

From Randall J. Brewer's book
**BORN TO LOVE,
CALLED TO SERVE**

A LIVING SACRIFICE

Guidelines for Today's Active Christian

RANDALL J. BREWER

A LIVING SACRIFICE

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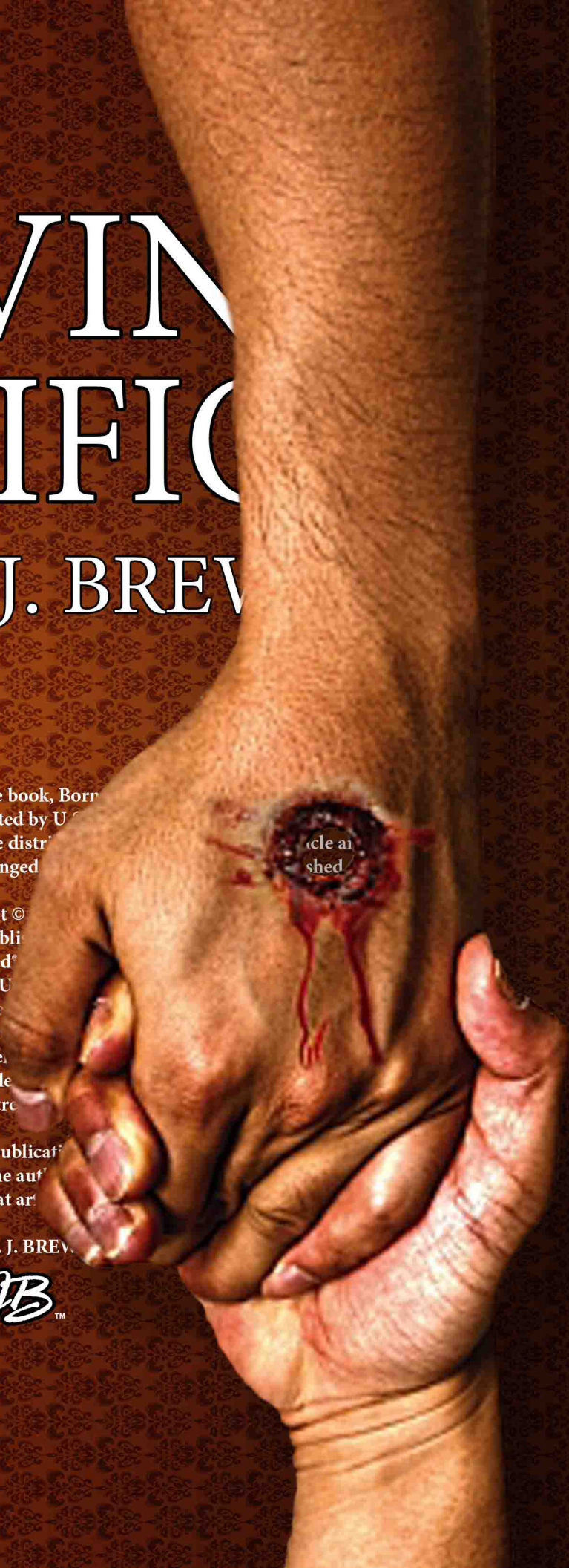
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- II. The Love Command
- III. Radical Love
- IV. Loving Thy Neighbor
- V. A Living Sacrifice
- VI. Take Up Your Cross

OPERATION: INTERVENTION

Salvation is all about intervention. To intervene is to save, rescue, and preserve. God's salvation is designed to save us from damnation, to rescue us from our present conditions, and to preserve the rest of our lives by His loving care until the day He returns for us.

Intervention is also about being proactive. God expects us to do more than just sit around waiting for something good to happen. He wants us to occupy until Christ returns for His church. As sons and daughters of the King, He wants us just as active as He is. We are His occupation army. We conquer, we occupy, and we re-establish our Father's Kingdom (His attitude) on the earth.

Afterward, we will leave for a seven year celebration and award ceremony. For us, it will seem like centuries have passed. Then we return to help rebuild the physical kingdom of our Father on this earth, and put planet earth and mankind back on track as it was originally designed. After reigning with Christ for a thousand years, there will come the final war, and the judgment of man and the devil he has served.

In this fifth of six volumes of his book, *Born to Love, Called to Serve*, Randall J. Brewer shows us how to become those instruments of intervention for the Kingdom of God. It won't be easy, and may prove to be difficult at times. The rewards are not only off-planet, but a great number of them are available for us today.

God sees us, hears us, and He knows right where we are, and He needs us to intervene in the lives of those who need rescuing and preserving, until we see Him coming in the clouds.

Paul Baker,
Publisher and friend of Randall J. Brewer©

CHAPTER ONE

FERVENT IN SPIRIT

You were born to be great. God wants you to be happy, but you were not born to be happy. You were born to be great.

Greatness in the eyes of many means to have vast amounts of wealth and to occupy positions of power and authority where you are able to rule over many men. Having people do what you tell them to do is the accumulation of everything some people have ever worked for, and many consider this the pinnacle of greatness. This is not so in God's eyes for He sees greatness in a different light.

Jesus said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" Matt. 20:25-

28.

JESUS, THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE

Jesus came and set the example that we are all to follow. "He offered Himself as a sacrifice to free us from a dark, rebellious life into this good, pure life, making us a people He can be proud of, energetic in goodness" Titus 2:14

MSG

You were born to love and called to serve, and this is greatness in the eyes of God. You are a masterpiece, created and formed by the

Master Himself. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" Eph. 2:10. When you become zealous for good works, you become great in the eyes of God.

God won't leave you hanging. When you surrender your life to Him and answer the call to be great, He will show you in His Word how to achieve this ultimate way of life. He will lead you to the words of Paul where he wrote in Rom. 12:10,11, "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." To be great you must forever be serving the Lord with diligence and holy fervor.

There is a certain intensity in the Christian life and you must serve the Lord with a boiling spirit and keep yourself fueled and aflame. The Phillips® Bible says, "Let us not allow slackness to spoil our work, and let us keep the fires of our spirit burning as we do our work for the Lord." The NIV® says, "never be lacking in zeal" and this is a rebuke to passivity, laziness, lethargy, apathy, and boredom. The Amplified® Bible says, "Never lag in zeal, and in earnest endeavor be aglow and burning with the Spirit serving the Lord."

The Greek word for "fervent" is 'zeo' which means "boil, to be hot, burn, and glow." This means you must be earnest, zealous, on fire, and enthusiastic in serving the Lord. Don't put a frown on your face if the pastor asks you to

*You must be earnest,
zealous, on fire, and
enthusiastic in
serving the Lord.*

do something at church. Instead, smile from ear to ear, boil with heat, be white hot, and have a burning zeal to do the will of God. God is calling you to invest your life in something great and with fervor and enthusiasm you must find ways to pour your life into the things of God.

Col. 3:2 says, “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” There are great things worth living for, such as the greatness of God and His glorious purposes in the world. We exist to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things.

Rom. 12:11 is a verse about living life as unto the Lord, and this is why you must boil in your spirit and **stir up zeal** for God and the cause of truth and life. Rom. 14:8 says, “For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.” All of life is a serving of the Lord and there is a work to be done. Work is spiritual. The Father works, the Son works, and you are to work also.

Jesus said in John 5:17, “**My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.**”

Paul said in 1 Cor. 15:58, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

God has assigned us much to accomplish, and He will hold us accountable for the faithful performance of it. Every Christian has enough to do to occupy all his time until the Lord returns. He whose life is spent in ease and does nothing, should doubt altogether his faith in God and whether or not he is truly saved.

GODLY WORK IS BUSY WORK

Jesus said in John 14:12a, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also...**” He goes on to say in v.15, “**If you love Me, keep My commandments.**”

Being fervent in spirit is the capacity and ability of every Christian to be consumed and eaten up by the things of God. The call on your life is to do the will of God from the heart.

The Message® Bible says, “Don’t just do what you have to do to get by, but work heartily, as Christ’s servants doing what God wants you to do. And work with a smile on your face, always keeping in mind that no matter who happens to be giving the orders, you’re really serving God” Eph. 6:5-7.

There are different commitment levels to the Lord among all believers:

If you fail the little tests, it is foolish to believe you’ll pass the big tests.

1) Some people work fervently, 2) others work a little, and 3) most work none at all.

In Rom. 16:12, Paul told the brethren to greet two of his friends who labored in the Lord. He then said to greet “the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord.” Two labored in the Lord, but Persis labored much more than the others.

Many people are deceived. They think they’re more committed than they actually are. For some it’s only talk, but no action. We read in John 13:36-38, “Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, where are you going?’ Jesus answered him, ‘**Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.**’ Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.’ Jesus answered him, ‘**Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied**

Me three times.””

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus asked His disciples to pray with Him, but they fell asleep. It was after this that Peter denied Jesus. If you fail the little tests, it is foolish to believe you'll pass the big tests. Be diligently committed to seek first the kingdom of God, for he who is faithful over a little will be made ruler over much ^{Matt. 25:21}.

The Lord said in Num. 14:24, “But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.” Caleb went all the way with God and God took him all the way into the Promised Land. He went farther than Moses and all his elders.

Jesus was committed and your commitment level should be the same as His. He said in John 14:31, “**But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do.**”

Jesus went all the way and gave everything He had:

- He offered His spirit for your spirit;
- His mind for your mind;
- His body for your body;
- He gave all of His life's blood;
- He became sin when He knew no sin;
- He did all this willingly, because He was committed to the Father and to you;
- He held nothing back. He gave it all. He went all the way;
- He went to hell for all mankind and you can't give any more than that.

Even today He ever lives to make

intercession for you. He is your Advocate. Every moment of every day and every night He pleads your case before the Father. His blood is speaking and proclaiming your innocence from off the mercy seat. His commitment level is without dispute, and like Him you also should go all the way.

Paul said “that in the last days perilous times will come, for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money...” ^{2 Tim. 3:1,2}. Many people are only committed to themselves, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Whatever you love the most, you will be committed to the most. There are folks highly committed to their pleasures and their lives are going nowhere. They don't know that serving others is, what gives meaning to life, and brings complete satisfaction.

Total fulfillment comes when God uses you to help another person's dream come true.

This only happens when you love God more than you love yourself, and when you desire what God wants,

more than what you want. Truly, it will be the most fulfilling life you could ever imagine.

Compromise is like erosion, it happens slowly.

THE CONDITION OF LACKING

A Christian who is not fervent in spirit has become lukewarm through compromise. Compromise is like erosion, it happens slowly, and before you know it you're in a state of lukewarmness and you're only going through the motions. Those who have lost their fervency and passion for God become empty, slack, shallow, sluggish, and useless, all because of compromise.

God's people in the Old Testament were warned about being lazy and slothful. Amos 6:1a says, “Woe to you who are at ease in Zion” and Jer. 48:10 tells us, “Cursed is he who does the

work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed is he who keeps back his sword from blood.” Those who are not on fire on the inside will not do very much on the outside.

BE FULL OF PASSION

Neglect and a do-nothing attitude will ruin your Christian life. Passivity is unacceptable to God and slothfulness should never be tolerated. The wet blanket of apathy, sloth, and laziness will put out your fire for God. Don’t drag your feet spiritually, but be full of zeal and enthusiasm, forever glowing in your spirit.

The word “fervor” suggests heat and passion, and only the fervency of the Spirit can overcome laziness and slothfulness. The heat of one’s fervency will drive you forward and cause you to wake up each morning ready and willing to be used by God to serve Him and bless others.

The only other place in scripture where “fervent in spirit” appears is Acts 18:25 where it describes the teaching ministry of Apollos, an eloquent man and mighty in his knowledge of the Word ^{v.24}. His internal fervency produced an external fervency in his service for the Lord and “he greatly helped those who had believed through grace” ^{v. 27}.

Serving God is fun and the Christian attitude must be one of enthusiasm, a hot fervor which the Spirit promotes. Ps. 100:1, 2 says, “Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before His presence with singing.” A joyful spirit is a fervent spirit in which the fire of your first love still burns.

Despite all the hardships that you might encounter, be sure to complain less and not lose courage, but rather display even more joy in the Lord and His work. You will succeed if the fire of

faith, hope, and love burns brightly from within. Jesus said John the Baptist was “**the burning and shining lamp**” ^{John 5:35} and in Matt. 5:16 He said, “**Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**” This is a great motivator to be fervent in spirit, because the brighter and hotter your light shines, the more glory the Lord receives.

The word “Lord” is ‘Kurios’ and this describes someone who has undisputed possession of a person or thing. It means ‘Master’ or ‘owner.’ Jesus is your Master and you are His servant. The word “servant” is ‘doulos,’ meaning you belong totally to the Lord. You have no rights of your own and your sole desire is to honor and serve Him with enthusiasm that comes from having a fervent heart.

In the context of Christian service “fervent” means ‘to be full of energy, to be on fire with

zeal and enthusiasm.’ It is a warning against settling into comfortable, shallow ruts in your spiritual life. The idea is that you are to be continually “hot” for the things of God.

It is to be your habitual practice, your lifestyle before a critically watching world.

Those great in the eyes of God are those who serve. The Lord expects His children to be whole-hearted workers who are wildly willing, and filled with an impassioned desire to please and serve Him faithfully. God wants on fire, red hot enthusiastic followers who love Him more than anything or anyone on earth; disciples who are determined to follow Jesus all the way.

You must always have a realization of what a great privilege it is to serve the Lord, and that nothing can stop the man who is fired up with zeal and enthusiasm, and is full of a fiery anointing that empowers him in everything he does.

*Be full of energy, [and]
be on fire with zeal and
enthusiasm.*

THE ENERGIZED CHRISTIAN

The person who is fervent in spirit will keep going no matter what the circumstances are that come against him. He will be driven by compelling compassion with an irresistible motivation that gives direction and meaning in everything he does, everything he says, and everywhere he goes. Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:14, “The love of Christ compels me.”

The Message® Bible says, “Christ’s love has moved me to such extremes. His love has the first and last word in everything we do.” Don’t waste time waiting for inspiration. When you address the task at hand, inspiration will come.

Fervor and enthusiasm are the fundamental keys to success in the Lord’s work. Fervency produces results ^{James 5:16}, and gives boldness and power ^{Acts 18:25-28}. It brings rejoicing to God’s people ^{2 Cor. 7:6-8}, and makes up for other shortcomings ^{1 Peter 4:8; Jude 22}. Most of all, fervency brings about a real and genuine love ^{1 Peter 1:22}, a love that stays on fire and never burns out or grows cold ^{Matt. 24:120}. A fervent spirit burns for God in such a way that you are consumed by Him. He is the reason you wake up in the morning. He is your One and only, your all in all. In Him you live and move and have your being ^{Acts 17:28}.

Your love and devotion has no ultimate value unless you are humbly and fervently serving the Lord. Work for Christ with feeling and live for Him with all your might. Intensity matters, zeal matters, wholeheartedness matters (see Jer. 29:13,14). Don’t settle for anything less.

Work for Christ passionately and be eager and earnest to accomplish what he has called you to do. Live your life in such a way that it shows openly your love and adoration for Him.

Become like the godly widow in 1 Tim. 5:10 who was “well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.” Paul said in Titus 3:14, “And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.” The Message® Bible says, “Our people have to learn to be diligent in their work so that all necessities are met (especially among the needy) and they don’t end up with nothing to show for their lives.”

Serving God is not for the weak and timid. Paul said “according to my earnest expectations and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be manifested in my body, whether by life or by death” ^{Phil. 1:20}.

*Work for Christ
passionately; work for
Christ with feeling.*

It takes strength to be diligent, so let the weak say “I am strong” ^{Joel 3:10}. Is. 40:29 says, “He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength.” Stop talking about how tired you are because you’re always busy. Say out loud, “I’m strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! I’ve got pep in my step! I’ve got all the strength I need! Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world!”

Those who are great have a strong desire to worship and serve, and are always looking for opportunities to do so. At the last supper Jesus said, “**With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer**” ^{Luke 22:15}.

THE SLOTHFUL ARE OFFENSIVE

Being fervent in spirit produces a diligence that is free from sloth. The slothful mind can

be very creative and inventive in the excuses they make. Prov. 20:4 says, “The sluggard will not plow because of winter.” In the winter it’s too cold and in the summer it’s too hot. Lazy people always have a reason for not working or an excuse for their laziness. “The slothful man says, ‘There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!’ As a door turns on its hinges, so does the slothful turn on his bed” Prov. 26:13,14. The door is moving, but it’s not going anywhere and so is the man who is slothful and forever making excuses.

Solomon wrote in Eccl. 11:4, “He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap.” The Message® Bible says, “Don’t sit there watching the wind. Do your own work. Don’t stare at the clouds. Get on with your life.”

If you wait for the conditions to be perfect before you do anything, nothing will get done. As you wait for the perfect opportunities to do something, the days will quickly pass you by. Months and years will go by and you’ll still be waiting and doing nothing. Before you know it your life will be over and you’ll have nothing to show for it.

The Living® Bible says, “If you wait for perfect conditions, you’ll never get anything done.” If you want an excuse not to work, you’ll surely find one. It is because of slothfulness that Jesus said in Matt. 9:37, “**The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.**”

We live in a lazy generation. Gone are the days when a person had to walk across the room to change the channel on the television. Conveniences are everywhere. We now live in a world of drive-thru restaurants, microwaves, and remote controls. In Las Vegas there is even a place for drive-thru weddings.

Well abled people are being programmed to eat potato chips and watch soap operas all day expecting the government to pay their bills and buy their food.

Prov. 19:15 says, “Slothfulness casts one into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger.” We have returned to the days of Sodom. God said in Ezek. 16:49,50, “Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy. And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.”

Most people think it was sexual perversion that caused the destruction of this wicked city, but here God says it was pride, gluttony, and the abundance of idleness. Slothfulness opens the door to the devil. Sin enters in and things go from bad to worse. Prov. 18:9 says, “He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.” Think about it. When you are diligent and fervent in spirit, you are a child of God, but when you are lazy and slothful, you are a brother to the devil.

There are a lot of people doing nothing for God who think it’s no big deal. All they want to do is eat, drink, and be merry, and when they’re all done they go off and sleep their life away. They want God to supply their needs, but they don’t think it’s worthwhile getting involved in kingdom business. They are carnal and only think about what’s in it for them. What they don’t realize is that there’s a lot in it for them if they would only adopt the lifestyle of being a blessing to somebody else.

Heb. 11:6 says, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes

*Pride, gluttony, and
idleness destroyed
Sodom.*

to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Believing God exists is easy, but most people struggle to believe that God rewards people. He is a rewarder and you must believe this in order to please God. *This is not optional!* It is mandatory that you believe this!

When you seek God and the expansion of His kingdom with passionate diligence, good things will happen to you. You must believe this! People who say “you never know what God’s going to do” don’t believe that. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him and are fervent in spirit.

A reward is a blessing; it is the goodness of God being poured into your life. It’s increase, promotion, and getting your needs met. God is a good God and,

- *He’ll bless you!*
- *He’ll protect you!*
- *He’ll deliver you!*
- *He’ll heal you!*
- *He’ll prosper you!*
- *He’ll fill you with the Holy Spirit!*
- *He’ll fill your house with treasure!*
- *He’ll give you a good marriage and children you can be proud of!*
- *He’ll make you rich and you’ll never lack for anything as long as you live!*

Ps.122:1-3 says, “Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth; The generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches will be in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.”

Wealthy people have choices, poor people don’t. People who are poor have no vision and

no creativity so they perish ^{Prov. 29:18}. They cast off restraint and become a wandering vagabond like Cain in the Old Testament. They run wild and don’t know if they’re coming or going. They break loose without a guiding hand to direct them in the way they should go. These people need a vision of the goodness of God, that if you seek Him diligently He will reward you. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights” ^{James 1:17}.

If it’s good, it’s from God and it’s for you. Like Abraham you will be blessed and you will be a blessing ^{Gen. 12:2}. You were born to love and called to serve, and when you’re rich you can bless people. You can feed them, clothe them, and help pay their bills.

It is the will of God for you to be wealthy enough to bless other people, to be a pipeline of blessings that flow in to you and out to others. As this happens, your storehouse will be full and all your needs will be met and all your desires fulfilled. God is not unjust and unfair. He remembers your labor of love and He rewards it, now in this life and in the hereafter ^{Heb. 6:10}.

God is a rewarder and He talked about the reward part before He talked about the diligent part. “Therefore do not cast away your confidence which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: ‘For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.’ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul” ^{Heb. 10:35-39}. This describes the life of the diligent and the fervent in spirit.

*A reward is a blessing;
it is the goodness of
God poured into you.*

The Message® Bible says, “But we’re not quitters who lose out. Oh, no! We’ll stay with it and survive, trusting all the way.”

CHAPTER TWO

A LIVING SACRIFICE

Freedom is the prominent craving of every human heart. Wars have been fought and lives sacrificed all for the sake of freedom. Indeed, the taste of freedom is sweet and people will to anything and everything to bask in it's redemptive glory.

We all love the heroics of William Wallace and Abraham Lincoln as they spent their lives for the sake of freedom. More important than all this, however, is the freedom that Christ came to give each of us.

Freedom is what was taken from man in the Garden of Eden and four thousand years later God's gift of spiritual freedom was returned to man through the life and death of Jesus Christ. In John 8:34-36 ^{MSG} Jesus said, "I tell you most solemnly that anyone who chooses a life of sin is trapped in a dead-end life and is, in fact, a slave. a slave is transient, who can't come and go at will. The Son, though, has an established position, the run of the house. So if the Son sets you free, you are free through and through."

Once freedom has been lived and experienced, never again will people let themselves be put under the yoke of whatever wants to control them. Surprisingly, there were a group of believers in the Bible who allowed themselves to be coerced into doing just that.

Freedom from the law of sin and death was the message Paul was commissioned by God to teach the local church. He said in Rom. 8:2 ^{MSG}, "The Spirit of life in Christ, like a strong wind, from a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death,"

O FOOLISH PEOPLE

Old time religious leaders, unfortunately, came into the churches in Galatia where Paul taught and tried to manipulate and coerce these freedom-loving believers back into the prison of religious rules and regulations.

With strong-arm tactics these Jewish legalizers sought to control them and bring them back into a yoke of religious bondage to Old testament law. Paul was furious for these acts of intimidation, but even more so at the Galatian believers who allowed themselves to be taken captive by these false doctrines.

In Gal. 1:16 he said, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different Gospel."

He comes on even stronger in Gal. 3:1 as he calls them "O foolish Galatians!" The Message® Bible states, "You crazy Galatians! Did someone put a hex on you? Have you taken leave of your senses? Something crazy has happened, for it's obvious that you no longer have the crucified Jesus in clear focus in your lives. His sacrifice on the cross was certainly set before you clearly enough."

Paul knew that freedom in Jesus was not an instrument to be used to control people and make them behave in prescribed ways. Jesus was a personal Savior whose love set us free from within in order that we might live a free life. The Book of Galatians was written to help these misguided believers regain back the freedom that only God can give. He boldly proclaimed in

Freedom is what was taken from man in the Garden.

Gal. 5:1, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”

The NIV® says, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free” and the Message® Bible states, “Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you.”

This precious freedom, priceless as it is, was bought and paid for by the shed blood of Jesus. This freedom is not free and neither is it offered and given in vain. There is a purpose for freedom and Paul’s letter to the churches in Galatia sought to show them the true nature of Godly freedom, and to give them clear direction on how to use it.

A preview of what Paul had to say is found in Is. 58:6,7, “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?”

Paul mirrors these words in Gal. 5:13, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” There is a call on your life. The Amplified® Bible says, “For you, brethren, were [indeed] called to freedom; only [do not let your] freedom be an incentive to your flesh and an opportunity or excuse [for selfishness], but through love you should serve one another.” Paul is saying that you were called to freedom from servitude, now in love submit to servitude. He said in 1 Cor. 9:19, “For though I am free from all men, I

have made myself a servant of all, that I might win the more.”

Daily strive to promote each other’s welfare and through love help each other mature in their spiritual salvation. When there is true, genuine love there is no sense of servitude. Duty is pleasant and acts of kindness agreeable. It gives you a reason to get up each morning.

LOVE IS ALL THERE IS

Love is the only behavior that we can do in freedom. The Message® Bible translation of Gal. 5:13,14 states, “It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don’t use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that’s how freedom grows. For everything we know about God’s Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That’s an act of true freedom.”

Love not shown is not love at all. It must be put into practice. Paul continues in Gal. 6:2-4 MSG, “Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ’s law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived. Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and sink yourself into that.”

He goes on to say in vv. 9,10, “So let’s not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don’t give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith.” Paul is encouraging us to become like a cool mountain

*The most miserable life
you can live is the self-
serving life.*

stream that services the valley with the water of love.

The thought of freedom was heavy on Paul's mind when a year or two later he wrote to the church at Rome, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" Rom. 12:1.

The NIV Bible says, "this is your spiritual act of worship" and the NLT states, "this is truly the way to worship Him." Worship is more than music and singing and lifting up holy hands. You can worship God with your service. In times past sacrifices were presented before the altar, but now the altar is wherever you may be. A "living sacrifice" is an unselfish giving up of one's life for the sake of another. Jesus said in Matt. 16:25, "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."

The most miserable life you can live is the self-serving life. If all you do is serve yourself you will be empty and unfulfilled. You will never be able to buy enough things to bring you complete satisfaction, nor can you accomplish enough great deeds to make you happy. When Alexander the Great won his final battle he wept, because he had no more lands to conquer. You were saved to serve, and until you make yourself useful there will always be a void in your life.

HOW DO YOU WALK?

Being a living sacrifice is the walk of the mature Christian. In the world, there is a struggle to always be on top where you call the shots and make all the decisions; where other people assist you and do what you say. Jesus spoke about this in Matt. 20:25, "You know that

the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them." The Message Bible says in vv. 25-28, "You've observed how godless rulers throw their weight around, how quickly a little power goes to their heads. It's not going to be that way with you. Whoever wants to be great must become your servant. Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not be served - and then to give away His life in exchange for the many who are held hostage."

To be Christlike is to be service-minded, and you must be spiritually mature to accept that cleaning toilets and changing dirty diapers is just as much spiritual worship as the one who stands in front of a crowd.

Spiritual babies only think of themselves and their own comfort and ease. They think they're too good to get on their hands and knees to scrub the floor, but are always first in line to ask for favors and handouts from somebody else. But when you are spiritually mature you become more aware of what's going on around you and the needs of other people. Increased in you is the desire to have the Lord use you to help them and meet the need.

Jesus set the example for all of us in John 13 when He laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself, and began to wash the disciple's feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded vv. 4,5. Jesus dressed like a bond slave, the lowest of the low, and proceeded to perform the lowest job around. This was not a high profile job, for there was dirt, grime, and donkey manure on those feet. It was the same as if He were cleaning toilets.

The greatest joy is knowing your life counts for something.

AN ATTITUDE OF SERVITUDE

He then said in verse 14, “If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” He then said in verse 17b, “happy are you if you do them.” Do you want to be happy? Then have a “foot washer” mentality. Be mindful of how God can use you to bless others. Wherever you go, whoever you see, ask God to reveal to you what you can do to be a blessing to them. Be a living sacrifice and shovel snow for your elderly neighbor, and change the tire for the person stopped along the side of the road; open the door for somebody and let them pass in front of you; buy a coworker a cup of coffee at break time, and carry the groceries out to the car for a mother with four children. This is how true happiness comes and will overflow in your life. On the other hand, if you want to be unhappy, then always look for people to do things for you.

The greatest joy a person can have is to know that their life counts for something, to know that they have made a positive difference in the life of another. There is no greater feeling in the world than usefulness, the feeling that your life matters, to know that you’re doing something to help somebody else.

Life has no meaning when all your energy, talents, finances, and desires are consumed only on yourself. To do that may seem nice for a season, but quickly and most assuredly that lifestyle will grow old and stale. True peace and contentment comes by reaching out to others and making a positive difference in their lives.

To know a person is better off because they have met you is what it means to take on the character of God. The lives of people everywhere are changed for the better when introduced to the loving kindness of our

precious Heavenly Father. As ambassadors of the kingdom, and because we are His children, it is our responsibility to be transformed into His image and express His nature by words and actions to whomever we come in contact with.

Many believers, however, are bitter and unhappy, because somebody didn’t do something for them. Self-entitlement will destroy you and your relationships, and the way to overcome a life that is downtrodden is to be service-minded. Daily look for ways to bless and benefit other people. It will put you on the mountain of joy and happiness from which no devil can knock you off.

Let’s face it, good help is hard to find. You know it, the boss at work knows it, and sad to say, God knows it as well. Matt. 9:35-38 records these words, “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’”

Jesus said “the laborers are few.” Since the beginning of time this has been a stark reality, and an intense search has always had to be made to find “a worker who does not need to be ashamed” 2 Tim. 2:15.

God said in Ezek. 22:30, “So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.” To be a servant of the Lord takes diligence,

There is no greater feeling in the world than usefulness..

sacrifice, and a willingness to lay down one's own plans and desires in order to fulfill the will of the Master.

In truth, the majority of believers don't have what it takes to be a servant of God, and are content to step back and let others take on the responsibility of doing the work of the ministry. For these people the requirements of servanthood are too high, for it comes with a price they are unwilling to pay. Jesus said to the rich young ruler, **"If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me."** When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions ^{Matt. 19:21,22}. Indeed, good help is hard to find.

In the New Testament Paul gives a detailed, yet unlikely description of the person God takes delight in using to fulfill His will and purpose on earth. We read in 1 Cor. 1:26-28 these words, "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen..."

The Message® Bible puts it this way, "Take a good look, friends, at who you were when you got called into this life. I don't see many of 'the brightest and the best' among you, not many influential, not many from high society families. Isn't it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these 'nobodies' to expose the hollow pretensions of the 'somebodies'?"

GOD CALLS THE UNKNOWN SERVANT

According to Paul, God delights in choosing people who are not highly educated or gifted with special insight and enlightenment according to worldly standards. Rarely does He call those who are from the high class of society, but instead chooses those from a normal, average background.

Elisha was a farmer while Moses and David were both shepherds. Of the twelve disciples, one was a tax collector, another a thief, and several were smelly fishermen. God uses people the world will never recognize. Movie stars, big name athletes, stock brokers, bankers, and those of high prestige and royalty are almost never called to be used by God. Instead, God calls those who are considered insignificant and despised by the world. Is. 53:3 tells us that even Jesus was "despised and rejected by men." Whom the world rejects and throws away, God will use.

Not many of you came from high-ranking families of society.

A better and more detailed rendering of what Paul is saying to the Corinthian church is this,

"For you see your calling, brothers, how not many of you were especially bright, educated, or enlightened according to the world's standards. Not many of you were impressive. Not many of you came from high-ranking families or from the upper crust of society. Instead, God selected people who are idiots in the world's view; yet God is using them to utterly confound those who seem smart in the world's eyes. God has picked out people who are laughable; yet through them, he is confounding those who think they are high and mighty. Low-class, second-rate, common, average. These are the ones God has chosen..."

SEPARATE YOURSELF

The word “chosen” is a compound of two Greek words which literally means “Out! I say!” God says we are to separate ourselves and come “out” from the world and when we do we immediately become what Peter describes in 1 Peter 2:9,10, “but you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people, but are now the people of God...”

Many people pull away from the privilege of serving God, because *in* and *of* themselves they do not feel qualified to do so. For the most part, these people are correct in their thinking. They are not qualified and this is the exact reason God called them.

Paul writes in 2 Cor. 3:5,6a, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant...”

Many people pull away from the privilege of serving God.

Those who are qualified run the risk of taking credit for what God does through them, thus robbing God of all the glory. Truly, this is a dangerous thing to do. Jesus said in John 15:5, “**I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit for without Me you can do nothing.**” This being so, a servant of God must therefore be teachable and have a hunger to fulfill the will of God.

Prov. 16:26 says that the laborers appetite works for him and his hunger drives him on. In Matt. 5:6 we read, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.” A lazy and self-satisfied person will rarely be motivated to work, but a person who is hungry for the things of God will be motivated to seek a course of action that will help fulfill and

meet the need.

David revealed that he had a servant’s heart when he wrote in Ps. 25:4,5, “Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me for You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.” Solomon also testified that good help is hard to find when he wrote, “Most men will proclaim their own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?” Prov. 20:6.

To be a servant of God, one must die to self and put aside their personal agendas, and choose to live a life for a cause much more noble than their own self interests. Without much outside motivation, a faithful person keeps moving forward each day driven by their mission and the Word of God in their heart. They do not grow weary in well doing as they perform the same righteous tasks day in and day out.

A faithful person will never give up as they look for opportunities to serve and witness, because of their love for Jesus and the Word of God. God is looking for those who are faithful and willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done.

In Matt. 20:16, Jesus concluded the parable of the laborers by making what could be considered a shocking statement. He said, “**For many are called, but few chosen.**” A careful study will reveal that, in truth, we are all called to be laborers for God Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Peter 1:3. We are chosen only if and when we respond to the call. To do this we must first and foremost have a willing heart Ex. 35:5 and mind 2 Cor.8:12 that is ready to obey Is. 1:19 the voice of the Lord.

A better example of a person willing to be used of God cannot be found, than in the call on the life of the prophet Isaiah. In Is. 6:8 we read, “Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying;

‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’
Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’”

David wrote in Ps. 110:3a, “Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power...” In Judges 4 God used the prophetess Deborah and the warrior Barak to defeat the army of the Canaanites. Afterward they sang a song of victory which began with these words, “When leaders lead in Israel, when the people willingly offer themselves, bless the Lord.” Simply put, God chooses those who are ready and willing to work for Him and who will submit to the call on their lives, no matter what the price may be.

Those who do, can rightfully be called “the chosen few.”

CHAPTER THREE

HOOKED ON MINISTRY

a wonderful transformation took place the moment you were born-again. Once destined to a life of eternal destruction, Jesus snatched you from a fiery grave and placed you into His heavenly family. Gal. 4:7 says, “Therefore, you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

BORN AGAIN, THEN PROMOTED

God has elevated all believers to the high position of being His very own sons and daughters, and in John 15:15 Jesus calls those who follow and obey Him “**friends**.” Because of the great love poured out for the whole world on Calvary’s tree, it has become the privilege and honor of believers everywhere to give their lives back to Him in loyal and devout servitude. It will stir the fire of motivation inside if you to understand that servanthood is a promotion in the kingdom of God.

You become born a child of God, but get promoted to the high calling of being a servant of God. This promotion occurs when you choose to willfully surrender your will to the will of the Heavenly Father.

Joshua said, “Choose you this day whom you shall serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” ^{Joshua 24:15}. For His service God is not going to use just anybody. He is only going to use those believers who are willing to make the necessary sacrifices required to become His servants. To do this you must count the cost by daily dying to your own self-will, for

a servant will always put the needs and desires of his Master above his own.

In the New Testament, Peter, Paul, James, Jude, and Jesus all classified themselves as servants. The willingness to serve is the mark of spiritual greatness. To be a servant Jesus said we must humble ourselves as a little child. To be humble means to be submissive. It means to take your authority, power, and independence and yield them to another.

On a recent adventure a rock climber saw something that taught him a valuable lesson on the subject of humility. Two mountain goats stood facing each other on a narrow ledge, one going up the mountain, the other coming down. There was not enough room for both of them to pass by at the same time, so there they stood facing

...you are no longer a slave, but a son... an heir of God through Christ.

each other in a silent confrontational showdown. The climber watched in utter amazement as the goat going up the mountain lowered itself down onto its’ knees and then laid down further onto its’ stomach and became perfectly still, as it allowed the other goat to walk over him on its’ way down the mountain. Once passed over, the goat got to its’ feet and continued its’ journey up the mountain. The lesson here is that when you humble yourself in the sight of the Lord you may sometimes be walked over and downtrodden, but ultimately the Lord will lift you up to success and victory.

The humble man has no plans, programs, or ideas of his own. He simply adopts with all his heart the plans and goals of the one to whom he is submitted. In exchange for all this, the

servants of God become the happiest people in all the world. On the other hand, self-centered and prideful people who walk over others are all heading downhill on the path to defeat and destruction.

MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS

There is nobody in the body of Christ who's supposed to be doing nothing. You didn't get saved so you can play more golf or watch TV without pain. You got saved to serve. Paul told Titus, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men" Titus 3:8.

The NIV® says "that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good." In verse 14 Paul said, "And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful."

You can be saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, and still live an unproductive life. If all you do is live for yourself, you will have an empty, useless life, and on the day you breathe your last breath the words of Solomon will ring true, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?" Eccl. 1:2b,3.

Even Jesus said in Mark 8:36, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" The reward for all this is that, what you do for God will never be forgotten. "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward" Mark 10:42.

With God, the smallest task can take on

eternal significance. Ps. 84:10 says, "I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of wickedness." With utmost urgency make serving God the top priority of your life. Don't make it your second choice and don't put it off until tomorrow.

Many people think it's highly spiritual to put their family first, but if they do then God is not. There is only room at the top of your priority list for one person and it must be God. Some people are so busy with their families that they don't have time for God. There is grave danger in doing this, because if you put your family first you are teaching them to put themselves first. You are teaching them that they are the center of the universe and not God. Yes, love your spouse and your children with all that is within you, and together as a team make God and your service to Him the top priority of your lives.

Many people think it's highly spiritual to put their family first.

There is no better example of a family who did this than the household of Stephanas. We read in 1 Cor. 16:14,15, "Let all that

you do be done with love. I urge you, brethren - you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints." This family gave themselves wholly to the work of the ministry and did works of service with great heartiness, diligence, and zeal.

The AKJB® translation says "they addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." They were serving so consistently, so regularly, that it was like an addiction. They were hooked on ministry. There is something down on the inside of you driving you to get addicted to something.

It's human nature to want to get "high" on some adrenaline rush that brings excitement. Deep calls unto deep, and people use worldly substances to fill that void. They drive fast

cars, jump out of airplanes, take drugs and go to casinos all for the purpose of feeling good. This “high” they feel is short lived, and it never satisfies them, so they do it again and again until a lethal addiction occurs. This is all a substitute for serving God, so don’t be deceived by trying to satisfy your cravings with worldly things. Serving satisfies and if you’re not addicted to this, you’ll be addicted to something else.

Serving is one addiction that’s good. It satisfies. It gives you what you’re looking for. It fills the void that only God can fill and it makes you want to serve more and more. It will get you “high” on the Most High.

Jesus said in John 15:10,11, “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” His joy becomes your joy when God’s love flows through you to others, and this gives you the “high” you so desperately need and crave.

GIVE YOURSELF TO THE LORD, FIRST

This is what happened in the churches of Macedonia. Paul writes in 2 Cor. 8:2-5, “that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we had hoped, but first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”

The NLT® says “they begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift

for the believers in Jerusalem.” Fierce troubles came down on these people, but their trials only exposed how incredibly happy they were. They had given themselves without reservation to God and now they were earnestly pleading and begging with much urgency for the chance to help their brothers and sisters in the Lord.

The heart of these people wanted to serve and they, too, were addicted to ministry. They knew it’s not a sacrifice to serve, it’s a privilege, an honor! It’s a privilege to push that broom, to clean that toilet, to change that diaper, to wash those smelly feet. This is all kingdom business and it never stops. It just keeps going and going and gets bigger and bigger. There is no task too small or insignificant if it does something to help somebody else.

There is no such thing as a person who can’t do anything. Even the useless can become

useful. If you are paralyzed you can still pray and walk in faith. In Philemon 10, 11, Paul writes, “I appeal to you for my son Onesimus,

whom I have begotten while in my chains, who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.” Onesimus was in prison for being useless. If you’re not occupied doing something good, you’ll be available for something bad. David sinned with Bathsheba, because he stayed home during the time of battle.

The NIV® says about Onesimus, “Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and me.” Paul told Timothy we are to be “useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work” 2 Tim. 2:21 NIV. He later told his young protégé, “Get Mark and bring him with you for he is useful to me for ministry” v.4:11b.

Mark had earlier abandoned Paul on a missionary journey, but now the useless has

All believers have been called to the ministry of helps.

become useful. Opportunities are there if you'll pursue them and make them your top priority. If you will take the first step, God will enhance your ability to bring your service to people many times over.

EMBRACE THE CALL

God gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness ^{2 Peter 1:3} so that we can serve Him and be a blessing to others. When you commit yourself to taking care of God's business, when you get addicted to ministry, He'll provide you with whatever you need to get the job done. Jesus told Peter to **"Come"** and Peter received the power to walk on the water.

Jesus is also telling you to **"Come, follow Me,"** and when you embrace the call He'll put strength in your body and money in your hand and whatever else you need to fulfill that which you've been called to do. Peter's mother-in-law was sick with a high fever and Jesus "stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them" ^{Luke 4:39}. This woman needed a healing to serve her guests and Jesus gave it to her.

In Luke 8 certain women had been healed of evil spirits and various infirmities and they "provided for Him from their substance" ^{vv. 2,3}. This is what Godly provision is for. You're healed to help and set free to be a blessing to other people. These women did not look back at their past problems, but immediately set out to serve others.

To serve is a privilege and if you hesitate, you're not qualified. Too many people put too much time, energy, and effort into things that don't matter, things that don't have eternal

significance. But when you addict yourself to the ministry of the saints, fullness of joy comes and true satisfaction will engulf your entire being.

The more you help people the more happy you'll be and the higher you'll get. John 15:13 says, **"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down his life for his friends."** Paul said in 2 Cor. 12:15a, "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls..." The Message® Bible says, "I'd be most happy to empty my pockets, even mortgage my life, for your good."

The NIV® states, "So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well." Everybody in the body of Christ has a ministry. 1 Cor. 12:28 lists the ministry of helps as a definite position in the church just like apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, and pastors.

To serve is a privilege and if you hesitate, you're not qualified.

A small percentage of people have speaking gifts that allow them to stand behind a pulpit, but all believers have been called to the ministry of helps. Don't think your position is unimportant, because you're not on the platform in front of a large crowd of people. Most people have the need and desire to be noticed and acknowledged, so they downplay the importance of the helps ministry. These people are carnally minded, but those who are spiritually mature are always willing to be in the background where nobody sees them or knows who they are.

The Lord knows everything and He sees all you do and He'll never forget your labor of love. Don't prompt people to sing your praises and don't boast about all you've done. Nobody says people have to notice and appreciate what you do. The Lord knows, and for the spiritually mature that's all that matters.

The ministry of helps is a big canopy that

covers a wide area of things to do to help the body of Christ. 1 Samuel 10 tells the story of how Saul became king and shows how the ministry of helps is more important than most people think. After Samuel anointed Saul to be king we read in verses 25,26, “Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and valiant men went with him, whose hearts God had touched.”

Saul needed help to be king, and at the very beginning of his reign God touched the hearts of several brave men to help him. These men may have been naturally gifted in and of themselves, but there is a spiritual aspect to being a good helper. God touched their hearts and they were able to go out and fulfill their mission.

In like manner there is also a spiritual aspect to cleaning carpets, changing diapers, and being a parking lot attendant. When God touches your heart you'll do anything that needs to be done. Don't make restrictions on what you're willing to do and always be open minded. If you're pushing a broom to sweep the floor, just remember that it's God's broom and it's His floor.

GET ADDICTED

To be addicted to the ministry of the saints you must have the heart of a helper, and it's a heart that God has touched. A true helper has an unselfish heart and these type of people are very rare. The nature of the flesh is selfishness, and most people have themselves and what they want on their mind. They're afraid people will take advantage of them, but yet they pray to God and ask him to use them. There is a

difference between being used and abused, and because they don't know the difference they choose to do nothing at all.

A good helper, how-ever, has no such fears and doesn't have the need to make all the decisions. Faithful followers help leaders based on what's in the leaders' heart and not what's in their own.

1 Samuel tells the story about the faith of Saul's son Jonathan and how he was willing to face the garrison of the enemy Philistine army on his own. We read in verses 6,7, “Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, ‘Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the Lord will work for us. For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few.’ So his armor bearer said to him, ‘Do all that is in your heart. Go then, here I am with you, according

to your heart.’” This was an unselfish response, and how encouraged Jonathan must have felt to have his servant

respond this way. Jonathan had a plan on how to defeat the enemy and together these two men went out and won a major victory.

There is a specific call on the life of every believer that goes above and beyond the ministry of helps. Before this call can be fulfilled, more times than not, God will use you to help fulfill the call on someone else's life. Jesus said in Luke 16;12, “And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?”

Being a good helper brings maturity, growth, and proves faithfulness, and what you make happen for others God will make happen for you. Submit yourself to the leadership of those over you and do what needs to be done.

Help them the way they want you to help them, and not the way you feel they should be helped.

A faithful person is a dependable helper.

THE UNSELFISH, HUMBLE HEART

Take yourself out of the equation and don't assume you know what's best. With a humble heart ask for specific instructions on what they want you to do and then go out and do it with everything you've got. 1 Thess. 5:12,13a says, "And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake." Know those who are over you. Know what they like and don't like, and help them the way they want to be helped.

Paul describes his helper Timothy in Phil. 2:20-22, "For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the Gospel."

Like-mindedness is one aspect of an unselfish heart, so always get to know the person you're helping and how they like things done. You don't hear "for" the person you're helping, you hear "from" them. A faithful person is a dependable helper who can be counted on to do what they say they'll do. They always show up on time and they'll always be where they're supposed to be.

However, helping somebody doesn't mean you'll get close to them. A leaders' privacy is precious to them and just because you're called to help them doesn't mean you're going to be their fishing buddy. You can help somebody without spending any personal time with them. If you get too close to a leader, whether it be the pastor at church or the boss at work, you'll have a hard time taking their correction or receiving direction from them.

Some people want something in return for their help and if the leader doesn't give them the

time they feel they deserve they walk away hurt and offended. This is not proper behavior for one who is addicted to ministry. A faithful helper is there when you need them, and not there when you don't. Don't overstay your welcome. Don't hang around when it's not necessary. Do your job and leave. Don't stay unless you're asked to stay.

Helping is more than mechanical acts of labor. God looks at the heart, and a good helper is one whose heart has been touched by God. God will put somebody on your heart and you'll receive divine direction to help them. You must be unselfish, humble, and submissive. Pride always has a better idea, but humble yourself and help people the way they want to be helped.

You are no longer your own. You were bought with a price and when Jesus is Lord you die to what *you* want. A faithful servant has no agenda of his own and each morning he wakes up and says, "Lord, not my will, but Your will be done." There is amazing happiness and freedom in doing this. It's already been decided what you're supposed to do and this means you don't have to figure everything out. The Master knows everything and all you have to do is hear from Him and discover what you're foreordained to do.

Paul wrote in Gal. 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Gods' children are to do His will with gladness of heart. They do what they do from their heart as unto the Lord, and they serve because they want to. God will not have compelled servants for the reason that love cannot exist where there is no choice. Life is

Excuses abound as to why people don't step forward to serve God.

short and opportunities to serve are precious. Become like the household of Stephanas. Get addicted to ministry and then go out and change your world.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOUR OF DUTY

This world is like one big, giant airport. Every day there are thousands of arrivals and every day there are thousands of departures. Almost without fail those who are closing in on their departure date testify that the latter years of their life pass by much faster than the years of their youth.

HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW

The Bible says your life is like a mist. You're here today, gone tomorrow. Ps. 39:4 ^{NL} says, "Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered - and that my life is fleeting away."

Since our time here on earth is so brief, we must all seriously consider that the day will soon be upon us when we will stand before God and be held accountable for what we did with the one life we've been given.

Some people spend all their time and energy trying to get the corner office on the top floor of the highest skyscraper. They sacrifice their life, family, and any chance of having a relationship with God, so they can one day retire, play golf, and go on Caribbean cruises one or twice a year. They achieve their goals, when suddenly and unexpectedly the doctor informs them that they've got six months to live. The result of all this is a wasted life with nothing of eternal value to show for it.

Throughout the Bible we are warned to avoid the lifestyle that allows us to gain the whole world, but lose our own soul. The rich young ruler refused to sell what he had and give

to the poor so he could follow Jesus. Little did he know that no hearse ever had a U-Haul pulled behind it.

In no way does God *not* want us to have nice things and live the good life. All He requires is that we put Him first, and when you seek first the expansion of His kingdom, then all these things will be added unto you ^{Matt. 6:33}.

Paul writes in 1 Tim. 6:17,18, "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they may be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share."

People who don't do anything, don't want to do anything.

The Message® Bible tells us "to do good, to be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous."

This is our purpose for living, the reason we arrived on this planet. Every person who is here is supposed to be in active service in Gods' kingdom, but too many people value their own life more than their service to God. They live for themselves and don't realize that God has something better for them, a life of greater influence in the world and usefulness in His kingdom.

Sad to say, excuses abound as to why people don't step forward to serve God. They say they're too young or else they're too old, too poor, or too rich. They think they're too busy to serve God, or else they're too important, or live too far away. These people are too occupied with their own lives and don't realize this is the greatest enemy to serving God. They need to die to themselves and their own self-interests

and put God first, because time will come and go, and before they know it their life will be over.

Jesus spoke about this in Luke 14 when He told the Parable of the Great Supper. He said in verses 16,17,

“A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’”

The Lord depicted a feast on a scale of great magnificence, given for the purpose of bringing people together for a time of rejoicing and fellowship. In the East men of rank and affluence would send out two calls to a planned feast. The first was given so the people could make all the necessary preparations for accepting the invitation. The second call came later and told the people the feast was now ready and that the invited should stop what they were engaged in and go to the feast.

This same invitation has gone out to every person who's ever been born and it is a great privilege to be invited by the Lord to be a part of what is His. Unfortunately, not every person feels this way and Jesus said in vs 18a, “But they all with one accord began to make excuses.” Animated by one spirit and moved by the same impulse, all those who received the first invitation to the supper begged to be excused. In their refusal to go is the implication of hostility toward the host, so they began to make up excuses for refusing his generous offer.

Excuse #1

I HAVE BOUGHT LAND

“The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused’” v.18b. This is a lame excuse, for one can hardly conceive of

anybody buying anything before seeing it first. He would need to know if the land was flat or if rolling hills covered the landscape. Was the soil rich for planting or was the acreage covered with stony ground? How would the land respond to a heavy rainfall? Could it retain moisture and sustain itself during a dry season? All these facts needed to be considered before a purchase was made.

Also, this grand feast took place at supper time which was in the evening, so even if he had foolishly bought the land without seeing it first, he could have easily seen it earlier in the day or else wait until the following morning.

Excuse #2

I HAVE PURCHASED FARM EQUIPMENT

“And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them.

I ask you to have me excused’” v.19. A small farm would only need one or two oxen, but five yoke of oxen would be for a large plantation which means

that, like the land owner, this was a wealthy man. Nobody ever bought oxen without testing them first to see how strong they were so this was another lame excuse.

Excuse #3

I'M ON MY HONEYMOON

“Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’” v.20. This was the most rude response, and had this man not been so selfish, he could have gone to the feast with his new bride and given her a pleasant night out.

All three excuses may differ in terms, but all three express an immersion in worldly affairs that left them with no time for God.

Multitudes today are invited to the same Gospel feast and respond in the same way as

*People are wasting days
of their lives doing nothing
important.*

described by Jesus so long ago. It was for this reason that Paul wrote in 2 Tim. 2:3,4, “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlists him as a soldier.”

ENTANGLEMENTS OF LIFE

The word “entangle” means ‘braid, twist, to weave like a crown of thorns.’ It means to become involved in an activity to the point of interference with other activities of objectives.

There is a difference between involvement and entanglement. Like a ram whose horns are caught in the brush, one is entangled when he is not free to get loose. When worldly pleasures and the business affairs of this life hem us in so tightly that we can’t get loose to fulfill the Lords’ commands, then we have become entangled in the thorns of non-eternal pursuits.

Entanglement is the act of getting so involved in something that one becomes restricted and controlled and is no longer free to do what should be done. Samson got entangled with Delilah and Lot got entangled with Sodom. Deut. 20:5-8 warns a man not to go to war if there are unsettled affairs in his life. The battle is serious and a soldier cannot be distracted by entanglements of business and worldly affairs.

We are all called to be soldiers in the army of the Lord, and our **tour of duty** begins when we arrive on this planet and ends when we leave. We’ve got a job to do and we’re not here to wile away the hours just to see how much fun we can have or how many toys we can buy. Paul’s description of the Christian soldier is one who is single minded and has an undivided heart and singleness of purpose. Detachment from

extraneous cares are essential for successful service, and we must not entangle ourselves with worldly affairs to the point that we are diverted and drawn away from our tour of duty and the great concerns of our Christianity.

No one, when engaged in military service, allows himself to become involved in civilian pursuits nor does he waste his time doing the things that most people do. A soldier in the fight needs to concentrate on the task of doing the Lord’s work, and must avoid all preoccupation with the daily affairs of life in order to be free to obey without hesitation, or hindrance the orders of the Commander-In-Chief. He must not let anything distract him or stop him, and he must put all of his effort and energy into the fight, for his aim is to please the one for whom he is fighting.

*Don’t quit, don’t give up,
don’t lose heart.*

Like soldiers, Christians should work hard to do what the Lord wants and not get involved with things that would prevent them from doing this. Their main purpose is to please the Lord whom they serve.

We are called to be in the world, but not to be entangled by it. 1 John 2:15 says, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” If you want to get serious about serving God then there are going to be times when you can’t do some of the things that other people do.

Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin ^{Heb. 11:24,25}. Soldiers in the field must avoid anything that hampers their effectiveness in battle. They are to be so consumed with their duties that they are oblivious to the enticements of this world and

the non-essentials of life.

In the Parable of the Sower Jesus said, “Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful” ^{Matt. 13:22}.

Many concerns and activities in this life are innocent in and of themselves, but people have allowed them to crowd out the primary purpose of serving God in the advancement of His kingdom (see Luke 9:57-62). Instead, the active service for Christ must always occupy the prominent place in our hearts, while the things of this life are kept in the background. The active soldier must forever be on guard against becoming so involved in such matters, that he no longer feels free to give himself fully to the call of Christian service.

We cannot have the mentality of a civilian who sits on the sidelines and does nothing. Some believers think they can be Christians, but not have to fight as a soldier, except they are deceiving themselves. All believers are called, delivered, and set free so they can be in active service to the Lord, and will always be on the front lines of battle, whether they realize it or not.

HAZARD DUTY

Serving God is hazardous duty, and one must be able to endure hardship and be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus ^{2 Tim. 2:1-3}. Soldiers find out early on that they’re not called to a life of ease and comfort. They are tough warriors, and there is no room for whining cry-babies in the army of the Lord. A soldier fights in all conditions whether it be in the rain, snow, or 110 degree heat. They’ll crawl in the mud, run in a storm, eat out of a can, sleep under

the stars, carry heavy equipment, and go long hours without rest or sleep. They train hard and will do whatever it takes to win and overcome. They will go anywhere, at any time, at any cost. Active service calls for rigorous self-discipline and unquestioning obedience for a soldier is always on duty and needs to be alert around the clock.

Total commitment is necessary to be a good soldier and his training is designed to make him obey the word of command. A soldier is conditioned for obedience, and with much vigilance puts priority on his calling and the task at hand.

Wholehearted devotion, marked by hard work and careful attention to Gods’ Word, brings the greatest glory to the Lord. Time is going by fast and what you do for yourself won’t matter a short time from now.

Procrastination is the manifestation of the lack of diligence.

Life is more than having fun all the time and only those who are doers of the Word get fully developed and receive eternal rewards and benefits. You will never be satisfied and fulfilled on the inside until you do something for somebody else. People of honor are always ready and willing to serve anytime, anywhere. The greatest expression of love is giving ^{John 3:16}, and your service is the keeping of the love command. This doesn’t mean you can’t have a family, job, or hobbies. You just need a revelation that this is not what life is all about.

It is foolish to live just for this life. People live like they’ll be here forever, but the truth is that your life on this planet is the shortest thing you’ll ever do. And the longer you live the faster you realize this life is passing you by quickly. You were not made for this life, you were made for eternity.

A good soldier must not allow the ordinary

affairs of life to become the main object of his existence. Paul was a tent maker, but this was only a means to further his passion of preaching Christ crucified. You will have no regrets if you sacrifice things in this life in order to complete your mission.

This world is not your home, so live with the awareness that this life is short and there is a better world to come. All Christians have been delivered from the fear of death and if you're not afraid to die you can become a courageous soldier in the army of the Lord. We've all been invited to the great feast of the Master and when the call comes the only acceptable response is "Here I am."

Gen. 22:11 says, "But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.'" In Gen. 46:2 we read, "Then God spoke to Israel in the vision of the night, and said, 'Jacob, Jacob!' And he said, 'Here I am.'" Moses said the same thing in Ex. 3:4 as did Samuel in 1 Sam. 3:4. Is. 6:8 tells how the Lord needed somebody to go on a mission for Him and Isaiah said, "Here am I! Send me." Jesus called the fishermen Peter and Andrew to follow Him and "they immediately left their nets and followed Him" Matt. 4:20.

To go on with the Lord and fulfill the call He has for you requires great levels of commitment and dedication. Daniel continued in his service to the Lord and through decades he did not swerve from his loyalty to God and his devotion to the high interests that were committed to his charge (see Dan. 1:21).

The world does not want the flash of a meteor, but the constant radiance of a fixed star. When you put your hand to the plow never look back to the fleeting pleasures that this life has to offer. God *will* call you out of your comfort

zone, and if you're willing to turn loose of some things, you'll quickly find out how better off you'll be when you obey the Lord in every way. If God calls you to another state or country, then you must go where He tells you to go and stay where He tells you to stay. Good soldiers go where they're sent and stay where they're stationed. Soldiers come and go on command, and you must follow Him and go where He is for you.

If you are called to the wastelands of Siberia, then that is where God is for you. It takes faith to turn loose of what seems like security to you and go to a place you are not familiar with. Abraham left his home not knowing where he was going, but he knew God's commands were His enablings. He didn't know the details, but he knew the direction and he promptly obeyed.

Like Abraham follow the orders of the Commander-In-Chief and His Word will give you the faith and ability to overcome any fear, and to fulfill that which you've been called to do.

*Diligence stays with it until
the work is done.*

YOU HAVE A COMMITMENT

There is a place for you and a service you are to perform. When you turn loose of your self-will and submit to the will of God, then fullness of joy will overwhelm you. If you don't step out and obey, you'll never know what you've missed. The children of Israel didn't cross over the Jordan River and died in the wilderness.

Do whatever it takes to fulfill your role as a soldier of the Lord. If you don't, you'll be unhappy all the time and you'll never be satisfied or fulfilled. Rarely will things go right for you, and it was all brought about by selfish disobedience. The selfish life is a miserable life and the giving life is the fulfilled life. There are sacrifices to be made and much effort is needed, but it will make you feel good and want to wake up each morning.

BE FRUITFUL, PRODUCTIVE

Spend your time doing something useful and worthwhile. Be not unfruitful, but be productive and excel in good works and hospitality. The word “excel” means ‘to super abound’ and means you will do way more than what is adequate, to go above and beyond what is needed. Soldiers in the army of the Lord are eager and enthusiastic about doing good works, advancing the kingdom of God, and pushing the devil out of the way.

When on duty, soldiers are always busy doing something. They’re never idle or lazy and they never lay around and do nothing. James 2:20 says, “faith without works is dead.” A better rendering would be to say “faith without working is dead.”

Faith that does nothing is a *dead faith* and is worth nothing. The woman with the issue of blood was weak from her ailment, but she pressed through the crowd anyway. She worked to get to Jesus and this is what secured her healing. You, also, cannot be idle. You must get up and do something.

1 Cor. 3:9a says “we are Gods’ fellow workers.” We are laborers in the kingdom of God and work is what we’ve been called to do. There are too many non-working people in the church today, and Paul says we are to keep away from such people. 2 Thess. 3:6 ^{NIV} states, “In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.” If the non-working man is included in everything you’re doing, then he’ll think everything is all right. Paul continues in v.7: “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you.”

When on duty, soldiers are always busy doing something.

V.10: “For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: ‘The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.’”

V.11: “We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies.”

Vv.12,13, “Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.”

What are you doing in your service to the Lord? At church most people come, they sit, they listen, and then they leave. You will not see them or hear from them again until the following Sunday morning. These are the very people Paul says we are to avoid.

The Message® Bible translation says, “Our orders - backed up by the Master, Jesus - are to refuse to have anything to do with those among you who are lazy and refuse to work the way we taught you.”

This may seem like a harsh command, but if you fellowship with the wrong people long enough, there is the chance that you will become as they are. Bad company corrupts good habits. In the Parable of the Talents the man who buried his was idle and got thrown into everlasting darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth ^{Matt. 25:30}.

We are warned several times in scripture not to be idle, lazy, and slothful. Rom. 12:10,11 tells us, “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”

The Living® Bible says, “never be lazy in your work, but serve the Lord enthusiastically.” An enemy to your service to the Lord is

slothfulness, so never put off until tomorrow what you can be doing today. Your window of opportunity to serve is short, and if you put things off long enough... you won't do it. There is a limited time window on your life and if you're not careful you'll miss the chance to serve, and then you'll depart this planet without having done anything at all. Jesus wept and wailed over Jerusalem, because they missed their chance to accept and worship the Messiah ^{Luke 19:41-44}.

The Book of Proverbs has a lot to say about slothfulness. Prov. 6:9 says, "How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep?" Laziness loves to sleep. It goes to bed early, sleeps late, gets up to eat, and then takes a nap. Prov. 26:14 says, "As a door turns on its' hinges, so does the slothful turn on his bed."

A door moves, but doesn't go anywhere, and so it is with the slothful. It's all about being comfortable, but the more you yield to slothfulness the worse you'll feel. Prov. 20:4 tells us, "The sluggard will not plow because of winter; Therefore he will beg during the harvest and have nothing." The slothful person yields to the flesh and is always making excuses. The sluggard will not plow his fields for it's either too cold or else it's too hot. There is a specific season to plant, and pretty soon it will be too late to plow and prepare the soil.

Poverty comes on the slothful man and he'll begin harvest, but will have nothing. If you don't work, neither shall you eat. Prov. 24:30,31 states, "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the field of the man devoid of understanding; and there it was all overgrown with thorns; Its' surface was covered with nettles; Its' stone wall was broken down." Prov. 22:13 says, "The slothful man says, 'There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!'"

The slothful man is safety conscious and always has a reason not to work. He looks out his window and says, "Lions, and tigers, and bears! Oh my!!" These savage predators dwell in the wilderness and never roam on city streets. This is all an excuse not to work, and the slothful man returns to his bed where he will sleep his life away.

In this life you are going to serve something or someone, and there is nobody better to serve than the Lord. Because of His great mercies upon us, it is just reasonable that we serve Him. He created us, He sustains us, and He purchased us with His own blood. God set you free from the chains of bondage in order that you may serve Him.

God sent Moses to Egypt with these instructions, "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord: "Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let my Son go that he may serve Me"'" ^{Ex. 4:22,23a}. The same thing was said in Ex. 7:16; 8:1,20; 9:1,13; 10:3. The people were already serving the Egyptians, but God set them free so they could serve Him and so it is with us today.

After the people crossed the Red Sea and were delivered from bondage God gave them the Ten Commandments, and the first one said, "You shall have no other gods before Me" ^{Ex. 20:3}. Our God is a jealous God, and we are not to make a god out of material things. Worship is intimate, and worshipping a false god is spiritual adultery and unfaithfulness.

You will serve something and if you don't serve God you will serve something else. God said in Deut. 28:47,48a, "Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies..."

Paul wrote in Rom. 6:16, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?”

You are a servant to whom you obey. Some people serve their own belly and lustful appetites. They serve alcohol, drugs, money, and power. The devil wants to be served like God ^{Matt. 4:9}, and he uses these fleshly cravings to draw you into a web of deceit where these entanglements will destroy your life.

Serving God, however, is a joy, a privilege, and we are to serve Him with gladness.

- We are not here just to have a good time.
- We are here on a mission and a good soldier knows we’re in this life to complete our tour of duty.
- We’re in the trenches with the devils and the diseases.
- We’re here to rub elbows with those who are hurting and need a friend to lean on.
- We are here to make a positive difference in the world and our love for God is shown in our service to other people.

We are here to make a positive difference.

Nothing is too little or trivial if done with the right attitude and a heart of love. The older you get the faster the years go by, so do something that matters today. Don’t waste precious opportunities to serve God. Wake up every morning and say,

“Lord, here I am.

What would you have me do today?

How can I be of service to You?

Where can I help?

What can I do to advance Your kingdom?

How can I be of service to Your children and the church today?

Here am I! Send me.”

About the author:

Randall J. Brewer has been conveying the mind of God for more than thirty years, and we believe he's just getting started.

Raised in an abusive home, Randall has overcome numerous obstacles throughout his life by his trust in the One True God of the Bible. Writing for the Lord, Randall will put pen to paper anywhere the Lord finds him. From the comfort of his home to sitting in his car in a frozen Illinois parking lot, Randall can tell you that when the Spirit of the Lord is upon you to move... you move wherever you are.



Gifted with the Holy Spirit's willingness to express God's attitude and clarification of the Word, Randall has distributed a myriad of his publications worldwide over the years. Thousands of requests pour in each month needing the ministry teachings of Randall and the Holy Spirit's revelation of the character of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the King. Countless ministers throughout the world are using Randall's teaching as a basis for their sermons and study guides.

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