

lifelifters



by Demos Shakarian

Limited edition 300 copies





Life Lifters

by

DEMOS SHAKARIAN

Gift Publications
Costa Mesa, California

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by Demos Shakarian

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Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number 84-80166
International Standard Book Number 0-86595-013-X

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Printed in the United States of America.

Dear Gospel Friends,

Today more than ever, the vision of this Gospel has an important call in the entire world. Since its beginnings Gods design was clear and it has been present for many years, and now that we live a very Challenging time, we know that Gods Favor has been, it is, and will be with us forever.

This special book that you have in your hands, it's a clear message from God, through our founder Demos Shakarian, on how to lift up lives, lives that have been in darkness.

In The Lords Word, there are many passages that nurture our soul and spirit and confirm the great love that God has shown us through Jesus. One of those passages is the one of Gideon and the 300 men army, the way our Father demonstrates us how to win that special battle was very strategic. No days it is the same. Those who have understood the service call in this Gospel have decided to give the final step to a life of service; they have been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. They are like those 300 warriors that carried the torch inside the jar and at the time that they received their leaders order, they opened the jar and showed the fire that defeated the enemies. Today we are men and women of faith, and at the time that we take out the fire of The Holly Spirit, we take The Lords Word of life and life in abundance through our testimony, that is the strategic weapon that God has given us. I want to tell those who buy this book, to become one of those 300 warriors, and always be prepared to raise your last crop. I wish you abundant blessings and my gratitude for your loyalty and fidelity to Gods call that is FGBMFI.



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Contents

Preface	1
1 The Joy of Deliverance	3
2 "Lord, Give Me This Kind of Love"	5
3 Prepared by the Spirit	7
4 Exalted to Serve	10
5 In God's Diplomatic Service	14
6 Love Softens the Hardest Heart	17
7 A Word Wisely Spoken	19
8 When the Going Gets Tough	21
9 Faith Is a Way of Life	23
10 Oh, the Power of the Layman!	25
11 The Gospel Is Good News	27
12 Strength Comes Through Joy	30
13 Called to Be a Friend	32
14 The Invincible Power of Praise	34
15 The Secret to Boundless Energy	36
16 "Don't Wrestle, Nestle"	38
17 Set Free in Jesus	40
18 Faithful in Little, Ruler Over Much	42
19 Vase of Clay—Vessel of Honor	45
20 God Has Ways of Pulling Us Through	47
21 The Purpose of Success	49
22 Nothing Is Too Small for God	52
23 How to Know When God Leads	55
24 "You Are Jesus, Aren't You?"	57
25 Wholly New in Christ	59
26 Love Is All the Proof You Need	61
27 The Best Gift of All	63

Preface

Wherever I go in the world people tell me how much they have been blessed by the book, *The Happiest People on Earth*. The story of how God used me to raise up the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, and of how He prepared me for the task, helped them in their own relationships with the Lord.

As founder/president of the Fellowship, I have had a rich spiritual pilgrimage down through the years. Much of it has been furnished by my contact with the wonderful men and women of God who have surrounded me through the Fellowship. From my own experiences, and by observing God at work in the lives of others, I think I understand a little of how God works in His people.

As I speak in various conventions and meetings around the world, the Holy Spirit leads me to share real-life stories which illustrate some of the great spiritual truths of the Bible. They are stories about myself, about members of the Fellowship, and about both believers and non-believers whom I have met over the years.

I have put some of these stories into writing so that many more people can benefit from them. Early in 1982 the task of compiling them was begun. As the work progressed, we realized that it could become a valuable tool for building up the body of Christ. For this reason the devotionals focus on issues that affect us everyday. They are aimed at all who love our Lord Jesus Christ and desire to grow and mature in Him.

This volume is intended to be positive, uplifting and

2 LIFE LIFTERS

inspiring. The stories are designed to build faith, hope and love. God bless you as you read. May you know how great is His love for you and understand more fully the inheritance that is yours in His Son Jesus Christ.

*With love in Jesus,
Demos Shakarian*

The Joy of Deliverance *2 Kings 18:13-37; 19:1-37*

Then Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said... "Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear; open your eyes, O Lord, and see... Truly, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands... Now therefore, O Lord our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you are the Lord God, you alone."
—2 Kings 19:14-19

In the early 1970s I was going through an extremely dark moment. The pressure of my business affairs was crushing. Early one morning my attorney confessed sadly, "Demos, we've done everything we can. I don't know how to save you."

I shuffled out of his office on Spring Street in downtown Los Angeles and stood gazing into the overcast sky. Even the buildings looked cold, and the people who passed me by seemed lifeless. I had a similar eerie feeling when I went through Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in London.

As I stood on the curb, tears blurred my vision. "Lord, I don't know what to do," I choked. "You heard my attorney. I don't know which way to turn. But if You'll lead me, I'm willing to walk moment by moment."

I was due in Phoenix for a convention that evening. As we departed, my son Steve slid behind the driver's seat and my wife Rose found her place in the front next to him. I slumped in the

4. LIFE LIFTERS

back seat, my head pounding, my ears aching. To hide the tears streaming down my cheeks, I slid my western hat low over my face. We were close to Blythe when I finally broke the silence.

"Let's go back home," I moaned.

As they agreed, my spirit suddenly, unexpectedly rose up within me. "No, I will not be defeated!" I exclaimed. "Let's go on to Phoenix."

When we arrived, I didn't feel like going straight into the meeting. Instead, I ate dinner in the hotel, then took a shower, hoping to revive my spirits. It was 8:35 when I finally entered the auditorium. As I walked in, a crowd of about two thousand stood and cheered.

The late Carl Williams, convention chairman and International treasurer, hugged me. "Man, am I glad to see you!"

"Why's that?" I mumbled.

"The meeting is dead! We can't do anything."

About that time several other men grabbed me. "Thank God you're here, Demos," they enthused.

When I took the microphone, all of my discouragement left in an instant. The Spirit of God came upon me, and as I began to share, the auditorium exploded into life and people were ecstatic.

Many have remarked about that meeting since. No one ever knew what I was going through, or that I had almost turned back. The deliverance God gave us that night was equally as great as what happened with Hezekiah.

There is a beautiful lesson in the story of Hezekiah. When he was at his lowest, God delivered him miraculously. Israel was God's people; when they cried out to Him, He rescued them. Today He is working with spiritual Israel, and we are His nation. We may not see Him defend a land by striking down 185,000 in the camp of the enemy in one night, but He delivers us spiritually in an equally spectacular manner.

That night in Phoenix, thousands had come to receive something from God, yet nothing was happening. The enemy had not only arrayed himself against me, he had momentarily succeeded in discouraging the people of God. Then, despite my own low state, God opened His hand and anointed the meeting.

Never give up, for it is at your lowest ebb that God may use you the most.

“Lord, Give Me This Kind of Love” Matthew 10:5-42

*“Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”
—Matthew 10:29-31*

One day my wife Rose was sitting in our den with our youngest son, Steve. Suddenly, they heard a thump at the window. Running toward it, there they saw a beautiful bluejay lying on the sill, wounded and bleeding.

Seemingly from out of nowhere about fifty other bluejays landed on our camelia tree, right outside the window. They seemed to moan and to cry for the bird that was hurt.

“I’ve never heard such a mourning from birds,” Rose related later. “They were all crying as if they themselves were hurt. I thought, ‘Oh, Lord, what love You have put even in the birds.’ They cried so much that I felt sick with their anguish and prayed, ‘Lord, give me this kind of love for Your people.’”

Rose and Steve prayed for the wounded bluejay, and it shook itself and flew away. When the rest of the bluejays saw what happened, they left, too.

Many times in life we find ourselves hurt, bleeding, brokenhearted. We all go through difficult times. But one thing

6 LIFE LIFTERS

gives us courage: the Lord loves us. If He put that kind of caring in little bluejays, think how much more He is concerned about us.

No matter how much despair you may feel, His loving arms are all around you. He will turn your mourning into laughter, your tears into smiles.

When we know deep inside of us how much God loves us, we will value ourselves and others. The ability to love comes from knowing how much God loves. When you know you are loved, and you love yourself as a result, you cannot help but show it.

The Lord cares enough about a bluejay to send others of its flock to weep over its hurt. How much more, then, does he care for you when you are wounded? And of what greater encouragement could you be to another than to show your compassion in his hour of need.

Prepared by the Spirit

John 9

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" He answered and said, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?" And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen him and it is he who is talking with you." Then he said, "Lord, I believe!"
—John 9:35-38

Years ago we had an All-American Market in our shopping center. It occupied about 30,000 square feet, which was big for those days. The owner of the market and I got together to go see Ed Toncks who was preparing for the grand opening of his supermarket.

Ed was the one who brought the giant supermarkets into Southern California, so he was a big businessman. Although we had never met, we knew each other by reputation.

"I must talk with you," he beamed when he saw me.

"Well, I don't want to bother you while you are getting ready for your grand opening," I hesitated.

"No, I insist," he smiled warmly. "I want to take you to lunch."

As we ate, he poured his heart out to me. "Demos, I know you're on radio calling men back to God and the businessmen say, 'Why doesn't Demos forget God and keep milking his cows.' I've always defended you by telling them that what you

are doing is more important than milking cows. But you ought to know that you are in the center of lots of controversy in this area. People don't understand what you are doing."

After lunch we took Ed back to his store. "Ed, would you go to a meeting with me sometime?" I invited as we parted.

"Yes, I'd like that," he said.

Two weeks later I telephoned him to see if he wanted to go with me to a meeting in Los Angeles that evening.

"Yes, I would," he responded. "Should I meet you at your house?"

As we drove to the service in my car, I asked him about his background.

"I'm a Methodist," he said, explaining that he originally came from Oklahoma.

"Did they have those old brush arbors back there?" I inquired.

"I used to play the guitar and sing at those meetings," he smiled.

A plan began to form in my mind. "Do you remember any of the songs?" I probed.

"Yes, I remember 'There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins.'"

I didn't say any more. When we arrived, the auditorium was packed, with people standing in the back. I was speaking that night, so I asked a young man if Ed could borrow his guitar. Ed protested that he had not played in years but reluctantly took it and followed me to the front. I announced that he was going to sing. As I put my arms around him, I felt his body quaking with fear.

"There is a fountain filled with blood," he began, "drawn from Immanuel's veins..." As he went into the second verse, tears began pouring down his face. Suddenly, he dropped to his knees, and right there I led him to the Lord.

Ed received the peace of God that night. To me, it is the most wonderful feeling in the world to bring a man to the knowledge of Christ.

No one can come to Jesus unless the Holy Spirit has prepared him. You don't need clever arguments to win someone. If you are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, He will lead you to those whose hearts are ready to hear the message.

Like the young man blind from birth who came to Jesus, God brings people across our paths everyday. Prepared by the Spirit, they cry out inside to know Jesus. The voice of their hearts is ever before him, "Who is He, that we may believe in Him?" As we follow the promptings of the Lord, He will lead us to those whom He has made ready.

Exalted to Serve Psalm 75; Luke 14:7-14; 1 Chronicles 17; 2 Kings 5

Exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one, and exalts another.

—Psalm 75:6, 7

Whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

—Luke 14:11

King David went in and sat before the Lord; and he said: "Whom am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? And yet . . . You have spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come, and have regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O Lord God. What more can David say to You for the honor of Your servant? For you know Your servant."

—1 Chronicles 17:16-18

My wife and I had just arrived home from Tulsa, Oklahoma, where we had been in a board meeting with Oral Roberts. As we opened our back door with our luggage beside us, the phone was ringing. Rushing to the phone, I quickly picked up the receiver and answered.

"Hello."

"The White House calling," the operator on the other end spoke authoritatively.

After a few moments a voice asked, "Demos Shakarian? Bob Maddox." I knew who he was; he was President Carter's Special Assistant for Religious Liaison. "The President wants you to be one of a team of men to represent him in Egypt. Israel is turning over a certain portion of the Sinai desert to Egypt, and he wants you to be one of twelve delegates. It means you're coming to Washington tomorrow."

Prophecies had been given years earlier that I would go before world leaders, but I never sought to curry favor to make them happen. I never cease to be amazed at what God can accomplish when we trust Him with our lives instead of seeking to promote ourselves.

The delegation comprised top corporate men such as Ben Dixon, such notables as former President Johnson's daughter Lynda Robb, a couple of senators and Robert Strauss, U.S. trade negotiator in President Carter's administration. The President flies aboard Air Force One; we were aboard Number Two.

From the plane we were taken directly to the home of President Anwar Sadat. I had the honor of meeting Sadat and presenting him with a copy of my book, *The Happiest People on Earth*.

Our first night in Cairo was a glamorous affair. A magnificent banquet had been prepared, hosted by President Sadat and other Egyptian officials.

Following the banquet our delegation was standing around thanking the Prime Minister and other leaders for their hospitality. President Sadat had already left. Suddenly, I saw a gentleman heading toward me and recognized him instantly as the former Egyptian Ambassador to the United States. A year earlier I had introduced him to our World Convention in Anaheim and had given him thirty minutes to speak about the problems of his country.

Now Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt, he grabbed me, hugged me, and kissed me three times, right in front of President Carter's manager and the Prime Minister.

"Mr. Prime Minister," he announced, "I want you to know

who this man is. Demos Shakarian is the man who gave me a platform before 12,000 people and got me on nationwide television to talk to the American people about our problems."

The Prime Minister greeted me warmly. "May I also hug you?" he asked, whereupon he hugged and kissed me three times. After that the general in charge of the Egyptian forces also hugged and kissed me three times.

The next day we flew across the Red Sea and landed at Mount Sinai airport, which had been built by Israel. We had followed the basic route that Moses and the children of Israel had trod thousands of years earlier. From the airport we traveled seventeen miles by bus to Mount Sinai itself, where a large tent had been set up for the ceremonies.

About 4,500 delegates were present. I was seated immediately in front of Pope Shenauda of the Coptic Church and Bishop Samuel. They stood, delighted to see me. "Mr. Shakarian!" the Pope enthused. I stepped up the bleacher toward them, and they hugged and kissed me. I had met them in Egypt a month earlier.

The following day on our way back to the United States aboard Air Force Two, one of the American delegation could stand the suspense no longer. Rising from his seat, he stepped over to me.

"Mr. Shakarian," he began, "I'd like to ask you a question. Who are you?"

"Why?" I asked, startled.

"The night of the banquet, the Prime Minister hugged and kissed you. The Deputy Prime Minister also hugged and kissed you. And the general hugged and kissed you. They didn't hug and kiss anyone but you. The following day at the dedication out at Mount Sinai, the Pope and the Bishop stood up to hug and kiss you. So who are you?"

I smiled and joked, "Now you know why the President sent me!"

Often we feel that we have to be seen with the right people. We forget that there is One who is a master of timing and who can exalt us without any effort on our part. It doesn't require back-slapping or boot-licking for God's people to be exalted. All that is necessary is a pure heart.

When God honors us, it is so that we may bring glory to Him. When He honored David, the king didn't let it go to his

head. His prayer was, "Let Thy name be established and magnified forever..." Through Israel's exaltation he saw that God would be glorified.

A great many people seek advancement in life. They want to be famous or wealthy. God isn't against those things; He delights to honor us. But we have to check our motives.

When Gehazi met the captain of the army of the king of Syria, he seized the opportunity to advance himself and get rich (2 Kings 5:20-27). God wants to bless us, but He is first concerned about our attitude. What is our motive in the things we do? Do we really want to see His kingdom advanced and His name glorified, or are we covetous at heart?

God has opened doors all over the world for me to meet with heads of state. But it is not so that I can become someone, it is so that I can share the Lord Jesus with them. That should always be uppermost in any of our minds.

In God's Diplomatic Service *2 Corinthians 5:11-21;* *Matthew 10:1-20; 22:15-22*

Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

—2 Corinthians 5:20

When God commissions us as ambassadors, He sends us where He needs us. If we are sensitive to His Spirit, He can use us to set in motion a chain of events which can have national and international significance.

Such was the case when two of our International Directors from Texas, Newman Peyton and Glen Norwood, received information from a priest in the region concerning events which were to result in the Jim Jones tragedy.

Newman and Glen arranged a dinner in Guyana to which key individuals in the community were invited. One of the guests was Sir Lionel Luckhoo, mayor of Georgetown and famed in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the world's most successful criminal lawyer." Of 232 murder cases which he defended, all defendants were acquitted. Born in British Guyana, Sir Lionel had received his law degree at Oxford University in England and returned to his own country.

He had not planned to attend the meeting, but at the last-

minute urging of a telephone call from an unknown black girl, he decided to go. That night, as Newman and Glen shared their testimonies, he stood and accepted Jesus into his life.

Because two members of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship were obedient to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, this great man found salvation and has since witnessed to world leaders and been instrumental in the conversion of thousands.

On one occasion, after the Jim Jones tragedy, Sir Lionel chaired a banquet at Queens College attended by 435 people, including some of the most influential men in the financial and business communities. Also, at least 35 members of the diplomatic corps representing 28 nations, including Canada, Cuba, China and the Soviet Union. I was the guest speaker that night.

"Every nation has a right to run its affairs as it sees fit," I told the audience, "so I haven't come here to tell you how to run your affairs. Jesus was tempted on this point; He could have taken control of the kingdoms of the world, but He didn't do it.

"When He was asked about a political issue, Jesus asked someone to give Him a coin. 'Whose image is that on the coin?' He asked those who were questioning Him. Of course, it was Caesar's. So He told them, 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's.'"

At that moment I looked at Forbes Burnham, the Prime Minister of Guyana, and said, "Mr. Prime Minister, you belong to God." Then I turned to the rest of the people and said, "This nation belongs to God. This continent belongs to God. The whole world was made by God." I began to exalt Jesus.

Seventeen minutes later I asked, "How many of you would like to give your hearts to God—to be reconciled and have peace with Jesus?" In the corner of my eye I saw Prime Minister Burnham's hand go up. That night 124 others raised their hands. I said to them, "Would you stand so that I can pray for you?" All 125 stood, and I prayed.

When I had finished speaking, the Prime Minister leaned over to Sir Lionel. "Sir Lionel, I have to speak," he whispered.

The Prime Minister addressed the guests for twenty-two minutes. "I went to a Methodist Sunday school when I was quite young," he explained. "I didn't raise my hand nor stand up for a

16. LIFE LIFTERS

show tonight. I had to make my peace with God. I have never felt such love—it's beautiful."

Suddenly, he turned to me: "Demos, I want you to take your men throughout my nation with this message." Then he addressed the ambassadors: "Call these men to your country; this love is what the world needs."

I hadn't planned what I was going to say that night; I hadn't thought of the illustration of the coin in this context before. But God gave me the words of wisdom which could touch the hearts of diplomats.

God has given different gifts to the members of His church, and one of those is evangelism. Not all of us are called to be evangelists like Billy Graham; we have varied and different ministries. But regardless of our calling we are all members of God's diplomatic corps on missions of life to a dying world.

Be aware of your rank as an ambassador—God may use you to touch off a series of events that will have major ramifications for the advance of His Kingdom.

Love Softens the Hardest Heart *Jeremiah 31:31-34;* *Ezekiel 11:14-20*

Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

—Ezekiel 11:19, 20

"Man alive, what has she gotten me into this time!" the trucker fussed to himself as he saw grown men hugging each other.

His wife had purchased his ticket to the Fellowship breakfast at the Hilton Hotel and insisted that he attend. He would have been out of there in a flash had he not been seen by a businessman from whom he had bought automobiles. Before he could leave, the car dealer sold him a ticket for the following month.

When the day for the next meeting arrived, his wife again insisted that he attend. "I haven't got the time," he protested, trying to avoid the subject. But somehow, he found himself at the meeting.

This time he was seated beside an engineer who began quizzing him. "Are you saved? And do you go to church?"

"I've been sprinkled on the head," the trucker mumbled, "but I can't say I'm a big church man." The engineer persisted with his questions, and to get him off his back the trucker finally said the sinner's prayer with him. He went home feeling no different, but not before he had been sold another ticket.

At the next breakfast the speaker was praying in tongues and singing in the Spirit. A little bolder this time, the trucker was nearer the front. He looked up and saw a ball of fire near the ceiling, but apparently no one else noticed it. Then the ball of fire descended and settled on his head. Suddenly, he began speaking in a strange tongue. Tears flooded his eyes. Since he thought of himself as a tough man and didn't want anyone to see him cry, he left. All the way home, he couldn't stop crying.

The trucker was a changed man from that day. His hard heart became soft, warm and tender. Later my trucker friend and another man went to Honduras to share Jesus with the Indians there. With a recording of the salvation message in Spanish, they knocked on doors, asking people to put the recorder to their ears and listen to what it had to say. Many were moved to tears and saved through this ministry.

When I went to Honduras sometime later, an artist gave me a picture of a village portraying a cobblestone street, large Catholic church and huts built alongside the road. Because the painting was still wet, I had to hand-carry it on the plane. When my friend saw it, he told me, "That village is where we witnessed in Honduras!"

If God can change a rough trucker into a compassionate evangelist, what can He do with you? It doesn't matter what your problem is, He can soften you by His Holy Spirit. It isn't our own effort that will change us; it is allowing the power of God to flow through us.

Desperately trying to improve themselves, too many people have burned themselves out. What we need most of all is to submit to the righteousness of God. No heart is too hard for Him to change, no character flaw is too difficult for Him to overcome.

A Word Wisely Spoken

Acts 17:16-34

Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things."

—Acts 17:22-25

Astronaut Charles Duke and I were sharing the speaking during a series of services in India. "Lord, how do I speak to these people?" I prayed. "They are ninety-five percent Hindu."

When I stood before the crowd, the Lord impressed me to relate my ancestral background. "How many of you know of Armenia?" I asked. Few hands went up. "How many of you have heard of Noah's Ark?" Most of the hands went up. "Well, that's our country," I explained. Then I joked, "Everybody came down from the area where the Ark landed except the Armenians, so

you are my cousins."

I continued, "A lot of people are nature worshipers. My ancestors were like that—their God was nature, and the sun and moon. According to tradition when Jesus was on earth in the first century, the Armenian king sent two ambassadors to offer Him a home in Armenia. Jesus replied, 'I cannot come, but later I will send two of My disciples.' The ambassadors then explained, 'Our king has leprosy. Won't You come and heal him?' Jesus took a towel, wiped the sweat off His face, and gave the towel to the ambassadors. 'Take it to your king,' he instructed. 'If he will receive it, he will be healed.' When they gave the king the towel, he was healed.

"The Armenian people had no peace in those days, but in the third century they became a Christian nation. And when they were reconciled to God through Christ, they found peace because He is God."

Then I asked the crowd, "How many of you would like to make peace with God?" In one meeting of 500 leaders, about 125 hands went up. In another meeting, 800 out of 1,300 responded. In every service at least a quarter of the people stood. And remember, these were Hindus.

God always gives us the wisdom to say the right word when we allow ourselves to be guided by His Spirit. He understands how to reach the hearts of men. All we need to do is follow the prompting of His Spirit.

When the Going Gets Tough Luke 9:57-62

Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

—Luke 9:57, 58

When God gives us a job to do we are to carry it out regardless of the cost. It doesn't matter what kind of forces come against us, if we know God told us to do something we cannot let other voices turn us aside from our mission.

I learned this lesson when God was first calling me into His work. In 1947 the Lord spoke specifically to Rose and me to sponsor a three-week convention in Fresno, California. The only ones we knew there were some men who had attended the Hollywood Bowl meeting we had held earlier that year.

I told these men that God wanted us to have a crusade in Fresno and that I would pay the expenses and take no salary for myself. If any money was left over, it would be for the pastors in the area. The evangelists who would conduct the meetings would be William Branham, Kelso Glover and A.C. Valdez, Sr. Each would take one week.

Many obstacles had to be overcome before the crusade could begin, and the devil fought hard to defeat us. The city band, for example, had planned concerts for the Saturday and

Sunday evenings of our meetings, and they were scheduled in the same auditorium. This meant that we would just get the meetings going, then have to give up use of the facility.

"If it's God's will, we'll get the auditorium on those nights," I encouraged. But when I talked to the officials about it, I was turned down. The door was shut and bolted, and there seemed no way forward.

Suddenly, God gave me an idea. I would talk to the bandmaster himself. I learned his name and where he lived. Mr. Hennesy was a tax collector in the city. I visited him at his beautiful home and asked him to cancel the concerts for the evenings we needed the auditorium.

"No way!" he replied sternly. But I kept talking, and suddenly the power of God struck him. I thought I was going to have to hold him up, so powerful was the conviction upon him.

"I don't know what I'm thinking of or what I'm doing," he muttered, "but I have to do what I feel is right. I'm really going to get the dickens for this, but I will cancel the concerts during the crusade."

"Mr. Hennesy, thank you," I said, "You're not going to lose out, you're going to be blessed."

Later, I signed a contract with Mr. Hennesy permitting the band to play on the three Sunday evenings from 6:00 to 7:00. I paid him as much as he would have taken in before. He couldn't believe it. I did it so that the concert audience would stay to hear the gospel.

When Jesus calls us to a task, it's easy to say, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." Yet when the going gets tough, a lot of us quit. Jesus said, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." We must persevere in the calling of God. As we keep our eyes ever forward, God will see us through.

When God gives you an assignment, it's going to cost you. But you will never lose out. God blessed Mr. Hennesy because he obeyed. He has never failed to prosper me when I have paid the price. It really is true that you can't outgive God when He is the One who has told you to give.

Never look back when God gives you a job, regardless of the price. When you are tempted to quit, persevere. He will meet every need you have.

Faith Is a Way of Life *Luke 12:13-34; Romans 10:11-18*

Do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. But seek the kingdom of God, and all those things shall be added to you.

—Luke 12:29, 31

The Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

—Romans 10:11

John Osteen said something at a convention in Detroit before seven thousand people that touched me. "I've never heard Demos talk about faith," he told the audience, "but while all us preachers are preaching it, Demos is out doing it." In those few words he expressed how I feel about faith. For me it isn't a doctrine, it's a way of life.

I had a five-hundred-acre ranch in Modesto, California, where I was raising my heifers. It is beautiful cattle-raising country. My neighbor had three hundred acres to the south of me, and I needed that land. But he refused to sell.

During pheasant hunting season one year when my son Steve was quite young, we were walking through the wet pasture, just the two of us, with our guns. At one point we walked over to the fence to rest. Gazing across that southern acreage, I sighed, "Steve, we need that land so that we can run

1,500 heifers here, but the owner won't sell it. Let's pray that God will give it to us."

We leaned our guns against the fence, held hands, and prayed. We asked the Lord to give us that land, and prayed that it wouldn't take too long.

God wonderfully answered our prayer. A few months later the owner called. He wanted to sell the land to me but couldn't explain why.

Years later Steve said, "Dad, that was a tremendous lesson to me. I realized that I could ask for things and God would give them to me."

Preaching isn't the only way in which faith is inspired in people. Our lives are themselves a message if we walk by faith. Nowhere is that more true than in our families.

Deep in my heart I have a fixed confidence that if I trust God as I go through life, He will do His part. If you are walking with God, you don't have to make deals with Him or strive to stand on promises; you don't even have to ask for things, they just come.

That has been my experience through the years in business. God has directed my decisions. He has enabled me to think clearly and to discern the direction He wants me to take.

Ask God to give you ideas and dreams, and believe that your prayer is answered. Even when all the odds seem against you, if God tells you to do something, do it. When you know that God is in charge, you can abandon yourself to Him. I've gone places and done things that seemed ridiculous at the time, but years later they turned out to be a great blessing.

I feel as much energy to do things for God today as I did forty years ago, and I'm going to keep walking this way until God takes me home.

I don't expect things just to fall into my lap. I work hard and do what God shows me to do, then trust Him to bless me. He's never let me down.

Oh, the Power of the Layman! **Colossians 3; Matthew 5:14-16;** **Philippians 2:14-16**

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.
—Matthew 5:14-16

A woman and her husband sat in the law offices of Judge Sewell, one of our Full Gospel men from North Carolina. She had called him earlier in the day, asking him to prepare separation papers.

The couple had considerable means. The devil whispered in his ear, "You might a get a pretty good fee out of this...could run into several thousand dollars."

As he talked with them, he learned that they had two children, a boy of 16 and a girl of 14. After listening to the couple for a while, he finally looked the husband straight in the eye and spoke boldly, "I don't believe you need a separation; you need Jesus."

A tear suddenly rolled down from the man's eye.

"Thank You, Jesus, for sticking the hook in him," Judge Sewell prayed silently, then continued, "I believe you wife is

saved but are you?"

"No . . . I'm not saved," his voice faltered.

"Do you want to be saved? You can be, right here in this law office."

Tears again ran down the man's cheeks as he nodded.

"Sit over here beside your wife," Judge Sewell directed.

"Now, say this prayer with me, from your heart. 'Dear Jesus . . . I repent of my sins . . . Come into my heart, Lord Jesus, and save me . . . Lord, help me to walk with You.'"

At the end of the prayer, the husband reached over to his wife and kissed her. The judge put his arms around them both and prayed with them. Instead of separating, they went out of that office together, rejoicing. A little later the judge heard someone running up the steps, followed by a knock on his door.

"I'm sorry, Judge Sewell, I forgot to ask how much we owe you."

"Not a penny," the judge smiled. "That cost God Almighty everything, but it doesn't cost you a penny."

We are living in a time when the layman is at last coming into his own. When God gave me the idea for the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, He showed me that it was never to become a church, or a substitute for a church. It was to be an organization of laymen, themselves members of churches of every kind, living ordinary lives and doing ordinary jobs.

When a man becomes part of our Fellowship, he doesn't give up his job. He stays where he is, doing the same things; what has changed is not his activities but his motivation. Hundreds of thousands of laymen like Judge Sewell, all leading normal lives, are having a powerful impact upon the world:

Christ indwells our whole life. That means that He is in our work, our family life, our recreation, our meal times—no matter where we are or what we are doing. He is present. No part of life is more holy than another. If I sing praises in a meeting with fellow believers, Jesus is glorified; if I sit in a coffee shop sharing experiences with a workmate, He is equally glorified. His love, His joy, His peace—all of the fruit of the Spirit—are evident no matter what I am doing.

The world isn't impressed by religion. It is turned on by dedicated laymen filled with the love and power of God.

The Gospel Is Good News *Luke 9:49-56; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23;* *Colossians 4:5, 6*

Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.
—Colossians 4:5, 6

For several years Brother Ming, a wealthy Chinese real estate man in Hawaii, urged me to visit mainland China. Finally, I agreed to go and joined him on a tour with nearly thirty other travelers. Among them was Herb Ellingwood, then legal counsel for President Reagan.

During our stay, Brother Ming escorted Rose and me to dinner with Madame Sung in her mansion. She was Madame Sung Kai-Shek's older sister, around ninety years of age, small and a little plump, and confined to a wheel chair.

In the twenties, her husband Dr. Sun Yat-Sen overthrew the Chinese dynasty with the help of General Chiang Kai-Shek and became the first president of China.

After his death, Mao came to power with the Communists, and Madame Sung became one of his personal advisors.

We had dinner at the same table where she had entertained many world leaders. After our meal, she related her father had been a Methodist preacher, and that she attended the Wesleyan

College in Macon, Georgia, in the early 1900s.

She was there to study political science but I knew that also she must have received some religious training.

Before we left, I presented her with a copy of *The Happiest People on Earth*. She held the book close to her bosom. Her secretary tried to take it away, but she refused, insisting that she wanted to read it that night. We said goodbye and drove back to where we were staying.

Madame Sung had fallen in love with Rose, and the next day she wrote us a two-page, hand-written letter in which she said that our visit had brought her pleasure and joy. She told us that when we celebrated our golden wedding anniversary in 1983 she wanted us to bring our children and grandchildren with us and celebrate the occasion with her. Herb Ellingwood and the others in our party helped us draft a letter of acceptance. We were to go on August 6, 1983.

While we were at Berlin for Jesus in October 1981, we learned that Madame Sung had died.

When we arrived home, we found an official invitation from the Peking government, requesting us to attend her funeral. We would have gone, but it was too late.

There are two approaches to preaching the gospel. One is to thunder the wrath of God, giving sinners dire warnings of what will happen to them if they don't repent. The other is to exalt Jesus. If you look carefully through the four Gospels, you will find that Jesus didn't preach angrily to sinners. The only people to whom He expressed anger were the religious hypocrites who were hindering others from entering the Kingdom of God. Whenever Jesus dealt with sinners, He was loving and gentle.

God has shown me through the years that a gentle approach goes a long way. I tell people how much God loves them and wants to bless them if they will turn to Him. We must be careful how we present the gospel. It should always be good news, not threatenings and warnings.

The evening we spent with Madame Sung we simply shared ourselves. Because she saw the sincerity and warmth of Jesus in us, she was touched. It gave us the opportunity to place a copy of my book in her hands and to form a friendship with her.

Rose and I never knew the total impact we had on Madame

Sung, but we believe the love we had shown, and the gentle witness we had given, had a profound affect. She was not buried in Peking, but in the Christian burial grounds of Shanghai.

Strength Comes Through Joy *Nehemiah 8:1-12*

Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.
—Nehemiah 8:10

One of the most joyous events to me is when a pastor discovers that he doesn't really know Jesus and is not only born again but filled with the Spirit.

Pastor Murray Moreford joined a denominational Church in 1933 and pastored for forty years. He had no time for people of a Pentecostal or charismatic persuasion. Whenever the subject of Pentecost came up, he became abrasive.

But on July 26, 1976, Pastor Moreford received Jesus into his heart. He spent six and a half hours in his living room waiting for the Holy Spirit to fill his life that day. It wouldn't have taken so long had he not needed to die inside to all his old beliefs.

When he experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit, he also received "the left boot of fellowship" from his denomination. But he had never been happier in his life. Quoting the verse, "the joy of the Lord is your strength" for forty years, he had never really experienced it until the Holy Spirit flooded his life.

"Can you imagine me in meetings like this seven months ago?" he asked his wife, Marie, at a Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship dinner six months after his infilling.

A lot of believers in our churches today, including many pastors, are like the people in Ezra's time. The Word of God

doesn't bring them joy. They have the doctrine of joy, but they don't have the experience of joy. The doctrine is just dead words until the Holy Spirit quickens us to celebrate life. It is the Spirit who enables us to enter into the joy of the Lord. Such joyous living is what gives us strength in time of trial to endure, persevere, and emerge victoriously.

Called to Be a Friend 1 Samuel 20; John 15:15

*Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.
—1 Samuel 20:17*

*No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.
—John 15:15*

Some people have the nebulous idea that once they have Jesus they don't need others. So they seldom relate to anyone in a close way; their relationships are surface.

I don't think I could have survived in the Fellowship had God not given me my good friend Tommy Ashcraft, our Executive Vice President. Like David and Jonathan, we share the same vision, the same feelings; we understand each other. Tommy has inspired men all over the world. If God hadn't given me a man like that, I couldn't have handled the load; it would have destroyed me. Tommy has been with me twenty-five years and has never complained. We love each other. He tells me when I am wrong, and we get in there and hammer things out.

Jesus meets our every need. Everything is from Him, but that doesn't make us an island so that we don't need others. When Elijah had no food, God sent him to a widow woman. He

could have given the prophet manna, but He gave him someone to take care of his need instead. God does that for us spiritually, too. He sends us friends with whom we can be close.

Often the great men of the Bible had someone to stand with them. Moses had Aaron, Elijah had Elisha, Paul had Silas, and there are many others. Jesus sent His disciples out in two's. But the classic is David and Jonathan. God wants us to develop a depth of commitment in a friendship. Praise God, He has given me friends like that.

If you don't have such a friend, ask God to give you one.

The Invincible Power of Praise *Psalm 148 and 149*

Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth...

—Psalm 149:5, 6

During one of our trips in 1970, Rose and I met a group of on-fire Brazilian believers. Many were pastors of large churches, and ten were some of the most successful businessmen in Brazil.

Of the millions of miles I've flown in my life all over the world, never have I seen an electric organ on a plane. But I noticed one on this flight. The Brazilians suggested that we go into the lounge where the organ was and start praising God among the passengers who were drinking there. They started singing, clapping and dancing in worship with full energy. We were high! And I don't just mean 36,000 feet in the air at 600 miles per hour. Soon around four hundred people were trying to crowd the back, causing the jumbo jet to tilt upward. The captain directed everyone be seated and fasten their seat belts so we could level off again.

After our praise session ended, Rose decided to remain in the lounge. Before long she overheard two men talking as they drank and smoked.

"What kind of people were they?" one asked about our group.

"Oh, they were Spirit-filled Pentecostals," the other began. He seemed to know all about the Spirit-filled life, so Rose joined in the conversation.

"My wife sends a check to the Fellowship each month," he said nervously after Rose introduced herself. Rose beckoned me to join them, and the three of us started to talk.

The man's name was Lyn Musick. He had belonged to a gospel singing group which had gone all over the country, but he had backslidden. He had a wife and five sons, two of whom were preparing for the ministry. Lyn had risen high up in Mobil Oil and was in charge of the corporation's marketing for the nation.

"Well, you're in the belly of the whale like Jonah," I finally observed. "We weren't even supposed to be on this flight, but God put us here with you."

Tears began to trickle down his cheeks. I asked if I could lead him in the sinner's prayer. Rose and I took his hands, and we led him in prayer as he bawled like a child.

Back with the Lord, he was feeling good again. I was impressed to ask him to play the organ and sing for us. Lyn put his liquor and cigarette down and started to play. The music was rough at first, but then the anointing of the Spirit came upon him, and he sang beautifully. Rose and I began to cry as a crowd gathered around to hear him sing to Jesus.

I have learned that you can praise God anywhere. To think that we could get high in the Spirit while on a plane! And why not? Israel worshiped God in the temple, and they praised Him as they went into battle. Whenever God's people come together today, they have one language in common—praise.

Often God allows us to join praises with the saints in glory. You don't have to be in a worship service for this to take place. It can happen right in your own kitchen, living room or car, or on an airplane at 36,000 feet. The "high praises" of God can come forth any time your spirit reaches out to God in adoration.

When you're dwelling in "high praises," your entire being is in harmony and unity with the Lord. When you are worshiping in this fashion, the gifts of the Spirit come into operation. Such praise is God's invincible power to energize your faith. It is the liberating power which carries your faith to the throne of God. It is the glory that surrounds your prayers. It is the atmosphere in which miracles are born.

Because a group of on-fire Brazilians dared to sing the praises of God on that flight, hundreds of passengers were touched, and the life of a backslidden executive was reborn.

The Secret to Boundless Energy *Psalms 46*

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Be still, and know that I am God...

—Psalm 46:1-3, 7, 10

Sometimes younger men who travel with me say, "We're tired; we don't understand how you can keep going so many hours. You travel from one city to another, go right into meetings—and you do it night after night."

Work is not what wears a person out. A man who digs ditches or labors on an assembly line year after year will not wear out from the work itself. Work is good for a person.

General Charles Duke, a personal friend of mine, flew to the moon on Apollo 16. Charlie tells me that the astronauts went through the most rigorous training program imaginable before they were ready for the mission. For six years he trained intensively, extremely long hours, under great pressure. The stress on men in the space program is tremendous, but they thrive on it.

No, it isn't work or stress that wears a man down. It's his response to the problems of life. If we know that God is in

control, His peace will calm the inner turmoil that threatens to defeat us. There is a simple way you can test yourself. Just answer the question, "Can I relax even in the midst of the storms of life?"

I can be calm even at the most difficult moments because no matter how fiercely the storm may be raging, I know that I am in my Father's care. He is not going to let me down.

Psalms 46 describes a situation in which the nations are engaged in warfare. The normal structures of life have been shattered, and uproar is everywhere. But in the midst of it, the man of God is at peace. Why? Because he knows that God is still on His throne.

I am confident that God will never let me down, no matter how intense the problems of life may be. Even if I am going through something that will take my life, I am still in His arms. He hasn't lost control; He is still God. Because my life is taken away doesn't mean that He let me down—He will have just promoted me.

When we really know that He is God, we are willing to go all the way with Him. In our spiritual pilgrimage, we are not finished until we arrive. We don't quit because the journey is rough; we go all the way because we have implicit trust in the One who rules over all the circumstances of life.

When you are convinced that God is God, and that no situation is beyond His control, you can be at peace. And this peace will give you boundless energy to accomplish the tasks before you.

“Don’t Wrestle, Nestle”

Acts 5:12-16; Revelation 3:7, 8

Through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people . . . so they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.

—Acts 5:12, 15

Tommy Hicks was not an impressive individual physically; he was a slight man of about five-feet, seven. But God was in this man’s ministry in Argentina. In sixty-two days more than 6½ million people came to his meetings.

One afternoon wheelchair and stretcher cases covered one side of the field in the center of the stadium. The sun was setting and cast a long shadow across these people from where Tommy was standing on the platform. He was preaching from our passage in Acts, unconscious of the fact that his shadow was falling upon these people. As it did so, people rose and broke up their crutches and wheelchairs. Pandemonium broke out throughout the stadium as people gave glory to God.

After Tommy had quieted the crowd down he asked, “How many of you want to give your heart to Jesus?” One hundred thousand stood up. He called me many times during the crusade to keep me up-to-date.

Revival is something that God does; we cannot generate it. Our part is to rest in Him and be sensitive to the leading of the

Spirit. If we will listen and move out confidently on the ideas He gives us, He will do the rest.

I see a great many believers trying to do something for God in their own strength, and little happens as a result. It is a hard lesson for us to learn, but we need to rest in Him. In the words of Corrie ten Boom, "Don't wrestle, nestle!"

What are you wrestling with today?

Set Free in Jesus

Romans 6—8:11

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free. . . .

—Romans 8:1, 2

A once prosperous insurance man stood on the banks of Niagara Falls, poised to jump. As he peered at the rushing waters below, his mind churned over the events that had led him to this desperate moment.

Trying to calm the turmoil of his soul, he had begun to gamble. His Christian wife's pleading and praying seemed powerless to stop him. Soon he had lost hundreds of thousands of dollars, and drained his family fortune. To continue his habit, he had borrowed and borrowed until he was a couple hundred thousand dollars in debt and could borrow no more.

Now he was at the end of his line, unable to face life any longer. As the man stiffened for the jump, something held him back. It was as if a voice within him was screaming, "Don't!" Slowly, falteringly, he turned away from the edge and headed home.

A short time later, he watched our *Good News!* telecast. The message touched him, he opened his heart and the Lord saved him. Transformed by the power of God, he was instantly delivered from his gambling habit. Before long his business picked up, he was back on his feet, his debts were paid, and he

went on to make another fortune.

Jesus came to set us free from bondage. The Christian life was never meant to be encumbered by old habits. Deliverance from the addiction of the past is our absolute right as sons of God.

But what if you have struggled with a habit unsuccessfully—if you find that in practice you are not delivered? Is the answer to try harder? Those who have tried this have only further proven the truth of Romans 7:14-25. The good that we want to do eludes us, and the evil we hate holds us fast in its grip.

The answer is to recognize the truth of our position in Christ. We have been set free from sin because the old man is dead. In our spirit we are a wholly new creation—though our mind, emotions, and body will not be redeemed until the resurrection. Our objective is to let this inner life have control.

When we were first born again, we had to take God at His word that we really were saved. The evidence of our conversion followed as we continued to trust in Him and confess that He was the Lord of our life. In our journey to maturity, we cannot deny the weakness of our flesh. The Apostle Paul struggled with problems until one day in desperation he cried, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” But he found victory in Jesus. Struggles and temptations are part of life, yet we need not live in defeat. Paul discovered that deliverance comes through Jesus Christ as he walked in the Spirit.

While the law of sin and death are present in our flesh, the law of the Spirit of life sets us free. What we cannot do in ourselves because of the weakness of our carnal nature, God did for us through Jesus.

Because you are a new creature in Christ, “You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit” (Romans 8:9). This is your position as a believer. Therefore, by the Spirit of God, you are triumphant over old habits. As you walk in this knowledge by faith, the Spirit of God will enable you each day to overcome and emerge in total victory.

Fight the good fight of faith. Dare to believe what God says of you. Get ready to experience the deliverance that God has already accomplished on your behalf. No habit can stand against the fortress of such faith.

Faithful in Little, Ruler Over Much *Matthew 25:14-30; Acts 9:1-30*

Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.

—Matthew 25:21

In the years 1938, '39 and '40, Rose and I were just two ordinary kids struggling through life. Yet God was giving us a vision for reaching the world.

In those years two men came to our home every couple of months to prophesy. Neither knew the other was coming, but they would arrive at the same time, slam on their brakes and slide into our yard, run screaming into our house unannounced and prophesy. Then, without saying another word, they would dash out of the house, jump into their cars and take off. Both foretold that we would be traveling all over the world, meeting with kings, presidents, prime ministers and dictators.

I was working for my father at the time, and my monthly salary was only \$150. We were struggling financially; my dad didn't believe in paying big wages. I remember buying a table lamp which cost us \$17 at a dollar and a half per month, and I was sick and tired of scratching to make the payment.

All the while these brothers were prophesying. After they left I would chuckle, "Rose, I haven't even been out of California! And these people say we're going to be all over the world and

meet rulers of nations.”

I didn't doubt God; I believed that someday it could happen. The Apostle Paul was my inspiration. I knew that God had called him to take the gospel to the world, to go before kings in far off nations. Even with this vision, Paul first did the thing that was at hand. When he was in Damascus, he started preaching there. When the people ran him out of town, he went to the next place the Lord took him. For several years he didn't do anything particularly great; often he labored as a tent maker and ministered in his local church.

If there is one lesson that I have learned well over the years it is to do the little things that God gives me from day to day. Early in my spiritual walk God began giving me a big vision, but I did what He put before me each moment. If God told me to go to a little church 150 miles away, Rose and I would go—even if it meant getting back at 3 a.m. after speaking at a Sunday evening meeting. Then I would get up at 6 to milk cows.

“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much,” Jesus said. “And he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10).

It's good to keep the big vision in mind, but the bigger tasks will only come to pass as we are faithful in little ways. I'm glad the Lord taught me this when I was young because it prepared me for so many things in later years. For instance, in 1940 the Lord sent us onto the street corners to preach. Learning how to be fearless in that situation helped me years later.

I was in downtown Los Angeles and had an hour to spare, so I took a walk in the park. Other businessmen were strolling about on their lunch hour. A fellow who attended the Los Angeles Full Gospel Business Men's breakfast occasionally was standing on a box. He spotted me.

“There's Demos Shakarian, he's a man of God,” he told a crowd that had gathered. “Would you come and give your testimony to these men?” he called.

“Sure,” I enthused and stepped onto the soap box. When I finished, the crowd applauded, and I strolled casually back to the office, thinking nothing of the event.

Later I learned that this man was telling people all over the country that he would never have believed that I had the courage to testify on a soap box on a street corner. He had

envisioned me only in ballrooms and other fancy places.

Had I not had that experience in 1940, maybe I would have been afraid. We set a pattern in our lives. If we don't do the small things, we will never do the big ones. Unfaithful in little, we will be unfaithful in much.

Vase of Clay—Vessel of Honor 2 Timothy 2:14-21; Song of Solomon 2:1

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

—2 Timothy 2:20, 21

In England many of the stately homes have been opened for public viewing. On one occasion, a touring party was strolling through a beautiful castle. They came into the room where the family trophies were displayed—swords, banners, shields, newspaper clippings, and messages from kings and queens to the family through the generations.

As the party began to move into the next room, a little old lady noticed a small clay vase and asked the tour guide why it was there. He leaned across, picked up the vase and examined it carefully.

“It’s just a locally made thing,” he shrugged, “a bit bent out of shape, and it has a chip on it.”

The guide set it back on the shelf and the group moved on, except for the lady who paused for a few moments. At that point the gardener walked in with one rose in his hand and placed it in the vase.

"Why are you doing that?" she asked.

"The owner of the castle told me to place a rose in this vase. It's been one of my most important duties everyday for the past ten years," he smiled.

The gardener left the room and the lady picked up the vase, taking the flower out to smell the container. It had the fragrance of the rose. Then she took the vase out of the room and sniffed again; it still had the fragrance of the rose.

That clay vase, bent and chipped, had no value of itself. It had no right to be among all those trophies. But because the master cared about the little vase, it bore the scent of a rose each day.

No matter what we look like on the outside, God prizes us highly. He has placed within us the Rose of Sharon. Because of our communion with Him each day, His fragrance transforms us into a vessel worthy of honor.

God Has Ways of Pulling Us Through Romans 12:14-21; 13:8-10; Matthew 5:43-48

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

—Romans 12:15, 17, 20, 21

All across the United States the owners of buildings leased to White Front Department Stores were trying to get their facilities back. I didn't realize that they were doing everything they could to grab their properties as quickly as possible.

Like others, I needed my building; it was a source of considerable income. But God gave me the wisdom not to hurt the store's tenants. They had invested two-and-a-quarter million dollars in the facility, and I decided to work with them—even though it seemed that I would go under from my own loss.

I have learned that God can turn the most adverse circumstances to our favor. As happened in the days of Elisha, he can even use our enemy to bless us. We don't have to lift a finger against another person to save ourselves.

One day I received a phone call from the company which

had gone broke while renting my property; an official wanted to see me. When I arrived, he said, "Yesterday the board met and decided to give you the building. It is then up to the mortgage people. Since you are not subordinated, we think they will take their loss and give you the building. They will simply wipe off the \$1,100,000 loan we have on it."

That is precisely what happened! They gave me the building, forgave the loan, and within two months it was in my possession and clear.

The company had blueprints I needed. When I went to pick them up, I spoke with Harry Epstein, the vice president.

"Mr. Epstein, may I ask you a question?" I began. "You didn't do this for anybody else, why me? You could have made me wait two more years for this building. Why did you do it?"

"At our board meeting, right before we were about to close," he explained, "one of our men spoke up. 'I'd like to say something,' he said. 'We have the Downey store. Mr. Shakarian is our landlord. He has been kind to us; he has never done anything to hurt us. We have nothing to gain from keeping the building, so why don't we help him by giving it back now, rather than making him wait while it deteriorates? He has never been selfish or greedy, and I propose to this board that we give it to him now.' The motion carried."

If we are in the Kingdom of God, we are not at the mercy of circumstances. We are subject to the Sovereign of the Fourth Dimension who can override the natural order. God has ways of pulling us through and blessing us when it is seemingly impossible.

The question we all have to face is, are we going to react to material pressures by demanding our rights, by grasping like the world? Or we are going to entrust ourselves to God?

On the surface, for me to help this tenant appeared foolish; I was risking everything. But I wasn't looking to man to meet my financial need. My business didn't depend on physical circumstances. I was looking solely to God, trusting Him to work even this seemingly disastrous reversal for good.

The Purpose of Success

Genesis 37; 39-41:1-46

The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand.

—Genesis 39:2, 3

Joseph dreamed of becoming a leader. It was a God-given vision for his future. But when he suddenly found himself betrayed by his own brothers and sold into slavery, his hopes of a great calling in life must have faded rapidly. On the surface, it seemed as if he would never amount to anything more than a common slave. But when God is involved, our darkest hour can become our finest.

God had a far greater purpose in the collapse of the White Front Department Store chain than I could immediately realize. Although I had weathered the storm and regained my building, what was I going to do with it? In the back of my mind I had often seen it as a church.

I was sitting in Foxy's Coffee Shop in Downey, California, early one morning when a young man with a beard, in his twenties, walked up to me.

"You're Demos Shakarian, aren't you?"

"That's right."

"I'm Jeff Johnson, pastor of the Downey Calvary Chapel,"

had gone broke while renting my property; an official wanted to see me. When I arrived, he said, "Yesterday the board met and decided to give you the building. It is then up to the mortgage people. Since you are not subordinated, we think they will take their loss and give you the building. They will simply wipe off the \$1,100,000 loan we have on it."

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auditorium seating three thousand—and it still has only used a third of the facility. An appraisal of the property disclosed that it had doubled in value in two years.

When you do something God's way, it will not only bless you, it will advance the work of the Kingdom. Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." By this He didn't mean that it's wrong to enjoy the good things of life. He was concerned about our attitude. Are we greedy, self-seeking individuals who are out for all we can get? Or do we desire to succeed so that we can be a blessing to others?

Nothing Is Too Small for God **Ephesians 1:11; Matthew 17:24-27;** **John 21:1-14**

... in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will. ...

—Ephesians 1:11

To see God at work in our lives is like observing a master chess player. No matter what move we make, He can always put us in check. I was to see this in a remarkable way after Rose lost her watch. Through it we were all to learn that God is directly involved in the most intimate details of our lives and that nothing is too small for Him to be concerned about.

Our family had searched the house in vain for the watch. Learning of the situation, evangelist Robert Fierro told me that God was going to reveal where the watch was hidden. Encouraged, we prayed again.

The next afternoon my aunts and cousins came in a carload to visit us. Determined to find the watch, they also searched the house room by room. They tore everything apart and turned everything inside out; still no watch. Yet, God had promised that it would be found.

On Saturday our son Richard, who was about eleven years old, and my father drove the truck out to Fresno where we were

staying. Richard asked if we could go to the fair. I like to go look at registered cattle, so I agreed to take him. Just before we were to leave the fair that evening, Richard saw a board with a lizard on it. The lizard was for sale, and it had a little cord around its neck. Because of the chilly air, the lizard lay perfectly motionless.

"Dad, will you buy me that lizard?" he begged.

"No, you can't have it," I refused.

I didn't think Rose or the nurse who was taking care of Steve would appreciate it. Little did I know that God wanted that lizard in our house. Despite my determination not to buy it, God was going to see that he got it. Finally, my dad interfered, "Why don't you buy it for him?"

"I'm not giving him no dollar for a lizard!" I protested impatiently.

With a twinkle in his eye, Dad pulled out a dollar and handed it to Richard. I was still protesting when Richard chided, "You're always telling me to listen to you, so why don't you listen to your dad?" Well, what could I say to that? So he took the dollar and bought the lizard.

He put it on his chest and tied the little cord to a button. After a while the lizard started to warm up from the heat of Richard's body and began to crawl around.

"Is it alive?" my dad gasped in surprise.

"Sure it's alive!" I muttered.

"I thought it was rubber!" he exclaimed.

On the way home we tried to persuade Richard into letting the lizard go, but he insisted on taking it into the house at least once. When we arrived, we stood on the front porch and again urged him to let it go on the grass.

"No! I want to show it to everyone first," he argued.

We knocked on the door and luckily the nurse, Mrs. Newmann, opened it.

"Oh, Richard!" she exclaimed, "that's a chameleon. I love chameleons."

I had no idea what it was called until then. Chameleons are lizards which change colors according to their environment.

"Let's go find it a house," Mrs. Newmann suggested.

She took Richard indoors, and they went through the front room, the dining room, and into the kitchen. Then we heard the

back door bang. Within minutes there was a tumultuous uproar.

"We found it!" they screamed. "We found the watch!"

After we moved into the house, we had a lot of boxes to throw out. Monday morning they would have been taken away to the rubbish heap. The nurse had looked them over among the trash and decided a certain one was the right size to make a home for the chameleon. Pulling it out, she heard something rattle inside. When she opened it up, there was the watch.

Rose had put it into that container while she was ironing. But she forgot where she had put it and threw the box into the wastepaper can. Of all the boxes lying in the rubbish, Mrs. Newmann pulled out that very one.

I don't believe it was a coincidence. Everyone looked so hard on Friday, and Richard had had such a hard time buying that chameleon and getting it into the house. Furthermore, had Rose answered the door, she would never have allowed it inside.

No doubt God could have given us a vision of the watch lying in the box, or brought it back to Rose's memory. But He chose to answer our prayer through a lizard. Although God sometimes uses supernatural means, He usually works through natural circumstances. He takes the ordinary, everyday things of life and turns them into miracles.

How to Know When God Leads Matthew 2; John 10:1-30

He who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out . . . and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

—John 10:2-4

Sir Lionel Luckhoo was Jim Jones' personal lawyer. About a week after Sir Lionel invited Jesus into his life, he received a telephone call from Jim Jones. An American Congressman and other leaders were visiting, and his presence was required since they were likely to give the religious group a rough time.

"I can't come," Sir Lionel told him. "I've given my life to Jesus and don't appreciate what you are doing."

Two years later my wife and I were in New Zealand with Sir Lionel. The auditorium where he was to speak was jammed with three thousand people. "When the Full Gospel Business Men came to Guyana, I was invited to attend," he told the crowd. "At the dinner that night, I accepted Jesus. Because I was saved, the Spirit of God was now working with me. He warned me not to go to Jim Jones. Had I not received Christ the week before, I would have gone. I would have been dead with the rest of them! Thank God that those men came to Guyana, and I gave my heart to Jesus."

People ask me, "How can you know when God is leading you?"

There is a sense in which being led of the Spirit is a natural thing for a born-again person. God is spirit, and He is infinite; so He wants to tell me something. Rather, the infinite breaks through to the finite in a natural way. It takes faith to believe that the ordinary things of life are the leadings of the Spirit.

When we are in touch with God, He can prompt us to take action that can not only save us from financial ruin, but actually protect our lives. We are partners with the One who knows the future and can direct us to avoid disastrous situations.

God has infinite ways to lead us, and He deals with each of us in different ways at different times. He leads us according to what is appropriate for the moment. There is no formula for knowing the leading of the Spirit; we simply move forward by faith, sure of Jesus' promise that His sheep will hear His voice and walk safely with Him.

Sometimes the Spirit's leading comes as a revelation in my heart. I don't hear an audible voice, but I know that God is telling me something. Without a shadow of doubt, I know that I know that I know. I can't explain it rationally, it is simply what I call "inner knowing"—a revelation.

Much of the time He speaks to me through circumstances. I begin heading in a certain direction, but I sense that I am bumping my head against a wall. I run into dead ends; things don't work out. That tells me that I need to change direction, and when I do so things begin to go right.

Sometimes circumstances appear to be against me, but God gives me a vision of what He wants me to do, so I keep going against all obstacles. When I come to a Red Sea which looks impassable, it opens.

God has promised to lead you. Believe that He is doing so. Go with what you sense the Spirit is telling you. You'll look back and see God's hand on your life.

“You Are Jesus, Aren’t You?” **Colossians 1:24-29**

Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily. — Colossians 1:27-29

A pastor in Lawrenceville, Georgia, invited James Rogers, one of our field representatives from Georgia, to his church. He took a group with him to give their testimonies. About twenty-five persons accepted Jesus and around fifty were filled with the Spirit.

Services were held every evening and on Tuesday a man and wife who had been alcoholics accepted the Lord and were delivered of alcoholism. On Thursday evening a young couple who were heavy in drugs came to the Lord and were set free.

As James introduced the different speakers he had brought, they would say, “Jesus changed my life” and tell what He had done for them. After the final meeting, a little girl swinging on the sign in front of the church building said something to him as he left. Not quite catching what she said, he picked her up in his arms. “Sugar, what did you say?” he smiled.

“I said, ‘Goodbye, Jesus,’” she repeated shyly. “You are Jesus, aren’t you?”

Stunned, James put her down and stepped to his car. Tears

filled his eyes as he began to wonder, "Why did she call me Jesus?" Then he remembered. The man and woman who were delivered from alcohol on Tuesday were the child's grandmother and granddaddy. And the young couple who had been delivered from drugs on Thursday were her mother and dad. Because she had seen James introduce the men who were testifying how Jesus had changed their lives, she assumed he was Jesus.

It taught James a tremendous lesson. The only Jesus that most people will ever see is the Jesus in us. What an awesome privilege—and responsibility—we have.

Wholly New in Christ *Revelation 20:11-15; 21:1-8*

I will give the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

—*Revelation 21:6-8*

Sometimes we have as many as five thousand telephone calls in one night respond to the *Good News!* telecast. I want to tell you about a powerful testimony that was given by a Canadian named George Godkin.

George is a big subdivider in Canada. When I met him that evening he was terribly burned.

"What happened to you, George?" I probed.

"My house was on fire and my daughter was trapped inside," he related. "I had to run through the fire three times to find her. Finally I was able to bring her out safely. But sixty-five percent of my body was burned."

His ears had been burned off completely.

"I was dying as the ambulance rushed me to the hospital," he continued. "In that moment of death Jesus stood at the foot of my bed and looked at me. I had never accepted Him as my Savior, but with tears I said, 'Lord, I'm sorry, please save me.'"

I had no idea what we were going to hear next, any more than the thousands of people who were viewing us live on television. "An angel took my hand and lifted me out of my body," he continued. "I looked back and saw my body all burnt. The angel told me he was taking me on a trip. He showed me Hell and the Lake of Fire. Then he took me to Paradise. There I saw the Lord, and He told me that I was to come back and be a witness for Him. So the angel brought me back and I woke up in my bed."

Hell is a reality, but the good news is that no one needs to go there. Jesus has opened up the way for all men to drink of the water of life freely. The possibility of going to Hell remains for each one, but that doesn't have to be the last chapter for any of us. God can make every man—liar, murderer, the immoral, idolater—wholly new in Christ.

Love Is All the Proof You Need

1 John 3:10-20

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

—1 John 3:14

How can you know you are saved? Tommy Ashcraft has a good answer. "Well, I was there when it happened."

The night Tommy came to Jesus a great change came over him. His heart was filled with love: Until then he had loved no one.

"I had a little black Cocker Spaniel," he relates. "I loathed every hair on his head, and he hated every hair on mine. When I came home drunk at night, I used to kick him in the belly to get him off the porch. As I tried to kick him, the dog would bark, growl and try to bite me. Reeling and rocking under the influence of alcohol, I would chase him around the table outside.

"Soon my wife would get embroiled in the fray. We would cuss and fight. Eventually I would kick the dog off the porch, scattering chairs and flower pots in all directions.

"But the night I got saved, I was so filled with love that I looked at the dog and loved him. He raised himself on his belly and crawled toward me, then lay down on the same feet that had kicked him all the other nights. He sensed that I was different."

The Bible says, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). This is how you become saved. But love is how others will know it.

Being saved doesn't mean you are perfect. Nevertheless, your attitude will be different. You can't help but love people. You may still have relationship problems to work through. Yet there's a love deep down in your heart that wasn't there before.

That's the proof you are saved.

The Best Gift of All *1 Timothy 6:13-16; 1 John 1:1-4;* *Isaiah 40:12-26*

To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?

—Isaiah 40:18

What is the best gift you can ever give?

Shortly after Fidel Castro came to power, Rose and I were on a plane bound for Cuba to start a chapter of the Fellowship. Near us was a brilliant young attorney, around forty years of age. On loan from Venezuela, he was on his way to help Castro set up his new government. Everyone else on the plane was asleep, but Rose and I started talking to him.

At first we talked about farming and politics. Eventually I revealed my real mission—calling men back to God.

"Demos," he announced, "I'm going to find God."

"Where are you going to find God, Frank?"

"In metaphysics."

Frank, we learned, had been brought up a Catholic. I decided to be direct. "You're a poor Catholic," I said.

"What do you mean, I'm a poor Catholic?" he scowled.

"Why don't you read the Bible, the Catholic Bible?" I suggested. "That will help you find God."

"No, I'm going to find Him in metaphysics," he squirmed.

"You don't have to find God in metaphysics," I baited, "because I've already found Him."

"You've found Him?" he questioned in surprise. "Okay, then show Him to me." Frank leaned forward in his seat expectantly. I quickly asked the Lord to put His words in my mouth so that I could reach this intelligent man in my simple farmer's manner.

"Do you know about George Washington?" I began.

"Of course I know about George Washington," he laughed. "I've even read his philosophy."

"I just wanted to know if you believed he was the President even though you have never seen him," I explained. "Do you believe that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary?"

"Yes."

"When Jesus got hungry, what did He do?"

"He ate."

"And what was he acting like?" I persisted.

"A man."

"What did Jesus do when He became sleepy?"

"He slept," Frank replied, puzzled by my questions.

"What was He acting like?"

"Like a man," Frank returned.

Next, I told the story of Jesus raising Lazarus. "Now what was Jesus acting like?"

"Well, do you mean He was acting like God?" he wondered.

I related the stories of Jesus walking on water, healing the eyes of a blind man, and performing other miracles. In each case, we agreed that Jesus was acting like God. Now, I decided to bring him to my point.

"A moment ago, Frank, you told me that you saw a man in Jesus. But now you are saying that He acted like God. What do you see, Frank?" I asked.

"I see God!" He slapped his forehead and exclaimed, "I see God, I see God!"

That is the best gift I have ever given a man.

