

Gary Carpenter Teaching

Provision - Stewardship

From Formula to Relationship.....	2
INTRODUCTION – FORMULA TO RELATIONSHIP.....	2
ISAAC SOWED IN FAMINE.....	3
THE TITHE AND THE FIELD.....	8
HOW GOD PROSPERS BELIEVERS.....	13
THE SERVING SON.....	18
THE SERVING SON'S ENEMY.....	23
THE SERVING SON'S HELPER.....	26
SOLVING FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.....	30
SHARECROPPER VS. SONSHIP FAITH.....	34
Kingdom Steward Teachings.....	39
THE STEWARD OF KINGDOM FINANCES.....	39
NEUTRALIZED BY GOOD INTENTIONS.....	41
DISTINGUISHING PROVISION FROM STEWARDSHIP.....	45
STEWARDSHIP AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.....	52
THE FOUNDATION OF "SONSHIP".....	54
DOES HE THANK THAT SERVANT?.....	56
GUARANTEED FAILURE IN STEWARDSHIP.....	59
THE SERVANT'S MEAT.....	61
QUALIFYING FOR STEWARDSHIP.....	63
THE WEALTH OF THE SINNER.....	66
THE CHANGE OF COVENANT.....	71
Sonship & Inheritance.....	77
POSSESSIONS SANCTIFIED UNTO HIM.....	77
PROVISION FOR FULL TIME GOSPEL ENTERPRENEURS.....	79
MANY CALLED - FEW CHOSEN.....	83
LOVE NOT THE WORLD.....	86
SERVANTS UPON HORSES.....	89
WALKING BY THE SPIRIT - THE DILEMMA.....	92
WALKING BY THE SPIRIT - THE SOLUTION.....	96
WALKING BY THE SPIRIT - THE FLOW.....	99

From Formula to Relationship

INTRODUCTION – FORMULA TO RELATIONSHIP

by Gary Carpenter

Have you ever heard the phrase, "One word from God can change your life forever?" It is true. I will never forget May 2, 1996. It was during mine and Sue's first year of being full time in the ministry. To the best of our knowledge, we were obeying everything that He had told us to do, yet we had been struggling terribly financially. I knew that was not His perfect will for us, yet I could not seem to break out of the "barely surviving stage" when it came to prosperity.

At that time I was "serving" the Lord, but I did not "know" the Lord very well. Consequently, I did not know my heavenly Father very well either. My relationship with the Father was still pretty much "performance" centered. Let me say it this way; I only had a relationship by "formula" when it came to my heavenly Father. I felt like, if I did "this," then He would do "that."

Because our financial needs were so great, I was daily in the frame of mind of "how can I get God to meet my needs?" I was following every formula I had ever been taught when it comes to prospering financially in the kingdom. Thank God for the Holy Ghost! He came to my rescue after a season of praying in other tongues and said to me,

"This thought never went through the mind of Jesus; What must I do today to get the Father to meet my needs?"

To me, that was an incredible statement because at the time it seemed that all my waking hours were CONSUMED with thoughts of, "What must I do today to get the Father to meet my needs." I asked the Holy Spirit, "Well, if Jesus did not think like that, how did He think?" The Holy Spirit responded,

"He believed that He was His Father's Son, and heir of all that the Father had."

I did not realize at the time that those two short statements from the Holy Spirit would change my life forever. The whole reason for my financial struggles in the kingdom of God were based on this simple fact: I did not have the revelation of "sonship." I still considered myself to be an "outsider," seeking to obtain the blessings of God based on my performance.

Think about it like this. There is a vast difference in the thinking of an employee of a rich man compared to the son of a rich man. The employee's relationship, financially, with the rich man is based on his performance. The son's relationship, financially, with the rich man is based on his "inheritance." The employee is "paid wages" according to his labor. The son receives freely from his inheritance because the rich man IS his Father!

By grace alone, through the finished work of Jesus Christ, the Father has adopted us into His family. He has made us "joint-heirs" with Jesus Christ. We have a vast inheritance laid up for us. The teachings in this section lay a solid foundation to help you appropriate from that inheritance.

ISAAC SOWED IN FAMINE

by Gary Carpenter

I had been praying in the Spirit for fifteen hours when I heard the Spirit say to me very plainly: *"Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him."*

You have been taught that this passage means, 'give bigger offerings to God when things are tough'. That is not what Isaac did! He sowed into the earth during drought. The modern day equivalent would be those people who bought Oklahoma land during the Dust Bowl days and those who bought stocks during the Great Depression. They all became rich later."

That is a word for word quote, including the references to the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression. [By the way, I was not meditating on this passage of Scripture nor thinking about Isaac at all prior to His speaking].

The longer I meditated on this statement and prayed, the more this piece fit into the overall puzzle concerning financial exaltation. If the lesson to be learned from Isaac's sowing was to teach us to give bigger offerings to God, then we would have seen Isaac building an altar and sacrificing animals on it as his father Abraham had done.

There was no temple, so this was the only avenue available to them in that time to make offerings to God. Or, Isaac could have tried to track down Melchizedek to offer gifts. But bigger offerings to God was not the lesson to be learned here. God had a reason for wanting to bless Isaac materially and he caused Isaac to sow material seed into the material earth to do it.

Another example of this principle; when God wanted to exalt Pharaoh to be the most powerful ruler on earth, he did not instruct Joseph to tell him, "What you need to do, Pharaoh, is to offer bigger and bigger offerings to God." No, God wanted to exalt him materially and He used material means and supernatural information to accomplish it.

God gave Pharaoh a dream containing, basically, the "inside information" regarding the future of their commodities market. Joseph gave the interpretation which contained within it the plan of God, "Gather the surplus grain during the seven fat years". [Note: because of the glut of surplus grain available in the marketplace, this seven year period of gathering would have generated no profit at all in a typical commodities market. No doubt the "economic experts" of the day lampooned him as being foolish.]

The rest of God's plan was, "Sell during the seven lean years." [Note: because Pharaoh now had the market cornered, the profits were enormous. This is the exact opposite, but the same principle as buying Oklahoma Dust Bowl land then selling it later. The principle is: Buy (invest, sow) when others won't, then sell to them when they have no choice but to buy from you. You can name your own price then.]

THE PLAN OF GOD

It is critical to point out that this is not a formula. Hearing God's voice and flowing with his overall plan for each generation is critical. Famine was occurring in Canaan during Isaac's day just like it had in his father Abraham's.

No doubt his thinking went something like this; "We are in famine. My father Abraham fled to Egypt during famine and God blessed him there. If I flee to Egypt, God will bless me there."

Isaac was following in his father's footsteps when the Lord appeared to him in the city of Gerar. If you look at a map of the land during Isaac's generation, you will see that Gerar is the last inhabited city in Canaan before entering the Wilderness of Shur along the well traveled caravan route between the nation of the Philistines and Egypt.

Up to this point, Isaac was going by formula. But when the Lord appeared to him, he said He did not want Isaac to go to Egypt, but rather to stay in Canaan and the Lord promised to bless him there (where famine was raging). The Lord was doing a different thing in Isaac's day than Abraham's and it was critical to flow with His plan. The same is true for every generation.

HOW DID ISAAC REAP A HUNDRED FOLD IN FAMINE?

I have often asked the Lord how he caused Isaac's crops to grow during the famine when nobody else's would. Obviously, there was no rain. That's what was causing the famine.

I have asked, "Lord, did you cause it to rain only on Isaac's crops and nowhere else? Or, did you miraculously cause his crops to grow without rain at all? What did you do?"

I know the Lord is perfectly capable of doing any kind of miracle He wants, but the silence in the Word regarding how these crops grew is almost deafening. The Word is not usually very timid in telling us about the miracles of God. It is very bold and says things like, "and Aaron's rod budded, or, the river became blood, etc.". But regarding Isaac's bumper crop it simply says,

Gen 26:12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him.

It doesn't give us a clue as to how this miracle crop grew during a time of famine. One day as I had been praying many hours in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit drew my attention to the many occurrences in the Genesis account concerning Isaac and the digging of wells:

Gen 26:18-19 And Isaac digged again the wells of water... And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.

Gen 26:21-22 And they digged another well... And he removed from thence, and digged another well...

Gen 26:25 And he built an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

Gen 26:32 And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water.

I didn't know what to make of this for awhile, and then suddenly, I just knew: Isaac's seeds produced crops during the drought because he introduced a new technology to the land of the Philistines. HE IRRIGATED HIS CROPS FROM WELL WATER!

That is why we are not told how the Lord performed this miracle, because it was not a miracle in the sense of a supernatural intervention into the natural laws of the earth, although God could certainly have done that had it been His desire.

How did Isaac come up with this idea? Again, after much prayer, the Holy Spirit not only answered this question but another one that has been in my mind for nearly fifteen years:

WHY WAS IT WITHIN GOD'S WILL FOR ABRAHAM TO GO TO EGYPT?

In the Word of God, Egypt is always a type of the world. Repeatedly we are admonished throughout the Word of God not to go to the world, nor depend on the world for our deliverance when things are tough. Yet this seems to be exactly what Abraham did during the time of famine.

I have never heard one preacher or teacher give a plausible explanation of this apparent contradiction concerning Abraham. Abraham went down to Egypt during the time of famine and God blessed him there to the point that Abraham returned to Canaan a very rich man.

It seems to contradict every other teaching regarding reliance upon the world system taught in the Word of God. Thank God for the Holy Ghost, our Teacher.

Remember, it is not by formula that we prosper, but rather by finding out the plan of God for each generation and flowing with that plan. God wanted Abraham to go to Egypt because He wanted Abraham to see something there.

Notice that during all of these famines, Egypt nearly always had excess crops. Why? Egypt is a very arid land and seldom receives sufficient rainfall to produce good harvests. The Egyptians had long since mastered the art of irrigation. The land of Egypt was blessed with the Nile River, which has its headwaters deep in the mountains of Africa. Drought in Egypt did not affect the Nile because the source of its flow was in Africa.

God wanted Abraham to observe how the Egyptians irrigated their crops. You could put it this way: While Abraham was in Egypt he had the opportunity to observe the "cutting edge" of technology regarding crop irrigation in an arid land. I am sure, to Abraham, this technology was interesting but he could see no application for it in the land of Canaan. After all, Canaan had no Nile River from which to irrigate, and you certainly cannot use saltwater from the Dead Sea nor the Ocean.

Sometime while young Isaac was growing up he surely asked his father, "What was Egypt like"? In telling the lad about Egypt and their customs which were so different from their own, he certainly must have described how they irrigated their crops from the Nile instead of depending on rainfall. That information was filed in Isaac's mind for future use.

ADAPTING THE TECHNOLOGY

Now Isaac was grown and had a family of his own. There was famine in the land, yet the Lord had actually "appeared" to him in the city of Gerar and specifically told him not to go down to the land of Egypt as his father Abraham had done. The actual promise reads like this:

Gen 26:1-5 **And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.**

This was the mind of God for Isaac, and Isaac chose to flow with it. The Lord said he would bless him in this land, yet there was drought, no rain from above. By now the rivers had run dry or were so low that there was not enough water flow to irrigate as Abraham had told him the Egyptians had done.

Isaac had faith like his father Abraham and knew that the Lord would not lie, and that what he had promised, he was well able to perform it. His thinking may have gone something like this, "I know God will bless me here, as He has promised. I need water to grow my crops. There is no rain, no water from above. The rivers are dry, no water available from them...."

And right about there, the idea must have hit him, "There must be water available from below. I could irrigate my crops using well water." He adapted the cutting edge technology of his day to the conditions existing in Canaan, and his crops grew when nobody else's would. Remember,

Prov 8:12 **I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.**

Because of this one idea from God, not only did Isaac have plenty of food for his household, but an abundance left over to sell to the Philistines. His prosperity really began to increase rapidly now, as the wealth of the Philistines was transferred from them to him.

In fact, he became so rich and powerful that the king said that Isaac's household was more mighty than the entire nation of the Philistines, and they sought a peace treaty with him. You don't have to be a genius to prosper. All it takes is one idea from God, acted upon.

HOW DID ISAAC PROSPER DURING FAMINE?

1. Isaac had to find out God's plan.
2. Isaac had to hear from God.

3. Isaac had to obey God's voice.
4. Isaac had to break with the tradition of his father.
5. Isaac adapted the wisdom of previous generations to the circumstances he was living in [Famine in Canaan].
6. Isaac had to be bold enough to do something that had never been done before [irrigation from well water].
7. Isaac had to overcome resistance [they contended for his wells].
8. Isaac had to persevere and not become discouraged by the resistance.
9. Isaac refused to get in strife with those who were opposing him.

Basically, Isaac had to believe what God had said. In this sense, he was following in the steps of the faith of his father Abraham. You could say, "And Isaac believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness."

He also had to believe that what God had promised, He was well able to perform it. God had promised Isaac that if he would remain in Canaan, in the midst of famine, that God would bless him there! I am sure that in the natural that seemed impossible, but Isaac believed God.

Notice that in Gen 26:5 the Lord was reminding Isaac that the reason that God could bless Abraham was because Abraham obeyed His voice! He was telling Isaac to do the same.

Of all people on the earth, Isaac knew the power of God's Word, THE FACT THAT HE EXISTED WAS BASED ON ABRAHAM AND SARAH'S FAITH IN THE WORD OF GOD TO THEM!

There is no doubt that Abraham and Sarah had told young Isaac about the miraculous way that he was conceived and born. He knew that he, himself, was a product of his parents believing the Word of God. Surely his attitude was, "If God birthed me by His Word, surely He will sustain me by His Word."

WE SHOULD HAVE THE SAME ATTITUDE! ALL OF US WERE BIRTHED BY THE WORD OF GOD!

1 Pet 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

SINCE GOD HAS BIRTHED US BY HIS WORD, SURELY HE WILL SUSTAIN US BY HIS WORD!

Once Isaac made the decision to obey the voice of the Lord and remain in Canaan where famine was raging, what was the "nuts and bolts" of his faith to receive the promised blessing from God? What did he do?

His situation seems so precisely the same as mine and Sue's once we hearkened to the voice of the Lord to go full time in the ministry with no visible means of financial support at all. It certainly appeared to be a "land of famine." All I could do was walk the floor and worship God and put Him in remembrance of His Word by confessing it for hours a day.

It seems to me that Isaac could not have done much different. Isaac had a family and servants and cattle to support. They were all looking to him as the head of the house. Once he told them that he was going to obey God and stay in the land of famine because God had told him that He intended to bless them there, I am sure there were some who wondered if he had lost his mind. Once the decision was made to stay in Canaan, what could Isaac do at first but worship God and put Him in remembrance of His Word that "I will bless you there."

WORSHIP THROWS THE BALL BACK INTO GOD'S COURT!

Isaac had done his part. He obeyed God and stayed in the land of famine. Now he could turn his face toward God in worship and trust that "What God had promised, He was well able to perform it." This put the responsibility for blessing Isaac squarely back on God. Isaac was standing on God's Word, and it was God's responsibility to make His Word good.

In this case, God manifested His Word to bless Isaac by giving him an idea that no man had ever had before. Isaac knew about irrigation from rivers because Abraham had told him about what he had seen during his sojourn in Egypt. But nobody had ever thought of irrigating crops from well water until God dropped that wisdom into Isaac's heart. This was a "Word of Knowledge " straight from the mind of God to Isaac.

NOW THE BALL WAS BACK IN ISAAC'S COURT!

Once you receive a "Word of Knowledge" and/or instructions from the Lord, then it is up to you TO ACT ON IT! God did not dig the wells for Isaac. That was Isaac's responsibility.

Notice the two way communication going on here. Communication requires RELATIONSHIP, not FORMULA! God spoke to Isaac. Isaac obeyed and turned back to God in worship and trust in God's Word until God dropped the Word of Knowledge into him. Then Isaac acted on that Word of Knowledge.

It is important to notice that resistance came in the form of the Philistines stopping up the wells of water, yet Isaac endured and continued to act on the Word of Knowledge that God had given him. Isaac patiently endured until he received the blessing. He had learned well the secret of endurance and trust in God's Word from having watched his father Abraham,

Heb 6:13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swear by himself. Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

Isaac was truly walking in the steps of the faith of his father Abraham.

Isaac prospered by RELATIONSHIP...NOT FORMULA!

THE TITHE AND THE FIELD

by Gary Carpenter

Mal 3:8-12 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

Most people have been taught that this passage means, to the individual tither:

1. I will have more blessings that I can possibly use.
2. There will be no diminishing of my increase.
3. I will be so rich that others will call me blessed.

These blessings are usually taught as being "automatic" [like a formula] to the faithful tither. Yet in most neighborhoods, you can drive down the street and you can't tell any difference between the prosperity of the tithing believer on one side of the street and the non-tithing sinner who lives on the other side of the street. Why? Again, the words of the Prophet Hosea:

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

It was revelation knowledge that he was speaking of. That is, lack of the knowledge of God's ways. Let us look very closely at what this passage actually says. In *Mal 3:9* it says the "whole nation" was under a curse. Then in *Mal 3:12* it says "all nations" shall call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful "land." God was talking about a "National" blessing and a "National Curse."

The key to understanding the tithe is to understand what kind of blessing God was talking about when He spoke through the prophet Malachi. The specific blessing that He was promising to send through the "open windows of heaven" to the nation of Israel was rain. When rain falls on a nation, it falls on all the people in it, both the just and the unjust.

Mat 5:44-45 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

In prayer, the Holy Spirit said to me, *"The literal blessing that God wanted to pour out through the open windows of heaven was RAIN. This was primarily an agricultural society, and rain was a fundamental necessity for their prosperity. Had they repented and brought in all of the tithes and offerings with a true and willing heart, and God had poured down rain upon their fields, it still would have done them no good had they not already had seeds planted IN THE EARTH. The tithes and offerings were not enough to produce prosperity, only to cause the conditions needed for prosperity to come to them. They still had to have seeds planted IN THE EARTH or else all they would have reaped from their rain soaked fields would have been MUD."*

When the abundance of rain began to fall, the man who had sown a hundred acres IN THE EARTH would have received an abundant harvest. The man who had sown only one acre IN THE EARTH would have received a much smaller harvest, BUT THEY BOTH RECEIVED THE SAME RAIN. Should the man who only sowed one acre blame God because the other man sowed 100 acres? No, God sent the rain.

The man's prosperity was limited because he had chosen to sow only one acre. It was not God's fault. What about the man who had sown nothing into the earth? Does he have a right to rail on God as being unfaithful to send prosperity? No, it wasn't God's fault that he chose to be slothful and sow nothing into the earth. God did His part. **GOD SENT WHAT WAS NEEDED FOR ABUNDANCE!** Each man determined his own prosperity by the size of the field **IN THE EARTH** that he chose to sow.

Then the Holy Spirit got very personal with me and said, *"I have blessed the only field that you have sown in the earth as much as is possible. I am speaking of your job. That is a very small field, and it is wall to wall corn. If I am going to increase your material harvest financially, you are going to have to sow into some larger fields **IN THE EARTH.**"*

This is the reason we don't see more of a difference, financially, between the saint and the sinner. Normally, most people have sown only a very small field, usually a simple job. God can bless that field to the maximum until every square inch has a stalk of corn growing up in it, but if that field is small (small growth potential), then you are not going to see much difference in his prosperity compared to his sinner neighbor.

In my case, I was still working as a driver for Crane Carrier when the Holy Spirit taught me this lesson. The first year I worked at Crane Carrier I made about \$26,000.00. Five years later, when the Holy Spirit spoke this to me, I was making about \$40,000.00, but that was the maximum harvest potential from that field. There was no more room for growth. It was maxed out.

To get a larger material harvest I was going to have to fence in larger fields either by acquiring more marketable skills to obtain a better job, sowing into stocks, bonds, or other investments, etc. I had to somehow sow more ground in order for God to be able pour down His blessing on it and give me a larger harvest.

The United States of America has been greatly blessed with economic conditions that foster prosperity for anybody who is willing to work. God has poured out upon us **WHAT WE NEED TO HAVE ABUNDANCE.** Only here can a person get a meager job flipping hamburgers at McDonald's and still be able to own a car and have an apartment. That is extreme opulence compared to most of the world. **GOD HAS RAINED HIS FAVOR UPON THIS WHOLE NATION! AS A NATION, WE HAVE WHAT WE NEED FOR ABUNDANCE! GOD HAS DONE HIS PART!** So what is it that is limiting your individual harvest? **THE SIZE OF THE FIELD YOU HAVE DECIDED TO SOW IN THE EARTH.**

Example: A high school dropout who has no skills other than manual labor has limited the field that he can sow into. Perhaps the largest field he can work in is capped by a wage of, say, \$6.00 per hour. Here is the promise of Malachi to that man. God will rain favor upon that man to the point that his "field" is wall to wall corn. In this case, that means the man would rise from the minimum wage to earning the maximum potential of \$6.00 per hour. Once the man is making the top dollar for that job, **GOD HAS DONE HIS PART!** If the man wants a larger harvest than that, he is going to have to **SOW INTO A LARGER FIELD!**

That normally means acquiring additional skills. I am speaking of such things as technical school, reading, writing, arithmetic, computer skills, marketing, **SOMETHING! GOD DOES NOT BLESS INCOMPETENCE! GOD DOES NOT BLESS IGNORANCE!** He is not going to exalt you beyond your level of competence. Put very plainly, God is not going to promote you to be the head of General Motors Corporation if you are not qualified for the job. Also, Jesus said,

Luke 10:7b The labourer is worthy of his hire.

What does that mean? God will see to it that you are paid in proportion to your labor, but it also means that God is not going to have an employer pay you \$100 per hour to flip hamburgers at McDonald's.

God is pouring the rain of His favor upon you every day. The main thing limiting your prosperity is the size of the field you are sowing into. If you want to harvest from larger fields, then you are most likely going to have to acquire some additional skills that God can bless. This part is not

fun. It requires effort. It means burning the midnight oil after you have already put in a full day's work.

For example, one of the first things that the Lord began dealing with me on after we began praying was for me to begin learning how to operate a computer. I had a full time job driving trucks, I attended every service at the Prayer Center when I was in town, but I burnt the midnight oil reading the most boring books on earth to learn how to operate computers.

THE FIRST STEP IS ALWAYS TO SEEK THE LORD VIA PRAYER. THE SECOND STEP IS TO BE OBEDIENT TO WHAT THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD TELLS YOU WHILE IN PRAYER!

If I had simply refused to obey His instructions to learn the computer, WE WOULD NOT HAVE A WORLD WIDE MINISTRY TODAY! Learning the computer was a necessary step in order for me to sow into the size field we are sowing into today. GOD DOES NOT BLESS DISOBEDIENCE! NEITHER DOES HE BLESS LAZINESS!

AVOIDING MATERIALISM

This message has to be balanced with avoiding materialism. Step one for the Christian is always:

Mat 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The "things" Jesus was referring to was all of the things that the Gentiles spend their whole lives seeking after...such as longer cars and VCR's. If you listen to this message and pursue sowing into larger fields only for the purpose of "heaping up treasure unto yourself" then you will fall into the same trap as most people in the United States. Most of the people in this nation are pursuing Mammon. Material wealth is the goal of most people. No, for the Christian, it is always,

Col 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

First of all, seek the mind of the Lord for your individual life by meditation of the Word, prayer and fasting. He will begin to reveal His instructions to you as an individual in order for you to be able to fulfill your call in the earth.

In my case, part of His instructions was to learn to use a computer. For some of you, He may instruct you to get your GED. For some of you, He may instruct you to learn to type. For some of you, He may instruct you to become a doctor or a nurse. For some of you, He may instruct you to start your own business. ONLY HE KNOWS HIS PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE! YOU WILL ONLY FIND OUT WHAT THAT PLAN IS BY SPENDING TIME WITH HIM! But as you learn to flow with His plan for your life, you will prosper and you will be in health even as your soul prospers. Again,

Mat 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

That means, above all else, to seek the mind of Christ, the plan of God for your individual life. He will show you what fields He wants you to sow into. Even when I was learning the computer my attitude was that these new skills were to be used "AS TO THE LORD." He also has me learning the stock market, for the same reason. The skills acquired there are also to be used "AS TO THE LORD." Our first and foremost responsibility is always to find the mind of Christ for our life IN HIS KINGDOM!

WHAT IS ROBBING GOD?

God is robbed when He is robbed of the opportunity of being "GOD" to His people. He cannot bless disobedience. GOD IS A BLESSER! In Malachi, when the Lord says,

Mal 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house.

You have to take it in context. Back up a few verses to see who He had on His mind:

Mal 3:5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the HIRELING in his wages, the WIDOW, and the FATHERLESS, and that turn aside the STRANGER from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

The "storehouse" was a depository in the temple where all of the EXCESS was stored. The widow, the fatherless, the orphan and the stranger were to be fed from this storehouse. Without this storehouse, they would be left unfed and the Lord was being "robbed" of being able to provide for them by the method He had designed under the law.

God cares for widows, orphans and strangers. He does not like empty bellies. He had made provision for them through the tithes and offerings. But the people were "robbing" Him from being able to bless the poor. They only had themselves on their mind, not the things that mattered to God our Father.

TO THOSE LIVING IN OTHER COUNTRIES:

You may be saying, "That's all well and good, Gary, but I don't live in the United States of America. The economic conditions are not as favorable in my nation. What about me?" Remember this verse;

2 Chr 16:9a For the eyes of the Lord search back and forth across the whole earth, looking for people whose hearts are perfect toward him, so that he can show his great power in helping them. (Living Bible)

The Lord desires that we look to Him and Him alone as our help. Never forget all of the men and women in the bible who prospered greatly even when they had been taken captive by a hostile nation. Daniel, Joseph and many others prospered supernaturally even though they were actually prisoners held against their will. GOD IS YOUR HELP! No matter what the economic conditions are in the nation where you live, God will bless you if your heart looks to Him and Him alone as your SOURCE!

Isa 43:19-21 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.

SUMMARY

God loves to prosper His people. His prosperity has much more to do with your RELATIONSHIP with Him than it does LEGALISTIC FORMULAS. I suggest you ask yourself the following questions if you truly desire to walk in more of His abundance:

1. ARE YOU SEEKING FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD?
Do you spend daily time in the Word, prayer and periodic fasting to seek the will of the Lord for your life's call in His kingdom? He has a plan for every member of His body. What is His plan for your life? What are you doing to find out what that plan is?
2. ARE YOU GIVING A PORTION OF YOUR INCOME INTO GOD'S WORK?
It will be hard to convince even yourself that you are very interested in what God is doing in the earth if you are not sowing a portion of your finances into the work of the gospel. Why do you want to prosper? To heap up treasure for yourself? To see souls rescued from Hell? Whose kingdom are you most interested in? His ... or yours?
3. WHAT IS THE SIZE OF YOUR FIELD?
Take inventory of your life. Is your field already producing maximum harvest? Is it already "wall to wall corn?" Is there any room for financial increase in the job you presently have? Has He already blessed your current field to maximum harvest?
4. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SOW LARGER FIELDS IN THE EARTH?
Spend time in prayer and ask the Lord to show you if there are additional skills He would

like for you to acquire. You will find Him to be very practical. He is a Living Lord and He is very capable of giving you precise instructions regarding what you should do.

Of course, to obtain answers like these requires more of us than simply "plunking" our legalistic ten percent in the offering plate each Sunday. Answers to questions like these require TIME in fellowship with the Lord Himself through the avenues of the Word, prayer and fasting. NOW you are discovering the true path to prosperity. He prospers His people through RELATIONSHIP, not FORMULA! He desires your fellowship infinitely more than He desires your legalistic offering. For those who will spend time with Him and obey His leadership, there are no limits to the level of prosperity He can bring them to.

Isa 48:17 Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.

HOW GOD PROSPERS BELIEVERS

by Gary Carpenter

We are all fairly familiar with the Lord's plan for providing the needs of those in full time ministry. Both in the old covenant and the new, full time ministers for the Lord are primarily supported by the offerings of the people. Just a couple of scriptures from the new testament concerning this are:

1 Cor 9:14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

1 Tim 5:17-18 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his reward.

When the Lord called Sue and I into full time ministry, however, He gave us some very unusual instructions. He told us:

"Take up no offerings from these people. Sell no tapes. Mail everything freely and do not even put in a return envelope. Never let a human being know of any needs that you have. I am your Source! If you will precisely obey these instructions of Mine I will speak to the hearts of the people I choose to support both you and the needs of the ministry."

We did precisely as He instructed us, and true to His Word, He began to speak to the hearts of people to send free will offerings. It is hard to describe the gratitude that was in our hearts as we began receiving these financial gifts from the precious people who had heard His voice and obeyed. My heart longed to see them prosper abundantly. I had heard all of the popular teaching that prevails in the body of Christ today concerning how God prospers believers. In a nutshell, they all boil down to the same formula: "The more you give to God, the more He prospers you."

The Lord told me that if I wanted to understand how He really prospers believers that I should study the book of Philippians. I began reading the entire book of Philippians over and over again while praying softly in other tongues. I have learned that most error in the body of Christ comes from lifting a verse out of its context and then making doctrine out of it. To really equip your spirit for "day and night" meditation, the best course of action is always to find the beginning of a subject and the end of the subject and put the entire passage into your spirit. When you are dealing with small books like the book of Philippians, it is best to simply read the entire book over and over to make sure you have equipped your spirit with the raw material of the Word which the Holy Spirit will use to teach you the truth contained in it.

I found that the believers at Philippi were normal Christians who spent the majority of their time with the daily affairs of life. When Paul first preached the gospel to them he described their condition as being in "deep poverty." Yet these same believers, once they had learned of the "grace of God" concerning their finances, eventually became Paul's number one financial supporters. He said that their deep poverty eventually "abounded to the riches of their liberality."

2 Cor 8:1-2 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

I must admit that it was a while before I realized that the "Macedonians" Paul referred to in 2nd Corinthians were actually these churches at Philippi. This is the advantage of reading the book repeatedly many times over. On one of my many journeys through the book of Philippians, this verse simply "jumped out" at me;

Phil 4:15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

When I saw the word "Macedonia" in that verse, I could not help but wonder if these were the same people that Paul had written about in 2nd Corinthians. I asked the Holy Spirit to give me another "witness" if this were truly the case and He brought to my mind this verse:

Acts 16:12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

Now I was getting somewhere because Paul tells us in 2nd Corinthians that these people went from "deep poverty" to "abounding in their liberality." This is what I had been looking for: To find out how God takes a group of people, bestows His grace upon them, and then prospers them. Notice in 2nd Cor 8:1 that Paul says that the "grace of God" was the key factor in causing their financial turnaround. My excitement continued to build as I went back for further meditation of the book of Philippians. The answer to how God did this had to be in there somewhere.

As I continued to meditate the book of Philippians and pray, it seemed that the Holy Spirit kept drawing my attention to a couple of verses that did not seem to make a whole lot of sense to me. Every time I would read these two verses it seemed that the Holy Spirit was giving me a "nudge" in my spirit, as if there was buried treasure in them that I had never seen. In the King James bible, the verses read this way:

Phil 1:9-10 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.

The way it is written, I could not make much practical sense of this verse. I was having a hard time understanding what Paul was actually saying to them. I looked up every key word in both of the verses in my Greek Dictionary and listed them in sequence on a sheet of paper. Here are the words, with the definitions:

Knowledge = Epignosis = Full knowledge, a greater participation by the knower in the object known, thus more powerfully influencing him.

Judgment = Aisthesis = Perception, discernment.

Approve = Dokimazo = To approve after testing. Used especially regarding metals. Coins could be tried by fire to see which were precious.

Excellent = Diaphero = Differ, the highest and best.

Sincere = Eilikrines = Unalloyed, pure of unmixed substances {single minded}.

Offense = To stumble, or to cause to stumble.

After many more hours of mediation and prayer in the spirit, keeping in mind the context of the entire letter, the Lord gave me the following paraphrase of verses nine and ten;

"I pray that as your love for Jesus increases, you will increasingly come to know Him better. You will come to understand what He is doing in the earth and become even more of a participant in His plans, purposes, and pursuits. The mind of Christ Himself will come to have an ever increasingly powerful influence in every area of your life. Your greater depth of acquaintance with Him will result in more comprehensive discernment regarding what to get involved in, and what not. You will be able to test various potential endeavors with the very mind (thinking processes) of Christ to determine which of them contain the highest and best potential for accomplishing His plans in the earth. By this process you will remain sincere, unalloyed, pure and single minded in serving Jesus and not Mammon. That purity and single mindedness will both keep you from stumbling into the world's way of thinking (the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things), and it will keep others from stumbling also."(Paraphrased)

Notice how this prayer goes far beyond the typical "formula" that is normally taught today concerning how to prosper in the Kingdom of God. Giving and receiving is important, but the Lord told me that He is changing the mentality of the Church from "formula to relationship" when it comes to prosperity. Look at how this prayer agrees with that statement. Paul prays for them that their "love for Jesus" will increase. That they will come to "know" Him better and better. As they come to actually know Jesus and have an ongoing relationship with Him, they will begin to understand His mind and His plan for their lives. By knowing these things they will be able to make correct decisions regarding the every day affairs of life...what to get involved in and what not to get involved in. By this method, Jesus Himself will be directing their steps so He can prosper them "individually" according to His plan for each specific person.

This requires RELATIONSHIP & FELLOWSHIP...NOT FORMULA! With Jesus Himself directing your steps by the leadership of the Holy Spirit, He can prosper you without you falling victim to the world's way of thinking, which is normally typified by greed, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things. Those are the things that often cause even very sincere Christians to stumble once they start prospering. Jesus desires for His brethren to prosper, but not at the expense of their relationship with Him! Remember,

Mat 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

That is why in my teachings regarding Kingdom Finances He has me emphasize so strongly the importance of spending much time in worship, praying in the spirit, and the meditation of the Word of God. Time spent doing these things is what builds an ongoing relationship and increasing fellowship with Jesus Himself! Time spent doing these things is what fine tunes our spirit man to be sensitive to receiving the leadership of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. To develop an actual relationship with Jesus requires spending time with Jesus. But, Oh, the rewards of that relationship are "unsearchable." He wants our relationship and our fellowship with Him to be so much more than merely some "formula" of giving and receiving. Again, our giving and receiving is involved, but it is never the foundation for our prosperity. The foundation of our prosperity is the "grace of God" that Paul taught first to the Philippians, and then to the Corinthians;

2 Cor 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Jesus bore our poverty on the cross in exactly the same way that He bore our sin. Jesus bore our poverty on the cross in exactly the same way that He bore our sicknesses and carried our pains. He took the curse of poverty upon Himself so that we could have access to all of the riches of the Father in glory. The finished work of Jesus Christ is the foundation for all new testament prosperity ... NOT OUR GIVING!

It seems to help people when I explain it this way. We all know we are supposed to forgive every man their trespasses against us. Amen! Yet, if I were to ask you, "Is that how a person gains entry into heaven ... by forgiving people?" ... you would say "No. A person is saved because Jesus bore their sins on the cross and they have received Him as their Saviour and Lord." That is correct! In other words, we put our faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross when He bore our sins away and we received complete forgiveness. HIS WORK IS OUR FOUNDATION! Our "forgiving others" is simply an outgrowth from the foundation of His finished work when "we were forgiven." When it comes to salvation, we all understand;

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

It is the same with healing. We all know that we are not healed by "our works." You cannot "earn" your healing no matter how many "good works" you do. Again, like our salvation, we are healed by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ when He bore our sicknesses and carried our pains, and by His stripes we were healed.

Yet, if we believe the popular teaching of the day, it seems that when it comes to us being redeemed from poverty, it is all up to our "giving" ... our "works." No, No, a thousand times NO! By GRACE we are saved from sin. By GRACE we are saved from sickness. By GRACE we are saved from poverty. The knowledge of this GRACE is what turned around the "deep poverty" of the Philippians to the point that they "abounded in their liberality."

Giving and receiving are very important but they must never become the "foundation" of our prosperity. Yet most of us have it turned around backwards in our minds. What I mean is, most of us "give" believing that God "will" prosper us. No, we give because He has already provided open access to all the riches of the kingdom when Jesus bore our poverty on the cross. It is by GRACE that we are saved in every realm of life. GRACE always refers to the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. HIS WORK is our foundation. All of our actions are outgrowths of what He has already done for us.

That's why Paul could pray for His supporters at Philippi,

Phil 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Have you ever wondered why Paul found it necessary to finish that wonderful statement with the words "by Christ Jesus?" Why didn't He simply say, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory?" IT IS BECAUSE THE REASON FOR GOD BEING LEGALLY FREE TO SUPPLY ALL THEIR NEED IS BASED ON THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS CHRIST WHEN HE BORE THEIR POVERTY! Jesus bore their poverty by grace so they could always have free access to His wealth by faith.

Was their giving involved? Absolutely! Giving is a corresponding action to the fact that they "have been prospered" in precisely the same way that "forgiving others" is a corresponding action to the fact they had already "been forgiven." Real faith always requires "corresponding actions" to become effectual. James told us;

That's why Paul could pray for His supporters at Philippi,

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works [corresponding actions] is dead also.

But we must always make sure that we are never substituting "works" for "grace." I correspond with many believers who are in dire financial trouble. I always listen for a long time at first to find out what is in their heart in abundance, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Almost without exception, they won't be talking longer than five minutes when their emphasis will be on how faithfully they have "given" into the work of the kingdom. The longer they talk, the more they reveal that their faith is in "their giving." To this day, I have never yet heard even one of them even mention the fact that Jesus bore their poverty on the cross. Look at the verse once again;

2 Cor 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

What does it really say? What provides our access into the riches? THROUGH HIS POVERTY! THROUGH HIS POVERTY! THROUGH HIS POVERTY!

Jesus allowed Himself to be stripped of every earthly possession on that cross. They even cast lots for His clothes. He had left the riches of heaven to come to earth and subject Himself on the cross to complete poverty. The question is why? Again, He bore our sin in order that we could receive His righteousness. He bore our sicknesses in order that we could receive His healing. He bore our poverty in order that we could have access to His unlimited wealth.

When I begin discussing this fact with the people who call or write, it is like a totally new concept that they have never heard of before. No wonder the devil has been so successful at keeping true financial prosperity away from the people of God. Even Satan knows that it is by GRACE we are saved, not by works. Anytime He can manipulate our thinking into trusting in our own

"works," he knows that we will be excluded from the GRACE that can only be accessed by FAITH. Faith in what? Faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

So what is the proper course of action? If you are a giving Christian who is still in financial trouble, the first thing I would suggest is that you begin to sow 2 Cor 8:9 deep within your spirit by saying it and saying it. I confessed that scripture literally hundreds of times once I saw this truth. I wanted to plant that seed so deep within me that there would never again be the possibility of me making my "giving" the foundation of my prosperity. Do I still give? More than ever! Once I switched my faith from "my giving" to "His work" on the cross for me, it did not take long for my finances to really begin to blossom. The same GRACE that took the Philippians from "deep poverty" to "abounding liberality" began working for me also. But it was still not by "formula," as the next two paragraphs show.

Secondly, in the same way that you worship the Lord as your Saviour, and in the same way that you worship the Lord as your Healer, begin to worship the Lord as your Provider. It is His work that has opened the Father's unlimited resources unto you. Your giving is simply a corresponding action to that already finished work. In your times of worship, give Him thanksgiving for the fact that He bore your poverty in order that you could have access to His wealth. Call Jesus your Provider. He truly is!

Third, along with your times of worship, be sure to spend much time praying in the Spirit. This is one of the primary ways that your "fellowship" with the Lord becomes most intimate and most personal. The Holy Spirit will begin to reveal the mind, the plan of Christ for your individual life. He will begin to show you "what to get involved in, and what not to get involved in." You will find yourself simply making decisions that are ever more in line with Christ's plan for YOU ... YOU, personally!

1 Cor 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

"Freely given" sounds a lot like GRACE doesn't it? By the GRACE of our Lord Jesus Christ you have been given "free access" to all the riches of the Father in glory. The Holy Spirit has been sent that you might "know" these things. He will bring the mind, the plans and the instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ to you as you spend time in fellowship with Him

THE SERVING SON

by Gary Carpenter

All of us are familiar with the famous verse:

Mat 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

To understand what Jesus means by "all these things," you only have to read the passage that precedes this verse:

Mat 6:31-32 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Paraphrased in today's language, Jesus was saying:

"The unbelievers spend their entire lifetime, from birth to the grave, primarily concerned with how to get their material needs met. They do not know the Father as Provider, neither are they concerned with the Father's kingdom. I am telling you not to be like them. Your Father knows that you have need of all the same things that they spend their lifetime trying to acquire. My promise to you is this; If you will devote your life, first and foremost, to finding out your place in the Father's kingdom and putting His will first in your life, the Father Himself will take personal responsibility for providing all of these things for you Himself. They will simply be a byproduct of serving Him in His kingdom. All these things shall be added unto you."

What a promise! Most reasonable people would agree that the ultimate in prosperity would be for God the Father to take personal responsibility for providing all of their material needs. If He was to take that responsibility, then they would be completely free to give their lives totally to serving Him in His kingdom. They would not only have all of their needs met, they would also be forever free from the "care" of how those needs would be provided.

The question that arises in most people's mind is, "How, in a practical way, do I go about seeking first the kingdom of God? Is Jesus talking about Church attendance? Is He talking about me giving more of my finances into the work of God? Is He talking about feeding the poor? How do I start?"

One place where Jesus expounds on what it means to "seek first the kingdom of God" is in the passage of scripture beginning with Luke 15:1 and ending with Luke 17:10. One of the first principles of true meditation of the Word of God is to find the beginning of a subject and the end of a subject. Jesus taught in complete subjects.

Every verse in the teaching is like the stroke of an artist's brush as He paints a complete image of what He is wanting us to "see" regarding the kingdom of God and how it functions. To understand difficult verses within the teaching, it is of the utmost importance to meditate the entire passage to keep each verse in its proper context.

To illustrate this principle, say you had a painting of the Taj Mahal and you wanted to send a copy of it to a friend who lived in the remote part of the world and had never seen it. Let's say your painting is a large, sofa size painting and it shows the Taj Mahal structure itself and the gardens that surround it. You take the painting down from off the wall and take it to a Xerox machine to duplicate the image, but the painting is far too large to fit all of it on the machine.

You haphazardly place the painting on the Xerox machine and make the copy, not realizing that the only portion of the painting that was actually duplicated was a small section depicting one of the trees in the garden. You mail that copy to your friend with a note saying, "This is an image of the Taj Mahal." Your friend would look at the copy you sent him and say, "The Taj Mahal is a tree." He only saw a tiny portion of the true image.

The same thing happens in our minds when we try to understand difficult verses from the Word of God without leaving each verse within the overall "image" of the subject being taught. Our understanding will be limited, at least, if not actually erroneous.

I have learned to ask the Holy Spirit to show me the beginning and ending of the subject matter when I come to verses that I do not understand. Once I know the beginning and ending, then I read the entire passage over and over many times to equip my spirit for "day and night" meditation. By this method, every verse is left in its proper setting within the complete image. When the understanding comes, every verse will fit precisely within the overall subject matter.

This passage of scripture opens by saying:

Luke 15:1-2 Then drew near unto him [Jesus] all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them

Here we see the Son of God who has left His Father's house (heaven) to come to earth in the form of a man to "be about His Father's business" of "seeking and saving the lost." Of necessity, that means He must mingle and associate with publicans and sinners.

The religious people of the day, the Pharisees and scribes, were shocked and horrified that someone who called Himself a man of God would associate with sinners. Their idea of "seeking first the kingdom of God" was to be meticulous about keeping the traditions of their ancestors and to stay completely separate from contact with publicans and sinners.

These two concepts of "seeking first the kingdom of God" are in sharp contrast to each other. Jesus is doing it right. The Pharisees and scribes are doing it wrong. Jesus now begins to teach what it means to truly "seek first the kingdom of God" in order to give the Pharisees and scribes the opportunity to repent if they choose to do so.

The subject matter does not end until this teaching concludes in Luke 17:10. Like a master artist, Jesus begins using words in parable form to paint a complete image of what it means to "seek ye first the kingdom of God." Every parable and word illustration that Jesus uses in that passage is to be understood in this context.

In this light we will take another look at what is commonly called the story of the Prodigal Son. To refresh your memory, you will find it in Luke 15:11-32. In context, the Prodigal Son represents the publicans and sinners. The Elder Son who was angry that the Prodigal had been restored to fellowship with the Father. The Elder Son represents the Pharisees and the scribes. The Elder Son, like the Pharisees and scribes, did not understand the heart of the Father at all. He, like them, had no idea that the Father was longing for the return of the Prodigal.

As I was reading through this entire segment from Luke 15:1 through Luke 17:10 one day, the Holy Spirit asked me, "What would have been the only hope for the attitude of the Elder Son to be changed?" I could see from the Elder Son's statements that he had served in his Father's fields for many years, but his emphasis had been on "not transgressing the commandments." Since he did not even know that his Father was grieving over the loss of the Prodigal son, it was obvious that he never spent much time with his Father. His problem was; he didn't know his Father's heart at all.

I responded to the Holy Spirit's question, "He would have had to come in from the fields and spend time in fellowship with his Father." In my mind's eye, I could see the Elder Son simply abandon all of his ritualistic "busy work" for awhile in order to come into his Father's house for the sole purpose of fellowship. I could see him pulling up a couple of chairs to the breakfast table and saying, "Father, we haven't just sat down and talked in a long time. Could we just spend some time together? I would like to find out what's on your heart and I would like to tell you what's on my heart."

I could see that the Father, who was already grieving over the loss of one son, would have been overjoyed to spend time in fellowship with the Elder Son. As this time of fellowship continued it

would not have been very long before the subject of the lost Prodigal Son would have come up in their discussion. The Elder Son would have discovered that his Father still loved the Prodigal and missed him terribly. The Father would have told him that he went out on the front porch several times every day to gaze down the road that leads from their house just in case he might see the Prodigal Son coming home.

The Elder Son was now, for the first time, learning what his Father was really like. He had assumed that the Father was enraged with the Prodigal. After all, the Prodigal had squandered the Father's inheritance on harlots and riotous living. He had disgraced the family name by his licentiousness. He knew that the Father had not raised him like that. He was angry with his Prodigal brother and he "assumed" that the Father was also.

As the fellowship with his Father continued, the Elder Son's hardness of heart would gradually have softened as he learned of the great love the Father had for the Prodigal. The Father was not pleased with what the Prodigal Son had done, but his love for His son had not diminished in the least. The Father's heart was aching for the Prodigal Son to return home.

Eventually, as this fellowship between the Elder Son and Father continued, this great love for the Prodigal Son would have been transferred from the Father's heart to the Elder Son. He would have said, "Father, I had no idea that you felt like this. I didn't know that you were grieving over the loss of my Prodigal Brother. Would you like for me to go look for him? Perhaps I could find him and tell him that you still love him. I could tell him that your heart longs for him to come home. He may not know that, Father. Would you like for me to go seek after him and tell him of your love?"

I can see the Father's eyes brighten with joy at the prospect of the Elder Son's offer. I can hear the Father saying, "Would you be willing to go? Yes, I would love for you to go seek my lost son. If you find him, tell him that I love him. If you can persuade him to come home, my heart would overflow with joy."

From this point on in the lesson I will refer to the Elder Son as being the Serving Son. He is a freeborn child of his Father, but he has chosen of his own free will to become the servant of his Father in seeking and saving the lost Prodigal Son. He is now a son who serves. Not by compulsion, but motivated by the love that was transferred to his heart through fellowship with his Father.

The Serving Son immediately begins to assemble a caravan of camels and pack mules to carry the provisions that will be needed on the expedition to seek and save the lost son. He gathers together some of the Father's servants to go with him on the journey. They load the pack mules with supplies of food, drinking water and many other things that they will need in the wilderness as they seek to find the Prodigal.

When all is ready and it is time to depart, I see the Father coming out to hug and kiss his Serving Son. The Father gives his blessing to all who are going with him to seek and save the lost son. As the caravan travels down the road from the Father's house toward the wilderness, the Father's emotions are full of joy at the prospect of his lost son being saved. He wants his Serving Son to have a prosperous, successful journey. He wants them both to come home to him safe and well.

The expedition goes well as the Serving Son's caravan travels from village to village asking, "Have you seen my lost brother? The Father has sent me to find him." Sometimes he would get information such as, "Yes, he came this way a year ago. We think he headed south when he left our village." The expedition continues, but the journey is longer than expected. Provisions begin to run low as they enter into the vast wastelands of the desert.

The Serving Son writes a message to his Father; "Father, we are still looking for the Prodigal. We have some good clues, but we have not found him yet. We are running low on food for the camels and mules. We are running low on food for ourselves and drinking water is in short supply. Could you please send us fresh supplies? Thank you. Your Serving Son."

The Serving Son gives this petition to one of the servants and the servant begins running back to the Father's house to deliver it. When the servant arrives, he finds the Father once again standing on the porch looking down the road in hope that the entire caravan was returning with his lost son. He sees the runner coming and wonders if he is bearing good news from the Serving Son.

The Father opens the message and reads the petition from his Serving Son. He calls all the servants together and says, "My Serving Son has asked that I send him fresh supplies. I will not only supply every need that he listed here, but much more besides. He has not asked for enough. Gather some wagons together and begin loading them with provisions that are exceeding abundantly more than everything he asked me for. Also, gather some fresh camels and some fresh mules to take to him. Also, some of you servants pack your bags and prepare for a long journey. My Serving Son needs more help. All that I have is his. My Serving Son shall never lack ANY good thing."

Dear Reader, this is true Kingdom Prosperity by "relationship and fellowship." The Serving Son is now "seeking first the kingdom of God" by giving his life to the "will of the Father" to seek and save the lost. The messenger that was sent back with the petition is representative of prayer to make our requests know to Him. The Father has sworn to provide every need abundantly while we remain His Serving Sons.

This relationship and fellowship eliminates all formulas. What I mean is this: Can you imagine, in your wildest dreams, that the Father would respond to his Serving Son in this manner? "No, I will not send you the provisions you asked for because you did not first send me an offering."

Ridiculous! The Father was not seeking a financial offering from the Serving Son. The Serving Son had already "sown" what the Father was after. The Serving Son was sowing his "life" to do the will of the Father by seeking and saving the lost.

The reason that the Church falls for such nonsense is that we do not yet understand that we are truly sons and daughters of our Father. Also, for most, their hearts have not yet become single minded in serving the Father. For others, it is simply a matter of being delivered from all of the "formulas" they have been taught in order to believe the plain words of Jesus Christ:

John 16:23-24 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

Faith in those words, and single mindedness of purpose, makes available unlimited resources to every Serving Son, no matter what job has been assigned to you in the overall mission of the body of Christ.

SUMMARY

What was it that changed the attitude of the Elder Son that caused him to be changed into the Serving Son? FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER! That is what changes us all. The new birth gives us a heart that has the capacity to fellowship with our heavenly Father once again. The more time we spend with Him, the more of His love for all people will be "shed abroad in our hearts." That love will eventually "compel" us to take our respective place in the overall body of Christ and be fruitful for our Father as we also endeavor to "seek and save the lost."

That does not mean that all of us are called to be "evangelists" in the normal sense of the word. But in a way, we all are. Paul tells us that the body of Christ is one body, made up of many parts:

1 Cor 12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

Christ has not changed. He is still in the business of "seeking and saving the lost." You could say, that IS the mission of His body. But even though not all of us are called to be "front-line"

evangelists, we ALL have a place in the body. Nobody gets to choose their own call. Paul also tells us that God places us in the body according to His own will:

1 Cor 12:18-20 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.

Of major importance, then, to "seeking first the Kingdom of God" would be for each of us to find our place in the body and begin fulfilling it. Some might say, "Gary, I would be happy to do that. the only problem is, I don't know what my place in the body is. I don't know what I have been called to do."

Well, since it is God who determines your call in the first place, doesn't it make sense that the best way to find out what your call is would be to spend time in fellowship with Him? That's what the Elder Son did in order to become the Serving Son.

I encourage you to spend more time in fellowship with your heavenly Father. Of course this would include all of the usual things like worship, prayer, meditation of the Word and so forth. But I am actually speaking of simply taking some time every day to just sit down and "talk with Him." Who knows? Perhaps you will find that He has been standing out on the porch today looking to see if you might be coming to fellowship with Him?

THE SERVING SON'S ENEMY

by Gary Carpenter

The Serving Son had left his Father's house to seek and save the Prodigal. In the vision, I saw that there was an enemy who hated the Father and all of the Father's sons. This enemy had once tried to overthrow the Father and take possession of His goods. He had been defeated and no longer had any way to directly attack the Father.

This enemy hated the Father. He wanted to bring grief to the Father in any way he could. Since He could no longer directly attack the Father, his anger was now directed toward the sons. He revelled in the grieving of the Father over the Prodigal. He wanted that grief to continue. In no wise did he want the Prodigal restored to fellowship with the Father.

The enemy saw that the Serving Son had left the Father's house to seek and save the Prodigal. He was determined to stop this rescue mission at all costs. This enemy had hordes of beings who were his slaves [demons]. He sent waves of them to attack the Serving Son in order to stop the rescue mission.

His tactics were many and varied.

1. He posted road signs along the way that gave false directions in order to lead the Serving Son in wrong paths.
2. He saw that the Father was sending supplies to keep the rescue mission stocked with the necessary provisions. He sent some of his hordes to intercept the provisions in order to "starve out" the Serving Son and his servants.
3. He kept sending false messengers "in the name of the Father" [religion] to discourage the Serving Son. They brought all sorts of evil reports such as:
 - The Father has died
 - The Father is angry with you.
 - The Father has gone broke.
 - The Father will no longer supply your needs.
 - The Father has cancelled the mission. He has changed His mind about your commission.
4. The enemy also sent direct attacks against the Serving Son such as:
 - He sent sickness and disease.
 - He sent diversions in the form of calamity.
 - The camels went lame. [car trouble]
 - Dust storms, lightning, and floods came.
 - Shortages occurred. [equipment failure, lack]
 - He sent temptations of pleasure to divert the Son from the Father's rescue mission. ["Eat, drink, be merry. Life is short. Enjoy it!"]
 - He sent diversions in the form of "false assignments," saying that the Father wanted him to do these additional things also. [busy work, shadow boxing]
 - He sent his hordes to cause envy, jealousy and strife among the servants who went with the Serving Son. He knew that a house divided would not stand.
5. The enemy sent his hordes into the villages along the way to stir up the people against the Serving Son.

- They said he was a fool to give his life to rescue the Prodigal. After all, the Prodigal had made his choice.
- They said the Serving Son was mistaken concerning the will of the Father. They said the Father only wanted judgment and punishment for the Prodigal.
- They called him arrogant and prideful to think that the Father would supply every need to finance this rescue mission. Who did he think he was anyway?
- They said they knew that the Father did not supply such needs because they had often sent him requests to send longer cars and VCR's to enjoy their own lives ... and the Father had not sent them. [They weren't on the same mission as the Serving Son].
- They said they had learned they could get along just fine by working to supply their own needs to consume on their own lusts. They didn't need the Father. They said the Serving Son should just should just join them and enjoy life.

The Serving Son soon learned that he needed much more than just financial provision in order for his mission to be successful. He sent a messenger back to the Father telling Him of all these attacks by the enemy. The Father was outraged and declared all out war on this enemy whom had already been defeated, but was still attacking anyway.

For teaching purposes, let me say that the Father had a supernatural ally named the Holy Spirit. This ally was invisible, but all powerful. Nothing was impossible for this Holy Spirit. In addition, He had hordes of powerful angels who were available to put down the attacks of the enemy's demons.

The Father said, "I will send my Holy Spirit to be with the Serving Son forever. Anything that is needed in the way of power and anointings will be available to my Serving Son at all times. My Son shall never lack ANY good thing!"

"My Holy Spirit will also be my Serving Son's Counselor. He will only speak the truth. Whenever false reports come, my Serving Son will turn to this Counselor to find out the truth. He will never have to depend on false reports again."

"My Holy Spirit will provide the leadership for my Serving Son. My Serving Son will never have to depend on natural road signs [circumstances] again. My Holy Spirit will lead him by his spirit."

"All of the power to destroy sickness and poverty will be available through my Holy Spirit. No longer will the enemy be able to place disease upon my Serving Son. No longer will the enemy be able to intercept my provisions."

"All that I have is available to my Serving Son. My Holy Spirit will make manifest to him whatever he needs to complete his course with joy. He will be successful."

What joy it was to the Serving Son when the Holy Spirit came to him from the Father. He found that he had received power now that the Holy Spirit had come to him. With the power and leadership of the Holy Spirit, the mission continued with great increase in success.

The enemy did not give up. At first he was completely dumbfounded as to what he might do to disrupt the mission to rescue the Prodigal. He had no power nor authority against this Holy Spirit who had come from the Father. This Holy Spirit could not be tempted, could not be deceived, could not be bribed, could not be overpowered. What to do? As long as the Serving Son stayed in close fellowship with the Holy Spirit, no weapon formed against him could prosper.

The enemy decided he only had one hope. Since this Holy Spirit was invisible, the enemy had to somehow convince the Serving Son that the Holy Spirit had not come to him. His only hope was to get the Serving Son out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit. From that point on the enemy focused all of his strategy on breaking the fellowship, the communication between the Serving Son and the Holy Spirit. If the enemy could somehow break that line of communication, the Serving Son would be cut off from the power and provision of the Father and would be left to continue the mission in his own strength.

In his own strength, he was no match for the enemy.

Zec 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

The Serving Son is one body, the body of Christ, made up of many members.

1 Cor 12:12-14 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.

Not all have the same "office," but we all have the same call: To seek and save the lost. There are many offices, many jobs to be done in the fulfilling of that mission. You are a member of that body. You have a calling and an office. All are important. All are needed. None are to be despised.

1 Cor 12:15-21 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

No matter what your office is in the body of Christ, the LIFE of Christ within you is empowered for dominion through the agency of the Holy Spirit which the Father has sent to you. It is to our detriment when we fail to turn to this HELPER Who has come to provide power, dominion, and leadership for us as we sojourn through this life. Few Christians even think of turning to the Holy Spirit to receive wisdom and counsel regarding the financial matters they face. Yet the bible says:

Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

The Holy Spirit understands everything there is to know concerning commerce, investments, finance, and employment that coincides with the mind of Christ for a person's call in the body. It was the wisdom that Solomon received from the Holy Spirit that is recorded for us in the book of Proverbs. By following the counsel he received from the Holy Spirit, Solomon became the richest of all kings. There are no problems, financial or otherwise, for which the Holy Spirit does not already have the answer.

Be sure you stay in close fellowship and communion with the Holy Spirit. He has come to enforce the victory of Christ in every area of your life. At all costs, do not forsake your communion with the Holy Spirit.

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

THE SERVING SON'S HELPER

by Gary Carpenter

As I continue to meditate the vision that the Lord gave me concerning the Serving Son's mission to seek and to save the Prodigal, many practical aspects of the Father sending the Holy Spirit are becoming more and more clear to me. I have heard many messages concerning the Holy Spirit being the "Paraclete," that is, "One called alongside to help." Now I see how true that statement really is.

For one thing, the Serving Son's enemy is a spirit. He is invisible, but the effects of his attacks are made manifest in the material realm. The Helper that the Father sent is also invisible, but the effects of His help are made manifest in the material realm.

The enemy's hordes [demons] are invisible, but effective in the material realm. The Helper's armies [angels] are also invisible, but effective in producing results in the material realm. From the scriptures I know that "they that be with us are more than they that be with them." (2 King 6:16)

From the vision I can see that the Helper was sent for one purpose and one purpose only ... to HELP the Serving Son in every possible way in completing his mission successfully. There was nothing about the Helper's assignment that was intended to harm, impede, or slow down the Serving Son's progress. Quite the contrary. Specifically, from the vision:

THE HELPER PROVIDES LEADERSHIP

The enemy posted wrong road signs [circumstances] to confuse the Serving Son and lead him in the wrong direction. The Helper provided leadership independent of circumstances to keep the Serving Son on course.

THE HELPER LOOSES SUPPLY WAGONS

The enemy had sent his hordes to intercept the provisions which the Father had sent. The hordes had prevented the actual delivery of the supplies to the Serving Son. The Helper released hosts of angels to drive away the demons and escort the wagons of supplies to the Serving Son.

THE HELPER PROVIDED COUNSEL

The enemy kept sending false messengers who claimed they were bringing information from the Father. The Helper caused the Serving Son to discern that these messengers were wolves in sheep's clothing. The Serving Son learned to get his information directly from the Helper, for He only spoke truth. The Helper only spoke what He had heard in the presence of the Father. The Helper became the Serving Son's Counselor.

THE HELPER BRINGS POWER AND ANOINTING TO ENFORCE AUTHORITY

The enemy kept sending wave after wave of attacks against the Serving Son in all manner of ways: Sickness, equipment shortages, the camels went lame [car trouble], floods, tornado's, and many such things. Before the arrival of the Helper, the Serving Son was powerless to stop these attacks. But the Father had said, "I will send my Holy Spirit to be with the Serving Son forever. Everything that the Serving Son speaks, my Holy Spirit will perform. Anything that is needed in the way of power and anointings will be available to my Serving Son at all times. My Son shall never lack ANY good thing!"

The Serving Son soon learned that whatever he spoke, the Helper performed for him. He then guarded his words very carefully. He learned to never speak anything except the desired end result. What he desired, he spoke, and the Helper manifested his words.

The Serving Son discovered that there was no limit to the power and anointing available from the Helper. All of the attacks were stopped by releasing the power of the Helper through the

spoken word. Absolutely nothing was impossible for the Helper as long as the Serving Son believed that what he spoke would come to pass. (Mark 11:23 24)

THE HELPER MAKES ALL THINGS POSSIBLE

The Father said, "All of the anointings to destroy sickness and poverty will be available through my Holy Spirit. No longer will the enemy be able to intercept my provisions. No longer will the enemy be able to place disease upon my Serving Son."

"All that I have is available to my Serving Son. My Holy Spirit will make manifest to him whatever he needs to complete his course with joy. He will be successful."

Victory for the Serving Son over all the tactics of the enemy came as he learned to always employ the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit rather than attempting to rely on his own strength. He learned to always ask himself this question in every situation: "How do I draw on the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit to be successful in my mission?" When he did not know what to say or do, he learned to turn to the Helper as his Counselor. The Counselor never failed him.

The Serving Son came to know this truth:

Zec 4:6b NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS.

Much of the difficulty we have in trying to live victorious over the evil one in this life is that we do not understand what is commonly referred to as "the anointing." We have thought that the help sent to us by the Father was some "thing" instead of some "one." Look again at the words of our Lord as He describes what sort of help we could expect to receive after His ascension:

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Jesus did not say the Father would send us an "anointing." He said He would send us the "Comforter." He has not just send us "help." He has sent us the "Helper!" The Holy Spirit does not "have" the anointing. The Holy Spirit "IS" the anointing!

In Acts 10:38 Notice the scripture says that God "anointed" Jesus ... WITH THE HOLY GHOST! With the Holy Ghost comes "power." This is the same Holy Ghost, the same Comforter given unto us. No wonder Jesus said,

Acts 1:8a But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...

From these scriptures and the vision of the Serving Son, I have had to readjust my thinking concerning the anointing we have received:

THE ANOINTING IS A PERSON

I have always thought of the anointing as being a tangible "thing." I must now conclude the anointing is a "person." Specifically, the anointing IS the third member of the Godhead ... the Holy Spirit Himself! He does not "have" the anointing ... He IS the anointing! The anointing is not something! The anointing is SOMEONE!

THE ANOINTING IS A LIVING ENTITY

Again, the anointing is not a "thing," but rather a living entity with a will, intelligence, emotions and all of the attributes we ascribe to "personality." The anointing is ALIVE! The Holy Spirit IS the anointing. The Holy Spirit IS the power of God. The Holy Spirit IS the finger of God. The Holy Spirit IS the hand of God.

THE ANOINTING HAS A VOICE

I am still having trouble putting this into words that carry the same impact as the knowledge of it is having in my spirit. Being a living entity, the anointing HIMSELF can actually communicate with us those actions required to loose His power! The anointing is not a "thing" to be studied, but rather an entity with Whom to fellowship and cooperate with.

Said another way, there is no need for guesswork regarding the activation of the power of God. The anointing HIMSELF will personally communicate with us those things that will release His power in every given situation. This is leadership indeed! This is light indeed! This eliminates all causes of stumbling in the dark "wondering" what to do. The only things needful are to develop the ability to hear Him and the mortification required to obey Him.

THE ANOINTING IS NOT LORD

The Holy Spirit does not assume the role of being Lord. Jesus Christ is Lord of all and remains the head of the Church. The Holy Spirit has come to bring us leadership directly from the mind of Christ Who sits at the right hand of the Father. I see that even though they are coequal in stature, the Holy Spirit has voluntarily subordinated Himself to the will of Jesus Christ. Of course we know that Christ has voluntarily subordinated Himself to the will of the Father.

THE ANOINTING REGENERATES

With the power resident within Himself, the Holy Spirit's actions (what we normally refer to as the anointing) move at the subatomic level to regenerate material substance and reorder material situations to conform to the will of the Father as revealed from the mind of Christ, Who is Lord of all.

THE ANOINTING IS ACTIVATED BY FAITH

It is important to note that the Holy Spirit does this by FAITH! I take that to mean He does not move to regenerate simply because it is the will of the Father, neither because it is in the mind of Jesus Christ, but rather because it is acted upon by believers in FAITH! At my present level of understanding this would mean that some believer(s) would have to "believe with the heart, say with the mouth, and obey with their actions" the things revealed from the mind of Christ in order for the Holy Spirit's regenerative power to be activated.

HIS ANOINTING IS AVAILABLE FOR ALL THINGS

The Holy Spirit said to me: *"You are learning and will learn more about making no decisions based on carnal information without seeking first My counsel in every matter, even in the smallest detail. Make no decisions based on carnal information, regardless of how serious those situations seem, and how immediate, and how pressing. Make no decision without hearing My counsel."*

This tells me that we must press beyond the normal level of thinking that the anointing is only available on rare occasions, such as when we are in Church services. Since He IS the anointing and He is instructing me to make no decisions without first hearing His counsel, then I must conclude it is the Father's will that we "live" in the anointing all the time by living in constant fellowship and communion with the Holy Spirit.

We are not to expect the anointing to "come and go" as we see it occurring in the old testament. Since HE has come to abide with us forever, and He IS the anointing, then we must expect His anointing to abide with us forever ... all the time!

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

I must reject forever all teachings which say , "We are anointed to preach the gospel, not to live the gospel." Nothing was ever farther from the truth. We ARE anointed to LIVE the gospel even regarding the smallest details of life.

THE ANOINTING SHOWS US THINGS TO COME

The Holy Spirit said to me: *"You shall follow My counsel and My leadership to the place where you see everything ahead of time. Nothing shall take you by surprise. In every circumstance, when you arrive, you have already had My counsel and My wisdom. You already know exactly what to do. These things belong to the sons who serve the Living God, IF they give the time to learn how to flow with Me, says the Spirit of Grace."*

I have always thought His best would be to anoint my mind with knowledge and wisdom regarding "present, current problems." He will do that but now I see it is not His best. He intends for us to always be "ahead of the game." He does not intend for us to be continually beset on all sides with "present tense" problems for which we are seeking His wisdom. That would forever keep us in the position of playing "catch up." He intends to show us His wisdom before the situations ever arise. This alone would be enough to inspire anyone to stay in close, intimate fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

AWARENESS OF HIS PRESENCE IS VITAL

The Holy Spirit said to me: *"Awareness of My presence is vital and key to releasing My power. Understand that I am with you whether you are aware of it or not. Lack of awareness brings lack of expectation. Lack of awareness brings lack of faith. Lack of awareness causes the leadership that comes by vision, and by the inward witness, and by words spoken in your spiritual ear to be dismissed. Do not dismiss these things for it is by these that I manifest the Gifts through you, says the Spirit of the Lord."*

It is of the utmost importance to understand from the Serving Son vision that the Father did not send the Serving Son "an anointing." The Father sent His Serving Son a HELPER! Not an "it," but a "Who!"

THE FATHER HAS NOT SENT US AN ANOINTING!

THE FATHER HAS SENT US A HELPER WHO IS THE ANOINTING!

King David danced with all his might before the Lord because he was so intensely "aware" that God Himself was watching him from within the ark. He didn't totally understand it all, but David knew that the very presence of God was in that ark. He knew that God was watching his actions. David did understand that Israel's victory was ultimately dependent on the accomplishment of "Jehovah in the ark" for them, and not on their own skills. That "awareness" influenced David's actions to the point that he was willing to be ridiculed in the sight of the people by unrestrained dancing before the Lord.

It is only as we become intensely "aware" that God the Holy Ghost dwells within our "ark" (our reborn human spirit) that our actions will become similarly influenced to do whatever we hear Him saying for us to do, even to the point of being ridiculed and mocked by our peers. It is being intensely "aware" that our HELPER is ever with us, is ever watching, is ever available, is ever speaking with us that our faith rises to fever pitch in order to "obey without question" whatever He says.

To remain unaware of His abiding presence is to remain dull of hearing, blind to leadership, disobedient to instruction, and full of our own ways instead of His! To know that the very anointing of God is ever present with us IN PERSON is to be constantly expecting the supernatural manifestations of His counsel and His power!

Who would fend for themselves when our Father has sent us such a HELPER as this?

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

SOLVING FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

by Gary Carpenter

"Dear Gary, Will God really help me solve my financial problems?" In one form or another, this is one of the most commonly asked questions that I receive. When I respond with *"Yes He will,"* the next question is always, *"How will He help me?"*

People today are under tremendous financial pressure. Most of the people who ask these questions are God loving, hard working, decent people who are doing all they know to do in order to live their lives pleasing unto the Lord. Yet with all their best efforts and faithful giving, financial difficulties seem to come and they can find no solution. From the pulpits where they attend Church, they are normally taught "formulas" as being the way that God delivers His people from financial problems. These formulas, no matter how eloquently stated, usually boil down to: "Give more of your finances to God if you want Him to bless you financially."

I certainly believe in giving of our finances unto the Lord, but is that all there is to receiving His help regarding specific financial problems? The vast majority of the people who write in with this question are already faithful givers into the Lord's work. Let's take a look at a specific financial difficulty that arose in Peter's life and see if the Lord's help came in a different form than the standard formula given to believers today ... "Give more."

Mat 17:24-27 **And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.**

This "tribute" is commonly called the Temple Tax, or Poll tax. Under the Law of Moses, it was required that every Israelite male twenty years old or more pay this tax for the maintenance of the Temple. You can read about this tax in Exodus 30:11-16. The tax was the same for everybody, both rich and poor, and amounted to half a shekel for each male. According to the footnote in the New American Standard Bible, this amounted to roughly two days wages. Not a large tax amount, but an amount that had to be paid nonetheless.

As we go through this example of how the Lord resolved this financial problem, please keep your thinking in the present tense. Peter's tax bill is due! He needs money to pay it. When people write in asking me if the Lord will help them with their financial difficulties it is because they have bills that are due (or past due) and they need money to pay them.

"Gary, will the Lord help me?" Well, what the Lord does for one, He will do for all. He is no respecter of persons. If we find that He helped Peter solve his financial problem, then we have every reason to expect that He will help us solve our financial problems today.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

Notice the precise, detailed, specific instructions that the Lord gave Peter to solve this financial difficulty:

... "Go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee. (Mat 17:27)

It is just as important to pay close attention to what the Lord did NOT say as to what He DID say. Notice that Jesus did NOT say ... "In order to get God's blessing on this situation, go to the

Temple and give a larger offering." Peter, having been raised a Jew, was no doubt already a giver. The problem was not with his "giving." Had that been the root of the problem, then surely Jesus would have said so. He did not!

What Peter needed was exactly what the Lord Jesus gave him ... wisdom in the form of specific instructions telling Peter what needed to be done in order to resolve the problem. At this point I have to say it again, "What the Lord did for Peter, He will also do for you!"

Everyone would agree that "going fishing" to solve a tax problem sounds like a very unusual instruction for anyone to act on. You will find that the Lord's instructions very often fly in the face of "natural" human wisdom. But notice that this instruction was very much within the scope of Peter's ability to do. After all, Peter had spent his life as a fisherman. The Lord did not ask him to do something that he could not do. The only thing required of Peter was obedience to the instructions he received from the Lord, unusual or not.

Most people would agree that if the Lord would give them the answers to the following questions, their financial difficulties would be solved. Those questions are:

1. What to do.
2. How to do it.
3. Where to do it.
4. When to do it.

The Lord's specific instructions to Peter included all of these things. Notice:

1. What to do - "Go Fishing."
2. How to do it - "Cast In A Hook" (rather than a net, the common practice).
3. Where to do it - "The Sea" (not a river).
4. When to do it - "Go" (the Greek tense indicates "now").

Regarding "How," the Lord gave Peter very detailed, step by step instructions:

1. Take the "first" fish that cometh up.
2. Open its mouth.
3. You will find the money there.
4. Pay the tax bill with the money.

Precise, detailed, step by step, easy to follow instructions. This is the kind of leadership that is available to all born again children of the Living God if we can ever learn to forsake "formulas" for "relationship" with the Lord.

FROM FORMULA TO RELATIONSHIP

On December 20, 1996 the Lord said to me:

"I am going to change the Church's mentality regarding Kingdom Finances from formula to relationship."

Was Peter's relationship with Jesus important to his receiving this detailed leadership to resolve the financial difficulty? Of course! Peter had an ongoing, daily relationship with Jesus Christ. There was daily fellowship between the two of them. Peter received these instructions directly from the mouth of Jesus Christ Himself! This wisdom was not recorded somewhere in a book, not even the bible. Peter got this wisdom directly through his relationship and daily fellowship with the Lord. That is precisely how the Lord intends for us to receive our counsel from Him also.

At this point you might say, *"But Gary, Peter had the advantage of being able to go right up to Jesus in person and speak with Him. Jesus isn't physically on the earth today. I can't ask questions like Peter did and expect to hear His answer."* Well, who in the world ever told you that? That sounds as though you believe that when Jesus ascended into heaven He left us as

orphans, having no leadership, and left to fend for ourselves in a world of darkness. That is exactly contrary to what Jesus said:

John 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

The Greek word translated "comfortless" in that verse is: orphanos, or-fan-os'; of uncert. affin.; bereaved ("orphan"), i.e. parentless:--comfortless, fatherless. [Strong's]

WE ARE NOT ORPHANS! WE ARE NOT PARENTLESS! WE ARE NOT FATHERLESS!

The very same Jesus Christ who gave Peter that precise, detailed leadership is alive and well today. His counsel is just as available to us as it was to Peter. The difference is, we receive His counsel through our time spent in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Look at the two verses just prior to John 14:18:

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Although Jesus is not physically present with us today on the earth, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit has been sent to bring leadership and counsel directly from the mind of Christ to us at all times. In fact, Jesus was so confident that we would always have access to His wisdom and counsel through the Holy Spirit that he told Peter and all the disciples:

John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient [BETTER] for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.

Jesus said that it would be "better" for us after He went away. Not worse! Better! In the context of this lesson, you might wonder how it could possibly be better for Peter after Jesus departed. After all, Peter had been able to get detailed instruction directly from Jesus Christ in order to solve his financial problem while Jesus was on the earth. How could it possibly be "better" for Peter in the future after Jesus left?

Simple! In order to obtain instructions from Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry, you had to go to His geographical location at the time. If you were in Nazareth, and Jesus was in Capernaum, you would have to physically travel to Capernaum to obtain his counsel. But the Holy Spirit is with each of us constantly, in all geographical locations, at all times! We have the "mind of Christ" available to us at all times through communion and fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor 2:12-14 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned..

LEADERSHIP BY RELATIONSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP

The last two words of 1 Cor 2:14 is the crux of the problem for most believers. The "things of the Spirit of God ... are spiritually discerned." Most people want to find God's answers already "formulated" for them in a book or a tape series. Although you can learn many good "general principles" that way, it is highly unlikely that you are going to find the Lord's specific instructions for you as an individual by those methods. If you want to hear specific instructions from your Lord, YOU need to spend time in fellowship with Him YOURSELF!

Let me give you an example from my own life. When the Lord called me into full time ministry, He gave me these instructions:

"Take up no offerings from these people. Sell no tapes. Mail everything freely and do not even put in a return envelope. Never let a human being know of any needs that you have. I am your

Source! If you will precisely obey these instructions of Mine I will speak to the hearts of the people I choose to support both you and the needs of the ministry."

I have no idea if He has ever given these same instructions to anybody else or not. That is none of my business. What matters is, this is what He told "me," Gary Carpenter, to do. These instructions made no sense to my natural mind at all. Sue and I were both full time in the ministry, meaning, we had no secular income whatsoever. We only had ten dollars and a twenty year old tape recorder at the time. We had no idea how we were going to be able to offer the tapes freely and pay the postage. For that matter, we didn't know how we would be able to even pay such simple things as our electric bill.

I sometimes picture in my mind the scene of Peter walking toward the Sea of Galilee with a fishing rod slung over his shoulder after receiving Jesus' instructions. I can't help but think that similar thoughts had to be going through his mind, "In all my years as a fisherman on this Sea, I have never once caught a fish that had money in its mouth. This sure seems like a strange thing to do. I never heard of anybody getting their tax bill paid this way, but this is what Jesus told me to do, so I am going to do it."

In the same way, Sue and I have been very careful over these years to precisely obey what the Lord told us to do. We have never yet sold a tape. We give them freely to all that request them. They are mailed postage paid. Even when we minister at various Churches around the land, we leave it completely up to the local Pastor as to whether or not he chooses to take up an offering for the ministry. We never take up one for ourselves, neither do we demand that they do so. We never include return envelopes in with the tape mailings. We never send out "appeal letters" letting others know what our needs are. [I am not against doing any of these things. Again, this is what the Lord told "me" to do. He did not tell me to impose these instructions on others. I am only giving this an example of a person receiving specific instructions from the Lord].

Today, we are mailing a minimum of four tapes a month freely to over 860 families world wide. That number continues to increase every month. Now the big question: Has the Lord been faithful to do His part? POSITIVELY, YES! He continues to speak to the hearts of the people whom He chooses to supply our needs and the needs of the ministry. The ministry pays cash for every thing and remains debt free. Personally, Sue and I have never been better off financially. It is a wonderful life to simply hear and obey the instructions that come from the mind of Christ through time spent in fellowship with the Comforter who has been sent to us ... the Holy Spirit!

The point of this example is: Do you think I would have ever heard those instructions without spending time in fellowship with the Lord through worship and prayer? Absolutely not! I didn't get those instructions out of some book at the local Christian book store. I "spiritually discerned" them ... I "heard" them in my spirit as I spent time in fellowship with HIM! Our Lord Jesus Christ is alive. He is still "speaking in heaven." The Comforter has come to bring His instructions to each of us who will spend time in fellowship with Him. We are admonished not to ignore Him who speaks from heaven nor to reject His counsel. If we "hear and obey" it will be well with us. If we refuse to hear or choose not to obey, then we have no choice but to walk in the darkness of the world's way of doing things.

Heb 12:25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven.

Today is the first day of the rest of your life. You can begin developing a deeper relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ through fellowship by time spent in worship and prayer today. Why wait until tomorrow? Tomorrow will be just as busy as today! Change your priorities. Begin putting your "time with Him" first place in your life. He has given each of us spiritual "ears to hear" His voice. But our ability to "hear Him" is developed through time spent "with Him." Jesus said:

John 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

SHARECROPPER VS. SONSHIP FAITH

by Gary Carpenter

Paul said that he that speaks in an unknown tongue is speaking unto God, and he is speaking "mysteries."

1 Cor 14:2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

One thing that anyone will discover as they develop a consistent life of praying in the spirit is that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, is helping them pray the "mysteries" of the gospel. These prayers are intended to be answered just as much as any other type of prayer, such as the prayer of faith. The answer to these prayers, however, come in the form of revelation knowledge as each mystery is prayed through to completion.

In my own life I have found that sometimes I will spend many hours in prayer, sometimes over several days, and all during that period of time, my "understanding is unfruitful."

1 Cor 14:14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

Eventually, however, I will have "prayed through" that particular "mystery" and ... suddenly ... the understanding will come in the form of revelation knowledge. Sometimes these revelations come in the form of visions, sometimes I hear the voice of the Holy Spirit explain the understanding, and sometimes they simply come by "revelation" alone. That is, one moment I do not know something. The next moment, I do!

Such was the case in June of 1997. I was driving home from a meeting simply praying softly in the spirit when ... all of a sudden ... without warning ... the Spirit of the Lord said to me:

"Giving and receiving is sharecropper faith. It is a valid level of faith to operate in, and most people will never graduate from it. What I desire is Sonship faith, where you know that you actually own the fields you are working in. You are not a sharecropper in the kingdom of God. You are a son. All that is mine is thine."

Well, needless to say, I had never heard of anything like that in my life! I have learned the voice of the Holy Spirit well enough over these many years to know for sure that it was Him, but to perfectly honest, I really had no idea how to implement what He said to me in any practical way. When that happens, I simply record what He says by making a written record, and then I continue to pray until He teaches me more. Over the course of the next six months, He continued to minister to my understanding, line upon line, precept upon precept the revelation knowledge that I needed.

One of the passages of scripture that the Holy Spirit had me begin meditating on was:

Luke 17:7-10 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Say "We are unprofitable servants?" This sounded like a very strange confession to me. Was Jesus saying that our attitude should be that we are worthless, useless servants to our Father? Both Satan and religion would love for you to believe that because

Prov 23:7a For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...

If you truly believe in your heart that you are a worthless, useless servant in the kingdom of God, that is exactly what you will become! Long ago I learned not to take isolated, difficult verses such as these and lift them out of their context trying to understand what they really mean. For true meditation of the Word of God, you MUST let the bible interpret the bible. In order to do that, I always begin backing up in the scriptures to find out when this subject began so I can meditate the difficult portion within the context of the overall teaching. In this case, you have to back up all the way to Luke 15:1:

Luke 15:1-2 Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

What do we see here? We see the Son of God, who by His own free will has chosen to leave His Father's house [heaven] to go into His Father's fields [earth] in order to reap a harvest of souls [from sinners] for His Father. The Son has become His Father's "Servant!" Is this "Serving Son" of great worth and value to His Father? Of course He is!

Religion, represented here by the Pharisees and scribes, does not at all understand the heart of the Father for lost sinners, nor the mission of Jesus Christ [the Serving Son] to save them, and they vigorously object to His laboring in the very fields [sinners] that the Father has sent Him into. Jesus begins to teach concerning their error and continues to do so in all of Luke chapters 15 and 16. In these chapters we find: The lost sheep, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the rich man and Lazarus.

Every one of these lessons teaches about how a true "servant" of the Father will steward his life, and his assets, in "being about the Father's business" to "seek and to save the lost." Jesus never changes the subject through all of Luke 15-16. He culminates His teaching in Luke 17:1-10. He knows that one day He will ascend back into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. The mission to "seek and to save the lost" will be passed to His disciples at that time. He is teaching them to become "serving sons" in like manner as Himself.

Now, with all of that in mind, let's go back to our original question. Does Jesus intend for these disciples to become worthless, useless servants to the Father? Is that the kind of servant He was in Luke 15:1-2?

No! So what does He mean when He says, Say "We are unprofitable servants?" The only way to understand it is to see what sort of "Serving Son" Jesus is in Luke 15:1-2. We do not find Jesus serving His Father for "personal profit." He is not a "hireling." He is not doing what He is doing "for wages." He is the Son of His Father, totally free, yet He has chosen for love's sake alone to give His life as a Servant laboring in His Father's fields to reap a harvest of souls from sinners. He is not for hire! He is serving His Father alone, and not mammon!

We have a hard time understanding such concepts because most of us still view Christianity as a religion. Christianity is not a religion. Christianity is a family! God is our Father. We are His children. As I continued to meditate the scriptures and spend much time praying in the spirit, the Holy Spirit began showing me more about what He meant by the difference between "Sharecropper vs. Sonship" faith.

My paternal grandfather had twelve children, sons and daughters. He had a large ranch/farm of many acres in rural Oklahoma. This was a "family business" in which all of the children had work to do as they grew up. As each child grew, they were assigned increasing responsibilities in this "family business" as they matured. The sons would go into the fields to labor with grandfather. The daughters would work at home with grandmother. All of them had work to do. This was a family, not a religion.

At the end of every day, a huge meal was prepared. There were large bowls of mashed potatoes, gravy, fried chicken, steak, green beans and so forth. When the dinner bell rang, the sons and daughters came in from their labors. When they were all seated and the prayer of thanksgiving had been made, they all began to eat. Each one was to eat until he was full ... of

anything and everything that he desired from grandfather's table. I can hear one voice saying, "pass the mashed potatoes, please" while at the same time another voice was saying "please pass the green beans." The bowls of food came around to each of them and they were expected to TAKE ALL THEY WANTED! Grandfather would have thought they were mentally ill if they did not eat because, for some reason, they thought he wanted them to go hungry or do without. Absurd!

The Kingdom of God is a "family business." I often use the phrase, "God & Sons, Inc." because it helps me to remember that even though I am God's servant, I am also one of His sons. I and my brothers labor in our Father's fields to reap the harvest with eternity in mind. We use all that He has provided for us in the way of talent, ability, equipment and finances to labor in the fields that we are heir to in order to reap the harvest of eternal souls that is His desire. As sons, we do not work individually for profit. No, this is a family business. We all labor in the fields and we all eat from the same dinner table [Grace]. We are all free to eat as much as we want from the table which our Father has provided for us.

Getting back to the scenario of the family dinner table, it is important to notice that the amount of food that each son ate was not proportional to how much he individually produced in the fields that day. What I mean is this; each son had different talents and abilities. One son might have the ability to run the combine that harvested the wheat. Another son might have lesser ability and his job was to simply grease the wheels of the combine. The son who drove the combine did not get five pieces of fried chicken while the son who greased the wheels only got one.

No, as long as each of them carried out their respective assignments in the field with diligence, they all got to eat freely as much as they desired from the dinner table. Regarding God's provision for serving sons, there is to be equality. Each of them is free to eat as much as he wants. There is no shortage of their Father's grace. The table is abundantly supplied for all of them.

Their respective talents and abilities did not determine how much they could eat from the table. No, their respective talents and abilities determined the level of their stewardship in the fields. There is no doubt that the level of responsibility is greater for the son who drives the combine than the level of responsibility for the son who greases the wheels.

To whom much is given, much is required, but both of their assignments are absolutely necessary. The combine will eventually become useless unless the wheels are greased. As long as each of the sons does their jobs with diligence, there is absolutely no difference between them when it comes to their right to freely partake of all they desire from the table that has been provided for them by the Father.

Now that we have taken a look at how sons and daughters are provided for, let's take a look at another scenario ... that of a sharecropper. Suppose a man came to my grandfather and said that he had noticed there was a hundred acres of land that grandfather had not yet cleared for use.

This man had a wife and several sons, but he had no land of his own to farm. He also had no money with which to buy land with, so he makes a proposal to "sharecrop" the unused 100 acres. The agreement would be something like this, "I will do the work of clearing the land of stones, removing the tree stumps, burning off the thorns and brambles and plowing the ground. If you will provide the seed, then I will sow the ground and do all of the work to bring in a harvest. I will give you the crop when it comes in except for enough to provide for the needs of my family."

This is traditionally what is called "Sharecropping." It is usually set up on a percentage basis, with the owner of the land getting the vast majority of the crop. After all, the tenant is providing nothing but labor.

Notice that the sharecropper is doing exactly the same kind of work as the sons of my grandfather. But the difference is, THE SHARECROPPER AND HIS FAMILY DO NOT GET TO

EAT FROM THE TABLE OF GRACE. That table is reserved for "family." The sharecropper is working for profit, in a sense, and he will always have to eat the fruit of his own labor ... his own sowing and reaping from grandfather's land. He will never own the land. He is not an heir. He is, to a certain degree, simply a hired servant. When he "sows," he does so with his own "personal profit" in mind. This is precisely the attitude that Jesus did not want his disciples to have.

Because the doctrine of "sowing and reaping" has been taught so strongly to the Church, all of us have become "sharecroppers" in our thinking when it comes to Kingdom Finances. We have lost the revelation that we are sons of God who are simply being about our Father's business. We have departed from the grace of being sons and heirs, co-laboring in the Father's fields with our brothers to bring in the harvest with a single mind and a single purpose. We have forgotten that sons get to eat freely from the family dinner table which the Father provides. Jesus plainly told us how to receive from our Father's table of grace:

John 16:23-24 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, HE WILL GIVE IT YOU. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ASK, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE, that your joy may be full. [Emphasis mine]

Doesn't that sound a lot like, "Father, pass the mashed potatoes, please?" A son, in any family, would not hesitate to make such a simple request. Jesus wants us to have the same attitude as sons of our heavenly Father. What do you need? Ask, Jesus said! He did not say go "sow first" and then the Father will "pay" you in proportion to your sowing. No, a thousand times NO! We are sons, laboring in our Father's fields of our own free will. It is our Father's great delight to meet all of our needs. There are no limits to His bountiful supply.

Even more sad than the situation regarding the sharecropper would be a true son of the Father who, by choice, decided to become a sharecropper instead. The elder son in Luke 15 had done that very thing. His relationship with his father had become one based on works, not grace. He did not come in for food and fellowship with the father at mealtime. He spent his time laboring in the fields, and expected to get "rewarded" [paid] for his efforts.

He simply could not understand the concept of the grace bestowed on sons, and that he already was heir to all that his father owned. He chose to base his relationship with his father on his own works instead of on grace. He was a son who had chosen to become a sharecropper. He was left to eat from the fruit of his own sowing and reaping rather than come in to the house at supper time to dine from the table of grace with his father and brethren.

It is important to notice that those who will not base their relationship with the Father on grace instead of works always become self-righteous in their own eyes and critical of those who simply "receive the abundance of God's grace." This elder son, who based his relationship with his Father on works, simply could not understand how the Father could receive the prodigal son by grace. Self-righteousness had so darkened his understanding that he was no longer in concert with the heart of his Father at all.

It is interesting to note that this carries over not only in the areas of sin but also in the areas of giving. Since the sharecropper is making his living by his sowing and reaping, he understandably becomes proud that he is doing a good job. But a son, especially a son who has been adopted into the family free by grace, would never become proud of his own "sowing." His own efforts, his own sowing and reaping, is not what made him eligible to dine from that table. No, it was the grace of the Father when He adopted him into the family as his son.

Rom 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Dear Reader, do you still live in fear that your heavenly Father will not provide for you, His own child? That sort of fear does not come from the Father. Jesus has given you words of faith to overcome such fear if you will only believe Him:

Mat 6:24-34 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Does all of this do away with "sowing and reaping?" Absolutely not, but it does change the motive behind our sowing. When we give financially (or any other way) into the kingdom of God, is our motive to "personally profit" from it? If so, then we have the mentality of a sharecropper and not a son. Remember, the Holy Spirit said it was a valid level of faith to operate in, and most would never graduate from it. Our Father allows "sharecropping" in His kingdom, just as my grandfather allowed sharecropping on his acreage.

But our Father's best is that we begin to mature in our understanding that we are His own sons and daughters. We are heirs! When we give financially (or any other way) into the "family business" [the kingdom of God], our motive is to reap a harvest of souls for our Father. THAT is "being about our Father's business." As for our own needs being met? What is that bell I hear ringing? Oh yes, it is supper time and the Father is ringing the dinner bell to call all of His children to dine at the table of His grace.

Pardon me ... time to eat!

John 21:12a Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine...

Kingdom Steward Teachings

THE STEWARD OF KINGDOM FINANCES

by Gary Carpenter

This section is primarily for those who are "called" to transfer wealth from the world system into the Kingdom Of God to fuel the combines of revival in the last days. There is an actual call to this ministry office that is seldom taught in the body of Christ today. Some references to this office from the scriptures are found in the "Simplicity of Giving" (Romans 12:8) and the parable of the "Ten Pounds" in Luke 19:11-27. This ministry office functions as a part of the "Helps" ministry as listed in 1 Cor 12:28. Paul tells us:

Rom 10:14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

Rom 10:15a And how shall they preach, except they be sent?

Not everybody is called to be in the five fold ministry. From the preceding verses we see there are those who are "sent to preach" and there are those who "do the sending." Of course, all believers are encourage to support the work of the gospel financially, but it will require massive amounts of money to finance the mighty revivals that will soon sweep the earth in these last days. God is releasing understanding from His Word to teach those who are specifically called to transfer wealth from the world system of Mammon into the Kingdom Of God to provide the necessary funds required to preach the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

The purpose of this section is to provide teaching for those who know they have the "call" to Steward Kingdom Finances in the last days. Even if you do not know for sure you have this specific call, the principles of stewardship apply to all believers. This section will be updated as often as needed, not just monthly. I encourage you to check here often to see the latest teachings. Most of the teachings are progressive, building on the revelations in the prior lessons.

For practical reasons, I have chosen to make these teachings very user friendly. In order to make them as "printer friendly" as possible, they will be simply done in black type on a white background. Feel free to print and share this material with whomever you want.

For those of you that know you are called to be a Steward Of Kingdom Finances, I suggest you "copy and paste" these lessons to the word processor on your computer and save them as files for future reference. Who knows when the Lord may send you to some location where there is no access to the Web? By having the files stored in your computer [perhaps in a directory named STEWARD], you will always have this information available to review.

There is a term I use often in the teachings that most people are not familiar with. It is the term, "Gospel Entrepreneur." This is a person with whom the Holy Spirit co-labors through the Gifts Of The Spirit to do business in the world system to transfer wealth from Mammon into the Kingdom Of God. To see an accurate picture of such a person from the Word, see Luke 19:11-27. Gospel Entrepreneurs take a measure of money, increase it by trading [Strong's: "to earn in business."],

and bring the total back to the Lord for His use in the Kingdom Of God. The Gospel Entrepreneur is only one type of a Steward Of Kingdom Finances. There are others, which will be described in the teachings.

I welcome your questions but I am sure you understand that it is not feasible for me to personally respond to hundreds of such questions a day. That would leave no time for continued meditation of the Word and prayer. I will make your questions a matter of prayer before the Lord and no doubt they will eventually be answered in the teachings as they are posted in this section of the Web Site. This is an unfolding revelation and I am still seeking the answers to many questions myself. Your questions are very important because the answer to your question may be the key to unlocking the answers to many others. Rest assured that I will not disregard any questions that are sent to me.

Thank you and God bless you for your faithful stewardship to the King of Kings!

NEUTRALIZED BY GOOD INTENTIONS

by Gary Carpenter

The Holy Spirit continues to teach me why there are virtually no true Gospel Entrepreneurs who move great sums of money supernaturally from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God. Again, Jesus said,

John 14:10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

Jesus made it very clear that He was the vessel through whom the Father did the works by the moving of the Holy Spirit. Said another way, unless the Father "moved" by His Spirit, no supernatural "work" was accomplished. Just as this is true for the healing evangelist who operates by the Gifts of the Spirit, it is also true for the Gospel Entrepreneur. If "supernatural" wealth transfer takes place ... it is the Father doing that transfer of wealth through the human vessel.

The Holy Spirit showed me the "trap." That is, how nearly all ministries are diverted away from the supernatural participation of the Father into mere "good works" of man, what we commonly call "programs." Most ministers never realize what happened to them, much less how it happened. In order to teach me how this happens to those with the call of Gospel Entrepreneur, He first showed me how it happens to those called to the ministry of healing.

Let' say a young man in his twenties gets saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. He doesn't know it at the time, but God's hundred fold, perfect plan for this individual's life is that he mature into a full blown healing ministry to the deaf. That is, if He allows the Holy Spirit to train him perfectly all the way to the highest call of God for him, every single deaf person that he prays for will be supernaturally healed by the working of the Father by the Holy Spirit. That is God's highest and best for this young man. Again, he does not know that in the beginning of his walk with the Lord.

The young man begins to meditate the Word and spend much time in prayer and fasting. Over a period of time, he doesn't know why, but he begins to develop a real heart for deaf people. Compassion for the deaf is coming forward in him at an ever increasing rate. He doesn't realize it, but the Holy Spirit is causing the love and compassion of the Father for the deaf to be supernaturally built into his heart because ultimately the Father wants to use him as a vessel through whom the Father can work to restore healing to the deaf.

The young man continues to worship, fast and pray. This love and compassion for the deaf builds and builds in his heart. There comes an overwhelming desire to "do something" to help them. He begins searching his city to see if there are opportunities available for volunteer service where he might be able to be of some help. He finds that there are a multitude of opportunities available. Everything from teaching sign language all the way to complete schools for the deaf where he can be of service.

He volunteers his time and finds immense satisfaction in finally being able to "do something" to relieve this intense desire within him to help deaf people. He begins studying books at night to increase his ability to help them. Perhaps he enrolls in a Junior College course to increase his skills. Soon his time is virtually consumed in his efforts to help deaf people. Soon there is no time to continue those long hours of meditation, worship and prayer to allow the Holy Spirit to supernaturally "equip" him for the Father's work.

All of these human efforts greatly soothe that burning desire within the young man and he feels he has found his "niche" in life. Because of the satisfaction "his" work to help deaf people brings to his heart, he spends the rest of his life in this noble work, assuming he has found God's call for his life.

That is the trap! From the Father's perspective, when did the Father get to work? The Father has a different plan for deaf people than schools and sign language. If the Father Himself gets to do "His work," He will supernaturally restore each deaf person's hearing, even if that takes a creative miracle. Yet, in the case just described, the Father will have to watch from the sidelines, so to speak, as this young man spends perhaps fifty years serving the deaf from a human capacity, never having the opportunity to work through the man Himself to supernaturally restore their hearing.

It is not that such a scenario is completely outside the will of God. Jesus said you couldn't even give a cup of cold water (a natural work) and lose your reward. It is just that such human operations are done in the "good" or "acceptable" will of God. They are not His "perfect" will. If the Father gets to do His "perfect" will, He, Himself will "do the works" just as He did through Jesus. The deaf will not just be "helped." They will be "cured."

It seems that the first thing that the Holy Spirit develops in any person who seeks the Lord is a heart that is compatible with his "call." As the love and compassion of God is developed in the heart of each individual, the desire to "do something" to help becomes very strong. The "trap" that most people fall into is that their "good intentions" to help people diverts them from continuing to pray in order that they can become "supernaturally equipped" with the anointing for their call. They become preoccupied with "man's" works instead of becoming a vessel that the Father Himself can work through supernaturally. For all practical purposes, they were "neutralized by good intentions." It is good. It is acceptable, but it is not the Father's perfect will. The Father's perfect will is that we become vessels through whom He Himself can work, just as He did the works through Jesus Christ.

John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Then the Holy Spirit showed me that this is precisely what happens to those with the call of becoming Gospel Entrepreneurs. In the beginning, they do not understand that the Father's "perfect" will is to work "through them" to cause massive transfers of wealth from the world system into the kingdom of God. Just like the previous scenario, all they know is that the more they pray and seek the Lord, the more intense becomes the desire to "give" money into the kingdom.

As they continue to meditate the word, worship and pray, the desire to "do something" becomes intensely strong. They know they cannot "give" if they do not "have," so they begin thinking about various ways to make money to put into the kingdom. Different people come up with different ideas. Some begin to think of turning to the stock market, others to the commodities futures markets. Some think of Real Estate. But the end result for all of them is that, little by little, their attention is diverted slowly away from their times of meditation, worship and prayer toward learning "man's ways" of making money for the kingdom.

Soon, they have fallen into the same trap. No doubt many of them who have natural talent and abilities make large amounts of money through human effort and wisdom to give into the kingdom. They may spend the next fifty years doing a very good job according to man's estimation. But again, when does the Father, Himself, get to work in this scenario? I want to repeat a verse and then restate it in terms that we seldom think of, yet truly state what Jesus said:

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, THE SON CAN DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. [Emphasis mine].

Because we have not truly understood how Jesus Christ co-labored with the Father, the following statements almost sound like blasphemy to our ears, but they accurately reflect what He said concerning Himself:

1. The Son can do nothing of Himself.
2. Jesus Christ Himself cannot cast out devils.
3. Jesus Christ Himself cannot heal the sick.
4. Jesus Christ Himself cannot do miracles.
5. Jesus Christ Himself cannot walk on water.
6. Jesus Christ Himself cannot stop storms.
7. Jesus Christ Himself cannot do ANYTHING [supernatural]!

In John 14:10 Jesus plainly said it was THE FATHER IN HIM THAT DOETH THE WORKS! Now, if Jesus Christ Himself, the spotless lamb of God, says that He Himself cannot do the "works," but only the Father in Him, then what chance do the rest of us have of doing any supernatural "works" without it being the FATHER IN US DOING THEM? Human effort, human wisdom, human desire can never do the "works." Either the Father does them ... or they are simply not done. This applies just as much to wealth transfer for the Gospel Entrepreneur as it does to healings manifested in the ministry of an evangelist.

The "trap" is to try and "do something" with human wisdom and effort to "satisfy" the "heart" rather than stay in the classroom of the Holy Spirit through prayer and fasting until we become vessels "equipped" for use by the Father Himself.

All one needs to do is look around the country at our churches, even the best of them, to see that such is the case. Virtually all of us have substituted "programs" for the anointing. We have schools for the blind and the deaf, clowns to entertain children with cancer, counseling for troubled marriages, hospitals for those who cannot receive healing in our prayer lines, etc.. All of these are things that "man" can do. All of them bring some sense of satisfaction and help relieve our intense desire to "do something" to help. But when does the Father Himself get to work?

The Father opens blind eyes! He opens deaf ears! He sets the captives free from devils! He heals the sick! He mends broken hearts! THE FATHER DOETH THE WORKS! IF, and only if, He can find a vessel through whom He can work.

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

It is only as we become vessels through whom the Father can work that we can make the same declaration. Jesus could just as well have said, "If my Father does not work ... I can not work." Jesus was a vessel through whom the Father could work. With all my heart I believe it is Christ's desire that we also become such vessels. But where can a person go to become such? To man's universities? To man's programs? No, there is only one Teacher for the body of Christ. Only One has been sent to lead and guide us into all truth. Only the Holy Spirit can do the shaping, the molding, the purging, and provide the equipping for true vessels of God.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

How few there are who are willing to resist the temptation to prematurely leave the school of the Holy Spirit in order to "do something" to help in the natural realm. How few there are who are not neutralized by good intentions.

Through tongues and interpretation, the Lord was endeavoring to teach me these things last year. Only now am I truly beginning to understand the import of what He said. I think it would be beneficial to the reader for me to reprint what He said to me as follows:

Life From The Dead

Tongues & Interpretation

May 14, 1997

Life from the dead! Life from the dead is what I produce, sayeth the Lord thy God. That is what Abraham learned of Me. He considered not his own body now dead, but he staggered not in unbelief. He was strong in faith, believing that what I had promised I was well able to perform and I could produce it from the dead. His body was dead and he knew it. His body was not capable of producing life and he knew it. But he trusted in the Living God Who quickens the dead.

I produce life from the dead. I have declared your body "dead" and it is dead! Your trust, your faith, your hope must all be centered upon your God. I, the Lord your God, am He Who quickens the dead. I produce life from the dead. Life from the dead! That is what I produce in you. That is what I produce through you. Life from the dead! Your body is dead! You must look to Me and Me alone as your Source. You have thought in times past primarily of financial things and you have seen Me bring that to pass. But I am the Lord your God Who produces the living Christ from your dead body. I produce the life of Christ Himself in you, though you are dead.

Set no other course. Be diverted to no other path. Let not the pull of other things draw you away from the path that I have set for you, sayeth the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other path. There are no other steps of righteousness that will follow in the steps of the faith of your father Abraham. You must see My promise. You must say My promise. You must trust in the Living God Who quickens the dead. You must call those things which be not as though they were and set your feet on no other course.

Oh, there are assignments, my son, against you to draw you this way and draw you that way. You must set your face like flint. You march toward the Holy City that I have called you unto. You press towards the mark, the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. You set your face like flint towards the mark.

Press towards it, son. Press towards it, son. Your flesh will want to go the other way. Your flesh will want to "do" something. But it is dead! It is dead! I have declared it dead and it is dead! You must not put your trust in yourself. You must not put your trust in anything but My promise! Have faith in Me that what I have promised I am well able to perform it. There is no other path. There is no other course that will produce the life of Christ in you. Your body truly is dead! It can never produce Him! It can never produce holiness! It can never produce the promise! Never! It is dead! But I am He that quickens the dead. I am He that quickens the dead. I am He that quickens the dead.

As you trust Me and follow in the steps of the faith of your father Abraham, I will quicken your mortal body. You will see those things that you have longed to see but it is this path and no other, sayeth the Lord. Follow Me! Follow Me!

Follow Me! Follow the course that I have set for you. Be not diverted...by anything! Be not diverted!

DISTINGUISHING PROVISION FROM STEWARDSHIP

by Gary Carpenter

This lesson is written specifically with the Gospel Entrepreneur in mind, although the principles apply to every "call" in the body of Christ.

In December of 1997 I taught a series that was founded upon Luke 17:1-10 called "God's Steward Of Kingdom Finances." The pinnacle of that teaching was the revelation I have titled "Sonship vs. Sharecropper Faith." Briefly, the Holy Spirit showed me that Christianity is a "family," not a "religion," and that it operates very much like any "family business" on earth.

The Holy Spirit reminded me of my paternal grandfather's farm and how each of the sons and daughters had work to do every day as "their assignment," their "contribution" toward the common goal of "reaping a harvest." All of the children knew that the harvest belonged to grandfather. None of them had the mindset that the harvest, even a portion of it, belonged to them personally.

However, they also knew that when the dinner bell rang every night, they each got to sit and dine from grandfather's table not because they had "served him well that day," but rather because they were grandfather's children. Grandfather expected them to eat from his table until they were full. Their provision was not proportioned to them based on their "performance" that day on the farm. No, they were expected to take all they wanted from his table simply because they were his children.

Bringing this principle over into Kingdom Finances, the point we must understand is: As children of God our Father, our needs are met by His grace ... simply because of the finished work of Jesus Christ which opened the door for us to become adopted into the family of God. We can expect to be clothed, housed and fed simply because we are sons and heirs of God. This is the principle that Jesus was teaching in Matthew chapter six when He said:

Mat 6:25-26 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

One thing is for sure: Birds of the air do not contribute toward the harvest of any farm. If anything, they diminish the harvest by eating from it while the crops are maturing. Yet the Father feeds them. Are we, being our heavenly Father's own children, to expect less from Him? No! We are God's children and we can expect to dine freely from His grace alone based on nothing but the finished work of Christ who made it possible for us to become the "spirit born" children of God.

Our mindset is to be that we never have to have a care regarding our own needs being met in order that we can devote our lives fully to serving our Father by going into the fields to reap a harvest of souls for Him. Said another way, we don't have to spend our lives preoccupied with earning money to supply our needs. Rather than spending our lives seeking after money, we can serve God our Father with complete peace of mind, confident that all of our needs are met freely by His grace. Of course, this was the main theme of Jesus' teaching in Matthew Chapter Six:

Mat 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

A sharecropper's mindset is completely different. Knowing he is not a son, he would work a portion of grandfather's farm in the hope of reaping a harvest "for himself" from his labors. He

knows he is not "family" and will not respond to the dinner bell to dine at grandfather's table. All of his labors in grandfather's fields would be with the underlying motive of getting his own needs met. Even though his portion of the crop may be a fixed percentage, his mindset is, "The more I sow, the more I will have." He will forever have the mindset of "performance vs. heirship," or "works vs. grace," and he will always have to eat from the fruit of his own labors.

That is a valid way to live, but it would be tragic for true "sons and heirs" to have such a mindset themselves. It would have been ludicrous for any of grandfather's sons to think that their portion at the dinner table each night was somehow restricted, based on how many acres they "sowed" that day. Unthinkable! They were sons! They were free to eat all they wanted from grandfather's table simply because they were sons.

After returning from Houston in December of 1997, I soon noticed that in my seasons of prayer, the Holy Spirit was no longer teaching me along the lines of Kingdom Finances. The concepts He began to reveal to me were all along the same lines that Pastor Dave Roberson calls "The Born Again Trail." After awhile I said, "Lord, why are you no longer teaching me about wealth transfer? You do understand, don't you, that Hollywood still has the money and your Church does not?"

The Lord's answer to me was, *"Supernatural wealth transfer is accomplished by inheritance only. I have taken you as far as I can down the path of Kingdom Finances until you better understand who you are and how to appropriate from your inheritance."*

I was given instructions to spend the vast majority of my time in 1998 in prayer and in making sure that I thoroughly understood everything Pastor Dave taught on "The Born Again Trail." In fact, the Lord allowed me to accept only three meetings away from the Prayer Center during all of 1998, even though I had many invitations to speak elsewhere.

After hundreds of hours of prayer and hundreds of hours meditating the lessons and scriptures that Pastor Dave has taught this year, the door has now opened into the next room of revelation knowledge concerning the supernatural transfer of wealth. It took a year, to the month, for my understanding to become transformed sufficiently to even enter this room. I freely admit that I feel that I have only now crossed the threshold into it. There is much yet to explore in this room. For the past few weeks the Holy Spirit has been emphasizing these verses during my seasons of prayer:

Luke 17:7-9 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serveme, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank thatservant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

I cannot improve on the way Pastor Dave teaches this passage so I will simply quote him. *"A first class servant is the one who always puts the needs of his Master first. His life is spent on that one objective ... meeting the needs of his Master. A first class servant would never think of serving himself until after he was satisfied that he had done all he could to meet the needs of his Master each day."*

At the Prayer Center [and most likely in every Church] there are several people who obviously have the call to become Gospel Entrepreneurs. There is no need to mention them by name, but the "call" is obvious to everybody who meets them. All of them, including myself, are in various stages of development as our minds are being renewed to think according to the principles of the kingdom of God.

During this same time period while the Holy Spirit has been emphasizing "a first class servant meets the needs of his Master FIRST," He has also made sure I observed how myself and these people have functioned thus far during our training.

There is no need to mention names nor the methods of these people. It is the underlying patterns common to all of us that are important. One feels called to serve the Lord as a Gospel Entrepreneur by trading in the markets. Another by the avenue of creating and marketing new inventions. Another by starting and operating businesses. Another is in such early stages of development that he doesn't yet know what "method" the Lord intends for him to pursue ... but he knows he has the "call" just the same, and he is correct. At this point in his development and training as a Gospel Entrepreneur, his warfare has been mainly to simply "stay in prayer." Of course, that is the first level that all who truly "seek the Lord" must endure through.

All of these people are genuine and have the purest hearts of anybody I know regarding their desire to serve God ... not mammon.

As the Holy Spirit has been emphasizing the "first class servant" principle to me, He has also made me aware of the common pattern in all of the testimonies of these people, including myself, when we get together for fellowship. None of us, at this stage of development, have much to say in regard to the amounts of finances we have been able to give to meet our "Master's" need. The reason? We haven't had it to give! Certainly all of us have given as much as we could, but so far, these financial amounts have been relatively small. They have certainly not been the kind of massive transfers of wealth that all of us "see" in our spirit.

No, the common testimonies have not been about our "service," but rather about His "provision." All of us are amazed at how the Lord has miraculously provided for us even during this period of time when our thinking is so infantile as to be of virtually no service to the kingdom at all in regard to finances. The Holy Spirit then got even more specific, showing me how much more transformation of our minds is still to be accomplished.

He laid out the pattern in my own life first. When I finally obeyed the call to go full time into ministry, my heart was to serve Him fully for the rest of my life. As I would pray and receive instruction from Him, I would obey each instruction [sometimes very belatedly] one step at a time. I am speaking of such things as starting the bible studies, offering the cassette tapes for free, and so forth. But I have also known that at least a portion of my personal "call" is to transfer wealth from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God.

Those familiar with my testimony know that by obeying the Lord's instructions, I was cut off from virtually all conventional sources of income, both from the secular world and from what would be considered "normal" ministry income such as tape sales, appeal letters, and so forth. The end result was that even though I had a heart to serve Him and Him alone ... yet as a husband and father to my earthly family, my heart was consumed with thoughts of "how are we going to survive financially?"

Time precludes me from restating all of the precepts learned on that journey in this lesson, but suffice it to say, I was too consumed with how "my" needs were going to be met to be very much concerned about meeting the needs of my Master ... at least in the financial arena. Hardly the description of the "first class servant" Jesus described in Luke 17:7-9.

My desire has been for the Holy Spirit to teach me concerning the mysteries that cause the actual transfer of wealth from the world's system of mammon into the kingdom of God. On the contrary, He has thus far concentrated on teaching me the "Sonship," or "Heir" concepts of receiving freely from my Father's grace. As I am just now discovering ... the Holy Spirit had no other choice! That awareness is the key that unlocks the door into the next room of understanding.

What I said about myself could also be said of the others at the Prayer Center. For example, one man left his "day job" to go full time into trading in the markets. No man does such a thing unless he is sold out to serve God in the financial arena. But when I meet with him, to date, he has almost no testimony concerning massive transfers of wealth into the kingdom. No, like me, his testimonies concern God's faithfulness to meet his needs even though his best efforts at trading in the markets have produced almost no harvest of finances for the kingdom.

Like me, the Holy Spirit has been teaching him first, both by precept and example, the knowledge of our Father's faithfulness to provide for His children even when our "performance" is virtually zero. Notice I said "performance," not "effort." This man, for example, has spent untold hours both in prayer and in learning the markets. But his "performance" based on actual wealth transfer is virtually zero. What was it Jesus said?

Mat 6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

I could give example after example of such men who are "called" to transfer wealth from the world system of mammon into the kingdom of God, but to date, are first having to learn that they are sons whose provision is not based on their performance. I do not mean for the reader to think that all of these men have had their daily needs met in a lavish way. On the contrary, it has been more of a "wilderness" experience of having "just barely enough."

It has been very much like receiving just enough "manna" every day to keep the electricity turned on, to keep food in the house for the family, to fill up the gas tank in their automobile just one more time, and so forth. It has not been a pleasant "learning experience" for any of them.

Just like the Israelites during their forty year journey in the wilderness, we would all prefer to have quail to eat and an abundance in our finances. But what was the lesson learned by Israel after forty years of such training? To a man, all of them would have to say, "God is our Provider!" They also learned that His provision was not based on their performance. After all, they did not conquer one square inch of the Promised Land during that time period.

They first had to learn that God was their Provider and that their provision was based on His grace ... not their performance. I believe the same lesson is being learned by all of these men who are "in training" to become Gospel Entrepreneurs. Paul said:

1 Tim 6:5-8 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

Praise God, It does not have to take forty years to acquire this attitude of heart, nor to live in this state of contentment. What is required to "enter into this rest?" The revelation that you are God's own child! He is your Provider because He is your Father. His provision is not based on your performance. He will always provide for you based on the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ when He paid the price for you to become a Spirit born child of God.

You will never become a "son" who is also a "first class servant" [financially] until you "enter into THAT rest." You will always be more concerned with your own needs being met than with the needs of your Master being met. "Fear of lack" will always dictate that the money which comes your way should be used to meet your own needs first, or should be stored for possible future needs, rather than to meet the financial needs of God's Kingdom. Said another way,

YOU ARE NOT FREE TO BECOME GOD'S SERVANT UNTIL YOU ARE "FULLY PERSUADED" YOU ARE HIS SON!

Why were my grandfather's sons so free of care regarding their own personal needs that they could freely devote all of their days to the "family business?" It was because they thoroughly understood that they were his sons! They knew the dinner bell would ring on time. They knew they would all dine from grandfather's table every night. There was no reason to think otherwise. They were his sons, heirs to all that was his. It was unthinkable to them that grandfather would forbid them from his table. It was their complete confidence in their father's daily provision that "freed" them to devote ALL of their energy to laboring in the fields.

Had they harbored doubts concerning grandfather's provision for them, then they would have had to devote a portion of their daily time to getting "their own" needs met. But being free of all such care, they could now devote all of their time and attention to bringing in the harvest. This

"faith in our Father's provision" is precisely what Jesus was teaching in Matthew chapter six when he said:

Mat 6:31-34 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

The Church at large has been sadly lacking in such trusting confidence. The primary reason is because we have been steeped in religion rather than in our "sonship." We have not sufficiently understood that we are "sons first," and "servants second." In fact, it is even worse than that. For the first time I am seeing; we will never truly be free to be "first class servants" until we first understand thoroughly that we are truly "sons" and "heirs" of God.

We have been so "works" oriented that we have even taken Jesus' statement in Mat 6:33, "seek ye first the kingdom of God" to mean "work harder and harder at serving God" first, and THAT is what qualifies you to be blessed. No, No, a thousand times No! That method only makes you more and more of a sharecropper, basing your justification for being blessed on your own works. That is "sharecropper" mentality, not the mindset of "sons and heirs."

Five times in Matthew chapter six Jesus said, "Take no thought..." when it comes to the cares of this life. Why did He emphasize it so strongly? I say again, YOU ARE NOT QUALIFIED TO BECOME GOD'S SERVANT UNTIL YOU ARE FIRST "FULLY PERSUADED" THAT YOU ARE HIS SON! Until you are fully persuaded that your Father will faithfully supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus ... based on NOTHING but the fact that you are His "son and heir," you will never be truly FREE to serve Him and Him alone in the financial arena.

When the Holy Spirit began emphasizing so strongly that a "first class servant" puts the needs of his Master FIRST, my feelings were hurt, and to be truthful, I was somewhat upset. One thing I have learned through these years of turning myself over to extended seasons of praying in the spirit is that I have absolutely no control over what the Holy Spirit chooses to teach me at the time. I felt like saying, "Well, if my stewardship is the main thing I needed to know to become a first class servant to the Lord, why didn't you teach me these things FIRST?" I said earlier that the Holy Spirit had no choice but to teach me first about receiving freely from my Father's grace. Only now, after these years of Him faithfully meeting my needs in spite of my pitiful performance am I coming to the place where I can disassociate the two things in my mind. I am learning to make the distinction between PROVISION and STEWARDSHIP!

My right to dine at my Father's table is free by grace, given to me based on the perfect and completed work of Jesus Christ. Faith in that finished work is sufficient to meet all of my needs for the rest of my natural life, and for all eternity as well. I dine at my Father's table because I am His son ... Period!

When it comes to my own personal needs being met: I am a son, a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. I will always and forever be free to dine from the table of my Father's grace based on nothing but the finished work of Christ when He suffered, died and rose again to open the door for me to be adopted into the "family of God."

Stewardship, however, is another matter entirely. Now that we have settled the issue that our daily provision is by grace based on sonship alone, let's take a look at stewardship. Again, the Holy Spirit has been teaching me along these lines using the analogy of my grandfather's farm.

As sons on my grandfather's farm grew in stature, wisdom and skill, their levels of stewardship increased over time. When they were very young, say five years old, their whole responsibility was to simply ride in the combine seat next to grandpa or one of the elder brothers. As they grew a little more, they were given very simple tasks at first. Perhaps their first assignment was

to faithfully grease the wheels of the combine each day. Not technically difficult, but completely necessary if the combine was to remain in good working order.

Grandfather would watch them over a period of time to see if they were faithful in the daily stewardship of their particular assignment. If they proved themselves faithful over time, and as they grew in stature and wisdom, he would assign them tasks requiring more responsibility. This is the never changing principle for true exaltation [regarding stewardship] in the kingdom of God:

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Please keep paramount in your thinking that this is a "Stewardship" principle, not a "Grace" principle. After all, Jesus made this statement at the conclusion of the teaching we call "The Unjust STEWARD." Jesus Himself was teaching about how a man should "steward" his life in order to "serve" in the kingdom of God. The fact that Jesus was specifically teaching on how to steward money is evident in His next statement:

Luke 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

This is what God is looking for when it comes to equipping Gospel Entrepreneurs with the anointings of wisdom, knowledge and joy to fulfill their call. He is looking for stewards who will be "faithful in the handling of unrighteous mammon." Exaltation regarding your stewardship of finances IS based, 100 percent, on your performance. Unfaithfulness does not disqualify you from the dinner table of His grace. You are still His son. But unfaithfulness in the handling of money He has already entrusted to you WILL disqualify you for exaltation to new levels of financial stewardship in His kingdom.

If you prove yourself to be an "unjust steward," He will simply look for another son who WILL be faithful in the handling of kingdom finances. This is not rocket science. Jesus has brought His teaching down very low for us to be able to properly understand stewardship.

The principles revealed in the story of the "Unjust Steward" are not the subject of this lesson. We are endeavoring to expose a more subtle device of the enemy than that. If the reader is not familiar with the principles in that story, I have them written in other lessons and will be happy to send them to you if you would like to have them.

I think the best way to proceed from this point is to look at a quote from the testimony of one man who has the call to be a Gospel Entrepreneur. He states:

"The Lord laid the idea of Kingdom Finances upon me some 15 years ago. However, it was 4 years ago that He spoke to me and asked me to trust Him in a whole new area. He said He wanted someone He could use to take risks. It was a big step for me but I decided to take Him at His word."

"He then led me into commodity futures trading and some small cap stock speculation. I wish I could say that the project to this point was a raving success but on a physical level our success has been limited, I also wish I could say that I followed the Lord's instructions to the letter. Unfortunately I see now that I fell far short of following the detailed instructions I had at the time. Therefore I can't really blame God for my lack of success."

Failure to follow the precise instructions given by the Lord is a common thread that I have found in all of the testimonies I have received from such men. It is also what I have observed by watching those at the Prayer Center who have the same call. There are many reasons for failing to follow precise instructions "precisely," but I want to zero in on the one that must be emphasized first. In a word ... CARE!

All of the potential Gospel Entrepreneurs that I personally know have been neutralized up to this point. You could say it this way: The devil has [so far] been successful at "devouring" their ministry of transferring wealth into the kingdom of God. What is it that allows the devil to

successfully "devour" anyone, or at least the effectiveness of their ministry? Here is a verse that we are all familiar with, but is seldom taught in context:

1 Pet 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

No matter whether we want to admit it or not, every potential Gospel Entrepreneur I personally know would have to say, "Up to this point, the devil has successfully devoured the effectiveness of my ministry." They have done everything they know to "resist the devil steadfast in the faith," as the following verse states, but still to no avail. Why not? We are still being destroyed for the lack of knowledge. (Hosea 4:6) The key to "resisting the devil steadfast in the faith" is contained in the previous verses:

1 Pet 5:6-7 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

When we have "care," we are devourable. It is no more complicated than that. In the man's testimony he said that God told him he wanted someone He could use to take risks. This is God's usual pattern, as seen throughout the old testament.

He sends Abraham and 318 household servants to war against the allied armies of Kings. He sends Gideon and three hundred men into battle against innumerable, trained, well-armed soldiers. The key to victory is always to learn to depend on the strength of God rather than upon ourselves.

The Gospel Entrepreneur is no less at war than Abraham, Joshua, Gideon, or King David. Unless they are successful in fulfilling their call, the devil and his people will always control the bulk of the earth's wealth. The question again arises, "How has the devil been so successful at devouring these men's ministry?" From 1st Peter, we see that it is by the taking of "care" that the devil "devours" us.

Again, five times in Matthew chapter six Jesus said "take no thought" concerning "care." He was teaching HOW to serve God and not mammon. The "risks" God asks the Gospel Entrepreneur to take can look frightening indeed! Unless the Gospel Entrepreneur is totally free from care, he will never be able to "precisely obey" the detailed instructions he receives from the Lord.

WE HAVE NOT YET LEARNED THAT OUR PROVISION IS COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT OF OUR STEWARDSHIP! PROVISION IS BASED ON GRACE! STEWARDSHIP IS BASED ON PERFORMANCE! THAT KNOWLEDGE FREES A PERSON COMPLETELY FROM ALL "CARE" REGARDING THEIR PERSONAL NEEDS BEING MET!

We have been destroyed for the lack of this "knowledge." This is one of the subtle deceptions the devil has used to "devour" the Gospel Entrepreneur. When the "risk" appears too great regarding our stewardship, we see that risk as threatening our provision. At that point, we compromise God's precise instructions with our own natural reasoning ... and what we compromise to keep ... we lose!

Again and again, the ministry of the Gospel Entrepreneur is "devoured" by the enemy because we have not sufficiently separated STEWARDSHIP from PROVISION in our minds. That is about to change!

STEWARDING THE POUND

by Gary Carpenter

In the parable of the ten pounds we read:

Luke 19:16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

Notice that this first class servant referred to the original pound, the principle, as "thy" pound. The servant had not partaken of the principle entrusted to him, nor the increase gained by trading, for his own purposes.

In line with the teaching, "Distinguishing Provision From Stewardship," this servant had a clear cut distinction in his mind between his own needs being met, and his stewardship of the Lord's pound. He did not mingle the two.

Notice he did not say, "Lord, thy pound has gained ten pounds, less the portion I used to feed my family." No, he understood the difference between dining from the table of grace, and his stewardship of his Master's pound.

Notice also that this parable also illustrates the statement, "Exaltation regarding your stewardship of finances IS based, 100 percent, on your performance." The servants were exalted in proportion to the effectiveness of their stewardship. The better job they did in stewarding the Lord's money, the greater responsibilities of stewardship they were given. The servant who had gained ten pounds was given authority to govern ten cities:

Luke 19:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

The servant who had gained five pounds was given authority to govern five cities:

Luke 19:19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

It is imperative to notice that neither of these servants were "making a living" from the "gain" made by trading the original principle. They were not "eating" from this pool of finances. So how were they eating? From the master's table of grace! Exaltation to greater levels of stewardship is based on performance. But performance never prevents a child from the right to dine from his Father's dinner table.

It is interesting that we are given no example in this parable of a servant who traded the original principle and suffered the loss of it. Perhaps such a thought does not enter our Lord's mind, knowing He would send the Holy Spirit to assist these servants during His absence. We are told, however, the single action that will make Him angry concerning our stewardship ... TO DO NOTHING!

The startling thing is, it was not fear of loss that prevented the wicked servant from trading ... it was his attitude of heart. He did not understand what a "first class servant" is. Remember, from Luke 17:7-9, a first class servant is one who always puts the needs of his Master first! In the King James version, the wicked servant's response is recorded this way:

Luke 19:20-21 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

He did not say he was afraid of disappointing the Lord if he lost the principle. No, that attitude, at least to some degree, is in the heart of every servant of the Lord who is called to trade finances in a risky market. Looking at precisely what the wicked servant said, he did not trade the principle because he perceived the Master as being one who "takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow."

That is a little blind to us in the King James version. Although I am not a great fan of the Living Bible, I believe that version gives a little more light on this passage in this instance. In the Living Bible the passage reads:

Luke 19:20-21 "But the third man brought back only the money he had started with. 'I've kept it safe,' he said, 'because I was afraid (you would demand my profits), for you are a hard man to deal with, taking what isn't yours and even confiscating the crops that others plant.'

The words, "I was afraid you would demand MY profits" are most telling. This man considered that if he spent his life trading the pound, the gain should belong to him ... not the Master! He most certainly did not have the heart of a first class servant. He was interested in his "own" profits, not in gaining increase for the Master's use.

Even the wicked servant recognized that the original pound belonged to the Lord. He did not consume it upon himself. The problem was, he was not willing to spend his life in trading the pound to gain increase for his Master unless there was also "profit in it for him." He was a "servant for hire," a "hireling." This is why Jesus said:

Luke 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

When Jesus said for His disciples to say "we are unprofitable servants," He obviously did not mean that they were to think themselves to be of no value to the kingdom. The servants who gained the ten pounds and the five pounds were both "profitable" servants for the kingdom of God. That is why the Master promoted them to greater levels of responsibility.

It was the wicked servant who was only interested in his "own" profit that Jesus Himself labels as being "unprofitable" in his stewardship of Kingdom Finances. In Matthew's account of this parable, Jesus says concerning the wicked servant who did not trade the original principle:

Mat 25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Gospel Entrepreneurs, God's Stewards of Kingdom Finances, are to be "profitable" to the Kingdom of God. We are not to be as the wicked servant and consider ourselves to be "for hire." We are unprofitable in the sense of, "I trade the funds entrusted to me in order to obtain increase for my Master's use in the Kingdom of God. I do this because it is my call. I am not doing it for personal profit. I am not doing it as a hireling. I do not expect a commission for my services, neither do I need one, for all of my personal needs are already available to me on the table of my Father's grace."

We must make the distinction between being sons who dine at the family dinner table and our stewardship in the Father's fields. We dine from our Father's table because we are sons of God, by grace alone. We have no need to partake of the gain gathered by our stewardship in the fields.

STEWARDSHIP AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

by Gary Carpenter

Luke 19:12-26 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

A common fear of the potential Gospel Entrepreneur is that he will make mistakes in his "trading" and will wind up losing the Lord's pound. Yet in the Lord's teaching, He only mentions the man who gained the most, the man who gained less, and the man who gained nothing because he refused to trade the pound.

At first I could not understand why the Lord did not give us an example of how He would react if one of His servants lost the pound through mistakes in trading. After all, looking only at this parable, it seems that these servants were left on their own after the Lord departed to the far country. Surely there was the possibility of loss, knowing that these were mere mortal men who are prone to make mistakes. But the Lord never mentions the possibility of losing the original pound, neither in this account nor in Matthew's. (Mat 25:14-30)

My thinking went, "Doesn't the Lord know that we are fallible men, prone to mistakes and error? Why doesn't He mention the possibility of losing the pound?" Then I understood why the Holy Spirit chose the sequence of the revelations He has taught me this past year. First came the revelations in the series called, "The Serving Son."

To quickly summarize that series, the Serving Son left his Father's house on his mission with a pure heart and in the will of God. He quickly found that there was an enemy who would fiercely oppose him through direct attacks and all manner of deception.

The Serving Son's motives were pure, to serve the Father by accomplishing his mission, but he found he was no match for the enemy in his own strength. Wave after wave of attacks were launched against the Serving Son. Deception after deception came through false friends and false prophets. Finally, the Serving Son (though still doing his best) was bedraggled, hungry, worn out and "off course."

It was at this point that the Father sent a supernatural Helper, the Holy Spirit! This Helper could not be deceived, could not be tempted, could not be overcome in battle. The key to victory over the enemy ... every time, was for the Serving Son to fully cooperate with the Helper whom the

Father had sent. He learned to devote his energy and time completely to learning how to cooperate with, flow with, and to work with the Holy Spirit. As long as the Serving Son did everything in concert with the Helper, he was victorious over the enemy ... every time!

Victory for the Serving Son came as he became "one" with the Helper in thought, in purpose, and in method. This required that the Serving Son spend the vast majority of his time in communion with the Helper. Every time the Serving Son received the complete counsel of the Helper, and acted in perfect obedience to that counsel, victory over the enemy was swift, sure, and complete in every battle ... without fail!

Going back to Luke's account of stewarding the pound, it "appears" that these ten servants were "on their own" after their Master departed to the far country. But we know that is not the case. Our Master has not left us as orphans who must find our own way through a fallen world. No, Jesus said:

John 14:16-18 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless [Greek: orphanos = orphans]: I will come to you.

"I will come to you." How? By means of the Spirit of Truth, the Helper whom the Father has sent. The Holy Spirit brings us the very "mind of Christ" for every decision we must make. For the Gospel Entrepreneur, the problem has been, we have attempted to overcome mammon with the wisdom of man, rather than pay the price in communion with the Holy Spirit to receive the instructions that come from the mind of our Master, Jesus Christ Himself!

Gospel Entrepreneur ... YOU ARE NOT ALONE! You are to co-labor with the Helper whom the Father has sent. While I was in prayer during August of 1998, the Holy Spirit said to me:

"Instructions that are not heard cannot be acted on. Many hear not the voice of Him Who speaks from heaven for they have not learned to sit and hear My counsel. Again I say, it is I Who brings the mind of Christ to every believer. I bring His mind in a precise way for those who will sit and listen to My counsel of detailed instructions."

"Every instruction that they receive from Me ... it will not add to their burdens. It will free them from their burdens for the instructions that come from the mind of Christ are intended to loose Me and My power in the lives of every believer. His instructions do not come in such a fashion that I would stand idle while men should work. His instructions come that men can rest in the freedom which belongs to the sons of the Living God while the Spirit performs all things according to My power that is resident within Myself."

"This is the help that the Father and the Son have sent to their serving sons. NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT SAYETH THE LORD!"

Without this cooperation between ourselves and the Holy Spirit, we are most certainly fallible and the potential exists for us to "lose the Lord's pound." But for those who pay the price of communion with the Holy Spirit? For those who wait upon the Lord until they have received the full counsel of Jesus Christ from the Holy Spirit? There is no failure, no loss of the pound, for them.

1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

THE FOUNDATION OF "SONSHIP"

by Gary Carpenter

Being a male, fifty two years of age this month (January 1999), I look back over my life in astonishment as to how much of it was spent trying to "earn" my earthly father's acceptance, or you could say, approval. I wanted my earthly father to be pleased with me.

That, in itself, is not wrong. The problem arises when we begin confusing "pleasing" our fathers with "being loved" by them. For years I never could distinguish the difference.

Somehow I fell into a trap that is common to young males who think that the only way to gain their father's love is by exemplary performance on their part. The astounding thing is, that I have only discovered later in life, is that my earthly father loved me from the day I was conceived. True, any father is pleased when their sons do well. But my father loved me from the day I was conceived, before there was any performance on my part at all.

From my earthly father's point of view, I am his son. I am heir to all that is his. He has loved me as his son my whole life, even during those times when my "performance" fell far short of what he desired (sometimes it still does).

Amazingly, it was only after I began understanding the heart of a father, both by raising children of my own, and by learning of the love of our heavenly Father as demonstrated at the cross of Jesus Christ, that I was able to "rest" in the love of my own earthly father. As I began to identify with my earthly father based more on our "relationship" than on my "performance," the "fellowship" between us has become much more rich, full, and enjoyable.

Fathers desire "sons," not servants, nor employees. For years I attempted to approach my earthly father with a mindset more like a servant than a son. In a way, I was approaching him by my "works," rather than by my "relationship" as being his son. No wonder our fellowship was so strained during those lost decades.

The ability to "rest" in my "sonship" is what has improved my "fellowship" with my earthly father. I am finding the same to be true with my heavenly Father. I am also finding that the "relationship" of "sonship" is the foundation which all true "service" in the kingdom of God rests upon. Without that revelation, man winds up spending his life in "programs," the "works of man," rather than in "demonstration of the Spirit" and in the true "power of God."

How important is it for us, once and for all, to come to the place where we are totally secure in our "sonship" in relation to our heavenly Father? Notice this: "Sonship" is the very foundation that Satan first attacked when he tempted Jesus, THE Son, in the wilderness.

Mat 4:3a And when the tempter came to him, he said, IF THOU BE THE SON OF GOD ...

Mat 4:6a And saith unto him, IF THOU BE THE SON OF GOD ...

The devil was tempting Jesus to get into "performance" to prove His "Sonship." He was attacking the very foundation that all future ministry was to be built upon ... SONSHIP!

It is not by "proving" our sonship that true service for the kingdom comes forth. It is by "resting" in our sonship that the foundation becomes secure for us to "serve in our Father's fields."

Two of Satan's three attacks in the wilderness were aimed directly at destroying the foundation of SONSHIP! When Jesus could not be swayed from the security of His own Sonship, then Satan was left with no other alternative but to try and "buy him off," to bribe him with the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things. Praise God, Jesus was the SON who, by His own choice, was also His Father's SLAVE.

He is the embodiment of the "bond slave" that we see in the old testament. Jesus was totally free, and even the heir, yet for love's sake alone, He chose to completely give His life in service to His heavenly Father. THIS is the same character that the Holy Spirit is endeavoring to bring

forth in all of us who have been born again, having received a new spirit from the Second Man, the Last Adam, Jesus Christ.

We are the Father's "sons." We must rest in that truth, just as the bible declares:

Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

ACCEPTED (Strong's) 5487. charitoo, khar-ee-to'-o; from G5485; to grace, i.e. indue with special honor:--make accepted, be highly favoured.

How few Christians see themselves that way, made that way by grace alone, as Eph 1:6 declares ... "the glory of his grace." As our Father's sons, we have been "graced," indued with special honor, made accepted, and are (already) highly favored.

This mindset is foundational for all true "service" in the kingdom of God. It is from this firm foundation that all of us go forth into our Father's fields to do our part to reap a harvest of souls for Him, no matter our particular assignment (call) in that field.

For the Gospel Entrepreneur, this security of "sonship" is absolutely required to ever be involved in the supernatural transfer of wealth from the world system of mammon into the kingdom of God. Sons dine at their Father's table ... simply because they are sons. Their own provision is based on their "sonship," not their performance. This knowledge frees them from all fear as they go into their particular field, the risky and dangerous world system of mammon, to reap a harvest of finances the Father can use to finance revivals around the world.

If the Gospel Entrepreneur is not first "fully persuaded" that he is "accepted" in the beloved as a son, and that all of his own personal provision is based on that foundation by grace alone, then he will forever confuse his "performance" in the field with his right to partake from his "inheritance" by grace.

This concept is simple to understand as long as we are diligent to view Christianity as a "family" and not as a "religion." You fathers out there, does your son first present you with a list of all his accomplishments of the day, his "good works," and then wait for your approval before he sits down to dine from the family supper table each night? "Absurd," you would say. "My son eats from my table BECAUSE HE IS MY SON!" Amen!

Jesus knew, rested in, was totally secure in the knowledge that He was God's Son. Knowing that, He had no need to "command stones to be made into bread" to get His own needs met. He refused to substitute "performance" for "Sonship."

When the Father sends the Gospel Entrepreneur into the fields, the world system of mammon, to reap a harvest of finances for the kingdom, it is not for them to get their own needs met! That is their "service," not their "provision."

If we allow the devil's deception to base our "provision" on our "performance" rather than on our "sonship," then we will forever be approaching our Father on the basis of our "works" instead of on His "grace" that made us sons in the first place.

Rom 4:1-5 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Like Abraham, we are to simply "believe God" when it comes to our "sonship." We are to believe that God has made us His own sons through faith in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ when He made it possible for us to be adopted into the "family" of God. We are sons, by grace alone.

Being sons, we are heirs, free to always dine from our Father's table of grace. That knowledge frees us completely from all "fear of lack." That knowledge frees us to become absolutely fearless when it comes to our warfare in the financial trenches of the world system of mammon.

Nothing that happens there will affect our right to dine from the Father's dinner table every evening ... IF ... we remain secure in the knowledge of our sonship. The devil will attempt to confuse the two, but we are not to waver in "believing God," just like Abraham of old.

Jesus, the firstborn, taught us plainly how to always dine from the table of our Father's grace when He said:

John 16:23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

Sadly, most of us have spent our lives trying to "turn stones into bread" ... our own bread! Not understanding that we are sons from whom the Father will withhold no good thing, "we have not, because we ask not," when it comes to our own provision.

Getting your own needs met is as simple as any earthly son asking his father to "Pass the mashed potatoes, please" at the family dinner table.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Mat 6:30-31 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Being completely secure in our provision as God's own sons, we are now free to be our Father's bond slaves, for love's sake alone, to become the "first class servant" Jesus described in Luke 17:1-10. We can give our full attention to always "making sure our Master's needs are met FIRST!"

DOES HE THANK THAT SERVANT?

by Gary Carpenter

Luke 17:9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

In Luke 17:9 Jesus plainly says that a man would not "thank" his servant because he had done the things that were commanded him. However, just two chapters later when Jesus tells the parable of the man who entrusted the ten pounds to the ten servants, He reveals the Master's attitude toward a faithful servant:

Luke 19:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

Even though the Master did not actually use the words "thank you," he was most certainly commending this good servant, and gave him a promotion in his stewardship. It is splitting hairs to say, "Well, the Master did not actually 'thank' the servant though."

We are wanting to understand the heart of the Master toward his faithful servants and what Jesus desires in the hearts of "first class servants." To say "thanks" or to "commend" makes very little difference, so why did Jesus make a point of it in Luke 17? That is the question. The conclusion that Jesus came to in Luke 17 was:

Luke 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

As we have shown before, the word "unprofitable" does not mean "of no value, or worth, or benefit" to the kingdom of God. After all, Jesus is trying to make them disciples like unto himself, the "Son who serves" by reaping a harvest of souls for the Father. Jesus, THE "Serving Son," was most certainly profitable to the kingdom of God as He served the Father.

A second proof is Matthew's account of the man who was unwilling to trade his talent. Jesus called him unprofitable in the sense of not being of value, worth, nor benefit to the kingdom.

Mat 25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Most certainly Jesus did not intend for His disciples to "make confession" that they would be like that wicked servant. So what did Jesus mean by "say we are unprofitable servants" in Luke 17?

He meant, say "We do not serve for personal profit. We are not hirelings. We are bond slaves by our own free choice. We serve for love's sake alone, not for personal profit."

The parable of the ten talents gives us a second witness that this is the attitude the Master wants His servants to have. Notice that he commended the faithful servants who had traded their pound and gathered increase. Notice also that He increased the scope of their stewardship to now also include authority over cities instead of merely over money. But notice also that HE DID NOT "PAY" THEM FOR THEIR SERVICE!

THAT is the attitude of heart that Jesus is trying to reveal to His disciples in Luke 17 when He says the Master does not "thank" his servant for doing what is commanded him. As servants, we are not to expect our Master to say something like, "You obeyed Me? You served Me today? How unexpected! I am surprised at your unanticipated generosity that you would obey your Master's commands. Please, accept this payment as My 'thanks' for your most gracious behavior."

Bond slaves do not expect, nor desire, payment for their service to the Master. They chose to be His slave of their own free will, for love's sake alone. They do not have the attitude of hirelings, nor do they expect "payment" for their labors to serve Him whom they love. Bond slaves who

are "first class servants" only desire that the needs of their Master be met FIRST. When that is accomplished, their heart is already full. They require no payment. They require no personal "profit" for their labor of love for Him.

Again, the best analogy to help me understand this is the way my grandfather's farm operated. When his sons came in from the fields after serving all day, grandfather was not "surprised" that they had done the things that he assigned for them to do, neither was his provision for them at the dinner table prorated to each son based on his performance in the field. He did not "thank them" as if their service was something unexpected. Neither did they expect him to "pay them" as though they were employees.

They did what "serving sons" do ... they served! Once the day's labors had been accomplished and that day's increase had been gathered into grandfather's barns, THEN they came to dine at the family dinner table because they were sons, not because of their service!

Again, grandfather did not line them up and "pay" them separately each day as though they were employees. These were sons, who served. Their service in the field had nothing to do with their provision at the family dinner table.

GUARANTEED FAILURE IN STEWARDSHIP

by Gary Carpenter

The "Sowing and Reaping" message, as it has been taught to this hour, virtually guarantees failure in producing Kingdom Financial Stewards with an anointing to transfer massive wealth from the world system of mammon into the Kingdom Of God. Why? Because it is designed to produce unfaithful stewards. It is designed to produce "hirelings," not first class servants like Jesus described in Luke 17:1-10.

We have been taught that God meets our needs in proportion to our sowing of finances into the work of the gospel. "Sow a seed to meet your need" is just one of the many phrases we are bombarded with via Christian television, tapes and books. The resulting mindset in believers is that the way that God meets their personal needs is by sending them a "harvest" from their financial sowing into the kingdom. THAT IS THE VERY MINDSET JESUS WAS TEACHING AGAINST WHEN HE SAID "DOETH HE THANK THAT SERVANT? I TROW NOT." [See the lesson – "Does He Thank That Servant?"]

We have been taught to have the mindset that we are "farmers" in the kingdom of God. The more we sow, the more we personally reap. WE ARE NOT FARMER'S IN GOD'S KINGDOM ... WE ARE SONS, SERVING IN OUR FATHER'S FIELDS TO REAP A HARVEST FOR HIM! Our Father is desiring sons who will be faithful stewards of finances in His kingdom. If He can find such faithful sons, he will promote them to ever increasing levels of financial stewardship, just as we see in the parable of the ten pounds. (Luke 19:11-27)

But if we have the mindset [stronghold] that the "gain" on the pound is "our harvest" rather than the "Lord's gain," and consume the increase "on ourselves" rather than steward that increase for the kingdom, we have already proven ourselves to be unfaithful stewards. Retaining that mindset guarantees that we will NOT be promoted to ever higher levels of financial stewardship.

Again, the good steward in that parable presented both the original pound AND THE INCREASE to His Master at the reckoning. THE GOOD STEWARD HAD NOT CONSUMED THE POUND, NOR THE INCREASE ... UPON HIMSELF! He did not consider the "gain" to be his own personal "harvest," as we have been taught. No, he considered the original pound and the gain to belong to the Lord. He did not partake of ANY of it for his own personal use.

What would my grandfather have thought had he learned that one of his sons had secretly built a grain silo for himself and that every day this son was depositing the bulk of the grain harvested on grandfather's farm into his own personal silo and bringing only a pittance of the harvested grain into grandfather's silo? It would not take long for grandfather to remove that son from his labors in the harvest fields altogether. He most certainly would not promote that son to greater levels of stewardship regarding the harvest.

This is a primary reason why we have had no Kingdom Financial Stewards who have been steadily promoted to greater and greater levels of authority in the realm of stewarding money for the Father. The "Sowing and Reaping" message guarantees that no such stewards shall ever arise. The Sowing & Reaping Message teaches us that the "harvest" belongs to the sower, not to the Father. ONLY SHARECROPPERS HAVE THAT MENTALITY, NOT SONS AND HEIRS WHO LABOR IN THEIR FATHER'S FIELDS.

The principle for exaltation in stewardship is:

1 Cor 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Another analogy that illustrates the principle is that of an Ambassador. Suppose a wealthy and benevolent nation decides to help the people of a third world, impoverished nation. The wealthy nation sends an Ambassador to oversee the operation. No doubt they wealthy nation would

provide a house and a salary for the Ambassador to use personally while he lived in the third world country.

The function of the Ambassador is to be a faithful steward to make sure that the money sent from the wealthy nation is used for the purpose of helping the impoverished people. As the wealthy nation sends finances into the Ambassador's account, he is to use it to finance projects such as digging water wells, purchasing grain for the people to plant for crops, building roads on which their crops can be brought to market, constructing schools to educate them ... and a thousand other such projects.

But suppose someone came along and taught this Ambassador the "Sowing and Reaping" message, as we have been taught it today. They teach the Ambassador, "Every time you give to this poor people, your wealthy nation will send you more finances. What the wealthy nation sends is 'your' harvest, personally. As long as you continue to just sow a little more of 'your' harvest to the poor people, your wealthy nation will keep sending you more."

If the Ambassador believes that, he would operate something like this: He "sows" the first hundred dollars by spending it on worthy projects for the poor people. His wealthy nation sends him and additional ten thousand dollars. Believing this to be his own personal harvest, he spends nine thousand dollars of it to lavishly decorate his residence [which had been provided by the wealthy nation] and only spends one thousand dollars on the poor people. After all, a thousand dollars is "more" sowing than he did the last time.

His nation next sends him one hundred thousand dollars, [thinking the Ambassador is being a faithful steward to spend the money for the original purpose]. Again, thinking this to be his own personal harvest, the Ambassador keeps ninety thousand dollars for his own personal use, but does sow "more" to the poor people by spending ten thousand dollars on them this time instead of the previous one thousand dollars. Again, he is justified in his own mind because sowing ten thousand dollars is much "more" than he sowed the last time.

Can you imagine what will be the reaction of the wealthy nation when it comes time to do an accounting of this Ambassador's books? At this point, the wealthy nation has entrusted \$110,100.00 to his stewardship. Of that amount, he has kept \$99,000.00 for himself and only spent \$11,100.00 on the projects for which the finances were intended.

Not only would he immediately be removed from his "stewardship," but most likely he would be imprisoned for the rest of his life. The "Sowing and Reaping" message destroyed the Ambassador's concept of "stewardship." It guaranteed his failure as a faithful steward.

The "Sowing and Reaping" message teaches us to be just such Ambassadors. No wonder there have been virtually none whom the Father could promote to greater and greater levels of authority in Stewarding Kingdom Finances.

Just like a serving son on my grandfather's farm, the Ambassador needed to make a clear distinction between his own personal provision and his stewardship. If he desired more provision, then he should have petitioned his wealthy nation for an increase in salary. His personal provision must never be drawn from the finances over which he has been made "steward." These are two completely separate and different things. To mingle the two is to be disqualified as a faithful steward.

The increase gained from sowing is to be an increase in our stewardship, not our provision.

If we desire an increase in our provision, we are to simply ask. "Ye have not because ye ask not." (James 4:2b)

THE SERVANT'S MEAT

by Gary Carpenter

Jesus described the heart of a first class servant when He said:

Luke 17:7-9 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

A first class servant always puts the needs of his Master FIRST! Jesus, Himself, is the pattern for us. He is the freeborn Son of God who has chosen, for love's sake alone, to be His Father's Servant. We see this "first class servant" attitude of heart in the story we call the "Woman at the Well."

Jesus' disciples had gone into the city to buy food. While they were gone Jesus was serving the Father by "seeking to save" the Samaritan woman at the well. He spoke with her until she was convinced He was the Messiah. She ran back into her village and told the people:

John 4:29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

The people listened to her and went out to meet with Jesus in order to listen and decide for themselves.

John 4:30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

Now the scene is set. Jesus, the Serving Son, is at the well and a multitude of people from the city have come out to listen to him. This is why Jesus came to earth, "to seek and to save" the lost. His mission is to reap a harvest of souls for the Father.

It is upon this scene that the disciples return with the food they had gone to purchase. They see all of these people at the well, waiting to hear the "words of life" from Jesus Christ. But notice what is most important in the minds of the disciples:

John 4:31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

Using the analogy we have been studying, the food brought by the disciples represents the "dinner table." The multitude of people represents the "harvest field." Jesus now has a choice to make. The dinner table is prepared. He can now choose to sit and get His own needs met first, or, He can choose to continue laboring to harvest more souls for His Master ... the Father.

Jesus, being the Son who is also the first class Servant, chooses to put the needs of His Master [Father] FIRST! He tells His disciples:

John 4:32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

They correctly perceived that Jesus was saying, "I already have what I need to satisfy My hunger." They, not having the same servant's heart in themselves at this point, thought that He must have meant that somebody else had already given him natural food:

John 4:33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

Now we have arrived at the critical point for all who desire to become "first class servants" to their Master. Yes, food satisfies "hunger." But what is the driving force, the motivating "hunger" of a first class servant? His greatest hunger HAS TO BE, "I must meet the needs of my Master ... FIRST!"

John 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Said another way, "My life is not about getting My needs met. My life is about meeting the needs of My Master [Father]. My service for Him IS MY MEAT! My GREATEST 'hunger' is satisfied when His needs are met!"

For teaching purposes, picture in your mind the scene described for us here. Jesus is at the well. There is a crowd of "hungry" people who have come out to hear the "words of life." These souls represent the very purpose for which the Father sent Jesus into the earth. At the same time, the disciples are standing there with the food they purchased. They are, basically, ringing the dinner bell saying, "Jesus, come in from the harvest field. It is time to eat!"

In my mind's eye I can see Jesus directing the disciple's attention toward the crowd of people assembled there and in this setting He says to the disciples:

John 4:35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

I can see Jesus waving his hand toward the assembled group of people, saying to His disciples, "Can't you see this harvest field? This crop is ready to be harvested NOW for the Father. This is no time to sit down at the dinner table. Look at the people. The Father sent Me to harvest as many of these souls as possible. A first class servant never sits down to get his own needs met while the harvest is ready to be reaped for His Master [Father]. Given the choice, a first class servant always meets the needs of His Master FIRST! The servant can sit down later at the dinner table to get his own needs met."

THE DINNER TABLE IS ALWAYS SECONDARY TO THE HARVEST FIELD!

This next statement puzzled me for awhile because it seemed to violate something that the Holy Spirit had already taught me concerning the fact that father's do not "pay" their sons [like employees] for their labors in the fields. No, father's provide for their sons at the dinner table. The sons do not receive "wages," like employees, for their daily labors. Yet Jesus said:

John 4:36a And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal.

At first glance, that certainly seems to contradict the previous teaching, but Jesus explains what He means in the second half of the verse:

John 4:36b ... that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

"He that soweth" is the Father. The Father has "sown" His Son, Jesus Christ, into the earth in order to "seek and to save" the lost. Jesus is "He that reapeth." He has left His Father's house [heaven] to go into the field [earth] to be about His Father's business [saving the lost].

Jesus is drawing the analogy of the Ambassador who has been sent from a wealthy nation to benefit the impoverished people of a poor nation. The wealthy nation "meets the needs" of their Ambassador by providing him with a house and a salary so he does not have to devote his time to acquiring such things. Rather, the Ambassador can give his full attention to the mission for which he was sent ... in this case, reaping a harvest of souls for the Father.

Jesus was saying, "Look, I am not concerned about what I will physically eat. I 'take no thought' for what I will eat, what I will drink, what I shall wear. My Master [Father] knows that I have need of all those things. He supplies all of my needs and there is an abundant supply. I don't have to stop and physically eat now, just because you have brought the food at this time."

"Even if I never eat this particular meal, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE MORE FOOD SUPPLIED FOR ME! I don't have to worry about such things. I will eat AFTER the needs of My Master [Father] are met. As a first class servant, I am not so concerned about the "meal" that is presently set before me, but rather the "harvest" that is presently set before me. My Master [Father] will ALWAYS supply My own needs. There will always be an abundant supply for Me, but opportunities to reap the harvest must not be postponed."

At this point, I must add another word to describe a first class servant, as depicted by our "Pattern," Jesus Christ. We are not only seeing the heart of a "first class servant." We are seeing the heart of a "trusting," first class servant.

Jesus "knows" His Master, the Father. He knows that the Father both loves Him, and understands that Jesus has physical needs. Jesus need not "stop harvesting" in order to eat this particular meal because He "knows" His Master [Father] will NEVER leave His physical needs unmet. If Jesus does not eat this particular meal, He is resting in the knowledge that there will be plenty of food to eat later, AFTER the harvest has been reaped. There is no need to fear lack ... of any kind!

Both the Sower [the Father] and the Reaper [the Son] rejoice that the fruit of eternal life is being gathered into the Father's granary.

AS TRUSTING FIRST CLASS SERVANTS, OUR SERVICE IS OUR MEAT!

WE NEED NEVER FEAR LACK!

THEREFORE, WE NEVER HAVE TO PUT MEETING OUR OWN NEEDS FIRST!

WE ARE FREE TO DEVOTE OUR LIVES TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR MASTER ... FIRST!

QUALIFYING FOR STEWARDSHIP

by Gary Carpenter

Mat 20:1-16 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

Because we have not understood the distinction between Provision and Stewardship, we have not correctly interpreted this parable. The key to understanding it is to remember its context. The event just prior to Jesus teaching this parable was the "Rich Young Ruler" who could not bring Himself to follow the "qualifying instructions" he received from the Lord in order to "follow Jesus."

By this parable in Matthew 20, Jesus is showing us what is in the heart of most people (including the Rich Young Ruler), that disqualifies them from becoming effective Stewards of Finances in the Kingdom of God.

What did Jesus have in mind as being the "highest and best" for the Rich Young Ruler? Jesus desired for the Rich Young Ruler to become a permanent disciple, fit for service [Stewardship] in the kingdom of God. The invitation was to "... come and follow Me." Jesus gave him a "qualifying instruction" to expose the true motive of his heart. That underlying motive disqualified the Rich Young Ruler and it will disqualify all who desire to become Stewards for the Master, especially regarding Kingdom Finances.

The parable in Matthew 20 further describes for us the "qualifying process." It will help to understand this parable if you keep in mind that the Householder is also desiring permanent disciples whom he can trust with Stewardship [in light of the context regarding the Rich Young Ruler].

Desiring permanent, full time Stewards, the Householder first hires these men for a single day's service to watch their performance. Apparently, all of them did what they were told to do, from the ones who worked all day all the way down to the ones who only worked one hour. The Householder made no complaint as to the quality nor the quantity of their work. All of these men were qualified in the sense of their ability and their desire to complete the Householder's work.

Therefore, it was neither their abilities nor their diligence that determined their qualification to become permanent stewards of the Householder. No, the Householder was looking for something else ... the motivation of their hearts in serving Him. The qualifying question that must be answered is this: Why were they serving Him?

When it came time that evening for the servants to be paid their wages, we find out what the motivating force was in the hearts of the servants all along. We find out why they were serving the Householder in the first place. When those who had labored all day saw that those who only labored one hour were paid the same, they murmured against the Householder:

Mat 20:11-12 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

THEY WERE WORKING FOR THE WAGES. THEY WERE "SERVANTS FOR PERSONAL PROFIT." THEY WERE HIRELINGS, NOT BOND SLAVES WHO WERE SERVING FOR "LOVE'S SAKE" ALONE. "PERSONAL PROFIT" WAS THE MOTIVATING, DRIVING FORCE FOR THEIR SERVICE TO THE HOUSEHOLDER.

They were disqualified from becoming "full time Stewards" in the kingdom of God for the same reason that disqualified the man who would not trade the "pound" that had been entrusted to him by the Master (Luke 19:20-21). He would not spend his life "stewarding the pound" because He feared that the Master would come and "take up" the profits which the man considered to be his own. If there is no "personal profit" in it for him, he will not serve! [See the lesson - "Stewarding The Pound"].

We find the same disqualifying factor in the heart of these servants in Matthew 20. They do not have the heart of "bond slaves," they have the heart of "employees."

Jesus is looking for those He can promote to great Stewardship of Kingdom Finances in these last days. Later on in this same chapter, Jesus gives us the required progression that qualifies any person for promotion in the Kingdom of God when He says:

Mat 20:25-27 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.

To be promoted to the highest level of Stewardship in the Kingdom of God (to be chief), a man must be a "servant." These two words are very important. In the Greek language they are:

CHIEF = "FIRST" 4413. protos, pro'-tos; contr. superl. of G4253; foremost (in time, place, order or importance):--before, beginning, best, chief (-est), first (of all), former.

SERVANT = "SLAVE" 1401. doulos, doo'-los; from G1210; a slave (lit. or fig., invol. or vol.; frequently therefore in a qualified sense of subjection or subvency):--bond (-man), servant.

It is the "bond slave," the one who does not serve for wages, the one who does not serve with the motive of "personal profit," the one who serves "for love's sake alone" that Jesus promotes to the highest levels of STEWARDSHIP in His Father's kingdom! This statement in verse Mat 20:27 agrees completely with Jesus' concluding statement at the end of the parable of the Householder and the servants

Mat 20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

The word "first" is the same Greek word translated "chief" in Mat 20:27. The word "last," from Strong's dictionary is:

LAST = LOWEST 2078. eschatos, es'-khat-os; a superl. prob. from G2192 (in the sense of contiguity); farthest, final (of place or time):--ends of, last, latter end, lowest, uttermost.

The "lowest" position in any society is that of a SLAVE! A slave does not serve for wages. A slave is "owned" by His Master. In particular, a "bond slave" is owned by His Master by the

slave's own choice ... for love's sake alone. So what is the "wage," the "reward" for a bond slave?

HIS SERVICE IS HIS REWARD!

This is the "first class servant" [Greek = Doulos = Slave] that Jesus spoke of in Luke 17:7-10. The bond slave who is not serving for personal profit, but rather only because he loves his Master. For the bond slave, his "meat" is to do the will of his Master ... Period! Personal profit for the first class servant does not even enter into the equation.

Now notice how precisely all of this agrees with Jesus' answer to Peter's question after he saw the incident regarding the Rich Young Ruler. Peter asked:

Mat 19:27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

Notice especially the first part of Jesus' answer to the question:

Mat 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

What is to be the reward of these "first class servants" who have "left all to follow Jesus?"

THEY ARE REWARDED WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE EVEN MORE!

FAITHFUL STEWARDS ARE PROMOTED TO GREATER LEVELS OF SERVICE!

By proving themselves to be faithful stewards for Jesus in this life, they will be promoted to even higher levels of stewardship in the next life. They will then be "stewarding" whole "tribes" of people for Him. This is the eternal principle for promotion in Stewardship:

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Getting back to the original parable of the Householder and the servants, a person might jump to the conclusion that those who did not murmur were now qualified to be promoted in their stewardship. No, such is not the case. Those who worked only one hour, yet received the same penny as those who bore the heat of the day, felt they were "well paid" by comparison.

The only way to find out what is in their heart is to put them in the position of the first. Perhaps the following day the Householder would repeat this whole scenario, but this time, hire "first" those who had only worked one hour the previous day. If they also complained at the end of the day when they saw those who worked one hour being "paid" the same as themselves who labored more ... THEN the Householder would know they had the hearts of hirelings, not bond slaves. They too would be disqualified for promotion to higher levels of Stewardship.

Relating all of this to the Rich Young Ruler, it is not that Jesus was angry with this man. In fact, in Mark's account of this incident we are told that Jesus, "beholding him loved him." Jesus was exposing the answer to the question, "Why have you observed all of these things from your youth?"

Why did the Jews attempt to keep the Law in the first place? Was it because they loved God so much? No! In fact, the Law was given because they would not obey God for love's sake alone. Paul tells us:

Gal 3:19a Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions ...

What transgressions? When the Lord delivered Israel out of Egypt, ten times they provoked Him in the wilderness. Ten times they proved to the Lord that they would not obey Him for love's sake alone. Knowing they would be destroyed by their enemies unless they learned to obey Him, God gave them the Law. The Law had blessing and cursing, reward and punishment. If they obeyed, they were blessed. If they disobeyed, they suffered the curse.

THE UNSAVED JEW OBEYED THE LAW BECAUSE HE LOVED "HIMSELF," NOT BECAUSE HE LOVED GOD!

For the sake of this teaching, and to understand the "motive" problem of the Rich Young Ruler, I will say it this way: The unsaved Jew, including the Rich Young Ruler, kept "all these things from their youth" because it was "personally profitable" for them to do so.

Before the possibility of the new birth at the cross, this was perfectly acceptable to God. That's why He gave them the Law in the first place, knowing that they loved their own "selves" more than God. It was the best way God could deal with people who had the nature of death in their spirit.

Jesus is ushering in a new kingdom, based on the new birth. He is teaching and preaching the "Kingdom of God," not the old covenant. In this kingdom, the motivations of the heart supersede all acts of obedience done from a heart motivated by "personal benefit."

Notice that prior to the new birth, the question still loomed in the heart of Jesus' disciples, "What shall WE have, therefore?" Without being yet born again and receiving the nature of Christ, this attitude of "personal profit" was still within them. Yet, when Jesus had called the twelve, all of them were willing to "forsake all to follow Him."

The Rich Young Ruler was not! If following Jesus meant forsaking everything he had already personally gained through obedience to the Law, then he chose not to follow Jesus! It is the same attitude of heart that we see in the servants who murmured against the Householder and the wicked servant who refused to spend his life stewarding the pound: "I AM SERVING BECAUSE OF WHAT I WILL GAIN IN PERSONAL PROFIT! IF THERE IS NO PERSONAL PROFIT IN IT FOR ME ... I WILL NOT SERVE YOU!"

THAT attitude of heart must be put to death before any man will ever be qualified for promotion to great Stewardship in the Kingdom of God.

This lesson would not be complete without discussing the "penny." What does the penny represent in the context of the Steward Of Kingdom Finances? First of all, from Vines Dictionary Of New Testament Words, I find that the penny is a relatively small amount, only sufficient to meet the needs of a single day. I cannot help but be reminded of these words from the Lord's prayer:

Mat 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.

The whole message Jesus delivered in Matthew Six concerning serving God and not Mammon teaches us to come to the place of trusting God to provide our daily needs (like the birds and lilies) in order that we can devote our entire lives to accomplishing our call in the body of Christ.

Again, I see the analogy of the Ambassador sent from a wealthy nation to steward funds in order to benefit the impoverished people of a poor nation. The wealthy nation would provide both a house and a salary to meet the daily needs of the Ambassador. This would be his "penny." His "penny" is not affected by his punching a daily time clock, so to speak. No, some days may require longer hours than others, but he can depend on his "penny," the fact that his daily needs will be met.

It is the same in the analogy of my grandfather's farm. The serving sons could devote all of their time to harvesting in the fields because they trusted in their "penny," the fact that their own needs would be met at the dinner table each evening. If it rained extremely hard on any given day to the point they couldn't even work at all in the fields ... they still received their "penny." They still ate to the full at the dinner table that night. They trusted that their "daily" needs would be met.

I will share with the reader a teaching vision that the Holy Spirit gave me in December of 1997 when I was first learning of the "grandfather's farm" analogy. I had been meditating on the parable of the Householder and the servants, wondering what the "penny" represented. In my spirit, I "saw" each servant holding his penny in his hand. As I watched, the penny changed into an admission ticket, much like the ticket you receive to enter a movie theater. On the ticket was written these words, "Admit one to the family dinner table tonight." Amen!

In summary, all of this only reinforces the necessity of making a clear distinction between our PROVISION and our STEWARDSHIP. Every man received a penny ... his daily bread. His provision was not based on his Stewardship. His provision was not based on His performance. No amount of performance, great or small, changed the penny he received. OUR PROVISION IS NOT BASED ON OUR PERFORMANCE!

However, exaltation as a Steward in the Kingdom of God is based, 100%, on our performance. The motivation for a Steward Of Kingdom Finances must never be for the purpose of increasing our own "personal profit," our own "provision." We must NEVER confuse the two issues: PROVISION VS. STEWARDSHIP! They are mutually exclusive!

To become "qualified" for promotion to greater levels of Kingdom Financial Stewardship, the number one requirement is a heart that serves "for love's sake alone," and not for personal profit. Jesus does not "hire" Kingdom Financial Stewards. He "owns" them!

THE WEALTH OF THE SINNER

by Gary Carpenter

Prov 13:22b ... the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

Many who are called to steward wealth for the Kingdom of God in these last days are very familiar with this verse. The normal rendering is that there will be massive transfers of wealth from the world system of Mammon into the Kingdom of God through various means. That is correct.

However, there is another meaning to this verse as well. There will also be a transfer of wealth from those who are "called" to be stewards of wealth, but refuse to do so. Notice what happened to the wealth [the pound] that was entrusted to the third servant in the following passage:

Luke 19:20-26 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Remember, from the time of John the Baptist Jesus has been teaching concerning the Kingdom of God. This man was a "servant" of the Lord, but he was a "wicked servant." He refused to trade the Lord's pound unless there was personal profit in it for him.

What happened to the money that had been entrusted to him? It was taken from him and given to the man who had been the most successful in his stewardship of the Lord's money. There is coming a transfer of wealth from "believers" who refuse to function in the stewardship to which they have been called! We normally think of the "sinner" in Proverbs 13:22 as being people who are not born again. That is true. But is not this "wicked servant" from Luke 19 a sinner also?

James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Did this man know what the Lord expected of him? Notice what the Lord said at the beginning of the parable when the pound was distributed to each servant:

Luke 19:13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

OCCUPY (Strong's) 4231. pragmateuomai, prag-mat-yoo'-om-ahee; from G4229; to busy oneself with, i.e. to trade:--occupy.

Our English word "pragmatic" comes from this Greek word. These ten servants were to busy themselves in practical, pragmatic ways of trading to cause an increase in the pound. This third servant knew that! He knew what to do! He simply refused to do it because he did not have a servant's heart.

He had the heart of a hireling. Knowing that the purpose of his trading was to cause an increase for the Lord and not for himself, he had no heart to spend his life in that manner. He let the Lord's pound lay idle. I cannot help but think he did not allow his own money to be wasted in the same manner.

Some additional observations are necessary before we proceed further. At first glance it seems that at this reckoning the wicked servant intends to willingly turn over the pound back to the Lord. I say that based on this statement:

Luke 19:20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.*

In the King James version, notice that the words "here is" are in italics, indicating that they are not in the original Greek manuscript. They were added at the discretion of the translators. Those words cause us to think that the servant brought the pound to willingly place it on the Lord's reckoning table. He had no intention of doing so. I say that based on this verse

Luke 19:24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

Notice that the pound was forcibly removed from him and given to the good servant. The Lord did not tell the wicked servant himself to hand it over to the good servant. Why not? This wicked servant had not obeyed the Lord up to this point and there was no reason to think that he would start now. The wealth was forcibly removed from him by "those that stood by."

Who are "those that stood by?" We are not told. Perhaps Jesus is speaking of angels. Perhaps He is speaking of circumstances. Perhaps He is speaking of other stewards of Kingdom Finances whose wisdom and knowledge will cause the wealth to be transferred from the wicked servant to the good servant. We are not told in detail "who" forces the transfer of wealth nor "how" the forcible transfer is made. We are told enough from this parable, however, to make the following conclusions:

1. The transfer of wealth was made at the command of the Lord.
2. The transfer of wealth was forced upon the wicked servant.
3. There was nothing the wicked servant could do to stop the transfer of wealth.
4. Jesus Himself commands the transfer of wealth from "wicked" servants to "good and faithful" servants.

As an additional proof that the "sinner" in Proverbs 13:22 is not only speaking of unbelievers, but also of believers who will not spend their life stewarding the Lord's money, notice the great similarity between the words of Solomon's Proverb and the words spoken by the wicked servant:

... the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

Luke 19:20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, [here is] thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin

Now we can discuss another difficult statement by Jesus:

Luke 19:26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

What is Jesus talking about when He says, "Unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not ..."? Is He talking about the money, the pound? No, Jesus is talking about something the wicked servant "had not" before the money was "taken away."

What was it that the first two servants had that the third did not? THE HEART OF A FIRST CLASS SERVANT! The first two had the heart of a bond slave. They were willing to spend their lives stewarding the pound to gain increase for the Lord and His Kingdom even if it meant no personal profit for themselves.

The wicked servant "hath not" that kind of a heart. Having not the heart of a true servant, even what he did have was taken from him ... the pound, the money. That wealth was transferred, forcibly from him to the best steward. In this parable we are seeing "the wealth of the sinner" being transferred to the "just!"

Another point is very important. This parable deals exclusively with stewardship ... not provision! Again it is important to notice that none of these servants, not even the wicked one, took their own provision from the pound entrusted to them. No, this represented "extra" money, above and beyond the funds that provided their own needs.

What is the most common complaint that I hear from God's people when it comes to finances? "Brother Gary, I would like to give more into the gospel. Honest I would. But there just never seems to be any extra money to give. We seem to always be in a state of just barely making it financially. There never seems to be any extra."

Well, according to this passage, it was the "extra" money, above and beyond living expenses, that was taken from the wicked servant and given to the good steward of Kingdom Finances. The qualifying question arises, "What did you with the extra money the last time you had some?"

Did you consider it [even a portion of it] to be the Lord's pound and set about to increase it through trading for Him? Sadly, most believers today do not act even as righteously as the wicked servant in this parable. At least he did not consume the pound upon himself! What did you do with the extra money the last time you had some? Did you consume all of it upon yourself?

Perhaps you did as the Lord suggested and opened an interest bearing savings account at the bank. But did you do so to gain increase for Him or to gain increase for yourself? The Lord is not against us having personal savings, but if you want to become a steward of Kingdom Finances that the Lord can entrust with large sums of money ... SOMETIME you have to begin developing the mindset that at least a portion of your "extra" money MUST be considered HIS!

Let's take one more look at the following verse:

Luke 19:26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

The Greek word translated "taken away" has a very interesting connotation to it.

TAKEN AWAY (Strong's) 142. airo, ah'ee-ro; a prim. verb; to lift; by impl. to take up or away; fig. to raise (the voice), keep in suspense (the mind); spec. to sail away (i.e. weigh anchor); by Heb. [comp. H5375] to expiate sin:--away with, bear (up), carry, lift up, loose, make to doubt, put away, remove, take (away, up).

Especially notice the meanings "to sail away" and "to weigh anchor." My, how often believers have written to me with almost that very wording describing how it seems that just when it looks like they are finally going to have some extra money, it just seems to "sail away" from them. Something unexpected happens that causes the anticipated "extra" money to be consumed on something or other.

Again, without having this "first class servant's" heart developed within us, we can expect that pattern to continue. How do you know if you have this heart of a servant within you or not? Check to see if you have this motivation within you: "At least a portion of the next 'extra' money I receive IS THE LORD'S POUND! I will set it aside from my own finances and begin seeking the counsel of the Holy Spirit as to how I could pragmatically trade and/or invest it to cause increase for the Lord and His Kingdom. That money shall never be mine to consume. Both it and the increase shall be the Lord's, to use however He directs me by the Holy Spirit's leading."

To him that "hath" a heart like that ... MORE shall be given! You have the word of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself on it. Jesus said:

Mark 13:31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

THE CHANGE OF COVENANT

by Gary Carpenter

In order to understand the ministry of Jesus Christ as revealed in the four gospels, we must remember what He said He was doing:

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

From the time that Jesus was baptized by John until His glorification, His ministry on earth was in a unique time period between the two covenants of Law and Grace. Jesus is teaching, preaching and demonstrating to the people the Kingdom of God, and how it is to be different from the dispensation of Law.

In the old covenant, the people were not born again. They did not have the life of God in their spirit. For the common man to hear God, he normally had to go to the Prophet, the Priest, or hear the Law read by the Scribes. Being dead in spirit, He could not hear God directly for himself on a daily basis.

Under the old covenant, the people prospered by keeping the "formulas" of the Law. If they disobeyed the "formulas" (commandments), they were cursed. If they obeyed the "formulas," they were blessed. Such was the case with the rich, young ruler as told in Matthew's gospel:

Mat 19:16-24 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

This young man had become wealthy by "formula," not by relationship. That is, he had "kept all these things from his youth" and God, true to His covenant with Israel, had blessed the man materially. Under the formula of the Law, the man's mindset was that "ten percent of my income is the Lord's, and ninety percent of it is mine to do with as I will." Under the Law, that was accurate.

Jesus is now introducing the Kingdom of God, a new dispensation. He is informing this wealthy, young ruler that the formulas of the Law are now going to be replaced with a "living" relationship with God on an individual, person by person basis.

Look at this scene. For the first time in his life, this young man is hearing the voice of the Lord ... directly for himself! He is not hearing the voice of the temple scribes as they read from the Law, nor the priests, nor the prophets of the day. No, he is now hearing the voice of the Lord for himself! Not only that, but he is able to communicate back with the Lord also. Two way communication between man and the Lord of heaven and earth. This is how it is to be in the Kingdom, this new dispensation of grace. Every born again man, being alive in spirit, will now be able to hear the Lord directly by the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

In the Kingdom of God, man is no longer to function by formula. Now man is to function by relationship. The Lord speaks. You hear Him for yourself. As with the rich, young ruler, you can speak to the Lord and ask questions to make sure you understand the instructions. Once you understand, however, the only question remaining is ... will you or will you not obey Him? This is a radical change of covenant indeed!

Jesus is instructing the young man that no longer is the formula to be, "ninety percent belongs to man and ten percent belongs to the Lord." No, in the Kingdom, "you are bought with a price and you are not your own." Your LIFE belongs to the Lord, including ALL of your material possessions if He asks for it.

This was too much for the young man to accept. Even though he was hearing directly the word of the Lord to him personally, he could not bring himself to obey Jesus if it meant no personal profit for him. This was to be expected at this point because even though Jesus was teaching and preaching the Kingdom of God, the new birth would not be available to this man (or any other man) until after the glorification of Jesus. This rich, young ruler still had the fallen Adamic nature in him (spiritual death), as did all who lived prior to the new birth experience. It was for that very reason that God gave Israel the Law in the first place, to govern them by penalty in the flesh since they could not serve God out of a new nature.

At this point I will quote once more what the Lord said to me in June of 1997 when He first introduced the concept to me concerning Sharecropper vs. Sonship faith. He said,

"Sowing and Reaping is Sharecropper Faith. It is a valid level of faith to operate in and most people will never graduate from it. It has sustained My Church to this hour, but will never cause the massive transfer of wealth that shall be required to fuel the combines of revival that will occur in these last days. What I desire is Sonship Faith, where you know that you actually own the very fields you are working in. You are not a sharecropper in the kingdom of God. You are a son. All that is mine is thine."

This was one of those instances where His voice was so clear it seemed to me that it was audible. That is, I really don't know if others would have also heard those words had they been present with me at the time. Of course, I grabbed my micro-cassette recorder and spoke what He said word for word. I understood His words, but I had never heard anything like them before. It took many more months of worship, prayer and meditation before the vision came where He gave me the analogy of my grandfather's farm. Only then did I understand what He was saying.

[See the [Sharecropper vs. Sonship Faith](#) teaching]

As my understanding of these things increases over time both by precept and practical experience, I am beginning to comprehend why He said, "most people will never graduate" from the old "Sowing & Reaping" formulas. There are two primary reasons. Most people will never pay the price to:

1. Develop their ability to hear the voice of the Lord by the Holy Spirit.
2. Mortify greed and self-serving to the point they become a "first class" steward of Kingdom Finances.

In the rich, young ruler's case, because he was alive during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, problem number one was solved for him. He "was" hearing directly the "present hour" speaking of the Lord, giving him precise instructions regarding what to do. Still having the old Adamic nature with him, he could not bring himself to obey those instructions if they did not profit him personally. The old nature is greedy and self-serving to the core.

It is important to take notice that Jesus does not give this same instruction to everybody. For example, Jesus did not give these same instructions to Zacchaeus in Luke chapter nineteen. Yet, in chapter eighteen Jesus did give those instructions to the rich, young ruler. What is the lesson to be learned? Our Lord Jesus Christ is alive and well. He does not have one "formula" to be followed by everybody, as was the case with the Law. We have a living Lord who speaks

from heaven. All who are born again have the ability to hear those words by communion and fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

Another example of this truth is when Jesus told Peter he would be a martyr for the gospel's sake (John 21:18-19). The natural response was for Peter to turn and look at John, saying "What shall this man do?", wondering if John would also be required to be a martyr. Jesus' answer demonstrates for all time that in the dispensation of grace, each man is to follow Jesus based on a personal relationship with Him and not by some common formula.

John 21:22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

In the most simple terms, the truly anointed Steward Of Kingdom Finances is the Lord's "hand" in the earth. Just as your physical hand is supposed to receive instructions from your mind, so the Steward is to receive his instructions from the mind of Christ. I am talking about him hearing the "present hour" mind of Christ as He sits on the right hand of the Father in heaven.

We would think there was something terribly wrong with us if our own physical hand took it upon itself to open up our wallets and begin handing out sums of money to various people and organizations when it had not received those instructions from our mind.

Said another way, we would think it absolutely bizarre if our physical hand gave money by some "formula" completely independent from the instructions of our mind. We would think, "What is wrong with my hand? What is it doing? I didn't tell it to do that! I can't trust my hand with money any longer if it is going to act independently of my mind. I have no choice ... I will just have to make sure there is not much money available in my wallet for the hand to steward."

To some this example may seem overly simplistic ... but it is entirely accurate! None of us would trust wealth to a hand that operated independently from our minds. One of the primary reasons why there are not more anointed Stewards Of Kingdom Finances in the body of Christ is our dogged refusal to abandon all formulas and function by relationship with our HEAD, Jesus Christ.

I mentioned earlier that most people are never going to pay the "price" to develop the two essential requirements to become Stewards Of Kingdom Finances. What is that price? In a word ... TIME!

As with all good relationships, time spent in fellowship is required to develop a good one. To develop the ability to hear accurately the mind of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, time is going to be required in worship, meditation of the Word, and prayer. This will mean giving up many activities, not because they are necessarily evil or wicked, but simply because they consume too much time ... precious time that could otherwise be used developing an ear that is sensitive to the voice of the Lord.

Secondly, prayer and fasting are the two primary weapons given us for the mortification, the putting to death, of greed and self-serving within us.

Rom 8:12-14 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

This is the goal of the Steward of Kingdom Finances ... to be led by the Spirit of God rather than by formulas of carnal commandment. In order to develop that ability, we must no longer remain "children," but grow up to become sons who are now ready to participate in the "family business!"

Sonship & Inheritance

POSSESSIONS SANCTIFIED UNTO HIM

by Gary Carpenter

After Jesus taught on the principles of Provision vs Stewardship in the Parable of the pounds, He goes on to show us a visual demonstration of the proper attitude of heart required of stewards.

Luke 19:28-35a And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him. And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to Jesus ...

It is important to notice in verse 33 that certain men were called the "owners" of the colt. No doubt there was some investment involved to acquire ownership of the colt. They either purchased the colt directly or it was born from an animal they already owned. Even in that case, there were expenses involved to feed and stable the colt's mother.

They were the owners. When these disciples came to loose the colt they had every right to ask the question, "Why loose ye the colt?" They didn't know who these disciples were. For all they knew they could simply be thieves.

But notice, all these "owners" needed to know was ... "The Lord hath need of him." These particular men, although owners, were also "stewards" for the Lord. They understood that even though they might legally "own" certain possessions, ALL of their possessions were sanctified unto the Lord. If the Lord had need of anything they "owned," that was all they needed to know.

The Lord has need of such men and women today. The kingdom of God requires much in the way of material resources in order to spread the gospel throughout the world. The Lord has need of "owners" who are also "stewards." The Lord has need of men and women whose "possessions" can be tapped at a moments notice whenever "the Lord hath need of them."

If the church continues in her poverty mentality to never acquire material goods, where is the Lord to go when He "has need" of those goods? Shall He go to the world? Hardly!

He needs "owners" who are also "stewards" just like these men in Luke 19. It really does not matter to the Lord how great are the material goods we "own." It does matter to Him that ALL of those material goods are sanctified unto the Lord.

If our Lord let's us know that "He hath need of them" ... that's all we need to know in order to release them for His work. Notice Jesus' concluding statement at the end of the Parable of the rich fool:

Luke 12:21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Jesus did not say it was wrong to lay up treasure for the kingdom of God. He said you are a fool if you spend your life laying up treasure for "yourself" and are not rich toward God. He said almost identically the same thing in Matthew 6:

Mat 6:19 Lay not up FOR YOURSELVES treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.

PROVISION FOR FULL TIME GOSPEL ENTREPRENEURS

by Gary Carpenter

The term Gospel Entrepreneur is a phrase I use to describe the ministry office of financial stewardship regarding the Kingdom of God. The New Testament mentions this office in at least two places:

Rom 12:8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: HE THAT GIVETH, LET HIM DO IT WITH SIMPLICITY; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.
(Capitals Mine)

This ministry of financial stewardship is also included in the ministry of "Helps" as described in:

1 Cor 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, HELPS, governments, diversities of tongues. (Capitals Mine)

The ministry of "Helps" includes many more functions than financial stewardship alone, but it is without question included within that category. So, you could say that the ministry of "Giving with Simplicity" is contained within the overall ministry of "Helps" as a sub-category.

Saul & Barnabus where at one time counted among the prophets and teachers. But during a meeting of these prophets and teachers at Antioch, the Holy Spirit separated Saul & Barnabus into a higher office ... the office of apostle.

Acts 13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Just as there is a maturing process, a progression, into higher offices within the five-fold ministry gifts, so there is a maturing process, a progression, into more and more responsibility in the office of the Gospel Entrepreneur. Most people begin as "part time" stewards. During this time period they are what we would call "lay ministers" who still spend the majority of their time "making a living" in the world. But they are being groomed and trained by the Holy Spirit to become givers with simplicity. As they spend time in the Word and in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, He reshapes their desires, attitudes, and aspirations to line up with the mind of Christ for their lives. Covetousness progressively dies within them, and their hearts are turned more and more to that of a bondsman, to being a first class servant whose greatest joy is to serve their Master.

If they remain good students, willing to be trained by the Holy Spirit, their minds become more and more receptive to the instructions that proceed from the mind of Christ. It seems that the natural progression is that the Holy Spirit nearly always first trains them "how to give" before He begins training them "how to harvest" financially. If they cannot be depended upon to "give with simplicity" with small financial amounts, they will not be faithful later to "give with simplicity" with larger financial amounts. Why train a person to harvest millions from the world system for the Kingdom of God when they have already proven themselves to be unfaithful to give small amounts from the resources they already have?

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Luke 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will

commit to your trust the true riches?

Luke 16:12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Anyone who truly stands in the office of the Gospel Entrepreneur has one Master ... not two! He is a bondsman to the Lord Jesus Christ ... and to Him alone. To the Gospel Entrepreneur, money is a tool ... not a lord!

That being said, let's consider the case of a person who is steadfast and diligent in his training to become a full fledged Gospel Entrepreneur. The Holy Spirit watches him mature in his understanding, his motivations, and his obedience to the mind of Christ. He proves himself faithful over and over with the handling of "unrighteous mammon." In other words, he proves himself faithful to obey every instruction he receives from the mind of Christ by the Holy Spirit. He is therefore entrusted with more and more wisdom to reap greater and greater harvests from the world system in order to finance the work of the Kingdom of God.

Eventually, just like the Holy Ghost separated Saul & Barnabus to full time apostleship, the Holy Ghost will separate this man to full time service as a Gospel Entrepreneur. At this point the man may be stewarding massive amounts of finances for the Kingdom of God, yet he himself is no longer a "lay minister" who receives a regular paycheck for his support. Now he is full time. The question often arises, "How do I determine my provision now? How am I supposed to house, feed and clothe my family? I steward tremendous wealth for the Kingdom. Does the New Testament give me any guidelines for how I am to function when it comes to personal provision for me and my family?"

Thankfully, the answer is "Yes!" Let's begin our research with a very important passage written by Paul. We'll look at it in both the King James and New International translations:

1 Cor 9:7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

1 Cor 9:8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

1 Cor 9:9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

1 Cor 9:10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. (King James Version)

Here is the same passage from the New International Version:

1 Cor 9:7 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk?

1 Cor 9:8 Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing?

1 Cor 9:9 For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned?

1 Cor 9:10 Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. (New International Version)

This passage was written after Paul and Barnabus had been set into their full time offices as apostles by the Holy Spirit. The point is ... it is for those who hold a "full time" office in the body of Christ. We can glean from this passage the principles of personal provision for those who hold full time offices in the ministry. Paul poses some very good questions:

1. Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Nobody!

2. Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Nobody!
3. Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Nobody!

He goes on to say that this is not just a human tradition, but the principle was set in motion by God Himself when He said, "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Said another way, if the ox is doing its job properly by doing its part to bring in the harvest, then it has the right to EAT FROM THAT HARVEST! That would be the ox's "personal provision," would it not? The ox has a "right" to a portion of the harvest he is helping bring in to the Master's granary. That is God's principle ... not man's!

Notice also that it would not matter what "field" you have the ox laboring in on any given day. If on Monday you have the ox working in the cornfield, then the ox has a right to a "portion of the corn." If on Tuesday you have the ox working in the wheat field, the ox has a right to a "portion of the wheat."

Paul goes on to say that God intended this to be the principle for "people," not just oxen. The principle is, the laborer in the harvest field has a right to a portion FROM THAT HARVEST FIELD for his personal provision. This is the method instituted by God for His full time ministers.

In Paul & Barnabus' case, they were what we would call "front line" ministers. In other words, they were right out there among the people, preaching the gospel directly to lost souls. They were ministering "spiritual things" to those lost souls, endeavoring to bring in a harvest of born again souls into our Heavenly Father's granary. Paul goes on to say,

1 Cor 9:11 If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? (New International Version)

Paul and Barnabus labored directly in the harvest field of souls. From the free will offerings that the people gave, they had the right to a "portion of the harvest" for their personal provision. The remainder would be used for the expenses of the ministry and to help the poor, as the Lord directed. The principle is what must be noted: Because Paul and Barnabus were laboring directly in the harvest field of souls, they received a "portion" of the free will offerings for their "personal provision" FROM THAT HARVEST FIELD!

The Gospel Entrepreneur is one step removed, normally, from the harvest field of souls. In other words, most people who hold the office of a Gospel Entrepreneur are not "full time preachers" or ministers on the "front line." The end result of their labors provides the finances FOR the "front line" ministries. The Gospel Entrepreneur labors in a different harvest field ... the field of finances. By the gifts of the Spirit, they co-labor with the Holy Ghost to work in the "chief places of concourse" to reap harvests of finances to be used in the Kingdom of God. Staying precisely with the method of "not muzzling the ox" that God instituted, we must conclude that the Gospel Entrepreneur has the right to a "portion" for his "personal provision" FROM THAT HARVEST FIELD ... the field of finances!

Now that we have determined "where" the Gospel Entrepreneur's "personal provision" comes from, the next question we are faced with is, "How much of the harvest should be allocated for personal provision?" This is a much more difficult decision making process, and it is one where there is no substitute for hearing the "present hour instructions" of the Living Lord who "speaks from heaven." (Heb 12:25)

In the beginning this ministry, I decided I ought to start preparing a budget so I would know how much to ask the Lord for financially as our "personal provision" amount. I started preparing the leanest budget you can imagine. I was only including the bare essentials of what I thought we could survive on. My mind was still full of traditional "religious" doctrine that convinced me that God was really kind of stingy and was not pleased when we had much abundance.

So I was working on this extremely meager budget when, all of a sudden, the Lord said to me, real strong, "*Don't you think that I can provide for you at least as well as you used to provide for you?*" I had never thought of that. I began going back over our financial records for recent years

and took the average amount we had personally lived on. Sue and I discussed this and came to the conclusion, "Well, this is the amount we have been personally living on anyway. Surely the Lord is capable of providing for us as well as we provided for ourselves." We took that average amount and presented it to the Lord as a place to "start" regarding our personal provision amount.

Over the next few days, we spent a lot of time in prayer listening to see if either of us got any "checks" in our spirit concerning that dollar amount. We did not, and in fact, we seemed to be getting more of a "green light" via the inner witness. We set that amount as our "personal provision," making this promise to the Lord: "Lord, we are your bondslaves. We are agreeing that this set dollar amount will be our personal provision out of all the finances you send our way. Anything above this amount we will consider to be our "stewardship" amount for You. Desiring to be your hand in the earth, we will give it and use it in any way that You say. But, we will not consider it to be ours personally."

That was one of the best decisions we ever made in our lives. Prior to that decision, the best we had ever been able to do when it comes to giving amounted to roughly twenty percent of our total income in any given year. Since making that decision, we have sometimes been able to give more than we used to earn in the world during an entire year! It's almost as if the Lord said, "You are agreeing that everything that comes in above your personal provision is mine to use as I desire? Let Me show you what I can do with that which is mine."

Of course, as our lives have changed and our circumstances have changed, there have been times when we have needed to go back to the Lord in prayer to request a "cost of living" increase, if you will. Our Lord Jesus is alive and well. He speaks from heaven, and the Holy Spirit will bring His mind to your spirit if you spend time in fellowship with Him. Sometimes the Lord has granted our requests, sometimes not. But I can tell you this, nobody ever loved us like Jesus. Every decision He has made for us has been in our best interests. We have not found Him to be a hard taskmaster, but rather a loving and generous Master who deeply loves His bondslaves.

I have told you about how we determined our own provision as an example only. Every case is different. As I said earlier, there is no substitute for personal communion with the Lord via prayer, worship, and fasting. Some people may be living "far beyond their means" when they first attempt this process and the Lord may have some correction in mind in order to establish your initial "provision" amount. Others may be living too frugally, and you might be surprised at the amount He desires to establish as your "personal provision." You will have to spend time with Him yourself. There is no other path.

1. You are to receive a "portion" as your personal "provision" from the harvest field you are laboring in.
2. The actual dollar amount of your "personal provision" is a matter to be settled in prayer between you and the Lord.
3. As your life changes and adjustments in your "personal provision" amount need to be made, ask the Lord for an increase (or decrease) and spend enough time in prayer to hear His answer.

MANY CALLED - FEW CHOSEN

by Gary Carpenter

Mat 20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

To correctly understand what Jesus means in this verse, it is critical to understand the fact that the subject of the parable is God's qualifying process to determine those who will be promoted to higher levels of Stewardship. [See the lesson - "Qualifying For Stewardship"].

This portion of the parable is especially revealing:

Mat 20:6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

Remembering the context of the Rich Young Ruler's refusal to follow Jesus if it meant giving up what he had personally gained through obedience to the Law, we are endeavoring to unveil the attitude of heart that the Lord desires in His Stewards Of Kingdom Finances. There is no doubt that the Lord is looking for men and women He can trust to steward great wealth to finance massive revivals in these last days. No doubt He is calling "many." Why are there so very few being "chosen?"

The Householder's question to these potential servants was, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Their answer reveals the root of the problem in their hearts that disqualifies nearly all who are "called" to be Stewards Of Kingdom Finances.

Mat 20:7a They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us.

Strong's definition of the Greek word translated "hired" is;

3409. misthoo, mis-tho'-o; from G3408; to let out for wages, i.e. (mid.) to hire:--hire.

Why are there so few Stewards Of Kingdom Finances? Because most have the heart of a hireling, not the heart of a bond slave who serves for love's sake alone. I say again, Jesus does not "hire" Stewards Of Kingdom Finances. He "owns" them. They must have the heart of a first class servant as described by Jesus in Luke 17:1-10. They must be servants who do not serve for "personal profit."

I believe with all my heart that there are thousands of people whom the Lord is "calling" to become His Stewards of Kingdom Finances. But for all practical purposes (regarding this office), they are simply standing "idle." Why? For the same reason as the men in this parable. Let me give an example from my own life. In 1994 I was still making a living as a long haul truck driver. As was my custom, I was praying in the spirit while driving on Interstate 40 through Arkansas on February 4th when ... SUDDENLY ... without warning, the Spirit of the Lord manifested His presence in the cab of that truck with me.

His presence was so real and His voice was so clear and distinct that it seemed virtually audible to me. Had there been another person riding with me in the truck, I still do not know if they would have heard His voice or not. Without going into detail (which is not the subject of this lesson), the end result was that He "called" me into full time ministry that day.

He gave me some very precise instructions, one of them being; that this was to be my last run as a truck driver. I was to go full time into the ministry just as soon as this current run was finished. I want the reader to understand, there was no doubt about the "call," not even regarding when to begin.

Like thousands of others, I had received the "call." Here is the important part in the context of this lesson. For ten months after that day, I DISQUALIFIED MYSELF! Why? Because I still had the heart of hireling, not a bond slave. How did I disqualify myself? By refusing to obey without

question Him who called me. Why did I not obey Him? Because I wanted Him to "hire" me first! Let me explain.

Being a husband and father, I had the same financial responsibilities as everybody else. I had a car payment to make, utility bills to pay, debts to pay off monthly, and so forth. When the Lord called me into full time ministry the one thing He did not mention at ALL was my "payment." For the life of me I could not understand HOW I could meet my financial obligations if I just simply obeyed Him.

I would never have phrased it like this at the time, but looking back now with perfect 20/20 hindsight, I was "standing idle" [regarding my call], waiting for the Householder to come and "hire" me. With shame I look back now and see clearly that my attitude was, "I will not serve You until You and I agree on a financial arrangement first. You make me an offer, and if 'I' approve of it, THEN I will let you know if I will obey you or not." God forbid! How I praise Him for His mercy, longsuffering, and kindness toward me in those days.

I did not see it like that then. No, at the time it seemed to me that I was just being wise and prudent. My thinking was still that of a hireling who "worked for wages." I had virtually no concept that I was actually a son of God with an inheritance so vast that I could never appropriate it all.

Considering myself to be a potential "employee" of God's, rather than considering myself to be a son and heir who has now been called by my Father to serve in His harvest fields, I was not willing to "serve" unless the Lord made a financial arrangement with me FIRST!

This is precisely the attitude of heart that Jesus was teaching against when He outlined the motivations of a "first class servant" in Luke 17:10. His conclusion to the teaching on faith for stewardship in the Kingdom of God was,

Luke 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Paraphrased, Jesus was teaching "Do not serve your God from the motive of 'personal profit.' Do what you do for God from the heart, simply because He has called you to do it. Be His bond slaves, who serve for love's sake alone."

A first class servant always puts the needs of His Master FIRST! By my refusal to obey my Master's "call," I most certainly was putting my own needs first! Truly I had been "called," but by my refusal to obey, I had disqualified myself from being "chosen" as a full time minister of the Lord.

The Householder of Matthew 20 was looking for permanent laborers for His vineyard. Every day He "called" many to come labor in His fields. Notice that none volunteered to come help bring in the harvest unless they were "hired" first.

Even so, the Householder still gave them the opportunity to serve Him. His financial arrangement with them was designed to expose what was truly in their hearts in abundance. All who were serving from the motive of "personal profit" disqualified themselves from being "chosen" for increased stewardship in the Householder's vineyard.

Truly, many are "called," few are "chosen."

Many respond very quickly to the call to become Gospel Entrepreneurs. That seems like a "good" call. But their motivations are usually very "self" serving. They desire to be "first" in this temporary life on earth. When they find out that this call has nothing to do with their personal profit, they choose not to follow Jesus ... just like the Rich Young Ruler. By desiring to be "first" in this life on earth, they are considered to be "last" in trustworthiness as God's stewards.

Mat 20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

Others are more like the son who first said he would not obey, but later did. They have chosen to put themselves last in this life by becoming a bond slave to Christ. They will most certainly be

"first" in the next life, just like the twelve who will judge the tribes of Israel. Proper stewardship in this life means greater promotion to stewardship both in this life ... and in the next.

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

by Gary Carpenter

1 John 2:15-17 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

The reason we have trouble understanding what John meant by these words is because we have so little revelation of who we truly are. For the most part, we still see ourselves as creatures of this world, even though the bible says we are not of the world. Our day-by-day identification is still more with the world than with heaven.

As I continue meditating the Word of God and spending many hours praying in the Spirit, my comprehension of the fact that we are "born from above" is increasing. I find myself saying things like, "I am not on earth for the purpose of receiving from the world. I am on earth for the purpose that the world may receive from my heavenly Father." Progressively, I am identifying more with heaven than with earth.

All of those old sayings that used to just sound like religious jargon to me are starting to become "Who I am." Sayings like, "This world is not my home. Heaven is where my possessions lie." I find that my affections are truly becoming set on things above, not on things on the earth:

Col 3:2-3 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

We are simply "on assignment" from heaven to earth in order that the will of our Father may be done through the life of Christ in us while we live in these mortal bodies. We only need the "material things of the earth" as they are required to fulfill our assignment. We don't identify with the earth. We are from above. We have no covetous lust for the things of the earth. If we have lust at all, it is this intense desire to complete the work our Master has given us to do. We don't feel at home on the earth anymore. This environment of sin, sickness and poverty does not seem "natural" anymore. Neither does the all-pervading "deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things" seem "natural" to us anymore.

To spend our lives on a quest to satisfy the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life seems totally foreign to us now. These things are just simply no longer part of our nature. They are not "of the Father." They have nothing to do with our assignment from heaven. To give our affection to them is to abandon our assignment from heaven and divert us from the Father's will for our lives. To set our affection on them would be no less than treason. Are we, freeborn citizens of heaven, now to become citizens of this fallen world? I trow not! Our nature is to please the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. That's the motivational, driving force that gives us pleasure now.

2 Tim 2:4 No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs--he wants to please his commanding officer. NIV

We don't have too much trouble identifying the "lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes," but exactly what is this "pride of life?" The Greek word translated "life" in that verse is "bios."

From Strong's Dictionary: LIFE

979. bios, bee'-os; a prim. word; life; i.e. (lit.) the present state of existence; by impl. the means of livelihood:--good, life, living.

It is from the word "bios" that we get our modern word "biological." This is not referring to the "life of God" within us. The word "bios" refers to our physical, biological life, including the means

of livelihood by which that life is sustained on earth. It is the same Greek word translated "living" when Jesus spoke of the Widow's Mite:

Mark 12:44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living [bios].

She had cast in the last of the resources to sustain her physical, biological life on earth. With that connotation of the word bios, then John's statement could be translated "the pride of how well you make a living" is not of the Father. Or, "the pride of your standard of living" is not of the Father. It is the cares of our "bios," the sustaining of our physical life on this earth and the pursuit of the "pleasures of this life" that choke the word and make us unfruitful for the Kingdom of God:

Luke 8:14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life [bios], and bring no fruit to perfection.

Concerning the pride of our physical life, the Greek word translated "pride" in 1 John 2:16 is "alazoneia." From Strong's Dictionary:

PRIDE - 212. alazoneia, al-ad-zon-i'-a; from G213; braggadocio, i.e. (by impl.) self-confidence:--boasting, pride.

From the New American Standard Dictionary:

Braggadocios:

1. A braggart.
2. Empty or pretentious bragging.
3. Swaggering manner; cockiness.
4. The personification of vainglory.

Sad to say, this phrase "the pride of life" seems to be the "norm" for the majority of Christian Americans who devote most of their life to "keeping up with the Jones's." This same attitude runs rampant among many Christian ministries. It is at the heart of competition and "one-upmanship." It comes from the deep-rooted desire to be thought "better" than others. This motivational, driving force is "not of the Father." Paul said,

2 Cor 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

Needless to say, it is now more clear why John said that this sort of "pride of life" is not of the Father. This is the motivational, driving force of the world system, not the Kingdom of God. The safeguard against spending our lives floundering in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is to LOVE NOT THE WORLD, NEITHER THE THINGS THAT ARE IN THE WORLD! Rather than setting our love on the world and the things that are in the world, we are admonished to set our affection on the things which are above:

Col 3:2-3 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

The following verses also apply to this same principle. As stewards of the Kingdom of God, we must never bow the knee to the world, nor the things in the world. Our allegiance is to "Him who bought us" ... our Lord Jesus Christ alone! We are not hirelings. We are not employees. We are "owned." We are bondslaves who are single minded. We know WHO WE ARE, WHERE WE ARE FROM, AND WHY WE ARE HERE!

1 Tim 6:5-11 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. BUT GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN [Emphasis Added]. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. AND HAVING FOOD AND RAIMENT LET

US BE THEREWITH CONTENT [Emphasis Added]. **But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.**

Phil 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

1 John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

2 Tim 3:1-5 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, TRAITORS, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

2 Tim 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

Demas "loved this present world." The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life caused him to turn traitor to his assignment from the King. He chose to forsake his "mission from heaven" to spend his short life on earth pursuing the pleasures of the world instead.

From such ... "TURN AWAY!"

SERVANTS UPON HORSES

by Gary Carpenter

We must understand the proper relationship God intends between our reborn human spirit and our soul. This passage of scripture, along with the visual image it conveys, gives a powerful description of a major problem that exists today within the body of Christ;

Eccl 10:5-7 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler: Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place. I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.

In this scene we have three entities: the prince, the servant, and the horse. The spiritual analogy is:

1. The prince represents our reborn human spirit.
2. The servant represents our soul.
3. The horse represents our body (our physical lives).

Our reborn human spirit is supposed to have dominion over our soul and our body. We are to be led by our new nature, not by our natural mind or our emotions. Our spirit is supposed to be the one in charge, even as it remains a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our soul is supposed to be the servant of our spirit. Said another way, our soul is supposed to be a "tool" of the new nature, much like a computer is supposed to be a "tool" of a programmer. The intellect, the mind, the will, and the emotions comprise the soul.

Solomon laments that what he has seen most often is that the servant is the one in control. The servant is sitting on the horse giving the directions, while the prince is simply walking alongside ... sort of just going along in whatever direction the servant dictates to the horse.

The "type" would be; most of us allow our soul to be in the position of command. We allow our soul to "direct" our lives while the prince (the new nature, our reborn spirit man, the one who is supposed to be in command) must simply walk along whatever path our soul chooses to take. For most of us, the "reins of direction" are still in the hands of the soul, not in the hands of our reborn human spirit as they should be.

This process must be reversed. The soul must be de-throned from its position of command and the spirit man must take the reins of our lives. Our spirit is the one in contact with the Holy Spirit and can, through fellowship with Him, receive instructions from the living Christ Who sits upon the throne in heaven. As our spirit receives those instructions from the Head of the Church, it takes the reins of our lives and causes us to travel down the path the Lord has directed for us. Our soul is to be the servant of our reborn human spirit. Our soul is to walk down whatever path our spirit directs (based on the leadership received from Christ via fellowship with the Holy Spirit).

I am finding that the soul does not willingly come down from its position of authority. It has to be forced to take the place of a servant. It loudly protests against having any agenda (even the Lord's) prescribed upon it. Yet our spirit must take dominion. It has to treat the soul like an unruly child and force it to take its proper role as the servant. I am coming to believe that many of Solomon's proverbs concerning the "disciplining of a child" applies just as much to the de-throning of the soul as they do to raising children. Proverbs such as:

Prov 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Of course we are to take this verse literally when it comes to raising godly children, but it would also be proper to interpret this verse as meaning, "Foolishness (man's ways) are in the thought

processes of the soul. But the rod of correction (God's Word understood and enforced by the reborn human spirit) shall drive it far from the soul (and the soul will begin to think like God)."

By this process the soul progressively forsakes "foolishness" (man's ways) and comes to think and believe according to the mind of Christ (God's ways ... the ways of the Spirit). Not only was Solomon teaching on how to raise godly children, but Wisdom was also prophesying through him for us today regarding the de-throning of the unruly, childlike soul.

Paul instructed the Philippians to force their souls to "think" in a certain manner:

Phil 4:8-9 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, THINK ON THESE THINGS. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Again, the soul is very much like an unruly child. It likes to "think" on whatever it wants, even if what it chooses to think about are things that directly contradict the truth of the Word of God. I want to emphasize that not only are we supposed to force our souls to think on the "written" Word of God, but also on those things which the Spirit of God has said to us through the five-fold ministry gifts and those things that the Lord has spoken to us personally from heaven as "rhema" (present hour speaking) words.

Notice Paul said those things which they learned, and received, and heard, and saw in him ..., they were to DO! Those were the things delivered to them via Paul's ministry gift and manner of life. But the THINKING on those things precedes the DOING of them!

In my own life I not only have to force my soul to "think" on the things delivered to me through the ministry gift of pastor Dave and others, but also on those things which the Lord has spoken to me personally via fellowship with the Holy Spirit. I find that if I do not force myself to regularly "think" on those things, my soul will choose to "think" on other things ... such as ... how "bad" I have it and how "hard" this walk is. Rubbish! I cannot allow my soul to think on those things. If I do, I will NEVER apprehend that for which I was apprehended by Jesus. Thinking that way will cause me to NEVER walk in the high call of God in Christ Jesus!

If we are going to get serious about disciplining (training) our soul in the same way that we would a child, then we are going to have to implement similar procedures. We don't leave a child to just grow up on its own without sending it to school. We want our child's mind to be instructed, trained, and disciplined. We don't leave it to chance as to when those periods of schooling will occur. No, we force the child to go to school for set periods of time every day. If we are going to discipline our soul in the same manner, then our soul is going to have to have to endure prescribed periods of time where it will sit in the school of the Holy Spirit for training.

One way to do that is to "schedule" periods of time for the soul to sit and be quiet while our spirit man is instructed by the Holy Ghost. I'm referring specifically to the soul just sitting and listening while my spirit fellowships with the Holy Spirit by praying in other tongues. My soul is to remain attentive in order to receive any instructions delivered to it by my spirit as a result of that fellowship.

Another way to discipline the soul is to "schedule" periods of time for "Confession With Imagery" of God's Word ... both the written and rhema words. I used to rely almost entirely on confession alone. But I am learning the power of incorporating the entire soul in the transformation process. It is much more effective to hold the "image" of whatever you are confessing within your soul while your voice is giving utterance to the Word of God (both written and rhema). The image represents our "hope," while the time spent in confession represents our "faith."

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

For example, it is much more powerful for a person to not only confess "By His stripes, I am healed!" but to also "see" themselves well and whole in their soul while they confess it. Faith is

the substance of things "hoped for." Hope is in the realm of the soul. Hope is the image we hold there. Unless we actually "see" ourselves well and whole within our soul, there is no real hope. And if there is no real hope, then faith has nothing to draw substance from in order to manifest God's Word in the material realm.

By this method we are forcing our soul to "think on these things," the "things" that have been freely given to us by God! By this method we are forcing our soul to dismount from its place of rulership in our lives and become the servant of the reborn human spirit.

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT - THE DILEMMA

by Gary Carpenter

Preface: Neither the spirit nor the soul of man is a circle. The diagrams presented are simply a way of graphically demonstrating the relationship between the spirit, soul and body of man. The purpose is that we obtain clarity of understanding regarding how mankind functions by the interrelationship between the three.

The Diagram:

The inner circle represents the spirit of man. The outer circles represent the soul of man, divided into chambers to represent various rooms of acquired knowledge.

The outer circle, the soul, is comprised of a series of rooms, each of them having a door that opens inwardly from the hallway and a window on the opposite wall. Those windows represent the "sense gates" through which input [information] from the physical world enters the chambers of the soul.

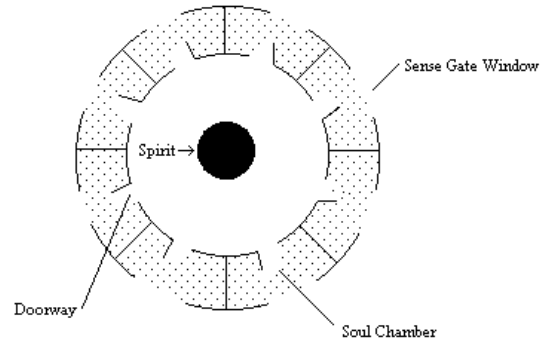


Fig. 1 - THE NATURAL MAN

The Natural Man:

We know that the natural man is born with the Adamic nature, the spirit of the world, the spirit of sin and death. In the vision, the inner circle representing the spirit of the natural man is black as night. As an infant, man is born with the chambers of the soul virtually empty of content. Through the sense gates, knowledge is gathered into the various chambers of the soul at an extremely rapid pace as he gains knowledge of the world around him.

At first, it seems that all the inner doors are open to the spirit and the natural man makes decisions in the soul that are heavily influenced by the "death nature" in his spirit. A typical example would be a very young child playing with toys in a room with other small children. Through the sense gate of the eyes, he sees another child enjoying himself while playing with a toy that the first child does not have. Standing from the position of his darkened spirit, he looks into the chamber of the soul where that data is accumulating and he comes to certain conclusions:

1. Playing with that toy brings happiness.
2. I want happiness.
3. I want that toy.
4. I will take that toy.

Of course, this is what the bible describes as "covetousness," and is a natural outflow from the spirit of sin and death. It is born in the natural man.

Continuing with the example, the youngster goes over to the other child and attempts to take the toy from him. He resists, so the first child "bops" him on the head in order to force him to relinquish the toy. [What we have just seen on a small scale is the same process that starts world wars]. Mission accomplished! The child who now has the toy feels no compassion for the other child who is crying over the loss of the toy. The nature of sin and death is totally self-serving.

If this young child continues to have such "success" via this method of forcibly plundering the possessions of others, his feedback loop will continue to give positive reinforcement to his methods. He will conclude, "This is the way to happiness." He will become an excellent thief when he grows up, if not a dictator. It is for this reason that the bible admonishes us;

Prov 19:18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Prov 23:13-14 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Applying this truth to our example, let's say that there is an adult teacher in that same room where the children were playing and that the teacher saw this whole episode. Her job is to come over to the child who took the toy by force and "teach" him that his behavior was not acceptable. If she is godly, she will not only remove the stolen toy and restore it to its true owner, but she will also "spank" the child, providing input through the sense gates that will be more persuasive than his previous conduct of covetousness. The goal is to provide sufficient sensory input via the spanking to fill that chamber of the soul with thought processes that go something like this:

1. Forcibly removing another person's goods causes punishment.
2. The pain of punishment brings unhappiness.
3. The unhappiness produced by the pain of punishment is more unpleasant than the happiness enjoyed by having the stolen toy.

Conclusion: "I shall not steal!" (Ex 20:15)

At this point it is imperative to take note that the spirit of sin and death within the child HAS NOT CHANGED! No, a chamber of the "soul" has received sensory input that will cause him to make a different decision from that which would come naturally from the spirit of sin and death. "Covetousness" is still within his spirit. But "instruction" has now filled that chamber of his soul. As he sojourns through life and encounters situations where he must once more make the choice to either "steal or not steal," the man has learned to block the influence of his death nature upon the soul in order to make decisions.

Through this ongoing process, man learns to live by his soul and not by his spirit. He learns by the "reward and punishment" system that it is better for him NOT to walk by his fallen spirit, but rather to walk by the information he has gathered into the chambers of his soul. In fact, he learns that the better he becomes at walking by his soul instead of his spirit, the more society lauds him as being a "good" man. But once more, it is imperative to understand that HIS SPIRIT HAS NOT CHANGED! At his core, he still has the spirit of sin and death. He has simply become expert at not walking by his spirit, but rather by the soul instead. See Figure 2.

For all practical purposes, he erects a "barrier" between his spirit and his soul. He wants to block the spirit of sin and death from influencing his decisions as much as possible. He does his best to make decisions based on the accumulated knowledge gained from "civilization" that has been stored in the various chambers of the soul.

But ultimately, even this process is still the product of the fallen nature. Why do I say that?

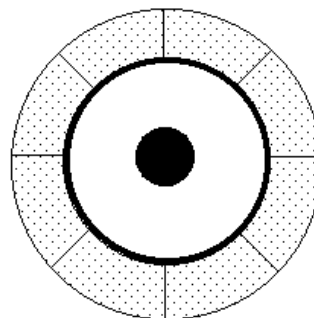


Fig. 2 – The Barrier Between Soul & Spirit

He is choosing to live a "good" [soulish] life because IT IS IN "HIS" BEST INTEREST TO DO SO! Even this decision to walk by the soul instead of the fallen spirit is totally "self" serving. There is no love of God involved in this process. The man is trying to be "good" because he has learned through the reward and punishment system of civilization that he is personally "better off" if he does so. His nature has not changed! He is still spending his life serving "self!"

Note: The tree of the knowledge of good and evil has a single root. That root is "self." What fallen man, as a society, calls "good" behavior and "evil" behavior stems from the motive of preservation and personal benefit for "self" on the "society" level. The laws of every nation are designed to protect man from man.

The Born Again Man's Dilemma:

For teaching purposes, let us say that the young man mentioned above does not get born again until he is a full grown adult. He has spent a lifetime trying to be "good" by building a strong barrier between his soul and his spirit. He has learned to never walk by his spirit at all costs, but rather to make decisions based only on the information contained in the various chambers of the soul.

In the vision I see some of the names on the doors that lead into the various chambers of the soul. Some of the names on the doors are ETHICS, ECONOMICS, GOVERNMENT, FAMILY, BUSINESS, DOCTRINE, PRAYER and so forth. The man has spent a lifetime developing the practice of living by the information contained in these rooms rather than by the nature of his fallen spirit. Society calls him "good" for his soulish discipline to restrain the fallen nature.

But now, as an adult, he hears the gospel of Jesus Christ. He understands the message and receives Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. He is "born again." His old spirit, the Adamic nature, the spirit of sin and death is literally put to death. In its place is inserted a new spirit which is "of God." We often call it the "new nature."

In the vision, the inner circle representing the spirit of this born again man is now filled with light. This born again spirit is "of God" and is capable of understanding the things of the Kingdom of God.

1 Cor 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

The goal for the born again man is to "walk in the spirit." That is, to walk according to the new nature that God has placed on the inside of him.

Gal 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

The problem is, the man has absolutely no idea HOW to do that! His lifelong pattern has been to walk according to his soul. At all costs he has avoided walking by his spirit because it was the spirit of sin and death before he was born again. His practical experience consists of knowing how to walk by the soul, not by the spirit.

The life, the power, the anointing of God, however, flows into the earth through the conduit of the reborn human spirit. To ever see the "physics" of the Kingdom of God manifested in the earth, somehow the man must learn to "walk in the spirit." By the "physics" of the Kingdom of God, I am talking about the same works that we see being demonstrated through the life of Jesus Christ; miracles, healings, dominion over the forces of nature, dominion over devils, and so forth. All of these are worked through the reborn "spirit" of man by the anointing of the Holy Ghost. They do not originate in the soul. They originate with God and flow through the "spirit of Him" which is inside the heart of every born again person.

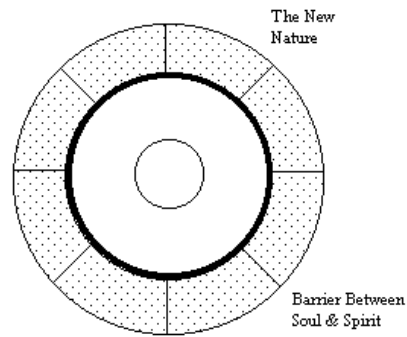


Fig. 3 – The Born Again Dilemma

Being conditioned to walk according to the soul, most Christians try to live their lives by the soul even after their spirit has been quickened from death to life. For the Gospel Entrepreneur to effectively co-labor with the leadership and anointing of the Holy Spirit, it is imperative that he learns how to tear down the barrier that has been erected over a lifetime of endeavoring to walk by the soul and not by the spirit. How to tear down that barrier will be the subject of the next lesson in this series.

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT - THE SOLUTION

by Gary Carpenter

The number one way that the born again man receives direction is by the inner witness. What is the inner witness? The conscience is the voice of the reborn human spirit. This agrees with the scripture that says,

Heb 10:16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.

The freshly born again man does not need a written law to tell him, "Thou shalt not steal." It is no longer his "nature" to steal. The new nature he received when he was born again tells him, through the voice of the conscience, that he should not steal from his neighbor. It is the same with all the rest of the Ten Commandments.

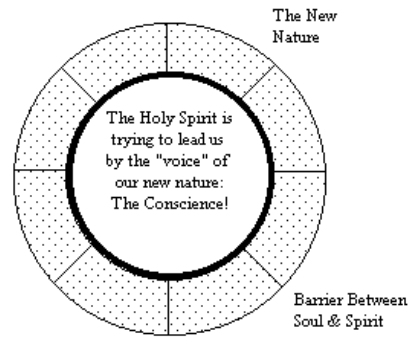


Fig. 1 – The Inner Witness

The Holy Spirit said to me,

"Those who habitually violate their conscience have great difficulty in discerning My voice."

Direction In The Affairs Of Life:

A man recently came to me with the complaint that he can't seem to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. I asked him, "When was the last time you violated your conscience?"

He thought for a moment and then said, "Well, I was about to go watch a movie with some friends a few nights ago. Just as we were about to enter the theater, 'something' within me seemed to say, *'Don't go in there. Go to the church and pray during this time instead.'*"

I asked him, "Did you obey that instruction?" He said, "No. I ignored it and watched the movie with my friends."

This man doesn't have a problem with hearing God. He has a problem with obeying God. The Holy Spirit was speaking through the man's conscience, giving him precise instructions on what to do. He has formed a lifestyle pattern of habitually overruling the voice of His conscience. The conscience is the voice of our human spirit, the number one place where God speaks to us. Habitually violating the "inner witness" (the conscience) is the surest path to becoming hardened to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Direction For The Gospel Entrepreneur:

For the Gospel Entrepreneur, this is vitally important. We MUST be able to discern the leading, of the Holy Spirit in the financial arena. It is the Holy Spirit who "shows us things to come." We want DIRECTION! Notice how the Holy Spirit was giving this man direction, but by overruling the voice of his conscience, he was also "deadening" his ability to be led by the Holy Ghost!

If all of us, from the day we were born again, would "instantly obey" the voice of our conscience, then we would avoid many of the pitfalls of life that the enemy plans for us. The Holy Spirit would be able to easily lead us through life. The problem is, however, most of us ignore many of

those promptings of the new nature. Over a period of time, we "deaden" our ability to hear the voice of our conscience. We become "hard of hearing" when it comes to the voice of our new nature. It's not that our new nature stops speaking to us through the voice of the conscience. We simply learn to "tune it out," much like parents do with the sound of their children playing.

1 Tim 4: Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

1 Tim 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; HAVING THEIR CONSCIENCE SEARED WITH A HOT IRON. [Emphasis mine]

From Strong's Dictionary, the Greek word translated "seared" is:

2743. kauteriazō, kow-tay-ree-ad'-zō; from a der. of G2545; to brand ("cauterize"), i.e. (by impl.) to render unsensitive (fig.):--sear with a hot iron.

When you cauterize a flesh wound, a scar is formed making that area insensitive to feeling. When we ignore the voice of our reborn human spirit (the conscience) we thicken the barrier between our soul and our spirit, making ourselves more and more insensitive to the leadership and direction provided by the Holy Spirit through our new nature.

Direction in "righteousness" and direction in your "call" both come through the same channel ... your reborn human spirit! The voice of your reborn human spirit is your conscience. If you want precise direction and leadership in your "call" as a Gospel Entrepreneur, you must be very tender and sensitive to the voice of your reborn human spirit.

It is folly indeed to try and be sensitive to the voice of your conscience only in the areas of your "call" and at the same time try to deaden your ability to hear that voice in your daily "walk" in areas of righteousness. You are either tender and sensitive to the voice of your conscience or you are not.

The new nature, your reborn human spirit, is still alive within you. Your new nature receives leadership and direction from the Holy Spirit. God IS speaking to you through the conduit of your reborn human spirit ... the new nature. The "voice" of that new nature is the conscience.

Why are you not hearing? Here is a good prayer:

"Father, in the name of Jesus, restore unto me a pure, undefiled conscience. Awaken my conscience in those areas where I have seared it."

Rom 9:1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.

One thing I know for sure; the more time a believer allows his reborn human spirit to fellowship with the Holy Spirit through meditation of the Word and praying in other tongues, the more tender and sensitive that believer becomes to the voice of his conscience. Referring back to the diagram at the beginning of this lesson, as a person spends hours of time in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, the "barrier" between the new nature and the soul is being torn down. Little by little, the light of righteousness from the born again human spirit begins to shine in all of those darkened chambers of the soul again. The conscience comes "alive" once more ... even in areas where we have seared it for many years.

In the plainest language I know how to speak, nobody can continue to habitually spend lots of time in the Word and praying in other tongues without becoming sensitive again to the voice of the new nature ... the conscience. The Holy Spirit is like a refiner's fire, and He will begin exposing those areas where we have been violating our conscience for many years. John the Baptist said,

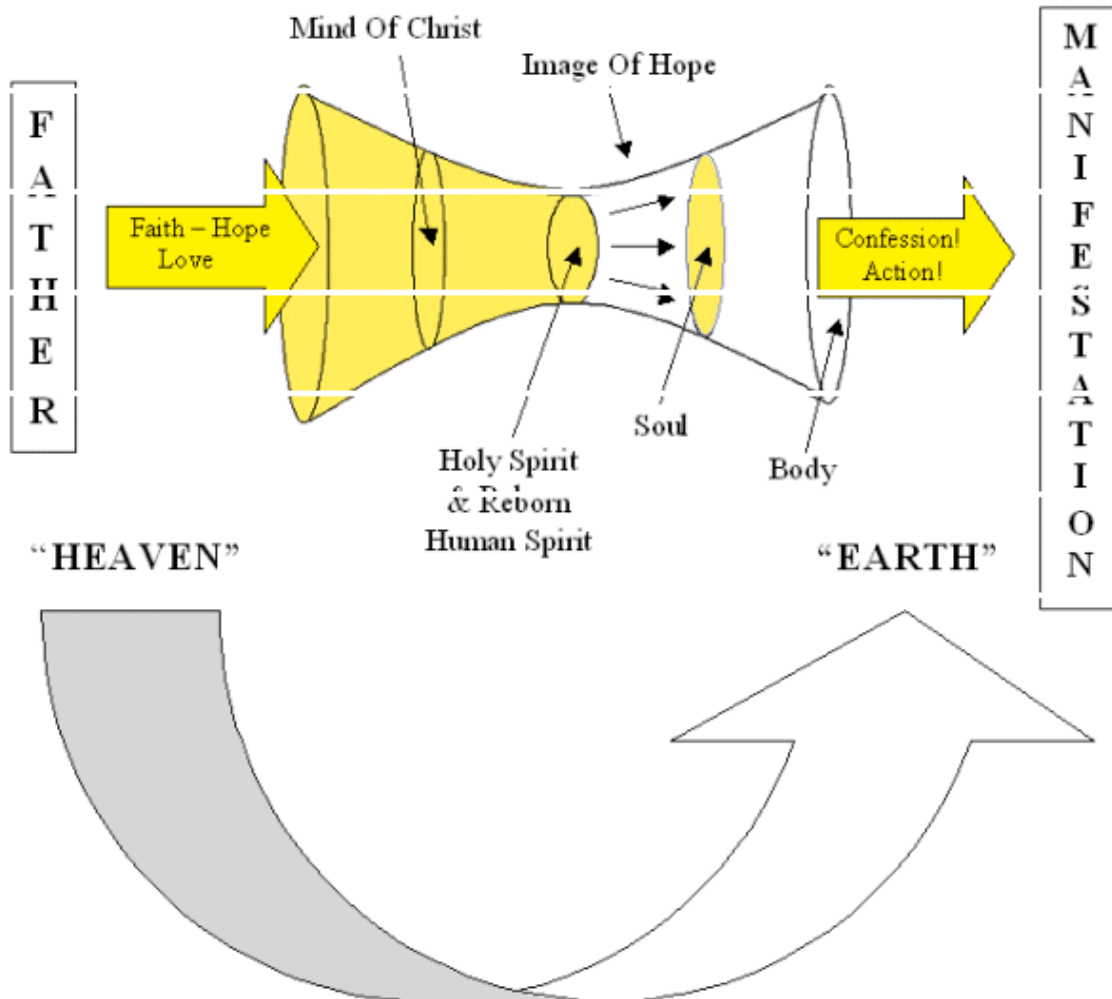
Mat 3:11-12 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

One by one, the believer will come face to face with habits, thought patterns, unforgiveness, and many other forms of unrighteousness that he has allowed in his soul for years. As he comes face to face with each one he will be faced with a decision: Repent or quit praying in tongues. Most people quit somewhere along the way, and then they wonder why they have so much difficulty "hearing" the leadership of the Holy Spirit in their "calling."

Once more, the number one way that we receive the leadership of the Holy Spirit is through the inner witness. The conscience of a believer is the conduit by which that leadership comes. If we have seared our conscience regarding leadership in "righteousness," we have unknowingly also seared our conscience regarding leadership in our "calling." For the Gospel Entrepreneur, it is imperative that the conduit of his conscience be clean, righteous, and holy in order that the leadership of the Holy Spirit may flow through it unhindered.

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT - THE FLOW

by Gary Carpenter



"Father, Thy Will Be Done In Earth, Just As It Is In Heaven!"

As we spend time in fellowship with the Father, He sends His own love, faith and hope into us via the conduit of the reborn spirit within us. His "will" is made known to us . . . first in our spirit. As we progressively comprehend the Father's will regarding any given situation, our spirit begins projecting the "image of hope" onto the screen of our soul. We begin to "see what our Father is doing." We then begin speaking the will of the Father and apply corresponding actions. This speaking and acting "in the name of Jesus" releases the authority for the Holy Spirit to manifest the will of the Father in earth, just as it is in heaven.