

CHAPTER 4

SIX GREAT HINDRANCES TO THE LIFE OF FAITH

..."Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold new things have come"....

2 Corinthians 5:17

We know that Romans 14:23b states that "whatever is not from faith is sin", and we know again from Hebrews 11:6 that it is only faith which pleases God. When believers truly seek to have these scriptures revealed to them by the Holy Spirit they will soon realize the importance of doing "all" things by faith in God's Word and keeping themselves in continual "readiness of heart" to receive the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

1. A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING THE "NEW BIRTH"

The first great hindrance to the life of faith is a lack of understanding of the New Birth; that is, the failure to comprehend the absoluteness of the fact that we are a "new creation" in Christ Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:17 states:

..."therefore if any person is ingrafted in Christ, the Messiah, he is a new creature altogether, a new creation; the old previous moral and spiritual condition has passed away. Behold the fresh and new has come"....

Amplified Translation

As we meditate on the Word the Holy Spirit is able to reveal to us a deeper revelation of the Father's will and purpose for our lives, and as we grow in faith we will experience - to a continually greater degree - what it truly means to be a new creation in Christ Jesus. We will also experience that the "old things" (and the power thereof) have passed away and that in the place vacated by them, new things have come. As we begin to feed and feed on the Word of God, and as our minds are transformed and renewed by that Word, we will be able to "behold" (by revelation) the "new things" - which include all of the fulness of the inheritance that is ours in Christ Jesus. To the degree we seek first the Kingdom of God; it is to that very same degree we will experience the fulness of what it means to be a

"new creation" in Christ Jesus. We need to realize that it was God's intention for the New Birth to purge mankind from all facets of the "evil nature" which Adam inherited from Satan, and every trace of the "sin-consciousness" which has robbed the church of its true authority and power in this earth. We must, as believers, come to realize the great price that was paid to buy our freedom! The precious Blood of Jesus was poured out as a "sin offering" for us and we must never "allow" ourselves to be deceived by the Evil One into denying the Blood of Christ in any way. It must be clearly understood by every child of God that any action we take outside the Word of God causes us - whether we are "aware" of it or not - to deny, in some way, the Blood of Jesus.

WE SHALL SEE THE "ABSOLUTENESS" OF GOD IN ALL THINGS

As we begin to meditate on the Word of God and the mystery of the ages is revealed (the plan of Redemption) to our hearts, we shall see the "absoluteness" of God in all things. The more we set ourselves wholly apart unto our Lord, the clearer the revelation will become. This is why it is extremely important for all believers to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) rather than on the things which made up their past, for as their eyes are fixed on Jesus (the Word), they are continually beholding the things of God and will soon come to the full realization that the old things have passed away, and thus they will be continually beholding and experiencing the "new things", which are of God. It is a wondrous thing to stop and ponder the fact that all the old has passed away. In realizing this "experientially", the children of God remove any potential ground that the Evil One could attack from, and thus they begin to experience the fulness of Romans 8:1-2 which states:

...."There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the Law of sin and of death"....

In Colossians 1:21-23 the Word of God states:

...."and although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him, holy and blameless and beyond reproach if

indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard"....

As stated in verse 21 we, in our old lives, were engaged in "evil deeds". We were fully encompassed by the law of sin and death, held captive by Satan to do his will, and we were without hope and without God in this world. We were separated from God and were complete strangers to the covenants of promise found in His Word. From these things we can clearly see the totality of our former enslavement to sin, death and Satan. As we read on we see that "He has now reconciled us", and in Colossians 1:13-14 we see that:

..."He delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins"....

Every child of God needs to know not only what they have been redeemed "out of", but also they must clearly understand what they have been redeemed "into". The old things must not only give way to the new things (their inheritance in Christ), but from the time they experience the New Birth all believers must "begin" to place all of their trust in the Gospel (the Word of God). It is the failure to do so which keeps many children of God in bondage to the Evil One. For too long "gradual consecration" has been a lie which has been acted upon by many children of God. By this I mean that some allow themselves to believe that the process of sanctification which they go through must be long and arduous and fear-filled, and in believing this, they create for themselves a "perfect excuse" to remain in sin and thus fulfil their own selfish desires rather than consecrate themselves wholly unto God. This is not to say that the Heavenly Father does not deal deeply and thoroughly with every one of His beloved children as He prepares them to walk in the fulness of the ministry He created them to walk in, for indeed He does. I am referring to the "state" which exists when one fails to give their heart "wholly" to God, and because of this, the Holy Spirit is hindered from doing the deepest work of the Cross in their lives, and thus they "spin their wheels" - spiritually speaking - and remain entangled in their sin. If we "hold part back" we have, by our intense desire to remain in control of any part of our lives, done a great disservice to the One Who loved us so much that He gave His life that we might be truly free from all that is a product of the law of sin and death! How clearly we can see, as we look out upon the church, that through the believing of

Satan's lies, many children of God continue to sow to the flesh, and because of this, many "traditions" have been instituted and nurtured, even in the so-called "spiritual circles" of the church! Every child of God needs to know that, having been born into the household of God, they are called to a life of consecration, faith and holiness. Have we not yet come to realize that the measure of Christ's surrender (obedience unto death) for our salvation is the only "true measure" of our own surrender to Him and His service?

WE ARE CALLED TO LIVE THE LIFE OF THE CROSS - CONTINUAL OBEDIENCE UNTO THE DEATH OF THE "SELF-LIFE"

We are called to live the life of the Cross and be led by the Spirit of God rather than by our old selfish nature, from which we have been redeemed.

In 1 Peter 1:23 the Word of God states:

...."for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding Word of God"....

As we read and study more and more of God's Word we will begin to see clearly that it (He) is the "foundation" of our walk and the sole means of sustenance in every area of our existence in this evil world. This was the reason God gave us His Word and yet some believers are "perishing" because of their decision to fellowship with the world and its way of doing things. The time has come for all of us to place the Word of God first and foremost in our lives, for the hour is late and we know that faith comes only by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Therefore, by putting the Word away from ourselves we are creating an immense hindrance to living the true life of faith, by our own volition. How subtle are the schemes of the Evil One. But despite his trickery he still must get believers to agree with the thoughts he has tempted them with in order to carry out his evil schemes. At all times we are either in agreement with the lies of Satan or the Word of God, and it is a certainty that what we choose will activate the Law of sin and death or the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus! This is precisely why it is so important for us to destroy speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge (Word) of God and to take every thought captive to a "perfect obedience" (2 Corinthians 10:5). It is no secret that the more believers meditate on the Word of God - which in turn will be revealed

by the Holy Spirit - the less Satan will be enabled to deceive them, for their senses will have become trained to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:14), and Satan's lies will be continually rejected as their heart is continually guarded with "all" diligence.

In 1 Peter 2:9 the Word states:

..."You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light"....

THROUGH THE "NEW BIRTH" WE HAVE BECOME A PEOPLE FOR GOD'S OWN POSSESSION

Through the new birth we have become a people for God's own possession that we might proclaim His excellence, and as believers consecrate themselves wholly unto the Lord, they will indeed begin to do just that, and with every word they speak and every action they take, their Heavenly Father will be glorified. We can be sure that sin or "any" manifestation of the "curse" (of disobedience) does not glorify God - despite the Evil One's attempt to deceive us in this area. Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin and sin is an abomination to God! Therefore, we must make the decision to allow the Holy Spirit to purify and transform us through the Word of God, in order that the "sin- consciousness, which is so "prevalent" in the life of a "carnal" Christian, be removed entirely, washed away by the precious Blood of Jesus and replaced with the revealed knowledge that:

..."He made Him Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"....

2 Corinthians 5:21

When believers begin to realize that they are who the Word says they are, rather than who "they" think they are (old inner image) - then they will endeavour to feed on the Word of God alone, thus strengthening their "new inner image", which in turn gives birth to a strong "righteousness-consciousness" and allows them to grow and develop in spiritual things. It is of the utmost importance for each one of us to know who we are in Christ Jesus because, to whatever degree we

base our lives on the "lies" of Satan (a "lie being defined as any "word" or "thought" which is not in perfect agreement with the Word of God and which is not motivated by love), it is to that degree that sin will remain in our lives; for in that area where we have turned away from trusting in God's Word, we will be found "sowing to the flesh", and we will, therefore, be unable to exercise faith until we forsake our fear and the "self-dependence" that it fuels!

In closing this step, we look at Revelation 1:5 which states:

..."From Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him Who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood"....

We need to know that we, as believers, have been freed from any bondage to sin, and we must ever consider ourselves dead to it and alive unto God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:11).

2. A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE FACT THAT WE ARE IN CHRIST JESUS

The second great hindrance to the life of faith is a lack of understanding of the fact that we are "in Christ Jesus". There are one hundred and thirty four references to us being in Him in the New Testament, and from this we can immediately see the need to have the "importance" of this revealed to our hearts by the Holy Spirit. A helpful suggestion in the study of God's Word is to take an exhaustive concordance and read and meditate on every scripture that pertains to the word or words being studied. For example in this particular case we would look up the word "Christ" and search for the word "in" before it, as we scan down the list of scriptures. It is best to read also those verses which come before and after the key word or words, as the Holy Spirit leads. As we read all the scriptures the Holy Spirit is then able to "draw a picture" deep within us and give us a deeper understanding of the Word as we approach each spiritual principle from many different angles. It is extremely important to meditate on the Word of God until it becomes established in the depths of our heart in the form of revealed, or exact, knowledge. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to teach us "all things", and the only pre-requisite is a willing heart which is continually inclined to the Word of

God. We need to have a deep desire for the knowledge and wisdom of God, for He is not holding anything back from us (James 1:5) and it pleases Him greatly when His children always come to Him first!

NO CONDEMNATION

Beginning with Romans 8:1 we will look at scriptures which will give us the true and proper picture of what it means to be "in Christ Jesus". Romans 8:1 states:

..."There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"....

The King James Version translates it:

..."there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"....

verse 2 states:

..."For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the Law of sin and of death"....

From these two verses we are able to see two things: one is that there is no condemnation for us in Christ Jesus. In other words, having been born anew and having been cleansed by the Blood of the Lamb, Satan has no power to accuse us or condemn us in any way. Once believers have this "revealed" to their hearts, they will no longer exalt - through unbelief - the lies of the Evil One above the Word of God, which clearly states that they are forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness. If one is continually faithful to have "acknowledged" their sin before the Father (1 John 1:9), the fact that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ will become a "living reality" within their hearts. From these things, we can see clearly the importance of studying and meditating the Word of God until we believe it!

WE ARE NO LONGER IN BONDAGE TO THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

Number two is that we who are in Christ Jesus have been set free from any bondage to the law of sin and death. This "law" consists of all those things which became manifest in the earth as a direct result of Adam's rebellion against God and the "bowing of his knee" to Satan. In other words, we are able to say it this way; we who are in Christ Jesus have been set free from a bondage to anything which does not proceed from God. This is an awesome reality which needs to be revealed powerfully to our hearts so that we will act continually on the authority we have been given to:

...."tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy"....

Luke 10:19

Satan has no power or right to harm us in any way unless we give it to him. It is that simple! As a matter of "spiritual fact" it is a sin in the eyes of God each time we receive that which Satan is attempting to destroy us with for it is only through the exercising of fear that one aligns themselves with the lies of the Evil One. Quite simply, when we believe one of Satan's lies, above what the Word of God says, we are exercising "unbelief" instead of "faith", and whatever is not from faith is sin! How often, in the past, we have "allowed" ourselves to be lured into an area of sin by the Evil One, being deceived through the hardness of our own hearts - a hardness of heart which was caused by a continual desire to lean upon our own understanding. In this last of the last hour we will be able to see quite clearly those who are walking in the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus and those who are under bondage, in some form, to the law of sin and death. It must be understood clearly by all "believers" who remain under bondage to the curse through rebelliousness and pride, that they are sinning in the eyes of God, for Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law through the shedding of His precious Blood at Calvary (Galatians 3:13). Therefore, from this we can see clearly that those "allowing" themselves to remain in bondage are not believing, or exercising faith, in the Word of God. It is not God's will for His children to be enslaved in any way by the Evil One, and in light of Calvary we need to awaken to the fact that the battle over Satan has "already" been won! It is a truth that, for the most part, the church, in not knowing who they are (joint- heirs with Jesus), have allowed

themselves to be defeated at every turn. The time has come for God's people to realize that there can not be any compromise in their walks, for each detail of their lives must cry out that Jesus is Lord!

"MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE"

In Hosea 4:6 the Word of God states:

...."My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"....

The word "destroyed" in Hebrew is "demah" which means to be cut off. The verse literally says:

"My people have allowed themselves to be cut off from the protection of My Covenant because of their lack of knowledge concerning My Word!"

We must always realize that we are the ones who are responsible if Satan is, in some way, stealing or destroying the very things which God intends us to have. The Father has made abundant provision in His Word for our every need and it is time to put away our slothful and undisciplined lives and reach out and receive ALL that is ours in Christ Jesus. As many of God's children tire of the "strain of carnality", they will open their hearts to the Word of God and come to the realization that all the answers they once sought in the "world", are, and always have been, found in the Word. There will arise a great hunger for the uncompromised and pure Word of God as the flesh and its desires are CONTINUALLY put aside!

WE TRULY ARE THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD!

In Romans 8:14-17 the Word of God states:

...."For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a Spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, Abba! Father! The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him"....

How blessed is the heart who has had revealed to it, by the Holy Spirit, the fact that we are children of the Most High God, brothers and sisters and joint-heirs with Jesus! It is the Holy Spirit Who bears witness with our spirit that we are children of the Most High God and as we experience, also by the Holy Spirit, the reality of God's love shed abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5b), we, in turn, are enabled to pour out that Divine Love on all those we come in contact with. As believers feed on the Word of God they will, in every way, become more aware of the "reality" of who they are in Christ Jesus, which in turn will cause them to pursue fellowship with the Father diligently - in an effort to be a pleasing child to Him. Once the children of God begin to see who they really are they will put aside the sin which so easily entangles and run the true race, fighting the good fight of faith as they go.

"MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH"

In Romans 13:14 the Word states:

..."put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts"....

We must make no provision for anything which our body or soul desires apart from the Word of God. There is no possibility of the carnal mind truly understanding the term "in Christ Jesus" - it is only when one applies themselves diligently to God's Word that their spiritual eyes are opened to the exact or true revelation of this term. Many believers struggle in their attempt to walk in faith yet refuse to give the Word of God its (His) proper place (first) in their lives. Since we can see that placing God's Word in our hearts is of prime importance, it should not surprise us that Satan will attempt to separate us from the Word any way we allow him to, therefore we must make a "quality decision" from the heart to "make no provision for the flesh" and we must obey the command of God to meditate in His Word day and night (Joshua 1:5-8)!

"BY HIS DOING YOU ARE IN CHRIST JESUS"

In 1 Corinthians 1:30 the Word of God states:

...."by His doing you are in Christ Jesus Who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"....

From this passage we see that we have been placed in Christ Jesus. The four terms mentioned in this verse encompass the totality of our "peace" (reconciliation) with God, in Christ. In Christ we have His mind (1 Corinthians 2:16). We are sanctified in truth (John 17:19) in Him, and because of Him we were redeemed from all of the curse (evil) (Galatians 3:13), and brought into perfect fellowship with the Father. In Him we have been given free access to all the blessings and life of God!

In 1 Corinthians 15:57-58 the Word states:

...."Thanks be to God. Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore my beloved brethren be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord"....

We must come to the full realization, through revealed knowledge, that we are a victorious Church, a Church not defeated in any way! If there is an area of apparent defeat in our lives it is for one reason and one reason alone: it is because we have not understood our place "in Christ".

"LOVE NEVER FAILS"

1 Corinthians 13:8 states that:

...."love never fails"....

We know that God is love (1 John 4:16), we know that Christ Jesus is in God (John 17:21), and we know that we are in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:30). Therefore, we know that we need not receive any of Satan's lies as he attempts to lead us into failure and destruction, for the "all-sufficiency" of God Almighty is found in His Christ - THE ANOINTED ONE AND HIS ANOINTING! In 1 Corinthians 15:58 the Word states, "be steadfast, immovable". Quite simply, the children of God will not be able to be steadfast or immovable until they have begun the process which will cause them to fill their hearts with the Word of God and this process begins, of course, with the heart decision to meditate in the Word

of God day and night, at all cost to the "flesh". Believers who attempt to handle the work of God with "natural" faith - which is really only faith in their OWN ability - will soon be led off course by the Evil One and held captive to do his will - having been bound by their own fleshly desires. There are many hindrances to the life of faith but the greatest is the unchecked desire of the flesh to seek its own end, and thus lean continually on its own understanding and strength. It is for this reason that we need hearts which are filled with, and minds that are renewed by, the Word of God, for it is only then that we will truly make "no provision" for the flesh, and it is only then that we will be led by the Spirit of God in all things!

3. A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS - OR "RIGHT STANDING" WITH GOD

The third great hindrance to the life of faith is a lack of understanding of righteousness, or, in other words, being in right standing with God. Isaiah 32:17 states:

..."And the work of righteousness will be peace, (between God and man) and the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence (security) forever"

THE TRUE "MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION"

The work of righteousness mentioned in verse 17 is the ministry of reconciliation talked about in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. The "ministry of reconciliation" is to preach the gospel to all creation in order that all men who hear the Word of reconciliation might be reconciled unto the Father through Jesus Christ. There is a great move afoot to reconcile man with his fellow man in the name of peace, but there can be no "true" peace between men unless they are first at peace with the Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ! This effort is but a subtle deception by the Evil One to keep man's eyes firmly fixed on themselves and their ability to accomplish all things. It is a lie and constitutes rebellion against God, just as "any" effort man attempts in his own understanding and strength, causes him to exalt himself above his Creator! How futile are the actions which proceed from the "flesh"! Quite simply put, there is no peace apart from true union with God, through Jesus Christ. The peace which passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7) cannot be experienced unless the children of God "believe" that they have been made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21) and thus set

themselves to "acting" on the Word of God concerning that right-standing. In other words, to act, not on who they think they are, but rather to act on what the Word of God says they are in Christ. We can see from this that the more we meditate and read the Word of God the more clearly we will see ourselves as God views us and we will no longer be plagued by a "sin-consciousness" - which is nothing more than an "inferiority complex" based on the lies of the Evil One.

THE DANGER OF "MENTAL ASCENSION" TO THE WORD OF GOD

For centuries Satan has continually filtered his lies into the church. These lies entered in through the hard-heartedness of men who - because of their continual desire to lean on their own darkened understanding - "allowed" themselves to be deceived into thinking that somehow God expected them to be responsible for completing His will on earth in their "own" strength and, because of this, they formed doctrines and traditions which made the Word of God of no effect in their lives, and the church - for the most part - became a cold and empty vessel, devoid of any real power! It is precisely for this reason that many believers still have a lack of knowledge of the fact that they are the righteousness of God in Christ and thus, they remain in an area of "enslavement" to the Evil One (Romans 6:16). The moment any child of God takes a "thought" which is not in accordance with the Word of God - as revealed by the Holy Spirit - and begins to "dwell" on it, their mind will have exalted itself above the ministry of the Holy Spirit and they will "mentally ascend" to what God has really said. It is this process of "mental ascension" which allows the Evil One to twist the Word of God to accomplish his evil purposes. This is why we, in the Body of Christ, must rely on the Holy Spirit (the Anointing) as our "sole" teacher and final authority on the Word of God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT - OUR "SOLE" TEACHER

While it is true that the Father will use our brothers and sisters as vessels of His knowledge and wisdom we must ALWAYS rely on the Holy Spirit to reveal each truth to our hearts. When these truths are "revealed" to us by the Spirit of God there is no demon in Hell, or even Satan himself, who will be able to remove it from us, as we continually guard our hearts with "all" diligence. When we continually feed on God's Word, the more the Word will enter into our hearts, and we know that the "entrance" of His Word brings forth His light (Psalm 119:130).

The Holy Spirit of God is our "safe-guard" against the lies which pervade

the church, and it is our responsibility to find out just what His job is and then yield to Him in EVERY way in order that we might accomplish, in Christ, all that we are called to do in our earthly ministry. We have been made righteous in the sight of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore, as we become continually more aware of who we are in Christ Jesus, we shall begin to experience to a continually greater degree what it means to be in right-standing before God. It is most certainly true that God sees us, from the moment we are born anew, as His Righteousness, and as our faith is "developed" by hearing the Word of God, we will begin to walk in all that God has given to us in Christ Jesus and we will become mighty vessels and channels of His love and blessing - again, continually experiencing to a greater degree a deeper revelation of the righteousness of God.

THE FATHER LONGS TO BLESS HIS CHILDREN!

Isaiah 54:14 states that:

...."in righteousness you will be established; you will be far from oppression, for you will not fear, and from terror for it will not come near you"....

Because of our right-standing with the Father we will indeed be established in all our ways by His power and protection and, as we appropriate the authority we have been given in Christ over the Evil One (Luke 10:19), we will be far from oppression and we will not fear. As we continually incline our ear to the Word of God we will begin to take our place as children of the living God and we will no longer be hindered by a wrong "inner image" (formed by fellowship with the world and its ways) and a lack of dedication to the Word of God. The benefits and blessings which belong to those who are in Christ Jesus are endless and to the degree that we seek the fulness of our "inheritance" it is to that degree we will be in a position to receive from our Heavenly Father. He longs to pour forth His life and love and tender affections upon His children and therefore, we must remove all those things (idols) in our life which would hinder Him. It is when we view nearness to, and fellowship with, our Heavenly Father as a thing to be sought after at ALL COST, that we will begin to experience the reality of the life of faith. This consecrated life of holiness is not something to run away from but rather to run to. To a great degree the witness of the Body of Christ has been weakened because they do not understand that they are the righteousness of God, and in refusing to

assume the authority they have been given in Christ Jesus, they have allowed themselves to be robbed of the Father's blessings, by the "ruler" of a "world" which is encompassed in the grip of death. As we look at the earthly ministry of Jesus we see that He was a man of authority, we see that He knew where He stood with God at all times and, because of this, he was able to accomplish the Father's perfect will - empowered solely by the Holy Spirit.

"GREATER WORKS THAN THESE SHALL HE (THE ONE WHO BELIEVES) DO"

We need to realize that the same Holy Spirit Who indwelt Jesus indwells us. Many would ask then, "Why are we not able to do the works of Jesus with more proficiency than we are?" It is because of our neglect of God's Word! This is the area which we need to key in on.

Jesus said in John 14:12:

...."Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to My Father"....

In this statement Jesus said that anyone who believes in Him will do the works that He did. If you are a believer then He means you! and in realizing this we need to go before our Heavenly Father and seek His face, asking Him to reveal to us just what it is that is preventing us from being an open channel of His love and power. Without exception the root of our problem will always be found to be disobedience to the command to "meditate" in His Word day and night. How slow we have been to allow the reality of this command to sink into our hearts and how slow we have been to incline our ears to the Word of God and nothing else. In Mark 4:24 Jesus said, "take heed what you listen to". We must realize that what we "feed on" (spirit, soul and body) will determine to what degree we are walking in the will of God and also determine the amount of sin (leaven) we "retain" in our lives.

Psalm 34:15-17 states:

...."the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and His ears are open to

their cry. The face of the Lord is against evil doers, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. The righteous cry and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles"....

verse 29 states:

..."many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers him out of them all"....

As we study and meditate the various passages concerning righteousness and its effects we will clearly see how little we have appropriated in the church, but the time has come for the Glory of God to fill the earth and we are the vessels by which He (the Holy Spirit) will be poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28).

The time has come for ALL children of God to walk in the fulness of their inheritance in Christ Jesus but they are going to have to begin to diligently read the "will" first! We must deal with every area of our lives which have been weakened by a lack of knowledge in God's Word and thus, no longer be strangers to the covenants of promise which ultimately were ratified by the Blood of His Son Jesus Christ. There is an urgency and seriousness to this whole matter which increases with each passing day. Therefore, we must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) and seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33), filling our hearts with a "superabundance" of God's Word in order that we become a "true representation" of the Lord Jesus Christ in ALL that we do.

WE NEED A CONTINUALLY DEEPER REVELATION OF OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST

In Romans 5:17 the Word of God states:

..."For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ"....

We need to receive a deeper revelation of our righteousness so that we might indeed "reign in life", and in doing this, be vessels of life to a dying world, always remembering in all that we set our hand to, that He (God) made Him (Jesus) Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the

righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). Rejoice!

1 John 1:9 states:

...."If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"....

We have the precious Blood of Jesus which continually cleanses us from all sin (as we will simply believe) and keeps us in right-standing with our Heavenly Father and allows us to "draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

4. THE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF OUR PRIVILEGE AND RIGHT TO USE THE NAME OF JESUS

The fourth great hindrance to the life of faith is the lack of understanding of our privilege and right to use the name of Jesus.

In Mark 16:15-18 the Word of God states:

...."Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who have believed: In My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover"....

From this passage, which is the Great Commission of the Body of Christ, we see clearly that it is in His name by which all things are done by believers. As we study more scriptures dealing with the name of Jesus we will see clearly that the name of Jesus is indeed the name above all names (Ephesians 1:21), and that we have been given the authority to use it.

John 14:12-14 states:

...."Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go to the

Father. And whatever you ask in My name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it"....

When believers ask anything which is in accordance with God's Word, in the name of Jesus, they will receive that request from the Father. Due to a lack of understanding concerning the name of Jesus, many believers fail to use the power and authority they have been given in Christ to take his name and "control" the Satan and his forces, and because of this many "Blood-washed" believers remain in some form of bondage to the Evil One because they are "ignorant" of the glorious power that is at their disposal. If believers will not use the weapons of their warfare against the Evil One, then it is certain that he will take advantage of this opportunity to attack them to whatever degree he is "allowed".

THERE IS NO "FORCE" IN EXISTENCE WHICH WILL NOT BOW ITS KNEE TO THE NAME OF JESUS!

The mighty name of Jesus is the name above all names and when this name is uttered it catches the attention of both Heaven and Hell. It causes the demons to tremble and bow their knee in the path of those who use it in Spirit and in truth. We have been given the authority to use the mighty name of our Lord and, as the Body of Christ awakens to this reality, we will go forth as a mighty army tearing down the strongholds of Satan as we go. There is no "force" in existence which will not bow its knee to the name of Jesus and we must awaken to this fact. Even in every day life when the name of Jesus is mentioned it draws a reaction in the hearer. No one is able to deny or ignore His Holy Name and its power and be effective against the forces of evil which inhabit the world.

WE MUST CONTINUALLY SEEK A DEEPER REVELATION OF JESUS AS LORD

As children of God continually seek a deeper revelation of Jesus as Lord, they will, at the same time, come to the realization that:

..."He is seated at the right hand of the Father in Heavenly places far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come".... (Ephesians 1:20-21)

In Philippians 2:8-11 the Word of God states:

...."And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in Heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father"....

In meditating on this passage believers will allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the absolute authority given the name of Jesus and this will enable them to deal successfully with ANY manifestation of evil which crosses their path. Not only will their feet be firmly planted on the throat of the Evil One but in the name of Jesus the captives will be set free and the bonds of wickedness will be broken - and with each passing day the Body of Christ will draw ever closer to walking in the full authority of the name of Jesus. As believers consecrate themselves wholly unto God and keep His commandments, the love of God will be shed abroad in their hearts, and Jesus will disclose Himself in every way to them (John 14:21) and His Holy name will become a "living reality" within them.

5. A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING ABOUT "ACTING" ON THE WORD OF GOD

The fifth great hindrance to the life of faith is a lack of understanding about "acting" on the Word of God.

In Proverbs 3:5-6 the Word of God states:

...."Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight"....

In verse 6 it is written, "in all your ways acknowledge Him." Christians acknowledge the Father by acting on His Word. Children of God may read the Word, they may have every translation of the Bible on their shelves, they can talk day and night about how important the Word of God is, but until they "act" on God's Word (faith united with corresponding action) (James 2:17) they are not

truly acknowledging the Father in all their ways. Acting on the Word of God by faith (obedience) is the highest form of acknowledging our love for Him that we have, and to trust in the Father's "integrity" above all else - regardless of what goes on around us - is the highest honour we can pay our Creator, and it both pleases and delights our Heavenly Father when we do.

THE FATHER IS GOOD (RIGHTEOUS) AND PERFECT IN ALL OF HIS WAYS

To lean on our own understanding in any matter - regardless of how small or insignificant it may seem - denotes a "mistrust" of our Heavenly Father. He is good and perfect in ALL His ways and we have no reason to doubt His integrity. It is only our prideful desire to exalt our "human understanding" (the wisdom of this world) above the Word of God, which hinders us from walking in faith. As we meditate on the Word of God "day and night", this desire or impulse to lean on our own understanding will decrease and we shall come to the point where we will depend on our Father's Word above all else - thus enabling us to truly acknowledge Him in all our ways by acting on, and living, His Word moment to moment. Quite simply, if we do not act on the Word then we are not acknowledging that it is truth. In every situation we need to ask ourselves, "what does God's Word say"? and in doing this continually we will soon develop the habit of bringing "every thought" captive to the Word of God (2 Corinthians 10:5) and thus, any reliance we once had on our own natural abilities will soon vanish! Above all else we need to develop an attitude of seeking what the Word says in EVERY situation and then apply what it says to our lives by acting on it - not allowing ourselves to be moved by "feelings" or any other temporal thing, but rather continue only to believe and act on the Word of our Heavenly Father - knowing that His integrity is infallible and that He is watching over His Word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12). Believers must realize that every moment of their lives they are exercising faith. It will either be faith (natural) in their own "darkened" understanding - which leads to death - or faith in God's Word which leads to life and is pleasing to the Father. It is a clear choice and we must ALWAYS be found choosing the Father and His Word every moment of every day.

"PROVE YOURSELVES DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT MERELY HEARERS"

In James 1:22-25 the Word of God states:

..."Prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror for once he has looked at himself and gone away he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does"....

All of us, as children of God, must realize that not being an "effectual doer" of God's Word constitutes a deep mistrust of our Heavenly Father and it betrays a deep desire to follow after our own selfish desires. For the most part it does not appear to be a deliberate and contrary action when we turn from the Word of God to follow after our "own plans", but God's Word says that God judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart of man (Hebrews 4:12) (1 Chronicles 29:18). Many have, for too long, been leaning heavily on their own understanding, taking within their grasp the "control" of all their actions, and they have allowed ourselves to "habitually" turn from God in times of "crisis" rather than to Him. Because of this negative pattern which has developed it will indeed take a powerful renewing of their minds by feeding on the Word of God and acting on it moment by moment, in every circumstance or situation. To the degree that we practice this, it is to that degree that any hindrance to our faith-walk will be removed from our lives, thus causing us to draw near to the Father and trust in His Word for all things. Believers will see this process clearly as they apply themselves to "act" on God's Word. On the other hand if they continue to lean on their own darkened understanding they will not see, for any "sustained" separation from the Word of God shall surely cause their hearts to become hardened and they shall be "ensconced" by the darkness of the world around them.

THE "ENTRANCE" OF HIS WORD BRINGETH LIGHT

The Word of God states in Psalm 119:130:"the entrance of His Word bringeth light". Without feeding on the Word of God continually one will not be able to change this negative practice of leaning on their own understanding and will not "realize" that they are going against God's will for their lives. It is as believers develop this practice of viewing "all things" in light of the Word of God that they will progressively come into a continual state of exercising faith in that

Word in all things and whether circumstances appear good or difficult their spontaneous reaction will be "what does the Word of God say about this?" and not the all too familiar "what am I going to do about this". There are only two ways to go: our way (Satan's way) and God's way, and although it appears needless to say that God's way is best every time, it must be said, for some children of God continue to lean heavily on the wisdom of this evil world for their sustenance and because they choose to fellowship with darkness they are not able to receive the blessings of God, and thus they remain in bondage to the Evil One in some way (2 Corinthians 6:14-18) - blinded by a veil which they themselves have allowed him to keep tightly wrapped around their spiritual eyes. Because of these things it is most certain that as one "abides" in this state they cannot be used by God to establish His Church and Kingdom in the earth! It is time for those who would call themselves children of the Living God to place the Word of God before their eyes, forsaking the traditions of men and doctrines of devils (Colossians 2:8) (1 Timothy 4:1) and any pre-conceived thought or notion which has proceeded from darkened understanding (flesh), and seek the revelation knowledge (exact knowledge) which comes only through the Holy Spirit.

FOR TOO LONG VAST SEGMENTS OF THE CHURCH HAVE WALKED IN DARKNESS!

For too long vast segments of the church have walked in darkness and so, in the lateness of this final hour, let each of us apply ourselves diligently to God's Word in order that we might present ourselves approved to God as workmen who do not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of Truth in all things (2 Timothy 2:15). To handle the Word of God accurately we will need to put it first in our lives - continually acting on ALL that is revealed to us. In doing this we will be living lives of faith - pleasing to our Heavenly Father - and because of these things anything that comes against us in an attempt by Satan to hinder our walk with the Lord will fall by the wayside. When any hindrance comes along, we will take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and get rid of the Evil One as we continually stand firm on that Word in all things pertaining to our lives. One need not reach the point of "desperation" if they will simply begin to place their entire faith (trust) in the Word of God (1 Peter 1:20-21). As we are faithful and diligent to do this the Way will be "made known" (become clearly evident) to us and our paths will be made straight (Proverbs 3:5-7). We need to act "boldly" (righteously) on the Word of God - for as we do we will

develop the proper spiritual habits we need in order that we might come to the place of abiding in the "fulness" of the Father's best for us.

PRACTICE THE TRUTH (LOVE)

In John 3:21 the Word of God states:

..."He who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God"....

As we continue on in our life of faith we should be seeking ways to "practice" the truth, in other words, to depend solely on the Word of God in every circumstance regardless of what we feel or hear or see or think. As we are faithful to do this we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds and all our "old habits" (mind-sets and the negative cycles that are their spontaneous by-product) will be negated and indeed all our habits will be new and beneficial to our spiritual growth in every way. We must never fear to step out on God's Word for even if we "miss it" in some way, our Heavenly Father will patiently teach us, and in finding out where we went off course, we will learn a most valuable lesson and it will be emblazoned upon our hearts forever. We must always realize that our loving Father did not give us a spirit of fear but a Spirit of power and love and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). Therefore, let us boldly act on His Word KNOWING that He has EVERYTHING under control.

Luke 8:19-21 states:

..."and His Mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd. And it was reported to Him, 'your Mother and your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see you.' But He answered and said to them, 'My Mother and my brothers are these who hear the Word of God and do it'....

Christians are able to hear a certain amount of the Word of God which will keep them comfortably (in their own mind) moving along, serving the Lord to a certain extent - although "far below" what the Father intended. Until believers give the Word of God top priority in their life they will not be "hearing" it to the degree they need to - and it is certain that faith comes (is developed) only by hearing and

hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). In other words, as believers feed on and assimilate the Word of God into their spirit, faith will arise and the very Word which was "heard" by them will cause or compel them to act on that Word. So from this we can see clearly the need to meditate and read and feed on the Word of God as this is THE pre-requisite to acting and standing on it in EVERY situation.

As believers put these steps into action their faith will be exercised continually and just as a muscle grows and develops when it is fed and exercised properly, so will the faith of the children of God become strong, and will lead them into a life of faith and dependence on their Heavenly Father in all things. Many believers know that the Word of God is true but, because of fear and a lack of true understanding (revelation knowledge), they allow themselves to be hindered in their desire to act upon the word of their Heavenly Father. They will, because of their fears, lean on their own understanding - particularly in a time of crisis - seeking a "false security" rather than the peace of God which surpasses all understanding. If one continues on in darkness in this most critical hour they will "allow" themselves to be taken to a place outside the covenants of promise - having made themselves "strangers" to them - and since all their hope was placed in the natural, their end will be in despair until they repent and get back on the Word of God. It is for this reason that we must be strong in the Word for it is Satan who is continually attempting to hinder us from walking in faith, but if we will continually "fellowship" with the Word, we will use the weapons of our warfare against him, thus preventing him from hindering our spiritual growth. There is no need for any of us to fall prey to anything Satan attempts to place in our path, but it must be clearly understood that the responsibility for resisting him lies solely with us, for all authority over the Evil One has been given to us in Christ (Luke 10:19)! Therefore, let every one, in this time, who would call themselves "Christian" receive by faith - and appropriate through obedience (love) on a daily basis - the "fulness" of the Father's provision (inheritance) that is theirs in Christ. For it is certain that before this "final onslaught" against Satan is over and the victory is perfectly completed, we shall be found to have need of that "fulness".

6. A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORDS WE SPEAK

The sixth great hindrance to the life of faith is a lack of understanding our confession, or, in other words, the importance of the words we speak.

It must be clearly understood by ALL believers that when we are born again and become children of the living God we are no longer of this "world", despite the fact that "physically" we remain in the earth. In our old lives our hearts and minds were filled with thoughts of fear, sickness and death and because of this the words we spoke were a manifestation of these things. As children of God our words must come into perfect accord (agreement) with the Word of God - and a revelation of that Word - in order that we speak words of life instead of words of fear and death. The importance of words has been VASTLY UNDERESTIMATED by the church and, because of this, fear, darkness and death have been allowed to "infiltrate" most congregations through the words that they continually speak, and this produces a "solid ground" from which the Evil One is able to operate - causing strife and darkened understanding to exist in the midst of God's children rather than the Love and power of God to "heal" and enlighten. Once again we will see clearly the importance of filling our hearts with God's Word in dealing with this problem.

OUR WORDS ARE OUR "REALITY"

As children of God stand on their Heavenly Father's Word their replies and responses must ALWAYS be in accordance with the portion of the Word they are standing on in order to reach the "goal" (revelation of the Father's will) which they desire to attain - that desire of course being in line with the will of God which is the Word of God (John 15:7). When a circumstance arises in the situation which appears contrary to what we are believing God for, our response MUST be based on the Word of God and, if we will continue to stand firm in this, we shall see the results of this continual exercising and releasing of faith. In the beginning this may seem a hard thing to do but the "continual practice" of speaking God's Word against anything the Evil One attempts to do to hinder us will result in a strong confession of trust in our Heavenly Father and we will indeed "walk by faith and not by sight" (our 5 physical senses) in all things. Quite simply, words which are spoken that are not in complete accord with the Word of God are a "lie" and put into motion the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2). On the other hand, words which are spoken in complete agreement with the Word of God are truth and put into motion the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.

Throughout the Bible we read of men and women who triumphed over the Enemy continually and every one of them had one thing in common: every word they spoke and every action they took was in agreement with the Word of God. There is glorious victory in the lives of those who will wholeheartedly trust in God's Word and "imminent defeat" impending in the lives of those who steadfastly rely on their own understanding without any regard for the integrity and "trustworthiness" of the Father and His Word.

OUR "FAITH" IS RELEASED THROUGH OUR WORDS

There is no way for us to exercise faith apart from our words which, in turn, cause our actions to come into line with our confession of faith - the end result being that everything we do in this earth will be of faith and we will, therefore, please the Heavenly Father. When believers continually call or speak things that have not yet manifested themselves in the physical realm as though they "already" existed - thoroughly believing with all their heart that they have "already received" the petition they have sought (that petition being based on the will (Word) of God), their confession of faith will be bold and steady and CANNOT FAIL to inherit the blessing [revelation of the promise] (Romans 4:16-21) (Mark 11:23-24).

"OUT OF THE ABUNDANCE OF THE HEART THE MOUTH SPEAKETH"

The faith exercised by children of God keeps pace with the words that come out of their mouths - their faith being unable to "develop" beyond the words they are faithful and obedient to "hear".

Matthew 12:34-37 (KJV) states:

..."out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned"

From this passage we see clearly the importance of words in the lives of believers. It was God who chose words as the vehicle to release the "force of faith". We see in Genesis 1 that God "said" is expressed eight times in relation to the creation of this earth and man. The literal Hebrew rendering of "Let there be light" reads as follows, "Let light be and light is" (Genesis 1:3 Young's literal translation of the Holy Bible). God spoke and it was so. Through His spoken word God Almighty set this universe and His man in motion. This is a spiritual fact which has largely been ignored by the church and because of this careless words of fear, death and unbelief flow forth from many pulpits - resulting in confusion and darkness amongst the flock and this in turn "allows" the Evil One to "openly attack" the children of God (Jeremiah 23) (Hosea 8:1). As believers "fill" their heart with God's Word to overflowing, then out of that superabundance shall flow forth the words of life and power and blessing which will enable them to meet the needs of all the people that the Father sets in their path. As more and more believers put God's Word first, and seek only to live by faith in that Word, then the Body of Christ shall rise to new heights in this earth and, in BEING the spotless and unblemished Church, the world shall see the living Christ in us and millions will enter into the Kingdom of God - and then the "catching away" of the Church! But none of these things shall come to pass until the people of God separate themselves from the world and unto God and His Holy Word. We will choose our "spiritual food", and thus we will choose the words we will speak. If we feed on the Word then we will speak forth words of life. If we feed on the "world" and its ways then fear and worry and unbelief will proceed from our mouths. The sum total of the words that we speak will determine our "reality".

Proverbs 18:21 states:

... "Death and life are in the power of the tongue"....

Therefore we must choose life in ALL things in order that Satan be given no opportunity in our lives.

THE "HIGHEST" LIFE OF FAITH

In Hebrews 10:23 (KJV) the Word of God states:

..."Let us hold fast the profession (confession) of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised"....

We need to realize that God is a faithful God and that He indeed watches over His Word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12). The reason why some believers are not experiencing the reality of God's goodness - and why the fruit of the Spirit are not being manifested in their lives - is because they are "bound" by the words which come out of their mouths. Every child of God must gain a deep revelation of the fact that the words which proceed from our mouths will dictate what comes to pass in our lives, hence Proverbs 18:21. The "highest" life of faith in this earth is the one which has only one authority - that being the Word of God - with no dependence or trust whatsoever on our five physical senses as our "final authority". Therefore, we must seek first the Kingdom of God - laying aside EVERY weight, and the sin which so easily besets and entangles us - that we might run the true race with endurance, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Amen