a seance. Originally he may have been innocently indulging in imagination but eventually these imaginations were invaded by impersonating evil spirits who deluded him. He equates Jesus with heathen philosophers like Confucius and includes Him in his 'cabinet' with atheists like Ingersoll and Paine! His 'rebirthing' is a modern new age technique to deal with guilt and substitute for genuine conversion.

The book reveals in detail that the secret he was destined to discover and reveal, and the life's work which he was ordered by the demon masquerading as Edison to complete is the 'POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING'. This aberration is both a substitute for genuine faith and a confusing deception for those who are not enlightened to know the difference. While at the beginning these paths may seem to be the same, the end destinations are worlds apart - heaven and hell.

1:2 VARIOUS KINDS OF FAITH

There are basically four types of faith.

1:2:1 Natural Faith

Faith of a purely rational nature - based on experience and factual knowledge. Without it no farmer would plant seed (James 5:7). This faith is actually a process of logical reasoning.

It is this element which is generated by the natural man to accomplish many outstanding things - the soaring vision of the architect, the success of financial empires of the business tycoon, the discoveries of the inventor, the courage of the intrepid explorer, etc. The kind of faith is often confused with true faith because of its apparent achievement - including the ability to transform a weak and negative or unsuccessful person into one with confidence who becomes successful in their chosen field of endeavour.

However the motive power of this type of faith is the mind and not the spirit. It is a product of the soul life of man and is common to the believer and unbeliever. The power of positive thinking or self confidence are abilities the natural man can develop apart from God and is therefore not a valid spiritual quality.

It has no ability to transform the unregenerate nature of man, or provide a basis for fellowship with God. While such methodologies may not be intrinsically evil unless they are developed from an occult motivation, and may indeed have a necessary function to perform in our lives, they must never be allowed to become a substitute for true faith.

1:2:2 Spiritual faith

The second type of faith is often called "saving faith". It is a gift of God and is imparted to the repentant sinner at the moment of conversion (Eph 2:8-9). It is a supernatural ability to believe what natural faith cannot or will not believe (1 Cor 1:18-24, Rom 1:16-22). It goes beyond the logical process of the mind to grasp and trust what cannot be perceived except by the spirit of man. This is the kind of faith which the Christian lives by. This "ordinary" level of faith is imparted to every repentant sinner and is the foundation of our whole Christian life

and true fellowship with God (Rom 1:17, Heb 11:6). This kind of faith is allied to two other types of faith to make an unbreakable bond of supernatural ability. These two categories of faith are faith, the fruit of the spirit and faith, the gift of the spirit.

1:2:3 Faith - the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22)

This kind of faith can be more correctly understood as "faithfulness" (RSV) or "fidelity" (NEB). It is both the product of spiritual faith and the support of it. While it is possible to develop and use spiritual faith without faithfulness, it will inevitably be flawed. This kind of faith is expressed in character and conduct and is that part of spiritual faith which concentrates on the development of progressive sanctification in the believer.

1:2:4 Faith - the gift of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:9)

This is a special impartation by the Holy Spirit of a supernatural ability to suspend or transcend natural laws. It impregnates the believer with ability to operate in the realm of special types of miracles. The kind of faith is occasional and is dependent on the initiative of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:11). It is really a supernatural amplification of the faculty of spiritual faith.

[In this series of studies, the faith generally referred to will be spiritual faith.]

1:3 HOW WE RECEIVE FAITH FROM GOD

God gives us His faith to live by (Rom 1:17, 12:3) and this fantastic quality is imparted to us in the instant of conversion. Faith to be saved, like repentance, is a gift of God (Acts 11:18, Eph 2:8,9). Salvation is not the adoption of a concept or culture. It is the reception of a person, and not an intangible idea or feeling. For example, in Luke 19:9 Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "This day is salvation come to your house". However, it was the person of the Saviour who had come. Note John 1:12, and Gal 4:19.

In the moment of conversion we avail ourselves of both a divinely imparted ability to repent and believe co-incidental with the decision to receive Jesus as the Lord of our life. In receiving Him we receive all that is in Him.

Colossians 2:10 (LB) says "So you have everything when you have Christ". Colossians 2:2,3 (LB) also says, "God's secret plan now at last made known, is Christ Himself. In Him live all the hidden and the mighty untapped treasures of wisdom and knowledge".

Galatians 2:16 and 20 clearly shows us that the faith we are living by is not our self-generated positive attitude, but the very faith of Jesus Himself and not merely our belief about Him. The very fact of receiving Christ incorporates His faith in us. Ephesians 1:3; Acts 3:16; 24:24; 26:18; and Galatians 3:7 all indicate this same wonderful truth. Note the comparison of 1 John 5:4 which states that faith is the victory which overcomes the world and John 16:33 in which Jesus said He had overcome it.

Luke 18:8, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Ephesians 4:5, 1 Timothy 4:1, Galatians 5:10, Jude 3 and 20, and Acts 14:27 all show that "faith" is the dynamic of Christian life and not merely adherences to a system of religion or code of beliefs. 2 Peter 1:1 shows us that this faith is imparted to us through the gift of salvation or the act of God which makes us righteous. Actually in this process of conversion we have received the spirit of faith (2 Cor 4:13). Galatians 3:23 also shows us that faith "comes" to us and is not a natural part of our lives. Note Romans 10 :17, "Faith cometh..."

There are some very important aspects of this truth which need to be clearly grasped in order for that divinely imparted faith to be effective.

1:3:1 When we are born again we received all the faith we will ever have.

In other words we will never need more, nor receive more, than we already have. The limitless ability of Jesus is at work within us now (Eph 3:17,20). His resurrection life imparted

to us produces everything in us which is part of His character and ability including faith. While there may be special manifestations of the "Gift of Faith" for special purposes, our spiritual faith cannot be increased in quantity. Since we have Christ we have all that is in Him now.

This is the same as a baby having received all of the life it will ever need through being conceived. While that life will increase in expression the child does not get more life as it grows. The life principle causes the child's body to increase with the passage of time and it becomes capable of more strenuous and difficult activities, but there is no new impartation of life to face these situations

1:3:2 The expression of that faith will increase with experience and use.

The more we practice living by faith the stronger it becomes in us. It is like a muscle which must be used to develop. If the muscle is allowed to remain idle it will inevitably atrophy and become useless. Faith like all other spiritual facilities must be put to work or the ability to use it will be lost. Many Christians think that faith is only for major crises. Unfortunately, if every daily situation is not faced with faith we are 'out of practice' when the major needs arise and our ability to function in this way is seriously impaired.

1:3:3 The search for faith is destructive

because it is an expression of unbelief in what we have already received. There is no command in Scripture to pray for more faith even though there are instances where people did this. The faith we have received is to be acted on and then it functions. When we try to get faith we are saying to God "I do not believe that you have given me faith". That then becomes a statement to God that we do not believe in His word and the faith that we have received ceases to function.

1:3:4 When we acknowledge that we have the faith of Jesus (Gal 2:20) it becomes active in us. Philemon verse 6 states "the communication of our faith becomes effective by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in us". This is a vital feature of releasing the faith God has given us through salvation.

1:3:5 Faith is now a faculty of the re-born human spirit which is united with the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Faith (2 Cor 4:13) and He activates and promotes the use of faith in us. Since our spirits are joined with him to become 'one spirit' like a husband and wife become 'one flesh' this relationship is one of the most powerful sources of releasing and utilising this facility of faith. When we work in harmony with the Spirit unbelief, conservatism and negativity are impossible. He will only release in us the attributes and values of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the author and the finisher of our faith.

Chapter Two

Faith - A Spiritual Faculty

2:1 FAITH IS A FUNCTION OF THE REDEEMED HUMAN SPIRIT

When a person is born again their spirit, which was formerly dead to God (Eph 2:1) begins to function again, and its various faculties are restored to a correct operation, energised and directed by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:17,20, John 3:6).

Note that the first part of 1 Corinthians 6 deals with spiritual authority. Then the subject changes to that of fornication. The emphasis of this chapter is that we must glorify God in our spirit, and live by faith instead of mixing human methods or motivations with our spiritual faculties. This is spiritual adultery. The redeemed have a totally new motivation and a new "modus operandi". We do not work as the world does - manipulating, pulling strings, etc. We live by faith in Almighty God and are enabled to move mountains in His name and live beyond ourselves in the miraculous dimension, thus glorifying God (1 Cor 6:20, John 14:13, and Heb 1:6).

2:2 LIVING OUT OF OUR SPIRIT IN THE REALM OF FAITH

With many people "faith" is a hit or miss affair. Often when we "feel" it, nothing happens, and on other occasions when we "feel" nothing, God works mightily on our behalf. We can be confused wondering either what we did wrong or even what we did right. Without a correct understanding of the various parts of man's nature we will not be able to exercise the faculty of faith consistently or effectively. Man is made up of 3 major parts - Spirit, Soul and Body.

2:2:1 Body

When this area of our life dominates, our faith is affected by the desires, feelings or needs of the flesh, and there is a concentration on circumstances, symptoms or visible effects. The body does not, and cannot live in the unseen and visionary realm of faith. If it does not see or feel the thing, then it can't believe (John 20:25). The body is motivated by the immediate and the temporal interpreted by its 5 senses.

2:2:2 Soul

The mind of man is not the source of faith - it is instead the area of logic, will-power or emotions. It is in this area that pseudo-faith is generated. The soul must be carefully controlled if the person is to truly walk by faith.

2:2:3 Spirit

It is from this area that true faith is expressed. The redeemed spirit of man contains three primary parts and it is by the development and expression of these faculties of the spirit that the faith received as a Gift from God is released.

These faculties are: Fellowship, Intuition and Conscience.

A. Fellowship

Through a development of our love for God and the building up of the spiritual relationship there comes an increased confidence in God's ability. Just as love in the marriage union promotes trust and confidence in the other partner's willingness and ability to meet our needs, so our communion with God enables us to trust Him. Galatians 5:6 declares that "faith works by love". It is common to see new converts in the first flush of their new relationship with God so trusting and receiving so much, while more "established" believers seem to find it hard to receive blessings from God. Often times it is because the religious observances are

maintained but not the closeness of a personal relationship with the Lord. A worshipping and loving relationship with God will also bring an increased confidence in God's integrity.

Doubt is really casting a question on God's integrity, which is the strategy of Satan seen in Genesis 3:1, "Hath God said?"

God is sovereign. He is totally in control of all things and a total confidence in His purpose and integrity will promote real faith. An acceptance of His sovereignty will assist rather than inhibit the release of our faith.

B. Intuition

The spiritual man has access to another source of knowledge than that gained by the five senses of the body or through the analytical or deductive powers of the mind.

This other kind of knowledge is by revelation and is the very foundation of the New Creation life. It is by this that we are able to receive Jesus as Lord. Note Matthew 16:15-17. Jesus said that "revelation" is the rock on which His Church is built.

Out of our fellowship with God there comes an understanding or revelation of God's purpose and strategy. The special "word" or rhema from God which is the trigger of our faith comes to us through this spiritual faculty of intuition. Note also 1 Corinthians 1:21 and James 3:15-17.

C. Conscience

In our faith walk with God it is the conscience which is the arbiter and not our mind or common sense. 1 John 3:21-22, and Romans 9:1 both show that the conscience bears witness to the truth and judges what is right rather than merely condemning for anything wrong. When we then move in faith, the conscience will either check us or approve us.

The activities of these three areas in the redeemed human spirit as they relate to the release of our faith can be summed up as:

- A. Fellowship - worship
- B. Intuition - waiting on God
- C. Conscience - wholeness

It is essential to recognise what is spiritual and what is soulish so that we will operate in true faith and not a humanistic substitute. Those who settle for soulish techniques will miss out on the true release of faith.

Presumption is one of the major hazards to those who attempt to live by faith. Jesus was tempted to this sin by Satan (Matt 4:6). It is the attempt to obligate God to our desires without first establishing God's intention and timing regarding that particular thing.

Psalm 37:4 tells us that if we will live in communion with God we will receive revelation in the matter of our faith, ie God Himself will give us the desires of our heart or He will put His plans in our heart. He will show us what to desire or believe for. Note also Romans 8:26.

1 John 5:14-15 sums up this aspect of faith. The release of our faith depends on the confidence that we have developed in God Himself and this can only come about by our fellowship with Him.

Chapter Three

The Place of the Rhema

The Bible declares that "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom 10:17). This verse has confused some who have thought that faith is created in us by learning Bible doctrines, facts or quotations. While it is certain that the Bible has an essential and unique place in the development of our faith it needs to be understood that mere technical knowledge, or memory of God's word is not enough to bring about true faith.

It is clear that not all of those who are well versed in the Scriptures are "faith people". Some of the most negative and unbelieving Christians are Bible experts. Many who spend their lives in the study and teaching of 'theologies' evidence no genuine faith and have never learned to trust the Lord for prayers to be answered or needs to be met. There are many orthodox Christians who only use the Bible as a source for 'proof texts' to argue and debate with their opponents about obscure, trivial or irrelevant subjects or their personal pet opinions. In this way many have reduced the word of God to lifeless dogma where it becomes the instrument of death rather than life. Paul warns that the word of God without the Spirit of God becomes lethal legalism rather than life-giving truth (2 Cor 3:6).

Some 'biblical experts' are sceptics or heretics, even denying the basic truths of the Scriptures such as the Virgin Birth, Resurrection and Deity of Jesus. The Bible is quoted or interpreted with only the understanding of a perverse mind which has never been enlightened by divine revelation. The mind alone is not adequate to grasp the truth of the Scriptures, and when it is reduced to a source book of information the real value of the Bible is lost. There are some unregenerate people who have a mental understanding of the Bible and are well versed in its contents, but are not saved and have no spiritual faith.

Romans 10:17 is actually describing the way revelation is imparted to unbelievers and through which they are born again. The context is about the process by which the 'word of faith' comes to the unregenerate heart through preaching. It shows us again that saving faith is a gift from God, and that unregenerate people receive that impartation of divine faith when they hear the word with revelation and receive Christ (v9) It also shows us that once we have become believers there is an ongoing facility of revelation through the intuitive part of our spirit which triggers or starts the response of faith in us. In other words we continue to live our spiritual life as we began - through the impartation of revelation.

The faith that comes through the word is related to the specific revelatory word to our spirit rather than to facts or knowledge we understand only with our mind.

3:1 RHEMA AND LOGOS

In the original Greek language of the New Testament there are two different words which are normally translated "word". One is logos; the other is rhema. At times the two words appear to be used interchangeably. Yet each has a distinct special significance of its own.

The full meaning of logos extends beyond a word that is spoken or written. It denotes those functions which are the expression of a mind. The Authoritative Greek lexicon of Liddell and Scott defines logos as "the power of the mind which is manifested in speech, reason".

In this sense logos is the unchanging, self-existent "Word of God". It is God's counsel, settled in eternity before time began, due to continue on into eternity long after time has run its course. It is of this divine logos that David is speaking in Psalm 119:89 when he says, "Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven". Nothing that happens on earth can ever affect or change this word that is eternal in heaven.

On the other hand rhema is derived from a verb meaning "to speak", and denotes specifically "a word that is spoken", something that occurs in time and space.

In Romans 10:17, when Paul says that "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the WORD of God", he uses the word rhema, not logos. This agrees with the fact that he couples "word" with "hearing". Logically, in order to be heard, a word must be spoken.

The Holy Spirit takes the very words that meet our needs at that moment and imparts His life to them. They become rhema - something we can "hear", like a living voice, God Himself speaking to our spirit personally and directly. As we hear His word, faith is released in our hearts for the specific thing He is leading us to receive or accomplish.

This agrees with Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 3:6, "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life". Apart from the Holy Spirit, there can be no rhema. In the Bible, the logos, the total counsel of God, is made available to me.

But logos is too vast and too complex for me to comprehend or assimilate in its totality. Rhema is the way that the Holy Spirit brings a portion of logos down out of eternity and relates it to time and human experience.

Rhema is that portion of the total Logos that applies at a certain point in time to my particular situation. Through rhema, logos is applied to my life and thus becomes specific and personal in my experience.

In this transaction between God and man by which faith comes, the initiative is with God. This leaves no room for arrogance or presumption on our part. Indeed, in Romans 3:27 Paul tells us that boasting is excluded by the law of faith. It is God who knows - better than we do - just that part of the total logos which will meet our need at any given time.

By His Holy Spirit He directs us to the very words that are appropriate and then imparts life to them, so that they become a rhema - a living voice. At this point the response required from us is "hearing". To the extent that we "hear", our faith is released.

Ephesians 6:17 says "to take the sword of the Spirit which is the word (rhema) of God. The spiritual battle demands specific assistance from heaven, and this is provided in the right word for the occasion. The Holy Spirit gives us direction and inspiration as we faithfully feed ourselves with all of the Word of God. In the time of need He brings to our remembrance the appropriate promise for us to stand on in the time of challenge and conflict.

Matthew 4:4, in the literal translation, says "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word (rhema) which is continually proceeding out of the mouth of God". This tells us that the "revelation" rock on which Jesus has built His Church is still current. God is still inspiring His people with faith ideas (Matt 16:17-18).

3:2 CONTROVERSY ABOUT LOGOS / RHEMA

3:2:1 Are these words always interchangeable?

There are some teachers who maintain that there is no difference between the words Logos and Rhema and that they can be used interchangeably. The first question that must be answered is why did the Holy Spirit specify the use of different Greek words to the writers of the New Testament if there is no difference. If rhema is completely the same as logos and always interchangeable then why use rhema at all?

Richard Trench in his book 'Synonyms of the New Testament' (WM Erdmanns - Grand Rapids, Michigan 1960) allows for the fact that a word may have a general and common usage in the

Scriptures, but this does not deny the possibility that such a word can and should legitimately be used in a different way on certain occasions.

"It is plain that when we affirm two or more words to be synonymous, that is alike, but also different, with the resemblance in the main, but also with partial difference, we by no means deny that there be a hundred passages where it would be quite as possible to use the one as the other. All that we certainly affirm is that, granting this, there is a hundred and first, where one would be appropriate and the other not, or where, at all events one would be more appropriate than the other"

This is true of the word rhema. While on some occasions there appears to be an overlapping use of both logos and rhema there are distinct uses of rhema which definitely separate its meaning from that of logos.

3:3 DEFINITIONS

Trench divides speech into two classes. It was first regarded as the "articulate utterance of human language as contrasted with silence". Secondly it was "the orderly linking of thoughts in a connected discourse of the inward thoughts and feelings of the mind"

3:3:1 Logos

Logos - "the orderly linking and knitting together in connected discourse of the inward thoughts and feelings of the mind". (Richard Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament)

- "Collect, say, count, intellectual, rational, reasonable, spiritual" (Dictionary of New Testament Theology - Brown)

- "The expression of thought. Not the mere name of an object

1) as embodying a concept or idea

2) a saying or a statement

.The logos of the mind was a process with a purpose. Things were gathered, analysed, organised and words put together in the mind for the purpose of instilling concepts and precepts in others.

The logos may be a "spoken word" but only as the embodiment of an idea or concept and is spoken with a purpose, to instruct others. It may mean not only the content but the style of delivery, 1 Corinthians 1..."if our gospel is emptied of power by such wisdom of words" (en sophia logou).

Dr Fount Shults (A Comparative Analysis of Logos and Rhema in the New Testament - Buffalo School of the Bible 1984 - page 28) points out that the use of logos in the new Testament is largely centred around four main activities or situations.

a) Mental conception

b) Manner and purpose

c) The whole content

d) The Person of Christ

3:3:2 Rhema

Rhema - that which is spoken, what is uttered in speech or writing. Singular - "a word", plural - "speech, discourse" (Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words).

- In certain contexts it can be translated, "a thing" (Albert Barnes, Luke and John Notes on the New Testament).

- It may be compared to the Hebrew word 'dabhar' which usually meant "word" but which was often used for "thing"

- "that which is stated intentionally; a word, an utterance, a matter, event, case"

- refers primarily to the mechanical act of speaking rather than content of what is spoken.

3:4 USE OF RHEMA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Rhema may be defined as the act of speaking, the utterance of the lips rather than the content...eg...confess with your mouth (to rhema). The Hebrew word "dabhar" (daw bawr) is used in the same way ie ' the thing or event spoken of'. (For example Luke 2:15, 2:19...let us see this saying which has become a fact.)

Rhema means a distinct message (eg Luke 3:2). The word (rhema) of the Lord came to John. This was not the entirety of truth, but a distinct component of it, a particular message spoken by God to John.

John 6:63 word - rhema...How could spoken words be spirit and life? Note the context of the passage...body and blood become food and drink. The 'word' of faith by which one might be saved was indeed 'spirit and life'.

In the same way God brought about Creation by the spoken word (Heb 11:3) "Rhemata Theou".

The Logos contains and comprehends all the Rhema (John 12:47-48).

The logos is general, the rhema is specific; the logos is the whole body of material, the rhema is the constituent parts. The following examples demonstrate the relationship between the logos and rhema.

Luke 20:25 "Render unto Caesar". They were sent to trap him in his word (logos) but couldn't even take a statement (rhema) out of context or 'lay hold of His word'.

Acts 10:36-37 "word" (ton logon) ...this word (rhema) came to pass. It was the "outspeaking of the logos" - event.

John 17:6,8 I have given unto them your word (ton logon) - sum total of revelation...then I have given them the words (rhemata) - sayings and utterances of divine reality

Acts 10:44 while Peter yet spoke these words (rhemata tauta) - these specific words...the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word (ton logon)

3:5 THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF RHEMA

Logos may be spoken but Rhema always is. In all 67 uses of rhema in the NT not once does it refer to the written word, although technically it may mean writing. Even then it is as an act of saying.

Logos includes all aspects of communication from the formulation of ideas to be spoken, to the consideration of language style, through to the actual verbalisation and reception by the hearer. Rhema on the other hand stands specifically for the "uttering" or "actual expressing"

Whereas logos can often designate the Christian proclamation as a whole in the New Testament, rhema usually relates to the individual words and utterances: man has to render account for every unjust word (Matt 12:36). Jesus answered Pilate without a single word - Matt 27:14, the heavenly ones speak unutterable words (2 Cor 12:4). (Dictionary of New Testament Theology - Brown)

The significance of rhema as distinct from logos is exemplified in the injunction to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (rhema) of God (Eph 6:17). Here the reference is not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual Scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for our use in time of need, a prerequisite being the regular storing of the mind with Scripture. (Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words).

The difference is not merely emphasis. Logos is used to signify the concept, thought or matter of discussion but Rhema is more concrete, and denotes a happening, a thing or event.

Logos - the thought behind the word.

Rhema - the expression of the word, the vehicle.

Rhema can also be the event...eg Resurrection...not just a true/ false examination of the facts. It is fact an identification with the event itself. Rhema is no mere teaching of the fact it is the "event" itself being administered to the individual by the Holy Spirit.

It has been stated that the rhema of God is used in specific ways to enable mankind to lay hold of the total word of God to them as expressed in the general Logos of the Scriptures:

Rhema takes the eternal - logos - and injects it into time.

Rhema takes the heavenly - logos- and brings it down to earth.

Rhema takes the potential - logos - and makes it actual.

Rhema takes the general - logos - and makes it specific.

Rhema takes a portion of the total - logos - and presents it in a form that man can assimilate.

Rhema is like each of the broken pieces of bread with which Jesus fed the multitude; it is suited to each individual's need and capacity; often it comes to us through another's hands.

3:6 TWO KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE FACULTY OF INTUITION

There is knowledge which is gained through the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. All of our consciousness comes through these senses and it is unfortunate that mankind frequently reduces his relationship with God to this level. If He cannot be seen He is not believed in. Note Thomas' declaration John 20:25. Even our Bible knowledge can be reduced to the level of sense knowledge - that of learning, logic, indoctrination without the actual experience of God or a relationship with him (2 Cor 3:16...letter kills). Theological study under the impulse of the human mind alone is both dangerous and an aberration of genuine truth.

However, there is another kind of knowledge - Revelation knowledge, by which God will impart direct to the human spirit, through our faculty of intuition, things which He knows or wishes to teach us or alert us to. The rhema is in this category. It is a special emphasis or guidance from God. While we are required to live by the logos as far as the general principles of our life are concerned, in special cases God will give us some explicit instruction or word. This word will release faith, and this is what Romans 10:17 refers to.

3:7 THE POWER OF THE RHEMA.

1. The specific word from God has inherent power to bring things to pass as when God said, "Let there be light", and there was light (Gen 1:3). "For no word (rhema) shall be void of power" (Luke 1:37 RSV). Note Isaiah 55:10-11 "the word from my mouth". The context of this is revelation of the word - verse 8-9.

2. The Rhema is powerful because besides being the energiser of faith, it is the source of Spirit and life. "The words (rhema) I speak unto you, they are Spirit and life" (John 6:63). It is the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17).

3. The result of the rhema is seen from John 15:7, "If you abide in me (fellowship) and my words (rhema) abide in you, you will ask what you will and it shall be done". This verse contains one of the important aspects of faith living. Our desires or ideas must be generated by God. We do not presumptuously decide ourselves what God is going to do for us but seek God until we know His way, until His Rhema is in our heart and his faith is released. Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 clarify this point for us.

The Williams and Amplified version are among the most accurate translations at this point.

"... whatever you forbid on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth must be what is already permitted in heaven" (Williams, Matt 16:19). That is, the Church, in the new order, must act in accordance with the will of heaven (God). They both reveal the force of the participle perfect passive (de-de-ME-non, must be already bound or loosed). This means that we can only speak and see accomplished on earth what God has already foreseen and predetermined. Only the man who consistently walks sensitively with heaven, and can hear the word (Rhema) of the Spirit; then checks it out with the principles of the Bible - only this man will see God confirm HIS word with signs following. God is under no obligation to answer our prayers on earth that are not in harmony with His predetermined heavenly plans. We can speak and loose on earth what He has already planned in heaven to be loosed; and we can speak and bind on earth what is already consistent with His predetermined heavenly plan.

A classic Bible example of this is found by comparing James 5:17 and 1 Kings 17:1. Elijah knew from the Word of God (logos), (Deut 11:17), that God has warned that drought would result from Israel's apostasy. He prayed earnestly until this word became alive in him and he knew that God had already bound the rain in heaven. He then went to Ahab and bound it on earth. In the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, 1 Kings 17:1 uses rhema for word.

1 Samuel 3:19 says that "the Lord did not let any of Samuel's words (rhema) fall to the ground". The Lord watches over His word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12 NIV - Septuagint). He invests Himself in the performance of His promises and the word which He has inspired His servants to declare in faith.

3:8 RHEMA PROCEEDS FROM THE LOGOS

1. In order to be able to receive constant revelation or the word of faith from God, we must fill our spirit with the whole Bible - the logos. No rhema will ever contradict it or be at cross purposes with it, and while the rhema (or people claiming to have a rhema) is fallible, the logos is infallible. WE Vine commenting on Ephesians 6:17 "take the sword of the Spirit which is the rhema (word) of God", "Here the reference is not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual Scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need, a pre-requisite being the regular storing of the mind with Scripture".

Note the temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4:7 and Luke 4:12. One states, "It is written", and the other, "It is said". The rhema is a spoken word. Jesus so imbibed the Old Testament Scriptures that He was able to say to Satan, "there is no difference between me and the word of God. When I say it, it is the same as when it was originally given. I am no longer repeating a quotation - this is part of my life". Note Revelation 10:8 and Hebrews 4:2. The word of faith has to be in our heart and mouth and there is no profit in the logos unless it is mixed with faith in those that hear it.

2. While the rhema comes out of the logos, it is entirely at God's initiative and cannot be generated by man. We must respond to it, but do not create it. Some people have foolishly sought guidance by using their Bible as a talisman - seeking verses to back up or justify a situation or have rebelliously refused to live according to the logos while seeking a rhema to support their unscriptural living.

There has been a distorted teaching by some people of the wonderful facility of God's rhema to produce and release faith . They state that what we speak becomes rhema. This is the basis of presumptuous or misguided confessions. While it is important for us to declare the word of God it must first be clear that this is a word that God has inspired to our heart and that His faith is released in us. The rhema is only what God speaks to us.

Some people have attempted to use the Bible as a talisman or easy form of guidance which is both lazy and dangerous. Instead of earnestly seeking the Lord and allowing the Spirit of the Lord to guide them with a variety of confirmations, they either pluck Bible verses at random

to be their guiding principle, or go searching for a verse that is too their liking. This practice has nothing to do with the use of the rhema of God. Diligent Bible reading and meditating on the promises of God is a prerequisite for the mighty word of faith to achieve its intended purpose in a believer's life.

This does not suggest that in His providence God can and will not guide His children by some verse which seems to leap off the page of Scripture and is appropriate to the prevailing circumstance. Many of the people of God can testify to amazing confirmations or directions that have come about in this way.

In a similar way the prophetic word of the Lord or dreams and visions etc often fall into the category of rhema - a specific word given for a specific situation. While this may frequently contain Scripture or sum up the essence of a scriptural reference, it is not the quotation that is as important as the fact of God specifically addressing some personal issue with His special word applied to the situation. Such words if genuine will always agree to and be submitted to the entire body of truth - the logos of God's word.

One of the definitions of the rhema is "the word that comes the second time". It is the emphasised or intensified word of God. One of the practices of the Scriptures is the use of repetition. In order to confirm His word or to underscore its importance He will confirm it in more than one way. He promises that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word will be established (Deut 19:15, word - rhema).

Chapter Four

The Confession of Faith

The matter of confessing our faith has come into controversy and disrepute in recent years through an over-emphasis and over-simplification of the vital truth of confession which has reduced it from a valid and necessary expression of faith, to techniques and formulas. Despite the distortions of unbalanced teachers and the presumptions of many foolish people, the confession of faith is not only scriptural, but essential to an effective faith life.

4:1 THE MEANING OF CONFESSION

The word confession comes from the Greek expression homologia. In Hebrews 3:1 it is translated "profession", but more correctly is "confession". These two Greek words, homo (the same), and logia (the word), give us the thought of "the same word".

Our confession of faith is therefore to say the same thing that God has said. We do not express doubt, fear, unbelief or other negative attitudes. Our confession is an affirmation of truth - a declaration of God's word and will. It is a positive statement of the faith words God has already declared. We say them again and this is homologia, or the confession of faith.

4:2 THE HIGH PRIEST OF OUR CONFESSION

In the Old Testament every High Priest received sacrifices to be offered, but they could not accept an animal or bird to be sacrificed if it was blemished. It had to be perfect. The New Testament church does not have animal sacrifices, but one of our sacrifices unto God is the confession of our faith or giving thanks to God.

Hebrews 13:15 - "giving thanks", can be translated as "confessing to". It comes from the Greek word homologia, ie. despite our feelings or apprehensions, we align ourselves with God's word and positively declare it to be true. We cannot bring an imperfect sacrifice to Jesus. It is negative, untrue or fearful. He cannot receive it. The sacrifice is blemished and must be rejected.

This is one of the reasons why many people do not get their prayers answered. They come to Jesus, but do not realise that He can only receive a perfect offering - the confession of faith, and He is specifically the High Priest of this spiritual function. He waits to hear us declare God's truth in our prayer instead of unbelief.

Psalm 19:14 says, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer". Let the confession of our mouth be aligned with God's own statements, even to the repetition of Scripture if we are not able to express any positive trust in God with our own words.

4:3 THE WORD OF FAITH MUST BE SPOKEN

1. Romans 10:8-10 shows us that the word of faith must be spoken and not merely a

concept or attitude of the mind. Speaking the truth that salvation has been received actually releases it in the life of the person receiving Christ, but without a declaration, his faith in Christ to save him is ineffective. He must make confession of his salvation with his mouth. The Scripture says that this "word of faith" is in our mouth and heart.

2. 2 Corinthians 4:13 shows us that when we receive the "Spirit of faith", we not only believe, but we speak out what we believe.

3. This same truth is taught in Mark 11:23. Jesus states three times in this verse that faith and speaking are essential to each other.

When we speak or confess God's word, it becomes the creative word of God. Seven of God's creative acts in Genesis 1 were "spoken into being" by His word.

Our confession of faith in God validates His word to us in the same way that signing a cheque releases the potential of a bank account.

4:4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SPOKEN WORD AND THE MIRACULOUS

- 1) God said, "Let there be light" (Gen 1:3).
- 2) Noah preached deliverance and received it (Heb 11:7).
- 3) Moses decreed the plagues (Ex 7-11).
- 4) Elijah spoke drought into being (1 Kings 17:1), and called fire down from heaven (1 Kings 18:37-38).
- 5) Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still (Joshua 10:12).
- 6) Hebrew three confessed the word (Is 43:2 and Dan 3:17).
- 7) Jesus proclaimed His resurrection (Matt 16:21; 17:9 and 23).
- 8) Most New Testament miracles were spoken into being. The lame man at Gate Beautiful was healed through the declaration of Peter "Rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6), Dorcas was raised from the dead by the spoken command of Peter (Acts 9:40). Paul raised up the lame man at Lystra through a spoken declaration (Acts 14:10).
- 9) Most New Testament miracles were spoken into being - lame man at Gate Beautiful (Acts 3:6), Dorcas (Acts 9:40), and the lame man at Lystra (Acts 14:10).
- 10) Romans 4:17. God who raises the dead and calls those things which be not as though they were. This is God's faith statement of things as they will be when there is no sign of it.

The changing of Abram's and Sarai's names to Abraham and Sarah is a classic example of such faith declarations by God and their subsequent confession by His people. Abram means "exalted father", while Abraham means "father of a multitude". Sarai means "Jah is Prince", but Sarah is "Princess" because she would become the joyful mother of princes. God Himself gave them their new names and thus declared years in advance of the event that they would produce children. Every day as they called each other by their new names, they were "confessing God's word" about them.

4:5 THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

The following Scriptures show that the tongue has an awesome power for good or evil and must be used in a positive way to align us with God's revealed word and His statements of

truth.

Proverbs 12:14 - "A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth."

Proverbs 12:18 - "... but the tongue of the wise is health."

Proverbs 15:4 - "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit."

Proverbs 15:23 - "A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!"

Proverbs 18:20,21 - "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

Mark 11:23 - "He that believeth ... shall have whatsoever he saith."

James 3:6-8 - "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity ... but the tongue can no man tame."

4:6 THE CONTENT OF OUR CONFESSION

It is precisely at this point that many people have pushed "confession" to an extreme and have often moved into either presumption or disillusionment (or both).

The confession of faith is not a magical formula - some "Open Sesame" to limitless material wealth or spontaneous miracles. It must be connected to, and balanced by every other facet of spiritual life such as prayer and fasting, determination, the sovereignty of God, and timing, etc.

1) Generally the confession of our faith is related to our salvation or what we are in Christ. (Rom 10:8-10, Philemon v 6, Gal 2:20, Phil 4:13, Eph 3:20, 2 Cor 2:14, etc.)

2) When God has opened His rhema to us, then we have a basis for confessing that fact and speaking it into being. Not every promise in the Bible is, however, directly applicable to us at any one time. There are general promises or provisions of redemption that are applicable to all of us, but there are other promises that were made to individuals which may not be claimable without a direct rhema from God, ie, Jesus' word to Peter "come and walk on water" is not a general promise to everyone to be claimed at their own discretion.

3) In any event the confession of our faith must always be "homologia", ie saying again what God has said. Note Hebrews 13:5-6, "we say because He has said", and do not take the initiative to "confess" any idea we choose. Our faith is not in the soulish area of auto-suggestion or mind over matter, and every confession must originate from God for it to be true homologia. Even Jesus' declaration of His ministry was a restatement of the Old Testament prophecy concerning Him (Luke 4:18, cp Is 61:1).

4:7 ABUSES OF CONFESSION

On many occasions it has been taught that once a person has received prayer for healing that they should cease taking any medication or refuse medical help, and confess their healing until it is obvious. Many tragic cases have resulted from this practise.

A letter from Pastor Charles Gould illustrates the lunacy of extremism in confession of faith:

I have been pastoring the First Assembly of God Church in Jackson, Tennessee, for three months now. This church has had many difficulties in the past, but the most recent was a church split over the very subject, the Confession Life of the believer, and all other teachings that have been spawned by the overbalance of faith teaching.

Ironically, the church I previously served had a similar situation develop during our tenure there. It started with one of the greatest soul-winners I had ever met. He would win several people to Christ during the week and bring them to church the following Sunday. There were many services when the whole pew on which he sat would be filled with souls he had won to Christ.

In a search for what he termed "deeper truths", he left the church to begin a small fellowship in his home in which he became the teacher. Several families began to attend his services, and from all indications, things were going well for him.

He began to use materials from a certain "faith" teacher, and continued great "faith feats," believing God for great healings. People began to talk of his fellowship throughout the town and outlying areas, and it appeared things were going well for them, having more and more families attend his services.

Under the teaching of this man (who in their opinion was teaching exactly what the Word said), they decided that it was not scriptural to go to doctors. They cited scriptural case studies such as King Asa who had "suffered many things at the hands of the physicians." So they began to make plans to have the six women who were pregnant in their fellowship deliver their children at home. The tape entitled "Our Family Physician" encouraged them to "trust Jesus, the GREAT PHYSICIAN, not doctors. Doctors are for those who have no faith."

The sad truth is that one lady, a friend of ours, truly delivered her baby, after 36 hours of strenuous labour. A beautiful baby boy. But after the hours of labour, she was too exhausted to deliver the afterbirth, and before her husband's and others' eyes, she bled to death.

The newspaper, of course, capitalising on the "religious cult," brought much shame to those who were novices in the Word of God, and indirectly to our Full Gospel cause in the town. They associated the "cult" with those who "speak with tongues" and preach divine healing and faith in God.

The death was not the end, however, for the leadership of the fellowship believed she died, but would be raised from the dead "for the glory of God." It was three days before the public knew she had passed away. Her body was prayed over by the fellowship members, and when people would call regarding her condition; they said, "She is doing just fine," (by faith, of course).

I suppose the saddest part of the story is that we were never able to admit they had been presumptuous. Today they are still meeting, even though their teaching has brought death, the loss of the family's other two children (the social services took the other children from the father), and other consequences.

The inquest I attended further mocked the churches that preach what we term Full Gospel. I remember how my heart ached as I watched the reproach being brought against the Lord.

A further example of presumptive confession is seen in this illustration from Dr. Cho's book, "The Fourth Dimension":

During the week of the youth campaign it rained heavily, and all the rivers overflowed. A group of young people wanted to go to the town on the opposite side of the river, where the meetings were being held. But when they came to the bank of the river, it was flooded. There was not a bridge or boat to be seen, and most of them became discouraged.

But three girls got together and said, "Why can't we just wade through the water? Peter walked on the water, and Peter's God is our God, Peter's Jesus is our Jesus, Peter's faith is our faith. Peter believed, and we should do all the more. We are going to go over this river!"

The river was completely flooded, but these three girls knelt down and held hands together, quoting the Scriptures containing the story of Peter walking on the water, and claiming they could believe in the same way. Then, in the sight of the rest of

their group, they shouted and began to wade through the water.

Immediately they were swept away by an angry flood, and after three days their dead bodies were found in the open sea.

This incidence caused repercussions throughout Korea. Non-Christian newspapers carried the story, making headlines of it: "Their God Could Not Save Them"; "Why Did God Not Answer Their Prayer of Faith?". So unbelievers had a real heyday as a result of this occurrence, and the Christian church experienced a slump, feeling depressed and discouraged, having no adequate answer.

This became a topic of discussion all over Korea, and many previous good Christians lost their faith. They would say, "These girls believed exactly as our ministers have taught; they exercised their faith. From the platform our pastors constantly urged the people to boldly exercise their faith in the Word of God. These girls did just that, so why didn't God answer? Jehovah God must not be a living God. This must just be a formalistic religion we have been involved in."

What kind of answer would you give to these people? Those girls had believed. They had exercised faith based on the Word of God.

But God had no reason to support their faith. Peter never walked on the water because of the logos, which gives general knowledge about God. Peter required that Christ give a specific word to him: Peter asked, "Lord, if you are Jesus, command me to come."

Jesus replied, "Come."

The word Christ gave to Peter was not logos, but rhema. He gave a specific word, "Come", to a specific person, Peter, in a specific situation, a storm.

Rhema brings faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by rhema. Peter never walked on the water by knowledge of God alone. Peter had rhema.

But these girls had only logos, a general knowledge of God, and in this case, the working of God through Peter. They exercised their human faith on logos; that was their mistake. God, therefore, had no responsibility to support their faith, and the difference between the way these girls exercised faith and the way Peter exercised faith is as the difference between night and day.

The confession of faith is valid and necessary to an effective faith life, but it must be governed by the principles of the Rhema from God.

Chapter Five

The Eye of Faith

The difference between mediocrity and greatness is vision. The Bible states this premise clearly. Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish", or as alternate versions state it, "Where there is no ongoing vision, the people run amuck", or "where there is no progressive vision, the people dwell carelessly", or "where there is no prophetic vision the people are unrestrained". In other words, in order for us to aspire to the greatness for which God designed us, a specific vision of our future and its possibilities must be held in clear focus.

5:1 UNFOCUSED FAITH

One of the major reasons why many people are not successful in their faith life, and achieve little, is because of the vagueness of their vision. They have no goals or definite expectations and have never "focused" their faith on anything specific. Consequently they drift through life, being manipulated by circumstances and other people. Habakuk 2:2 declares that we should "write the vision and make it plain that he may run that readeth". Our goals and aspirations in God need to be so specific that they can be written down and made plain to those we seek to communicate them to. The prime prerequisite for a clear vision is a word or rhema from God. 1 Samuel 3:1 tells us that there was no word (rhema) in Eli's day and there was no open vision in Israel. Eli was also blind, but it was a physical manifestation of a spiritual condition.

Isaiah 28:7 says that "the priest and prophet err in vision and they stumble in judgement" and this is an apt description of the condition existing in Eli's time.

5:2 THE PURPOSE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Contrary to popular Pentecostal opinion, the Holy Spirit is not given to us merely to:

- a) bless us
- b) make us speak in tongues
- c) work miracles
- d) give us power to witness.

Although He will produce all these effects and more.

Joel 2:28-29 shows us that the Holy Spirit comes to make us a "Prophetic people" fulfilling the cry of Moses, "I would that all the Lord's people were prophets" (Num 11:29). Part of this prophetic facility is released in the ability to see visions and dream dreams. The power of the Holy Spirit enables us to see God's plans and desires, to conceive God's ideas. The natural man cannot do this. God says that His thoughts and ways are higher than man's ways and then declares that when He sets an idea in motion, it will not return to Him void but will produce results, and He likens the process to sowing and reaping (Is 55:8-11). We need supernatural insight to grasp God's intention and this ability is released to us in the Holy Spirit. He searches the mind of God and reveals it to us so that we can have a valid vision (1 Cor 2:10).

5:3 A VALID VISION

God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts. Human negativity and unbelief cannot conceive Divine plans. We need the Holy Spirit's revelation so that we can dream dreams, plan plans, think thoughts and see visions that are big enough for God to fit into. Most of our ideas are so puny, so shortsighted and devoid of the element of faith that God cannot fit into them. For example:

1: Moses had a desire to bring deliverance to his people while he still lived in Pharaoh's palace, but his plan was so puny. He tried to bring about release for one individual instead of "seeing" the loftier vision of deliverance for the whole nation.

2: Gideon went out against the Midianites with 30,000 soldiers, but it left too little room for God to work. When the army was reduced to 300, God had room to move in the situation (Judges 7:2) and was glorified instead of Israel.

3: One of the basic requirements for a miracle is an impossible situation. Without an impossibility we do not need miracles and can work it out ourselves without God. He has most latitude when we have none. Man's extremity is God's opportunity.

5:4 THE POWER OF VISION

When we focus our believing, either positive or negative, we are laying hold of things in the invisible realm and bringing those unseen things into this tangible world by "seeing it" before it can be naturally seen.

One of the clearest examples of the power of our vision to work either positively or negatively is found in the situation of Israel's twelve spies in Numbers 13:28-33.

The spies saw the problems. They focused on the sheer size of the task before them and consequently they were in their own sight as grasshoppers. Their vision was negative but it had power to produce a powerful result. It bound them with fear until they were incapable of going into Canaan.

Caleb and Joshua saw the possibilities and declared that they were able to go in at once and so powerful was the result of their vision of the possibilities, that they alone out of that entire generation finally did go into Canaan. Caleb, forty years after his original vision of victory was able to overcome the sons of Anak and gain his desired portion of Canaan.

Dr. Yonggi Cho calls this spiritual vision the "spotted and speckled principle". The experience of Jacob putting rods before the eyes of the cattle and sheep when they were conceiving (Gen 30:37-43). Whatever type of rods were in their vision at the time of conception was the type of lamb or calf they eventually bore. In other words, what we see is what we conceive and produce.

This spiritual "pregnancy" in us is begun by a rhema from God. If we will "see" it, the thing desired will grow in the unseen realm until the time of its birth.

We see the project by:

1: Desiring it or clearly focusing on it in our spirit until we can see it vividly with the eye of faith.

2: Seeing it in an illustration, object or picture. A physical representation of the desired object or situation can be very helpful to maintaining focus.

3: Describing it constantly, and always in terms of completion and victory and the will of God.

4: Confessing it and acknowledging it as an accomplished fact.

Canon Jim Glennon of St. Andrews Cathedral, Sydney, and greatly used in healing ministry states, "Once having seen the promises of God and having accepted them as applying to you personally, you must ever afterwards describe yourself in terms of that faith vision".

5:5 FOCUS ON THE INVISIBLE REALITY

Since almost all of the things we need to bring to pass by faith are impossible or invisible at the moment, we must learn to see beyond the obvious into the unseen realm. Although these things cannot be felt they are none the less real.

1: 2 Kings 6 shows us that although the servant of Elisha could not see the angelic hosts, they had been there all the time and Elisha could see them. His servant had to get his eyes "opened" to be able to see into the invisible realm.

2: Hebrews 11:1 declares that faith is the evidence of things not seen. We can know things as a fact which other people cannot perceive.

3: Noah was able to see things not seen as yet (Heb 11:7).

4: Abraham left behind his tangible things and "looked" for a city which was invisible.

5: The Old Testament patriarchs had "seen the promises" afar off.

6: Moses was not destroyed as Pharaoh commanded because his parents saw he was a special child - Heb. 11:23.

7: Matthew 6:22 tells us that the "light" or revelation of the body is in the eyes. Vision lets in light.

8: It was this ability to see into the invisible "realm" which altered Job's circumstances (Job 42:5). His restoration began with "seeing" God.

9: Hebrews 11:27 - Moses endured "as seeing Him who was invisible". As a result of his vision of God he saw that Egypt's power was broken and forsook Egypt not fearing the wrath of Pharaoh.

Israel saw only the visible and faltered, but Moses focused on the invisible reality and triumphed.

Jesus said, "What things soever you desire when you pray believe that you receive them and you shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

The Scripture identifies a number of situations in which the principle of "seeing" is used to bring victory and deliverance to God's people.

a) Salvation - Isaiah 45:22, "Look unto me and be ye saved". This was the identical principle God used to heal Israel from the bites of deadly serpents. A Brazen Serpent was put on a pole and all those who looked to it were delivered (Numbers 21:8). This is also a type of our salvation in Jesus Christ. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness" Those who look to Him are saved.

b) Evangelism - John 4:35, "Look on the fields". Jesus shows us that merely pleading for souls to be saved will be deficient unless God's people see the state of the harvest and are able to identify that part of the field which is ready to be reaped. Without this type of observation the tendency is to postpone any reaping until another time. When we can see the state of the harvest as God sees it a sense of urgency will arise

c) Adversity - Job 23:10. Job boldly declared what he had seen "I shall come forth as gold" Although his natural circumstances at the time indicated continuing misery Job saw the

possibilities of God's blessing. .

d) Revelation of God - Job 42:5. In a similar way Job also came into a new understanding of God's grace, power and nature by having his spiritual eyes opened to see the Almighty, instead merely of being instructed "I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear but now mine eye seeth you"

e) Restoration of family - Gen.22:5. Abraham responded to the challenge to sacrifice Isaac and thus destroy all his hopes for the future. He saw not only the restoration of his immediate family but all that God had promised him in Isaac. "I and the lad..... shall come again".

Chapter Six

The Hand of Faith

There comes a point in the realm of faith where the prayer and vision must be translated into activity. Moses reached this place at the shore of the Red Sea when confronted with obstacles in front and problems behind. He cried to God for a solution, but God put the onus for the solution back on to Moses by saying, "What is that in your hand?" (Ex 14:16). God had previously committed to Moses a miracle ability with his rod (Ex 4:2), and now expected him to use it instead of trying to abdicate from his responsibilities. God was really saying, "Moses, the ball is in your court", or "It is your move".

The Scriptures are full of evidence that God expects us to make a faith-move instead of apathetically expecting God to do it all for us without our involvement. In other words, we have to make things happen! Note Exodus 7:19; 8:5,6, 16-17; 9:22-23; 10:12-13,22; John 8:1; 14:26.

While we do not foolishly or presumptuously do anything we choose and call it a step of faith, we must co-operate with God by acting on His promises. We must have a rhema and we need a valid and clear vision, but these elements will be unproductive unless we are prepared to get personally involved. Within the revelation we have received God expects us to take the initiative. Often He is hindered from working on our behalf because we have not, or will not do what we can do first. When we do what we can, then God will do what He can.

Joshua is another example of having to take an action to complement his prayer and by that action bring release to Israel (Joshua 7:10-15).

6:1 THE MEANS FOR OUR SOLUTIONS ARE OFTEN AT OUR DISPOSAL

6:1:1 Faith is Expressed As An Action

Hebrews 11 lists the faith experience of the Old Testament believers who acted on their faith. Abel offered, Noah built, Abraham went out, Isaac and Jacob blessed their descendants, Moses made a choice, etc.

This principle is clearly expressed in the story of 2 Kings 7. The four lepers said, "Why sit we here till we die". They determined to get up and do the little that they could and as they did God acted on their behalf. The sound God caused the Syrians to hear was an amplification of the steps of these pathetic men. It would not have happened had they not moved out.

This faith step often involves:

1. Doing what you've never done before. By faith Noah built an Ark (Gen 6). It had never been done before by anyone so there was no-one to copy and no precedents to follow. Faith is often pioneering a new path, setting the pace or blazing a trail for others to follow.
2. Doing what you can't do. Jesus commanded the man with the withered hand to stretch it out (Mark 3:5). This was beyond the ability of the man but he had to try and in trying to found that the miracle power of Jesus had released him. He would never have had that miracle if he had not tried to do what he could not do. This is one of the most common challenges God puts before us in living by faith. His plans are impossible and can only be achieved by His power, but this power is often released by attempting to do the thing which is beyond us.

6:1:2 Using What You Have

1. When God challenged Moses to do something about his situation, the solution was in his hands. Often we are waiting for God to manufacture our solution in some mystical way, but he frequently works through the thing at hand.
2. Elisha was able to miraculously break the yoke of poverty over the widow (2 Kings 4), but he used what she had. "What have you in the house?" She had a pot of oil and from this small resource God brought deliverance. (Her next step was to take a faith action and go and borrow vessels, not a few.)
3. Jesus used the small resources that were available to feed the thousands (Mark 6). Note that He told the disciples to check out what was available for Him to work with, "What have you - go and see!" (v38).
4. Two important aspects of faith arise from these illustrations:
 - 1) Begin where you are. People often postpone believing God hoping that things will improve first. The time when we need to believe is when things are at their worst or most impossible. Use what you have now and take a faith step where you are in order to give God an opportunity to meet our needs or bring His plans to pass.
 - 2) Despise not the day of small things (Zech 4:10). In many cases people are robbed of a miracle because they feel that the little they could do will not have any effect on the situation. If we could do it all we would not need God's intervention, but God often will not work for us until we first contribute the little we can. It becomes the deposit from which God will bring a total solution.

6:1:3 Sowing and Reaping

It is one of the laws of life that for every action there is a corresponding reaction. This is really the law of sowing and reaping or Seed Faith.

Though we cannot provide all the resources needed for a certain solution, yet the little we can do will set the wheels of change in motion. Sometimes the thing we can do or sow is not directly or apparently related to the need and may in fact temporarily and apparently make the need greater.

1. The widow of Zarephath was commanded by Elijah to give him the small resource of food she had left. This made her situation worse, but it was the seed sown from which God provided her needs for 3 years (1 Kings 17:8-24).
2. Elijah poured barrels of water upon his altar (1 Kings 18:33). This was the most precious commodity in the land at that time due to the drought. However it was seed sown for a harvest of rain which soon followed.
3. The ministry of paying tithes and giving offerings is an act of seed faith (Mal 3:8-11). To the natural mind it makes no sense to give at least one tenth of our income to the Lord as this makes our economic situation worse. However, it is an act of faith which releases the blessings of God and enables Him to "rebuke the devourer" for our sake.

6:2 FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

6:2:1 Active Or Passive Faith

It is very common for people to reduce their faith level to passive belief instead of active

commitment. For example - belief in the Millennium makes no real demand upon us and has little effect on the way we live. While this is more of a doctrinal type of belief, yet we can approach our daily living with the same uncommitted, or passive belief. True faith demands action.

1. Some years ago the great French stuntman, Blondin, stretched a tight rope across Niagara Falls. He walked on the rope, lay down on it, danced on it, and then wheeled a barrow across. He pushed the barrow across a second time with a heavy sack of potatoes in it. Finally he asked the crowd if they believed that he could wheel a man across the rope in the barrow instead of a sack of potatoes. The crowd enthusiastically shouted that they believed he could, but when he asked for a "believer" to step into the barrow, no-one would respond. Their belief in his abilities was passive and lacked commitment.

2. Abraham believed God with INTERNALLY EXPRESSED FAITH and as a result of believing God's promise of a miracle son and a multitude of descendants, he was justified by his faith (Gen 15:6, Rom 4:3-6).

However the Scripture makes it plain that this was not the full process of his believing. He had to ACT on that faith to make it fully effective. The Bible says he was justified when he added works or actions to his faith and offered Isaac up in obedience to God's command (Gen 22, cp James 2:20-24). His first expression of internal faith was validated and perfected by his EXTERNALLY EXPRESSED FAITH.

3. Rahab believed the spies when she received them, but she became "committed" to Israel when she put her life in jeopardy by hiding them. The Bible declares that this was an action of faith (Heb 11:31 and James 2:25).

4. Peter received a rhema from Jesus to walk on water. Despite this specific word to him, that miracle did not occur without his involvement. He made the decision to get out of the boat and step out on the sea. His action was a total commitment to this promise of the Lord which authenticated his internal belief in the possibility of doing what Jesus was doing (Matt 14:28-29).

5. All true faith will be tested. It is not intended that faith should be some magical formula, an "open sesame" to the promises of God. True faith will affect the way we live and bring about change in our character as we learn to trust God when our faith is under fire. The Bible tells us that there is both the "fight of faith" (1 Tim 6:12) and the "trial of our faith" (1 Peter 1:7).

It is not enough for us to say that we have faith. God will test it so that its expression will grow and we can see its phenomenal strength and so gain more confidence in our ability to live by faith.

6. Belief that remains in the theoretical or passive realm and is never proved or demonstrated by action is not really faith, but is a creed.

True faith will demand and force action. Martin Luther's new found justification by faith based on Romans 1:17 forced a total change in his way of living and caused his break with the Roman Catholic system. His new faith caused him to risk his life by nailing the 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenburg church. He expressed this new faith in his bold declaration, "Here I stand. I can do no other".

John Wesley's belief that the gospel was for the common man and should not be confined to the church building took him into outdoor evangelism and eventually caused his expulsion from the Church of England.

7. Faith in any given situation is always expressed internally or vocally before the works, but only action can prove that it is faith. These works of faith have an effect upon our

relationship with God by increasing the release of our righteousness. When we give to the work of God we receive from God both the multiplication of our seed sown and increase in the fruits of our righteousness (2 Cor 9:10).

Chapter Seven

The Rhythm of Faith

7:1 RHYTHM RELEASES ENERGY

It is not possible to be effective in faith on a stop-go basis. Once having committed yourself to live and act by faith in your Christian experience, you must continue in this way and maintain it as permanent. In fact casual or occasional faith expressions will become negative or destructive of an affective life of faith.

Our faith is an ongoing thing. There is no way that we can stop our faith and expect it to be effective when we try to start it again. It is intended by God to become a way of life rather than a facility we seek to exercise in times of need. Each step of faith is designed by God to prepare us for the next challenge.

Romans 1:17 says, "the just shall LIVE by faith". It is all day, every day, and every need and problem must be dealt with in a faith way. It is actually possible to so develop a "habit" of faith in God that a rhythm or momentum of faith is actually produced.

Rhythm is important to the long distance runner and if properly established can help him to use his energy effectively rather than inefficiently. In fact correct rhythm will make it easier to run. The studies of C. Richard Taylor and Norman Hegland at Harvard University Museum of Comparative Zoology showed that "the locomotion of all vertebrates can be described as the movement of either a spring or pendulum. A joggers legs & body converts the shock of thumping down onto the ground into an upward push. Between 20 and 70 percent of the energy is stored and then recovered for the next step.

When people walk, energy from one step helps to power the next step, but this must be at their natural frequency. If they stop or walk more slowly than their natural pace, they don't make full use of their momentum."

7:2 EXAMPLES OF THE RHYTHM OF FAITH

This effect is observable in the life of faith. Each challenge faced and victory won also provides an energy or momentum for the next challenge. Each new step in God is part of the last step and also the beginning of the next step.

This is similar to the launching of a three stage rocket. The momentum of the first stage is imparted to the second stage before that stage ignites. It, in turn, imparts its momentum to the third stage before it is ignited and ultimately achieves orbital velocity.

1. 1 Kings 17 and 18 is a classic example of the rhythm of faith in the life of Elijah.

- 1) He prayed for drought and declared it to Ahab
- 2) He received supernatural provision at the Brook Cherith
- 3) He initiated the miracle of supply at the of widow of Zarephath's house
- 4) He was enabled to raise the widow's son from the dead
- 5) He called the fire from heaven at Mount Carmel in audacious faith
- 6) He prayed in the breaking of the three and a half year drought
- 7) He outran Ahab's chariot over a 17 mile route.

Elijah's faith progressed from one level to another, each challenge providing the momentum for the next demand on his faith until he was "running faster than he could run" (1 Kings 18:46).

After this tremendous progression of faith Elijah "broke step" through fear of Jezebel's death sentence on him and he fled. Elijah never recovered the same rhythm of faith and shortly afterward was told by God to anoint Elisha to replace him as prophet.

2. Israel "broke step" at Kadesh-Barnea (Numbers 13) and it took 38 years to recover the rhythm of faith. In fact that generation never did recover it. Caleb and Joshua who did not break step with the rest of the people went from strength to strength and accomplished great things though now in advanced years (Joshua 14:6-15).

3. Joash stopped "too soon" in striking the arrows of deliverance and angered Elisha and missed his miracle dimension. Through embarrassment, exasperation or a lack of spiritual insight and obedience, he broke the rhythm of faith (2 Kings 13).

4. The Galatian Christians broke step by putting their faith in Christ aside and reverting to keeping the Law (Gal 5:7).

7:3 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RHYTHM OF EARTH

1. The run of faith is often demanding and sometimes physically and mentally exhausting. Isaiah 40:31 lists "waiting on the Lord" as a prime pre-requisite for a successful run. New energy is imparted from our devotional relationship with the Lord.

2. The run of faith is something the Lord has specifically ordered for us and is not a presumptuous program of our own. Jeremiah 23:21 says, "I sent not these prophets, yet they ran". The secret of success is to seek Him for His clear plans. "Draw me and we will run after thee" (Song of Solomon 1:4).

3. Out of that devotional relationship where both strength and specific guidance comes will also emerge a clear vision. Habakuk 2:2, "Write the vision and make it plain that he may run that readeth". A true run of faith depends totally on a clear vision for God.

4. Paul said that he did not run uncertainly (1 Cor 9:26). He ran with both purpose and personal discipline that nothing would break his rhythm (v 27). It is important to have a goal and to go after it with all the energy you can muster, "run that you may obtain" (v28). Israel in the days of the Judges was "sidetracked" and lost sight of the goal of total victory in Canaan (Judges 5:6).

5. The run of faith is a long run and never a short sprint. This is the marathon event. It must be run with patience (Heb 12:1).

6. In it all it must be remembered that even our experience in the run of faith is not sufficient to bring a victory. God's power and grace is the key factor. Romans 9:16, "So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

Chapter Eight

The Moment of Faith

8:1 THE FAULT OF MODERN ULTRA-DISPENSATIONALISM

While different schools of thought exist regarding God's dealings with man, most agree that He has dealt with the human race in at least two different ways, ie through the Old and New Testaments. Some Bible teachers see further division of these two periods into watertight periods of history as far as God's revelation to man is concerned, called Dispensations.

Scofield defines a dispensation as "a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some special revelation of the will of God". Scofield then identifies seven dispensations - Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace, and Kingdom. H.A. Ironside stated, "there are various economies running through the word of God. A dispensation or economy is that particular order or condition of things prevailing in one special age which does not necessarily prevail in another".

While most would agree that God dealt with man differently in the Old Testament than He deals in the New Testament, some teachers attempt to divide between God's dealings with the Church of the first century and the rest of the Church age. They declare that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the revelation of God's purpose through prophetic gifts and the manifestation of His miraculous ability were necessary for the formation of the Church, but are unnecessary and unavailable since the completion of the canon of Scripture. This ultra-dispensationalism is always remote from God's power. It accepts both past and future demonstrations of God's ability, but does not believe it is for today. Many fundamentalists (!) emphatically believe in both the miracles of Jesus and of the Apostles, and also emphatically believe in the miracle of the Rapture of the Church, but do not believe that faith in God brings healing from sickness now.

Others believe that any miracle is totally at God's discretion with no involvement by the recipient, ie it happens at random to some lucky person, but others miss out (John 5:4).

However, it is the clear teaching of Scripture that we must be involved in our deliverance (John 5:6, and Matt 13:58).

8:2 FAITH IS IN THE NOW

Hebrews 11:1 declares that "NOW faith IS". It is present tense - not past and not future. It is only effective when it is exercised now. You can't postpone faith without breaking its rhythm.

All of our Christian experience is "for today". 1 Timothy 4:8, "godliness has promise for the life that now is and that which is to come". 1 John 3:2, "Now are we the Sons of God". Mark 10:30, "Whosoever sacrifices for Jesus' sake shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, and in the world to come eternal life".

Jesus is called the I AM (Ex 3:14, John 6:35; 10:9; 11:25, Matt 14:27 AMP, John 18:6 AMP). He is always in our now and is never historical or futuristic (Heb 13:8).

All of God's blessings and promises are available to this generation. There are two ways in

which this needs to be understood.

8:2:1 The Moment of Faith

In God's sovereign purposes some things have a specific time attached to them. There is a moment in which they can be gained, but that moment will pass if it is not laid hold of and the opportunity for God to meet that need will be gone. For Example,

1. Israel missed the "time" of their visitation through rejecting Jesus (Luke 19:44).
2. At Kadesh-Barnea Israel missed their opportunity to inherit God's promise for them. There was a moment when the door to their future was open but they did not enter in because of unbelief (Numbers 13). They were out of synchronisation with God's timing. Tomorrow was too late. If it was to be of faith it had to be at the time He had indicated. When they did attempt to go the next day they were slain (Numbers 14:40-45).

8:2:2 God's Laws of Timing

Though every promise of God is potentially available in our generation, the laws of timing for the release of those promise is still in effect. One of these principles in the law of seed-time and harvest. Note Genesis 8: 22, Ecclesiastes 3:1 and Leviticus 23:4. There are seasons in God, even though we are not cut off from His blessings dispensationally.

Many of the problems associated with the exercise of faith are due to pushing a right principle at a wrong time or in a wrong way. In many cases "the vision is for an appointed time" (Hab 2:2) or the seed of faith must be sown and allowed to germinate before a harvest can be expected. Our responsibility is to understand the balance between God's promises, our need, and God's sovereignty expressed in timing.

The Scripture states, "In due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Gal 6:9).

Chapter Nine

Setting A Faith Goal

Faith is not a feeling and cannot operate in a vague or general way. It must have a goal or it will not be effective.

9:1 FAITH MUST BE SPECIFIC

The following Scriptures establish that faith must be clear in its expectations.

Hebrews 11:1, "Faith is the substance of THINGS hoped for".

Mark 11: 24, "What THINGS soever you desire . . .".

Psalms 37:4, "He shall give you the DESIRES of your heart".

James 4:2, "You have not because you ASK not".

Proverbs 29:18, "Without a VISION the people perish".

Habakkuk 2:2, "Write the vision and make it PLAIN".

A camera has to be correctly focused if the right results are to be achieved on the film, and in a corresponding way our faith needs to be clearly focused on the goal to be achieved. The desires for and details of the thing being reached out for should be crystal clear.

9:2 THE LONG RANGE GOAL

Every life needs to have an eventual goal - an overall vision or purpose. Without this sort of benchmark we tend to have a zigzag path through life and end up merely reacting to the various crises rather than operating out of a definite plan for our life.

God gave Abraham a vision of his land hundreds of years before his descendants actually possessed it (Gen 13:15). This long range vision became the motivating factor which brought Israel out of Egypt.

Long range goals help us to be definitive and selective. We are able to tell quickly if certain ideas or projects will fit into the overall plan of our life. This is not, however, easy to define if no such plan exists.

9:3 SHORT TERM STEPS

While long range goals are essential to set the ultimate direction of our life, they are too remote for us to work with. It is necessary to break them down to a series of short term stages to achieve the overall plan or vision. This is also true of any major faith project which may take an extended time to complete. It is also far easier to aim for the achievement of smaller steps than to be confronted with huge challenges. Long range goals also tend to be so futuristic and visionary that they become somewhat remote. Once it is broken down into smaller stages each of these needs to be:

1. **Realistic** - Some people live in an area of fantasy. Their ideals are not only vague, but tend to be unrealistic. For example, a church may have a desire for growth based on the fanciful idea that every other church in town will close down and come and join them, or to solve their financial problems they may be praying and believing for \$1,000,000 to be given to

them from some unexpected source.

Our faith goals need to be based on a certain realism, though not one generated by human ideas. Our goals must be born in God, but to check out that we are on course, establish if the goal is fanciful, idealistic or wishful thinking.

2. **Achievable** - Not only must faith have a vision of its future, but it must have a plan to bring it to pass. The short term steps to achieve the long range goal should now be broken down in specific areas of activity that you can accomplish with God's help. For example, the long range goal may be to have a congregation of 1000 people. Your short term goal may be to win 100 people to the Lord this year. That short term faith goal is not achievable as it is. It needs to be divided again - 2 people per week is an achievable goal and in achieving the tiny steps the goal is realised.

It is also important to identify exactly what the believer can and should contribute to achieving the goal. If there is some action of faith which can be initiated this will bring the person trusting God closer to the reception point. Frequently people wishing for change through all the responsibility for the miraculous supply onto God and accept no responsibility to co-operate with Him. The faith goal thereby becomes unachievable.

3. **Measurable** - In order to effectively maintain a faith goal it is essential to be able to monitor your progress continually, ie six months have now passed, what do our records show has happened. Are we on target to achieve the 1 year goal or have we slipped behind. If so, what is the reason? Measuring the goal generally means that there will be time set for its completion. While time is God's prerogative, He often requires us to express our faith within the limits of a set-time frame.

9:4 GOALS MUST COME FROM GOD

During the study on Faith Principles we have emphasised the danger and futility of presumption. We cannot pluck goals out of the air, or arbitrarily decide them by a process of logic or human reasoning. They must come from God if they are to be faith goals.

John 15:7 says we can ask what we will if we abide in the Lord and His rhema abides in us". His word in us is achievable but it will most often be far above man-made goals (Is 55:8-11). When we have His word abiding in us, we will set goals according to the will of God and these are realistic, achievable and measurable (1 John 5:14-15).

9:5 SEEING IT DONE

Our faith goals need to be constantly kept before us so that they can be clearly and continually focused. The plan of Jacob to increase his flocks by placing rods before their eyes as they conceived resulted in the flocks bringing forth what they saw (Gen 30:37-43). This is true of those who have a clear faith goal and keep it constantly before them. Our visualising of the desire of our heart fulfilled is the key to transferring it from the invisible realm to the visible (Heb 11:3). It is too easy for our faith goal to fade and we need to discipline ourselves by various means to keep it always before us.

Reach out in faith to believe God for more.

William Carey said, "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God".

Some people settle for the ordinary when they could have the extra-ordinary.

A man's capacity is generally determined by his goals.

Those without goals are often used by those who do have them.

Chapter Ten

Indecisiveness

10:1 DECISION MAKING

The ability to make a decision and carry it through is an important part of living by faith. Many people will try to avoid making decisions, hoping that things will turn out right in any case. However we are required to make decisions that are vital in many areas of our life. The choice of our marriage partner is not something that one can drift into and expect a proper relationship. The choice of career or training are important areas of decision making. There are other countless areas where our success depends not only on the quality of our decision, but the very ability to make definite choices.

A prevalent attitude of modern society is that if we don't take a definite position we can't be shown wrong. This philosophy promotes leadership by consensus instead of conviction and is really a cop-out. It is an attempt to avoid responsibility.

In the realm of faith there are constant challenges in our believing God that necessitate a definite decision.

Moses faced this level of choice when he grew up and realising his destiny "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God" (Heb 11:24-25). Both Elijah and Jesus called for definite decision (1 Kings 18:21 and Mark 10:21).

10:2 FAITH VERSUS FEAR

Fear and indecisiveness are closely related. One is the cause and the other is the effect - in any order. Either the person who is fearful will postpone or seek to avoid making a decision, or the very act of being indecisive will cause fear to rise in that person.

Procrastination is said to be the thief of time, but it is much more than that. It is actually the fear of making a decision. Most people have problems that could be avoided because certain of these "problems" exist because decisions which needed to be courageously made have been postponed or avoided.

10:3 THE POWER OF COMMITMENT

The word "commitment" does not appear in the King James Version of the Bible, but in each area where it is applicable the word for "believe" is used instead. To truly believe in Christ we must put our whole weight upon Him without reserve. This is commitment and it releases a positive power within us. True faith seeks no "back door escape". It is prepared to be committed to a cause of action and burns its bridges behind it.

Both marriage and walking on water are commitments that are activated by definite decisions. In a true commitment to either experience there is no way back. Bertrand Russell was asked if he was prepared to die for his beliefs. "Of course not," he replied, "after all, I

may be wrong!"

It is this level of decision making which allows faith to achieve its greatest triumphs in us. Instability is often manifested in indecisiveness and destroys our faith. James 1:6-8 declares that the wavering double-minded man shall not receive anything from the Lord.

Elijah challenged Israel to quit halting between two opinions and to commit themselves to one way or the other (1 Kings 18:21).

It was this instability in the face of temptation which cost Rueben his birthright. The Bible says he was unstable as water (Gen 49:3-4). He was wishywashy about evil. He was indecisive about his options in regard to his father's concubine and had made no commitment to avoid this sin of immorality. In the identical circumstances (Gen 39:7-8), his brother Joseph held to his steadfast commitment whatever the cost and was eventually exalted and received the double portion inheritance which had belonged to Rueben, ie both his sons received a tribal inheritance in Israel.

The prophecy of Isaiah regarding the Messiah was that He would refuse the evil and choose the good (Is 7:14-15).

10:4 DECISIONS RELEASE FAITH

Because decisions establish our commitment to a course of action, we can only know the reality of the situation after the decision is made. No-one really knows what marriage will be like until after the irrevocable commitment is made.

Torre Egge in the Himalayan mountain range is thought by many mountaineers to be the most difficult peak to climb in the world. The men who conquered it a few years ago said of their dash to the top, "There comes a point where commitment and not reason dictates reality".

Faith is manifested by an action necessitating a prior decision. Faith doesn't just happen in our lives. It is released by our commitment.

While there must always be a counting of the cost before a decision is made (Luke 14:28), this does not in itself dictate the decision. At this point faith assesses all the facts and while not ignoring them seeks to transcend their limitations by drawing on the power and ability of God to do what naturally cannot be done. When a rhema has been planted in our heart by God, there is an essential necessity to commit ourselves to it regardless of the obstacles and it is this very decision which enables God to bring about His best for us.

In every area of life we must practice being decisive and deal with the habits and fears that cause us to procrastinate decisions. This will assist us in making definite decisions of faith when without warning those challenges are thrust upon us.

Chapter Eleven

Mutual Faith

11:1 THE ATMOSPHERE OF FAITH

Romans 1:12 shows that there must be a compatibility in the realm of faith. Paul expected that the faith he had when joined with the Roman Christian's faith would produce a beneficial effect for both parties. He calls it mutual faith.

It is clear that there is a great need for unity and co-operation in faith. When we join our faith with others we are able to achieve more than we can on our own.

Matthew 18:19 shows that at times it is necessary for there to be a definite agreement in faith between at least two people, and when this is done their faith is lifted to new levels of possibility. The laying on of hands commanded by Jesus (Mark 16:18) is basically an agreement between two people to reach out for a miracle and blessing. While laying on of hands is not the only way to reach God, there is often a greater release or help in it as this mutual faith is expressed.

Mark 2:1-12 records the incident of a palsied man brought to Jesus by four of his friends. Note that Jesus healed the man when He saw "their" faith. This was a unity of faith. These men had made an agreement together and were reaching out for the same thing. Their faith strengthened by each others resolve was rewarded. There was often an identification by some friend or relative in Bible healings, for example,
The Nobleman's son, John 4:46-51.
The Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter, Mark 7:26.
Peter's mother-in-law, Mark 1:29-31.
Jairus' daughter, Luke 8:49-56.
The crowds brought the sick to Him, Mark 1:32.

11:2 THE RIGHT KIND OF FELLOWSHIP IS IMPORTANT

Amos 3:3 shows us that two cannot walk together unless they be agreed, and we generally accept that in marriage or business relationships it is essential to be in unity. However, in the matter of faith this necessity is often disregarded. The fact remains though that unbelieving company will foster that in us. If you fellowship with unbelief the dust of unbelief will rub off on you. If you want to be a winner, you must avoid the company of losers for their despair is contagious.

Most of the world around us tends to be a negative environment. It is easier to knock ideas or criticise someone's effort to achieve greatness. These attitudes of scepticism will become our natural state if we are not selective of our company.

1. We grow like the company we keep. An outstanding example of the power of negative values to reduce our faith potential is seen in the experience of an eleven year old boy who's medical problem had been incorrectly diagnosed. He had been placed in a home for

sub-normal children as a small child and had grown up showing all the symptoms of that condition. He was spastic and sub-normal in behaviour. During a tour of an electronic factory he was separated from the main party of sub-normal children. He was found sitting at a workman's bench which had been vacated for the morning tea break. He had completely assembled a transistor radio from the diagrams on the bench. Further tests were taken of him and it was discovered that far from being sub-normal, he had genius level intelligence with an I.Q. above 160. His only physical disability was that he was deaf! He had simply copied the attitudes and actions of those around him, considering this to be normal.

2. David's Lofchicks of Manitoba, Canada is another example of this necessity to maintain the right company. He was born with cerebral palsy and given no hope of a normal life by 27 doctors. Finally Dr. Pearlstien of Chicago told his parents there was a chance for him if they would arrange constant physiotherapy for him, and he also said, "Never let him mix with people with his problem or he will treat that as normal. Surround him with normal, healthy, well adjusted people".

Eventually this young man triumphed over his disability and was selected as Mr. Manitoba at 21.

Negative company will destroy not only your faith vision, but your faith ability. Choose carefully those whom you follow. Beaten paths are made by beaten men, but faith refuses to live among the dead.

Hebrews 13:7 advises us to follow men of faith, considering the end or results of their conversation.

Successful, positive and faith expressing people will enhance and increase our own faith potential. Their example and attitudes have the ability to make us reach out for more in God.

Faith is a faculty that needs to be constantly kept inspired and a right atmosphere is essential to this. The world we live in is so filled with negative and unbelieving attitudes that for this reason alone good faith inspiring friends or teachers need to be cultivated so that our minds are washed from destructive attitudes and our spirits are refreshed to be able to respond to God in faith.

Chapter Twelve

Faith for Finance

It is vitally essential to develop an effective life of faith in the realm of finance. The only challenge to prove God in the whole Bible is regarding money - Malachi 3:10, "Bring the tithes into the storehouse ... and PROVE ME NOW, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, there shall not be room enough to receive it."

If faith is not expressed in the matter of money, it is likely that it will be weak and underdeveloped in other areas as well. Finance affects every part of our existence and cannot be avoided. Many Christians ignore this part of life as being carnal or secular and never triumph over the challenges that financial needs, responsibilities and opportunities present. The Word of God speaks more about money than most other subjects, and we are expected to be both victorious in this realm and good stewards of the resources God releases on us.

12:1 DEALING WITH THE POVERTY SYNDROME

1. Some have the idea that it is spiritual to be poor and that this is an expression of true humility. It is clear that humility has nothing to do with the possession or lack of finance. Some of the poorest people are proud as a peacock refusing all charity or being bitterly censorious of those who are blessed with resources.

2. 1 Timothy 6:6-10 declares that it is the "**love**" of money, not money itself, which is evil. It is very often "loved" or "coveted" by those who do not have it. Many poverty stricken people dream of or wish they could win the lottery but never stir themselves into a wise life style which would lift them out of poverty

3. Poverty has nothing to do with economics. It is a spiritual condition, Money and wealth are not necessarily bound together. The attitude of the heart towards the responsibilities of life and the orientation of the spirit towards faith or unbelief will inevitably affect the financial and spiritual condition of that life. There are many wealthy people who are poor because they have inherited their wealth and do not know how to use it wisely, or who have amassed wealth by illegitimate means and are paranoid about losing it.

4. Poverty is part of the curse of the law (Deut 28:15-19, 38-45). This passage of Scripture makes it very clear that the loss or destruction of resources is a consequence of being out of right relationship with God. Rather than poverty being a sign of humility or spirituality it can indicate that some Godly principle is not being observed or implemented. The Word of God specifically addresses the matter of financial and physical resources and states emphatically that the blessing of God causes increase while the displeasure of the Lord will result in the erosion of a disobedient or ungrateful person's assets.

5. Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13-14, Ps 105: 37, 2 Cor 8:9). Through His poverty Jesus bore our poverty as much as sin and sickness. Church teachers have been too prone to separate the spiritual and temporal results of Jesus' redeeming work. This distorted view of God's saving grace is often thought to be orthodox but in fact does despite to the work of the cross. Jesus dealt with every human problem in bringing about our salvation.

These attitudes are generally adopted because of a misunderstanding of the unity of man's nature. Such theologians consider that the human spirit alone is important, and everything that has to do with the body or the physical world is intrinsically evil. However this position is heretical and has been adopted from the Persian Manichaeism which promotes the idea that

matter is evil.

The body of man and the physical world was made by God to be enjoyed. While the Word of God warns us to avoid materialism there is no command in Scripture to avoid the use of the world's resources.

6. Christians who deny God's provision for them are a liability on the Gospel. A distorted view of God is conveyed to the world in general by such faithless and limiting attitudes. Unbelievers are to excused for thinking that God causes poverty and hardship when they see Christians living so far below their inheritance, and failing to receive the blessings they have been promised.

7. The believer must express faith to appropriate it as in Salvation. The Abrahamic Covenant and Jesus' declaration of abundant life - John 10:10 is the basis for Christians to rise up from poverty and limited circumstances. Receiving these blessings and promises of God for abundant living is not automatic, nor is it imposed on anyone by God. It must be received by faith and accepted and appropriated in the same way as every other promise of God

8. The poverty syndrome is often a "fear of failure". It is easier for some people to continue to exist in their need than to take the risk that is involved in trusting God. The acceptance of a 'poverty' situation is often an excuse to avoid the challenges of 'living' by faith. Such people are then able to blame God for their circumstances and pass the onus for their limitation to His will for them. They do not dare to reach out and lay hold of these or other promises and live lives that are governed by fatalism instead of faith.

12:2 WEALTH COMES FROM GOD

1. The ability to have every need met does not necessarily mean that there will be great resources laid up in the bank, or that all challenges to believe God for future resources will be eliminated. In fact the opposite is probably truer (note Matt 6:19-20). Those who live by faith for finance will most likely have more of these challenges than those who avoid living by faith.

2. The abundant life means that there is no limitation to anything we need to do even if those resources are not always on hand. Phil 4:19 says that provision for every need comes from God. God is our source! Expressing faith for finance brings one into the miracle dimension where God alone is the means by which the needed finance for the things we are called to do for Him can be realised.

2. Deut 8:18, Ps 24:1, and 50:10-12. These Scriptures show clearly that God is the source of wealth and the possessor of all of the resources of the earth. Far from being evil or unimportant, money and resources belong to the Lord and are dispensed by Him to those who acknowledge His Lordship in this way and align themselves with His purpose for the acquisition and use of these temporal blessings

3. Poverty, like sickness, comes from Satan's work (Job 1 & 2). The loss of resources or poverty is clearly traced to Satan in the experience of Job. It was the devil who smote his body with sore boils, and robbed him of his family and all his possessions. Jesus declared plainly that the thief (devil) comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). It is hard to understand why some Christians insist of reversing the true biblical order of things. They insist that poverty comes from God and any financial blessings are the work of Satan when the word of God declares that the reverse is the truth.

12:3 GOD'S FINANCIAL WILL FOR HIS PEOPLE

1. Abraham was abundantly blessed by God to the point where the land could not bear his flocks for abundance (Gen 13:6). The Abrahamic covenant verified in Jesus, Gal 3:13-14, establishes the principle of every blessing that Abraham received being available to New Covenant people

2. Job was one of the most prominent men of his time and was blessed with great wealth. Yet God said that there was none like him in all the earth. He was a righteous man who hated evil. This is a good example that poverty and holiness are not necessarily essential to each other. Though Job was unmercifully destroyed by Satan yet God restored his fortunes and his latter end was blessed much more than his beginning (Job 42:12).

It needs to be noted that it was Satan who destroyed his resources and health and God who restored them. Satan is the thief but Jesus comes to give us abundant life (Jn 10:10).

3. Solomon received incredible wealth He was blessed with abundance and the Scripture is emphatic that this came from God. Because he asked for wisdom and not wealth God added this to him as a bonus, but it was specific divine favour that produced it (1 Kings 3:13, 10:14-15). This financial blessing on his life raises the question about whether finance is evil or not again. If God is against His people being blessed with physical and financial resources why does He then pour it out so abundantly on Solomon and others referred to in this study.

4. David began his life as a shepherd boy and spent 13 years as a fugitive from Saul yet was so blessed of God with abundant wealth that he able to give more than four billion dollars of gold and silver at 1982 values for the building of the temple. His elders were also men of substance and gave much more than David did.

5. Even without the release of large amounts of finance, we are enabled to live in God's resources in every time of need:

A. Widow of Zarapheth ... 1 Kings 17. The barrel of meal was not filled to the top but every day the scraping in the bottom was multiplied for the next day. The same thing happened with the cruse of oil. It was eighteen months of constant faith for these resources.

B. The Prophet's widow was in poverty and under the curse. She was under the threat of selling her children to pay her debts until the prophet, the messenger of God came to her. It was God's will to bless her and reverse her limitation. The oil stopped flowing only when she ran out of vessels to contain it (2 Kings 4). The limitation of God's blessing is not with Him but with our response to His outpouring.

C. The feeding of 5000 and 4000 men by Jesus in a wilderness place through the multiplication of loaves and fishes. At least 20,000 people would have been fed when we calculate for women and children. As many as 4000 people were fed per loaf with more than 2 baskets per loaf left over. After giving away the resources God had blessed them with there was more left than they had to start with.

6. Deuteronomy 28:1-14. This chapter does not only contain declarations of destruction to those who break their relationship with God, it also contains specific and abundant promises of blessing for those who walk in obedience

7. 3 John v 2 contains promises of both spiritual, bodily and financial blessing. God intends that all parts of our life should be united in the blessings of God. This is 'balanced' living. Note that the context of this passage is related to walking and living in the truth. John identifies this with giving and blessing the ministers of God.

8. 2 Corinthians 9:8 is one of the most powerful declarations of God regarding finance, and it establishes His will for us. He intends for us to receive abundant grace which is manifested in the release of physical and financial resources.

9. Psalm 112:3; God's promise here is that the man who fears the Lord and delights in His commandments will be blessed in family and in finance - "His children will be mighty in the

earth and wealth and riches will be in his house.

10. Mark 10:28-30 Jesus stated clearly that those who have made any sacrifice for the Lord are candidates to receive multiplied blessings in family and finance in this present world as well as spiritual blessings of eternal life in the world to come.

12:4 PRINCIPLES OF PERSONAL PROSPERITY

The promises of God's blessing on believers is not an automatic thing. It must be appropriated and possessed. There are a number of principles which need to be implemented in order to receive the fullness of God's blessings.

12:4:1 The release of god's financial blessing is tied to the principles of tithing.

1. Giving to God is an act of faith which opens us to God's resources.
2. The act of returning a portion of the resources He blesses us with, to Him for His work demonstrates our real attitude to the Lord. The level of generosity we employ in giving to God determines the level that God is enabled to bless us to in response.

Malachi 3:6-12 establishes the principle of returning one tenth of our gross income to God. God says that this is also a principle of being restored to a spiritual relationship with Him. Proverbs 3:9-10, "firstfruits" indicates that God is to receive the first portion of our income.

1. The ancient Israelis gave at least 28% of their income to God's work. The Lord's tithe was for the support of the Levites. The second tithe was mainly for sacrifices. The third tithe was for distribution to the poor.
2. Proper giving is far more than merely returning to God the one tenth that is His. Malachi 3:8-11, says that our giving is to include "offerings" as well. 2 Corinthians 9:10; Prov 11:24-25; Luke 6:38.
3. Without the covering of tithing which is our part of a covenant with God, we are exposed to the destroyer and cursed with a curse. Malachi 3:11 says that the Lord will rebuke the devourer for the sake of the tither. There is a preservation from the destruction of physical resources.
4. The refusal or failure to tithe is called theft. This not only causes a person to rob God of His rightful portion but causes the "thief" to lose their spiritual relationship with God as well. They are then under the curse of Satan and have no Divine protection against his onslaught.
5. Tithing establishes the Lordship of God in our lives. It is not only an act of faith but an act of submission to His sovereign leadership in our lives. This then provides the basis on which a spiritual relationship with the Lord may be enhanced.
6. The tithe belongs to the local Church (storehouse) Offerings may be given to the poor or in other situations but the tithe belongs to the Lord and is to provide "food" in His house. The tithe is not to be designated, it is not at the discretion of the giver but belongs to the Lord alone.
7. The level of blessing Christians can receive is tied to the level at which they give. "With what measure you give ..." Mark 10:28-30; Luke 6:38; 1 Cor 9:6. This law of harvest is an irrevocable principle with God. He has established that this will remain in operation as long as the earth exists Genesis 8:22. Giving back to God is sowing the seed by which He can provide a harvest of blessing. This removes the blessing of God from arbitrary benefits given to special chosen individuals. The promise of God to open the windows of heaven's blessing is applicable to everyone who enters into the covenant of tithing.

8. Abraham had a revelation of God as possessor of heaven and earth and immediately gave tithes. Some people try to avoid the responsibility to tithe by saying that it is part of the Old Testament law of Moses. It is clear that tithing is not part of the law since Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek 430 years before the law was instituted at Mt Sinia. Gen. 14 The revelation that Abraham had of "The Most High God" establishes the relative positions of God and man. Tithing is simply a physical acknowledgment of His lordship over our lives.

9. Ultimately everyone is a tither. They are either giving the rightful portion to God or they are being dispossessed of it and more by the devil. There is no escape from this principle.

12:4:2 Redemption from the environmental curse.

Genesis 3:17-19 shows that a curse was placed on all of the physical labour of unregenerate mankind. The very ground he ploughed and planted would become his enemy and produce destructive things to depreciate the returns he could expect. The redemptive work of Jesus has addressed this as well as the spiritual need of mankind .He wore a crown of thorns on His head during his crucifixion to show that every effect that sin has produced in the earth and the human race has been dealt with. Jesus bore the curse against our labour, with the crown of thorns upon His head. While the fullness of this promise awaits the final manifestation of the redemption of creation - Romans 8:19 in the same way that every redeemed person awaits the final redemption of their body and deliverance from the presence of sin, yet there is the opportunity to lay hold of this promise for the blessing of God to be released on us now. We do not have to accept the attack of Satan against the blessings that God has poured upon us.

12:4:3 Seed Faith releases miracles.

1. 1 Kings 17. The widow fed Elijah FIRST, then her needs were met during the whole famine. Elijah the prophet commanded her to give him a portion of her final supply of food before she ate herself. This was not because of his selfishness or insensitivity but to open a door of faith in her life. This act of obedience and generosity to the servant of God became the seed from which all of her needs were met for the rest of the drought and famine.

2. John 6:9. The boy gave his lunch to Jesus, then he was fed with miracle bread and participated in providing miracle bread for thousands of other hungry people.

12:4:4 Wrong attitudes about finance.

1. Being rich is not the answer to being poor. There are many who have an abundance of financial resources yet are in poverty because they trust in their wealth for security or look to it for happiness. They do not understand that finance is a tool to be used for the extension of God's kingdom and the benefit of their fellow man. Without this commitment to the will and purpose of God finance becomes both an idol and a source of bondage. It will actually pierce the soul of those who seek riches to satisfy their selfishness, or to remove their dependence on God.

The true answer to poverty is being faithful with God's resources and using them for their intended purpose. It has been truly said that the joy we get from living is the joy we get from giving. When believers make a commitment to use the resources God makes available to them for the right purposes and in the right ways there will be an even greater release of physical and financial blessings.

R.G. LeTourneau was a Christian businessman and manufacturer of earth moving equipment who attempted to out give God. He began by giving God's work one tenth of his business proceeds and became so blessed that he increased this tenth by tenth until he was giving God 90% of his income and was still a multi-millionaire.

God will increase your seed sown if you return your surplus to the work of God. 2 Cor 9:8 tells us that "He will make ALL GRACE abound unto us so that we may abound unto every good work".

2. The rich fool referred to in Luke 12:21 is an apt example that the major sin related to finance is covetousness. While this may have an application to those who do not have wealth lusting after it, or the wealthy man hungering for more it is clear that covetousness is actually keeping God's flow of blessing for yourself instead of being generous toward the work of the Lord.

3. God's financial blessing is actually a test of our character, in which He tries the attitudes and motives of our heart by giving us the chance to squander all of this bounty on ourselves.

12:4:5 Accept prosperity as your heritage.

An attitude of unbelief or a concept of poverty will cut off God's supply. One of the most difficult things a modern believer has to overcome is the wrong attitudes developed by unbelieving religious leaders who have no personal confidence toward God and pass on that mentality to those they teach.

Without a revelation of our place in Jesus and the totality of His redemptive work there will never be an environment of acceptance of the blessings of God. Such benighted Christians will always feel as though they are unworthy to receive, and in fact deserve punishment or deprivation.

This delusion must be resisted and an attitude of expectation of all the goodness of God because of the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ. He endured the loss of all things as our substitute in order that our depraved and deprived state might be reversed.

12:4:6 Express gratitude for past provision. Deut 28:47-48, Phil 4:19.

The warning of God to the modern believer is that Israel when blessed of God did not return thanks for all His abundant provision to them or serve the Lord with joy and gladness.

All the blessings of God whether temporal or spiritual have the capacity to divert our attention from the giver to the gift. The recipients of God's goodness must constantly remind themselves who the source of it all is in case they become deluded into thinking like Nebuchadnezzar that the abundance has come about because of their own ingenuity or effort.

12:4:7 Live in god's supply and not your own resources.

Jesus promised the giver that financial blessings would come to them from sources other than their own labour alone. In Luke 6:38 He said "men shall give unto you". If God can cause ravens who are birds of prey to deliver resources to the prophet Elijah is He not able to use the people of this world to provide His promised blessings to those who honour Him?

1. **The secret is not to consider our resources, but our Source.** Rom 14:14-20. The man who takes his eyes off the Lord as his provider and instead trusts in the blessing he has already received will soon be in poverty. When there is a revelation of Yahweh Yireh - 'the Lord who sees our need, and seeing, will provide' is in the heart of the believer no circumstance of limitation or distress can overcome him. He will know by faith that the answer is not in himself but in his Divine Source.

2. **Expect God to meet needs out of:**

a) **Better management of your resources.** God expects us to be both careful and frugal

with the blessings He bestows. Waste is not in His economy. There will be an accounting of all His bounty..

b) **Increase from known sources.** He gives wisdom to see and capitalise on opportunities and to gain all the possible advantage from the situations of our life.

c) **From unexpected sources** Peter was surprised by the miracle of money from the fish's mouth. God frequently provides our needs from sources we could never anticipate. He can cause shoes not to wear out and manna to come from heaven to feed His hungry people and He can also restore what has been lost or provide things we never anticipated. "Before we call He will answer"

d) **Perfect timing of circumstances**

God can cause His children to be in the right place at the right time in order to receive blessings He has planned. Saul just happened to be in Ramah when the prophet Elisha was there who not only told him by the Spirit where his father lost donkeys were but appointed him as king over Israel. Many confuse such unexpected situations as co-incidences but they are Divinely arranged opportunities.

12:4:8 Be diligent in labour.

The clear principle of Scripture is "If any will not work, neither shall he eat" (2 Thess 3:10). Through diligent labour in employment and business situations advancement will occur and greater returns for labour will result. Joseph is a classic example of being blessed of God in his work and being rewarded for it. Not only did he advance but God prospered his employer for his sake and this in turn caused further progress in his prosperity.

12:5 THE POWER OF GIVING - SEED FAITH

12:5:1 2 Corinthians chapter nine is all about finance and God's blessing. There are three levels of God's provision available to us if we will act in faith and give liberally and cheerfully. Note v 6-7.

1. **Bread for your food.** This is the basic covenant level of Matthew 6:33. It requires no expressed faith on our part. It is subsistence level and is that applied to those on the receiving end of the covenant only.

2. **Multiply your seed sown.**

a) This is the plan of God for us. When we plant our seed, it will produce a harvest relative to the size of our planting.

b) God's provision is "according to His riches" - not out of them (Phil 4:19).

c) It is based on multiplication not addition. God can only multiply what we've sown. If we fail to plant our seed, there will be no harvest.

3. **Increase the fruits of your righteousness.**

1. This is the result of giving to God in faith. Not only is there a return for our personal needs, but also a spiritual breakthrough.

2. Two of the prime results of giving freely to God are:
- a softened heart toward God
- an increased vision of His purposes

3. Giving breaks the bondage of materialism and delivers us from covetousness which God

abhors (Ps 10:3), and the "love of money which is the root of all evil" (1 Tim 6:10).

4. Seed-time and Harvest are irrevocable principles with God. Paul emphasises this in Galatians 6:7. What we sow we reap. The context of this passage is giving to the support of our ministers who teach us.

5. Jesus spoke often of faith as a "mustard seed". A seed must be planted. If we are believing for financial release, then we need to plant finance. Notice how Jesus tied receiving to giving Luke 6:38.

6. A rejected opportunity to give is a lost opportunity to receive.

7. God planted His Seed-Faith when He "gave" His Son (John 3:16). As a result He has reaped a harvest of sons - the blood-washed multitude (Rev 7:9).

12:6 AVOIDING PROBLEMS

1. Some ministers have sought to raise funds by promising "blessing" to people if they will give a certain amount to their ministries. This is a form of manipulation and may even be covetousness as God's people are 'used' illegitimately. This is not to say that those who give will not be blessed, but those who use such nefarious practices will eventually be dealt with by the Lord.

2. The tithe and offering belongs to the local Church. Giving to various ministries must only be over and above our first responsibilities.

3. Learn to be content in whatsoever state you are in (Phil 4:12). In this chapter Paul says "I know how to abound and how to be abased and I can do all of these things through Christ who strengthens me" (v19).

4. Seed-sowing requires time for a harvest (Galatians 6:9). Many are discouraged when their efforts to live by God's principles of giving do not immediately produce a result. No farmer is despondent when there is no harvest the day after his sowing of seed. There is a process of nurturing the sown seed by faith that must be implemented before the harvest is ready. Never Give UP!!

5. Seek first the Kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33). This primary principle of supply establishes the motive of our hearts and the orientation of our lives. It all must be for the glory of God and not a selfish state of wealth and a life of ease. God honours those who honour Him but those who despise Him will be lightly esteemed.

6. Many of God's people have more faith in techniques than in God. We must realise that God alone is the source of our supply. If we think that by giving a certain amount God must automatically respond with a hundred fold more than we have given we have lost sight of the sovereign providence and discretion of God and have attempted to manipulate the Almighty to our own ends. While He is the Source of our supply He is not our servant. He knows what we need and when we need it and expects that our trust will be placed in His character and integrity.

7. Don't eat your seed. Stewardship of God's resources is the key to continued prosperity. Many have failed to receive the ongoing blessing of God because they were selfish with their surplus and consumed God's blessings upon themselves.

12:7 PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH PROSPERITY

1. The Church that is mean will always be lean. A Church can only give to the poor, to missions and its ministry. God will tie a Church's income and budget to its treatment of the

servants of God in its midst. It is impossible for a church to be too generous with their resident or visiting ministry because this becomes the means by which God can abundantly bless the churches finances.

The meanness that pervades many churches is actually a religious spirit. There are many churches (or boards and treasurers) which express the common attitude, "Lord, you keep the pastor humble and we will keep him poor" This is wickedness and must be dealt with. Pastors who capitulate to this type of carnal control are actually partly responsible for the situation existing in the church.

The minister is God's appointed leader to change wrong attitudes in the church and teach them the principles of prosperity and giving. He must lead them into a generous way of managing the Lord's resources. Religious spirits and church poverty always go together. They are Siamese twins!

In Israel a workforce of 603,550 supported 22,000 Levites. These ministers of God were provided with almost 3 times the national average wage. Each Levite was supported by the tithe of 28 Israelites (Numbers 1:47, 3:43).

1. The Church must operate in faith. Its budget must never be out of its resources only, but out of its believing God for increase. The huge task of world evangelism demands enormous amounts of finance to be channelled through the local church. In many cases this will demand contributions which do not come directly from the congregational giving. In the same way that an individual believer should expect God's provision from unexpected sources so should the church.

12:8 THE TRANSFER OF WEALTH

Israel coming out of Egypt is a type of the End-time Church preparing to leave the world and having the resources of the world transferred to it for the purposes of World Evangelism. One of the miracles of the End Time church is the transfer of wealth from the world, or the use of resources which have been provided by the ungodly.

Like the ravens of Elijah's time God will compel the unrighteous of this world to contribute of their wealth for the purposes of the church even if they do not understand what they are doing.

The following Scriptures state the case clearly. The world and all its fullness ultimately belongs to God. He can and will call upon those resources for His people and His church as He sees fit. There is nothing the ungodly can do about it. (Ex 12:33-36. Note Ps 105:37; Is 60:5, 11; Job 27:16-17; Prov 28:8; Ecc 2:26).