

# NUGGETS of Faith

Plumbing God's  
Word to deeper  
levels of insight  
and revelation



BEATTY CARMICHAEL

Nuggets of Faith

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**Nuggets of Faith** (vs 1.22 – 230620)  
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**Cover art, titled *Unfathomable II***

2017 Phyllis Thomas

**From the artist:** “In 2003 I read C.S. Lewis’ *The Grand Miracle* in which he images the incarnation by describing a diver pushing down through the colors of the ocean and coming up again. I was reminded of that image and those colors as I studied **Romans 11:33** which speaks of the depth of the riches of God’s wisdom and knowledge. I began word-searching *deep* and *depth* and became aware of *deepness* ... the distance from the top downward from a given point; a downward measurement. The Greek word for deep, used in this passage and others, is *bathos* and it defines something of profundity, unsearchable, inscrutable, unfathomable, and bottomless. Discovering *unfathomable* coincided with my image of deep water because I found the plumb bob or plummet in Scripture is the device used for measuring the fathoms or depth of water.

“All of this study resulted in this image of blue, starting with the sky, down to the very darkest deep of the ocean. I was amazed at how fast I painted this piece because I had a complete gradation of colors from the lightest to darkest in my paint palette. Because I included the horizon line, a cross was automatically created which reinforces the perfectly vertical standard of God’s word. The plumb line does not go all the way to the bottom as God’s wisdom, knowledge, love and the deep things cannot be totally known. However, that does not stop me from trying to understand all that I can. Perhaps Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase says it best in today’s language: *And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you’ll be able to take in with all Christians the extravagant dimensions of Christ’s love. Reach out and experience the breadth. Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.*”

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## ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is a compilation of thoughts and revelations the Lord has been teaching me about his truths. Many of these are revelations directly from the Lord, while many others are thoughts he placed in my mind to understand his truths. And while I believe most of these Nuggets are inspired by the Lord and are, for the most part, theologically accurate, a few may be from my own thoughts, especially as I work out my understandings on various topics. I originally compiled these in book form primarily to share with family and friends in hopes they will benefit from them as much as I have.

It took five years to write these Nuggets. Because they are in chronological order of when and how the Lord gave them to me, you'll see a pattern of progression within them. They go from simpler truths to deeper and more profound truths as the Lord deepens my understanding of his word.

I pray that as you go through and study these Nuggets you will grow in deeper understanding of God's truths. I pray they will help instill a deeper walk of righteousness in your life, an increase in denying yourself, and a greater pursuit of intimacy with the Lord than you've ever experienced before.

At the back of the book you'll also find a handy **index** of each verse referenced in the Nuggets. This will make it easy to look up specific verses you may encounter as you read God's word and go straight to the Nuggets tied to those verses if you desire.

My hope and prayer is you will get as much from these as I have personally. Be blessed!

Beatty Carmichael

**P.S.** I have a podcast channel where I teach complex Biblical truths in an easy to understand – and easy to apply – format. I encourage you to subscribe to my channel, **Get Radical Faith**. You can find it on Apple Podcast, Google Podcast, Spotify, Audible, and all other podcast players. You'll get a lot out of it, and many of the topics I teach were born through these Nuggets.

## NUGGETS OF FAITH

### **Luk 17:22-24 - When Jesus speaks to his Apostles, he is speaking to all believers**

"Later he talked again about this with his disciples. "The time is coming when you will long for me to be with you even for a single day, but I won't be here," he said. "Reports will reach you that I have returned and that I am in this place or that; don't believe it or go out to look for me. For when I return, you will know it beyond all doubt. It will be as evident as the lightning that flashes across the skies." (TLB)

Jesus's second coming was not going to be in his Apostles' lifetime. But he is speaking to them as if they will see him again. What Jesus is doing is the same as the Holy Spirit does throughout the Bible. He speaks to nations as an individual without regard to time. In other words, he speaks to one nation and says "because you did not let my people cross your land when I brought them out of Egypt I will punish you." That may have been a thousand years previously. And Jesus is doing the same here. Though he is speaking to his apostles, he is speaking to all his believers who will come throughout the ages.

What is the implication? When Jesus gives commands to his apostles he is often giving commands to us. When Jesus gives his authority to his Apostles and disciples he is giving that authority to us. When Jesus speaks to his Apostles he is often speaking to all believers. (1/17)

### **Luk 8:24-25 - Jesus expects the apostles to do the miracles he does**

"They rushed over and woke him up. "Master, Master, we are sinking!" they screamed. So he spoke to the storm: "Quiet down," he said, and the wind and waves subsided and all was calm! Then he asked them, "Where is your faith?" (TLB)

Jesus doesn't tell the apostles that he is the only one who can stop the storm. He rebuked them by asking "where is your faith?" In other words, Jesus fully expected them to have faith to calm the storm as he did.

Every time Jesus rebukes his disciples for lack of faith it is because they should have acted in faith. When Peter is walking on the water and then sinks, Jesus rebukes him for lack of faith. When Jesus

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comes down from the Mount of Transfiguration and the father brings the epileptic boy to him and says "your disciples could not cast out the demon," Jesus rebuked his disciples for a lack of faith. And here, he's doing the same.

If Jesus expected that faith and ability to do miracles from the apostles who had not been given the gift of miracles, then it's not so much a gift as it is faith. Jesus keeps rebuking them for their lack of faith. If they just have faith, they can do the miracles that Jesus does. That's what Jesus expected of them.

If we have faith, we can do what Jesus did.

Therefore, Jesus did not do miracles in his position as God. He did them from his position as man with faith and authority from God, modeling how we should live ourselves. (1/17)

### **Luk 13:10-13 - Sickness includes skeletal problems**

"One Sabbath as he was teaching in a synagogue, he saw a seriously handicapped woman who had been bent double for eighteen years and was unable to straighten herself. Calling her over to him Jesus said, "Woman, you are healed of your sickness!" He touched her, and instantly she could stand straight. How she praised and thanked God!" (TLB)

Though the woman was bent over (skeletal issue), Jesus called it a sickness and healed her. Therefore, as we are called to heal sickness it includes skeletal issues.

Additionally, in verse 16 Jesus claims that her sickness was the bondage of Satan: "is it wrong for me, just because it is the Sabbath day, to free this Jewish woman from the bondage in which Satan has held her for eighteen years?"

If sickness is the bondage of Satan, then just as we cast out demons we can cast out sickness. (1/17)

### **Gal 3:17 - God's Precedence For One Is His Promise For All**

"Here's what I am trying to say: God's promise to save through faith -- and God wrote this promise down and signed it -- could not be canceled or changed four hundred and thirty years later when God gave the Ten Commandments." (TLB)

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Paul is sharing how Abraham was righteous before God through faith, not works. And later the law came. And Paul is arguing that simply because the law came it does not void a promise God made prior.

What's interesting is in the passage about Abraham God did not promise that all would be made righteous through faith. He merely said that Abraham was counted righteous through faith. Paul is arguing that a precedent set by God is a promise of God for all. That since Abraham was made righteous through faith, all are made righteous through faith.

This supports my assertion that when Jesus gave commands to the apostles, those commands were given to us. When Jesus gave authority to the apostles, that authority was given to us. When Jesus gave promises to the apostles, those promises were given to us. In other words, within a general framework of how God operates (not an absolute framework all the time), God's precedence with one becomes his promise to all.

Even Jesus comments on this precedence. When God spoke to Moses, he was speaking to us: **Mat 22:31-32** "But now, as to whether there is a resurrection of the dead--don't you ever read the Scriptures? Don't you realize that God was speaking directly to you when he said, 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob'? So God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (TLB) (3/17)

### **Num 17:1-8 - The Lord causes the dead to produce abundant fruit**

"Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell the people of Israel that each of their tribal chiefs is to bring you a wooden rod with his name inscribed upon it. Aaron's name is to be on the rod of the tribe of Levi. Put these rods in the inner room of the Tabernacle where I meet with you, in front of the Ark. I will use these rods to identify the man I have chosen: for buds will grow on his rod! Then at last this murmuring and complaining against you will stop!" So Moses gave the instructions to the people, and each of the twelve chiefs (including Aaron) brought him a rod. He put them before the Lord in the inner room of the Tabernacle, and when he went in the next day, he found that Aaron's rod, representing the tribe of Levi, had budded and was blossoming, and had ripe almonds hanging from it!" (TLB)

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All the rods were dead. Aaron was the only priest. His rod bloomed and budded and produced an abundance of fruit. This is a picture of the Christian Life. God takes us who were dead, gives us new life as priests to God, and when we remain in his presence he causes us to produce abundant fruit. (6/17)

### **Jos 13:6-7 - God's promised blessings require taking them by faith**

[God speaking to Joshua] - "I am ready to drive these people out from before the nation of Israel, so include all this territory when you divide the land among the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh as I have commanded you." (TLB)

Israel has just been 7 years conquering many nations and destroying all the inhabitants of those nations. God has now told Joshua he is getting old and there are still many nations yet to conquer. God then tells Joshua he is ready to drive all those nations out and give their land to Israel, so go ahead and divide the land now.

It was God's will for them to occupy the territory and to fully drive out and destroy all the inhabitants there. God even promised to help them do it. But they did not receive God's promised blessing because they did not forcefully take it by faith.

God's will for our life almost always requires us to act in faith to receive it. If we do not act in faith we will rarely receive what he has promised. (6/17)

### **Luk 17:12-14, 19 - Healings and miracles occur when the receiver acts in faith**

"... as they entered a village there, ten lepers stood at a distance, crying out, "Jesus, sir, have mercy on us!" He looked at them and said, "Go to the Jewish priest and show him that you are healed!" And as they were going their leprosy disappeared....And Jesus said to the man, "Stand up and go; your faith has made you well." (TLB)

The Truth of being healed is present tense, the natural reality of being healed occurred later, after they acted in faith.

It appears that when we proclaim Truth in the spiritual it has already occurred, but it doesn't show up as natural reality until we act in faith. This may be why healings frequently occur after someone "tests it out," such as getting out of the wheelchair, walking around, etc.

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If you want the Truth of the spiritual to become reality in the natural you've got to step out by faith and trust it. It doesn't take a lot of faith, just enough to act.

It's not by sight but by faith. You must believe by faith, and that belief shows up in action. Said another way, if you want to walk on water you've got to believe enough to step out of the boat. (6/17)

### **Mar 9:9-10 - Jesus frequently teaches in plain language but we fail to hear it as plain language**

"As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant." (NIV)

Jesus was speaking in plain language but the apostles did not understand it because they could not comprehend it.

How often do we take a scripture spoken in plain language and miss it simply because we can't believe it means what it says? For example, in Mark 11:23-24 Jesus says, "if you say to this mountain be taken up and cast into the sea and believe it will happen, it will. And whatever you ask in prayer believing that you have received it, it will be yours." When people read this, how many actually believe it?

Jesus frequently speaks plainly but we often miss it because we can't believe he means what it sounds like he means. (6/17)

### **1 Sam 14:6 - Miracles take no account for realities of the natural**

"Yes, let's go across to those heathen," Jonathan had said to his bodyguard. "Perhaps the Lord will do a miracle for us. For it makes no difference to him how many enemy troops there are!" (TLB)

The Israelite army was down to six hundred men against a huge Philistine army of 3,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen and tens of thousands of foot soldiers.

In the natural it is absurd to think it is realistic the Israeli army could win. But it makes no difference to God what reality is! (6/17)

### **Mat 25:14-30 - Reinvesting God's treasure is required for eternal life**

"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags

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of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey... Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said,... 'I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant!'"... "'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (TLB)

All the servants knew the Lord and He trusted them with great treasure. Only those servants who did something with the treasure entered into the Master's presence. The one who simply held on to the treasure and did nothing had it taken away and was cast out into the darkness.

The Lord has entrusted us with a great treasure of the gospel and eternal life. If we do nothing with it we will lose it. If we give it away it will increase and we will keep it.

Said another way, if one accepts Christ and does nothing with that treasure, he's fooling himself and will lose his life in hell. If one accepts Christ and risks his life by taking that treasure and doing something with it, focusing on reinvesting it by giving it away, then by risking his life he will gain it. One can, therefore, determine the validity of his salvation by looking at his own life and asking the question, "what am I doing with the treasure that was given me?"

This passage correlates directly with the parable of the sower. The seed thrown among the thorns that is choked out is the same as the servant who hides his bag of money and does nothing with it. Only those who produce a return on investment for his master, a harvest as in the parable of the sower, is the one who gets to keep his master's investment in him. All others get it taken away. (8/17)

(Post note 5/21 - as with the parable of the seed and the sower, only the ground that stewards the seed to produce fruit is considered good soil. In this parable with the talents, only the servants who produced more of the same were considered worthy of the Kingdom. The one who took and did not produce was cast out.

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We are given the seed of Christ. If we do not produce fruit bearing more seed, we do not inherit eternal life.

Therefore, this passage has a dual purpose. First, the more we produce for Christ, the greater our rewards. Second, if we produce nothing, we do not enter the kingdom. Production is evidence of begin a true servant.)

### **Mat 27:19 - God always warns man of impending judgment and gives him a chance to repent and do right**

"While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."" (NIV)

Pilate's wife had this dream during the day, it was a vision. God warned her about what would happen if Pilate condemned Jesus. Even though it was to be, and even though it was ultimately God's will for Jesus to be condemned for the redemption of mankind, he warned Pilate not to do it.

We see this throughout the Bible. God warns Pharaoh through Moses. He warns Nineveh through Jonah. He warns Solomon through a Christophany. He warns Ahab through Elijah. Even in modern day, he warned my friend Michael M. about his wife, Elaine, that she would die if she kept taking the weight loss pills. He similarly gave "warning" to Tracy, the young widow in our church singles class, and her husband when he gave her husband a premonition that his work was finished.

God is faithful to always warn us before impending disaster. It's up to us to recognize it. (8/17)

### **Esther - How God provides and protects in advance**

As Haman comes to power as prime minister he chooses to destroy all the Jews. However, long before he became prime minister God positioned Esther as Queen to protect her people.

God could have prevented Haman from becoming prime minister. Instead, he chose to show his power and sovereignty by delivering his people once they realized their peril. Had he simply prevented Haman from coming to power God would not have received the glory because no one would have known he had protected them. Not only that, but had Haman not come to power the thousands of

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people who hated the Jews would still be there causing them problems. Instead, because of Haman and the process God used, the Jews got a greater blessing - they witnessed God's protection for them and all their enemies were destroyed.

It seems God allows his people to go through tough times so he can get the glory of delivering them, and even bless them more through his deliverance. If he merely kept them from hitting tough times they would never recognize his hand in their lives nor receive the greater blessing. (cf Bill Johnson "delayed answers usually bring greater blessings")

Later in Esther the king can't sleep so he reads the historical accounts of the past. He reads how Mordecai had exposed a plot to kill him. That happened years earlier, but it was at that moment the Lord not only put it on the king's heart to read the historical accounts but also to want to honor Mordecai. It was that very same morning Haman was coming to the king to ask permission to kill Mordecai on the gallows that day. The Lord orchestrates events years in advance to show his power and his hand!

A key understanding is the Lord is directing events in our lives today that play a crucial role in accomplishing his will tomorrow. In the big scheme of things we can be at peace that the Lord is in control. 9/17

### **Joh 15:2,5-6 - God does NOT cut off people from His vine**

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit... I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit... If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned." (NASB)

The Greek word translated here as "takes away" is defined in Strong's as "a primary root; to lift up; by implication, to take up or away." In Greek it's the context that determines the definition.

Nowhere in scriptures does it say that God cuts off his people from him (their source of life, nourishment and provision). They are either his, or they are not his. And that has been determined before time began (cf Eph 1).

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There are two sections in this passage. The first section focuses on God, his people and what the Lord does to bring about fruit. If a branch is not bearing fruit He lifts it up so that it can get sunlight to bear fruit, and if it is bearing fruit he prunes it so it can bear more fruit. The second section focuses on man and his actions. Man either abides in Christ or does not abide in Christ. If man abides in him he bears much fruit. If man does not abide in him he dries up and is thrown into the fire.

If one does not abide in him (not connected to the vine) that's when the branch dries up and dies on its own. God is the vine dresser. A vine dresser does not cut away live branches, he only cuts away dead branches. God does not cut off someone simply because they have no fruit at that moment. He lifts them up and gives them opportunity to produce. If the branch is connected to (abides in) the vine, it will bear fruit. If it is not connected (does not abide) it has died already, and that is when it is burned. (10/17)

### **Mar 11:20-24 - Faith vs Belief**

"In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!" "Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.'" (NIV)

Jesus begins with "Truly I tell you..." In other words, this is very important, listen up. Not only is He speaking literally rather than figuratively, He also does not qualify our commands or requests except that we believe them to happen.

Our faith is in God who acts. Our belief is that he will act. We command and believe it to happen, and we pray believing we have received it, but our faith is in the Lord to do it. **Heb 11:11** says, "by faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised."

Our faith is in the one who promised and that he is faithful to do what he promised.

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This appears to be one of the spiritual truths we cannot fully comprehend or likely ever fully achieve. Just like Einstein's theory of relativity,  $E=mc^2$ , though it's theoretically possible to achieve the speed of light, in practicality it is impossible. However, even though it is a practical impossibility, it's still a truth of physics that enables us to achieve many breakthroughs we would never have achieved without applying that truth.

In a similar way, praying and commanding in belief are spiritual truths that guide how we interact in the physical realm. While we may never achieve them to the level Jesus taught, applying these truths will help us achieve far more in our walk and authority in the Lord than we would without them.

### **Authority and belief is like a programmer of a computer game**

Understanding Jesus's authority as God yet being fully man is difficult. An illustration that comes to mind is to imagine the programmer of a computer game...

In the computer game the characters are running around the screen following rules set by the programmer. The programmer plays as one of those characters, and since he programmed it he can do anything he wants because he can override and manipulate the code at any time.

One of the characters is Lazarus. Lazarus dies and is buried. The programmer character walks up to the grave and, with complete confidence and expectation, says, "Lazarus come forth!" And he can have that complete confidence because he can alter the code to make Lazarus come back to life. He has complete control in whatever he wants to happen. The characters only see and experience their reality as programmed by the programmer. But the programmer isn't confined by that same reality.

How does this impact us as believers? In a highly simplified manner, if we believe God is *willing* to alter his "code" to accomplish "whatever we ask for in prayer, believing we have received it," then our reality is no longer bound by what we see -- it becomes whatever God **promised** it to be based on our level of belief He will do it.

Reality is what we see, Truth is what God has chosen it to be. Don't believe in reality (what we see), believe in Truth (what God's word

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says). This is what happened with Peter walking on the water -- when his belief changed from Truth (Jesus) to what he saw (wind and waves), his reality changed. Therefore, when we command or pray, believing God will do it according to his word ... and has already done it in heaven... it will be done. When we loose on earth it has mysteriously already been loosed in heaven.

Our reality is what we see, but reality can change. Truth is God's word, and it cannot change. It's our level of belief in his Truth that determines our reality on a day by day basis.

Another illustration about belief is like this...

Imagine you are sick in bed. Your spouse is in the room with you. You ask, "please bring me my water on the dresser," and you have complete belief (expectation) she will do it. You watch her walk over, pick up the water, and bring it to you.

Now, imagine the same scenario except you can't see. You ask you wife to get the water and you have the same belief she will do it... only this time you can't see her doing it. You still believe she will, and you still hold out your hand to receive it. You fully expect her to bring it to you.

In a similar way, when you pray and ask, believing it to happen, God causes it to happen. You can't see how it may happen, but God has the power to make it happen. We ask, believing we have received, and he's the one who does it.

In a simplistic manner, **faith is knowing God has the power to do what he promised, belief is expecting he will do it.** Have faith in God, believe God will do it. (12/17)

### **Mat 18:14 - God's will that none should perish is only for those who belong to him**

"So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." (ESV)

In this section Jesus is sharing the parable that if a man has 100 sheep and one gets lost, he'll leave the 99 on the hillside and go search for the lost one and rejoice when he finds it and brings it back. He then says "it is not the will of the father that one of these little ones be lost and perish." The "little ones" references **Mat 18:1-2**, "At that

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time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' And calling to him a child he put him in the midst of them." In other words, the "little ones" reference those who already belong to the kingdom of heaven ... not those who are not.

**Luk 19:19** says "for the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (ESV)

Jesus uses the metaphor of sheep and goats throughout scripture. He says, "I will separate the sheep from the goats. My sheep will hear my voice" (**Joh 10:26-27**). "Only my sheep who hear my voice will follow me." Sheep represent those who are his already, as given him by the father.

God's desire that none should perish but all come to repentance and have eternal life (**2 Pet 3:9**) is not his universal will for all mankind. It is only his *desire*. However, in this passage here in Mat 18:14 God states "it is not his will" that any of these little ones -- those who are already his sheep but are lost -- should perish. That's the context... the sheep are already his.

The other interesting part of this passage is it doesn't say that when a sheep goes astray, the shepherd always finds it and brings it back. It says "and if he finds it..." In other words, it seems to open the door that if one of God's sheep goes astray, it may be possible they are not found and returned... that they end up perishing. However, that would conflict with Jesus's statement that "all of my sheep hear my voice and follow me," that we have been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and none whom the Father has given the Son shall perish. Because of that, we must assume that Jesus, when he uses the word "if," is simply using that for teaching purposes of a real life matter of a shepherd looking for a lost sheep, not a spiritual truth that one of God's lost sheep may not be found and ultimately perish. (12/17)

### **Luk 13:6-9 - We must produce fruit or be cut off**

"And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it

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should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.”” (ESV)

Scripture says only the one who perseveres to the end will receive eternal life. It says a tree is known by its fruit, and therefore it must bear fruit to be known. It says in John 15 that the vinedresser lifts up the branch that does not have fruit, cleaning and helping it to bear fruit.

We must bear fruit to persevere to the end. God continues to nurture us to bear fruit. But if one continues to be fruitless, he will be cut off and thrown away. (12/17)

### **Mar 12:26-27 - Scripture is truth and able to share the ways of God**

"And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong." (ESV)

Jesus showed the truth and infallibility of scripture, down to the very word. Because of this, we can look at scripture down to the very word and understand the ways of God.

When the Sadducees came to Jesus with the story of the seven brothers who each had the same wife, and at the resurrection whose wife will she be, Jesus said, "you neither understand the scriptures nor the power of God." He then shares one part of scripture where simply the verb tense dictated truth. He said, "when God spoke to Moses from the bush, he said, 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are greatly mistaken."

If Jesus confirmed scripture accurate down to the exact tense of a verb, every jot and tittle of scripture is completely inerrant. We can therefore study the scripture and know the ways of God, even if we cannot comprehend its implication. Even if it does not make sense, such as to say to a mountain to be taken up in cast into the sea, and if you believe and do not doubt, it will happen. We may not understand it, but it is truth. And since it is truth, we can rest assured upon it. (12/17)

**Dan 4:25, Dan 4:29-31 - Blessings, pride, and God's ultimate control of all things**

"You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes...' Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" Even as the words were on his lips, a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you." (NIV)

As in the precedent God set earlier, what the Lord does to one he does to all. When he reckoned righteousness to Abraham because of faith, he reckons righteousness to everyone because of faith. When he directs and controls the outcome of one, he directs and controls the outcome of all because he is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and he is not a respecter of persons. Here, he clearly shows that he directs the outcome.

Nebuchadnezzar's sin was thinking he had achieved greatness by his own might. That is pride. Anytime we look at what we have and think we did it ourselves, that is sin. God is the one who raises up, and he's the one who brings down. All things are guided by his hand. And while we have ability to disregard his direction and stumble, suffering the consequences (**Psa 37:23-24**), this appears to be a one way dynamic. The only way up is by the Lord blessing. But there are at least two ways down. First, we can disregard the Lord's direction and stumble, losing out on the blessings he intended for us. Second, we can disregard acknowledging what we have achieved was by the Lord's hand, and He removes those blessings, forcing us down.

This shows how intimately God works, and how working from a position of rest is simply acknowledging that God controls all things -- therefore it's not my labor, but him, that controls the outcome. Just as with the evangelist who shares the gospel ... it's not so much what he says or does but it's the Holy Spirit who opens the heart of the hearer. The evangelist can train and prepare better illustrations to use to share more effectively, but ultimately it's the Lord who controls the outcome, not him. In business it's the same thing. I still have to go out and work, but it's the Lord who opens the hearts of

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the prospects to respond. I still have to train and do the activity, but ultimately the outcome is the Lord's, not mine.

Pride is believing the outcome is up to me and how hard I work. Yes, I have to work hard and labor. I have to work with excellent skill. But ultimately it is the Lord who chooses to bless. If I am following his direction I will receive the blessings he has for me. Therefore, if I have been following his direction and have not achieved the level of success I desire, ultimately it's by his choice, and therefore I can be at peace with where I am.

Said another way, we can stumble along the way and miss out on individual blessings God intended for us, but ultimately if we are following his direction as a way of life we will generally receive the blessings he has chosen for us.

For additional illustrations that God controls all things, see Eze 23-25 in TLB version. (12/17)

### **Joh 17:17, Joh 17:21-22, Joh 17:26 - Jesus's high priestly prayer and its implications**

"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth... I have given them the glory you gave me, that they may be one as we are one — I in them and you in me — so they may be brought to complete unity... I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." (NIV)

- *your word is truth.* Said another way, God's word is Truth, it is absolute Truth that gives us faith. To be sanctified by the Truth is to have our mind renewed by the Truth, and to see reality not as flesh sees it but to see it through the lens of Truth. True reality is the manifestation of Truth.

- *I in them and you in me.* The Truth is: the Father is in Jesus and Jesus is in us; therefore all He is, His authority and power, resides in us if we are able to believe the Truth. We can believe the Truth only when our mind is set on the spirit and not on the flesh.

- *brought to complete unity.* In NASB it is translated with the meaning "be one in perfect unity as you and I are in perfect unity." In other words, when Christ is in us, we are to be the perfect image and representation of Jesus, including all his authority and attributes.

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Said another way, when we have yielded our will to such a degree that it is the spirit of Christ manifesting through us, then it's his spirit that carries the authority and attributes, not us -- it is the manifestation of his spirit through us. As a point of reference, when casting demons out of an individual, the demon spirits will sometimes manifest and take over that person's physical body. They carry all their demonic attributes. This is what living by the spirit is all about: yielding your will so the Holy Spirit manifests through you. And when that happens then you are in perfect unity with Christ, because it is Christ manifesting through you. And it's when he manifests through you that you operate in his full authority.

*- the love you have for me may be in them.* The same love the Father has for Jesus He has for us. God demonstrated that love by delegating His authority to Jesus and Jesus doing all he requested. Since Jesus is fully in us and the Father loves us with the same love with which He loves Jesus, we have Jesus's full authority and can expect the same response to our requests from the Father as He gave Jesus *provided we ask as Jesus did -- fully yielded to the father, doing those things He saw the Father do and in the Father's exact representation.*

Jesus' high priestly prayer articulates our positioning in him with all the love and authority the father gave him residing in us. (12/17)

### **Psa 8:5-6 - Our authority articulated in Scripture**

"you have made [man] a little lower than the heavenly beings [angels] and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion [rule, in charge of] over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet" (ESV / NASB / TLB)

Also **Gen 1:26** - "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'" (ESV)

God has made man in his image, in his representation and likeness, and made man just a little lower than the angels (lower meaning in spatial hierarchy (angels are in heaven, we are on earth) rather than ruling hierarchy (angels do not rule, but we do)). He has crowned man with glory and honor (as a ruler has glory and honor), and has given him dominion, rule, and authority over all his creation. The

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word used for dominion and rule can also be translated as "governor." We are the governor over his creation, and with that position comes the authority to do all things within the constraints of that delegation.

A word search on dominion in the Old Testament shows that word is used for kings and their domain. Solomon ruled over all his dominion. Nebuchadnezzar ruled over all his dominion. Those who ruled over their dominions had complete power and authority over all their land. (12/17)

### **2 Kin 6:12-17 - Even when times look bleak, the Lord is still in control**

"None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, "but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom." "Go, find out where he is," the king ordered, "so I can send men and capture him." The report came back: "He is in Dothan." Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked. "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." (NIV)

Things are not always as they seem to our eyes. There is a spiritual battle raging in every physical battle that goes on. We must always remember God is in control. (12/17)

### **Luk 5:4-7 - the Lord controls the harvest**

"When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink." (NIV)

"Success" in whatever we do is not based on man's effort in working but on God providing the harvest and provision. The disciples

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worked all night and caught nothing, then they dropped down the nets and their boats were filled to the point of sinking! One Bible note describes some scholars have estimated it would take about 2000 pounds of fish to get both boats to the point of sinking. That's about the result of two weeks of fishing, and it happened during the middle of the day rather than at night when the fish normally come out. This is why Peter realized it was such a miracle! (12/17)

### **Luk 5:17 - Jesus did not heal by his own power**

"One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick." (NIV)

In what way did Jesus heal -- as God in man's body, or as man in right relationship with God?

If he healed as God, then why does the scripture say "the power of the Lord was with him to heal?" Rather, this scripture indicates his healing power was from above, from the Lord, not from within, from himself. 12/17

### **Personal Thought: in the natural we believe all the time in what we cannot see**

It's amazing how we live by faith in things we cannot see all the time, but we find it hard to live by faith in what God's word says because we cannot see it. Radio waves are passing through us all the time. We have no difficulty believing they exist even though no one has ever seen one before. We have receivers that indicate their presence and we have diagnostic tools that let us to see a picture of them in the natural, but no-one has ever seen them before. (Matthew Pless)

God's truths are the same. We cannot see them with our eyes, but we know they exist and that they are true. And just as with the radio waves, when we believe in and understand them, we can harness them in our everyday life.

The difference between intellectual belief and heart belief is like the radio waves. Intellectual belief is recognizing radio waves exist and having confidence to turn on the radio and expecting it to work. Heart belief, though, is being so intimately acquainted with radio waves that you can build a transmitter and receiver and make them work. That's an image of the Christian's life. It's one thing to

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intellectually believe the truths of scripture. But it's only when you intimately understand them by intimately pursuing the Father that you can harness those truths in your daily life. 1/18

### **Jos 1:4-5 - God controls all we have, but we must work by faith to receive it**

"Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. No one will be able to stand against you..." (NIV)

God is in such control he has even determined the extent of the boundaries Israel will have when they enter the promised land. He does this with every nation, determining which land they have and to what extent.

Bringing this down to the individual level, he determines the extent of the land each individual shall possess. To some he gives great lands and business, to others he gives less. And just as the Israelites had to fight to conquer that which the Lord had given them, we, too, have to fight to conquer in our lives that which the Lord has given us.

And just as the Israelites in the Joshua years fought by faith and received all the promised blessings the Lord had for them (none were able to stand against them), then later Israelites failed to fight in faith and failed to receive the full measure of promised blessing God had for them, the same happens with us. If we work in faith we will receive what God promised. If we fail to work in faith, we, too, will fail to receive the full promised blessings he has for us. It's not how hard we fight, it's that we work in faith.

God is in complete control, and he illustrates it throughout his word. (1/18)

### **Jos 3:13-14 - When God chooses to do a miracle, he chooses to do it when it seems most impossible**

"When the priests who are carrying the Ark touch the water with their feet, the river will stop flowing as though held back by a dam, and will pile up as though against an invisible wall!" Now it was the harvest season and the Jordan was overflowing all its banks; but as the people set out to cross the river and as the feet of the priests who were carrying the Ark touched the water at the river's edge..." (TLB)

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God doesn't send the Israelites across the Jordan during low water season when it would be easier to stop the Jordan. He purposefully chose to send them during harvest season when the Jordan was raging, full of water, and overflowing its banks.

When God chooses to do a miracle, he often chooses the most difficult circumstance rather than the easiest. As Christians we should take courage. When we are in difficult circumstances it's just as easy for God to produce a miracle as when we're in easy circumstances.

The other observation is the miracle occurred when the Ark of the covenant entered the water. When God's word and presence enters the difficult situation, miracles occur. But we must carry his word of promise (covenant) into that difficult situation and believe it if we want to see the miracle in our life. (1/18)

### **Jam 5:17-18 - Elijah models binding and loosing on earth**

"Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit." (ESV)

This is the concept of binding on earth what has been bound in heaven, and loosing on earth what has been loosed in heaven. What Elijah prayed, God acted (i.e. faith). On Mount Carmel Elijah prayed seven times until his servant saw a cloud the size of a man's hand on the horizon. At that point Elijah knew God had answered his prayer.

Elijah modeled for us what Jesus taught about later -- man in right relationship with God. As it took Elijah seven times praying for rains to come before he saw the answer, it may take us multiple times before we see the answer in what we are praying for. The same thing occurred with Elijah raising the widow's boy back to life. He prayed and laid on the body three times (1 Kin 17:20-22) before God restored the boy's life.

What's insightful, though, is Elijah prayed with an expectation that God would answer. He prayed, believing he had received, and it was granted him. Binding or loosing on earth may take multiple prayer attempts to accomplish, but if we pray with expectation and belief we will receive. (1/18)

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### **Mat 15:12-13 - Not everyone is a child of God**

"Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?" He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots."" (NIV)

Then later in verse 24 Jesus says "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

Similar to the wheat and the tares, and the sheep and the goats. Some belong to Satan and are destined for destruction (not elected), while other belong to God and are destined for blessing (elected, lost sheep). We see this also in Romans 9 where Paul talks about the potter making vessels for common use and other vessels for holy use. When the potter makes the vessels, he makes them for a specific purpose ahead of time -- they were destined for common use or holy use from the beginning. (1/18)

### **Mat 16:5-11 - Jesus rebukes the disciples for being concerned about their lack of provision**

"When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. "Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." They discussed this among themselves and said, "It is because we didn't bring any bread." Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."" (NIV)

While this passage is about the yeast of the Pharisees, the disciples were concerned because they didn't have any food, and so they thought that's what Jesus was talking about. Jesus rebukes them for that concern, saying "don't you remember all the abundant provision my Father gave you when we needed it? Don't be concerned about provision - God will always provide."

Two points here.

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First, we're not to be concerned about our provision, for the Lord will provide.

Second, when we're concerned about it, it takes our eyes off the main message the Lord may be trying to tell us. So don't fear, just trust and be in a frame of mind to hear what the Lord is trying to tell you. If your eyes are on the natural and worry, you will miss his message. (1/18)

### **1 Joh 5:14-15 - Praying, believing you have received**

"And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." (NASB)

How do you pray, believing you have received? It's by praying according to God's will, knowing "He hears us in whatever we ask," and therefore knowing (believing) we have that request. In almost every instance where the Greek word for "know" is used in the Bible, it carries with it the implication "to know as a certainty." It's an absolute knowing.

This is what George Muller did with the fog while crossing the Atlantic: "If it is consistent with your will, please lift this fog in 5 minutes so I may make the appointment you set for me in Quebec Saturday. I believe it is your will."

How is this different from most people today praying "if it be your will"? Muller believed (knew it as a certainty, not as a hope) it was God's will. I'm not sure most people today know God's will, so this phrase is more of a cop-out: if God doesn't respond it must not have been His will. It's not that it wasn't God's will, it's that they didn't really believe it was his will (1/18)

### **Luk 18:35-43 - It's the presence of faith, not the amount of faith, that causes a miracle**

"As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus

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asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” “Lord, I want to see,” he replied. Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God.” (NIV)

I can just imagine the situation. The beggar had been hearing about Jesus and the miracles he's done. He has probably been praying to God to send him Jesus. He hears a crowd on the road and asks what it's all about, and someone says that Jesus is coming by. With only the faith born from hearing about Jesus he calls out to Jesus for help.

My guess is his "faith" could more likely have been described in today's terms as "hope" rather than faith. I doubt he had the faith and belief to move a mountain or to curse a fig tree. I doubt he had the faith to heal someone of their blindness. But he had enough faith to be bold and cry out for Jesus. And when he's told to be quiet, he shouts even more!

He has only a little amount of faith. But Jesus takes the little he has to contribute and works a miracle from it. It's not the amount of faith someone has, it's simply the presence of faith that enables a miracle. (2/18)

### **Rom 14:23 - sin is anything that does not conform to the image of God**

"But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." (ESV)

We either live by faith or we live by sin. Anytime we act or respond in the absence of faith, it is sin.

Faith is when we act in conformance to the image or from the perspective of God. Sin is when we fail to act or respond in conformance to the image or from the perspective of God.

To act in conformance to the image of God is to act as God would act. To act in conformance from the perspective of God is to see what God sees from his perspective and act in accordance with that knowledge of truth.

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Therefore, any time we act in any way that does not conform to the image of God, from his perspective and in accordance with his truth, is sin. 2/18

### **Psa 95:8-11 - let not the one who doubts expect to receive anything from the Lord**

"Don't harden your hearts as Israel did in the wilderness at Meribah and Massah. For there your fathers doubted me, though they had seen so many of my miracles before. My patience was severely tried by their complaints. "For forty years I watched them in disgust," the Lord God says. "They were a nation whose thoughts and heart were far away from me. They refused to accept my laws. Therefore, in mighty wrath I swore that they would never enter the Promised Land, the place of rest I planned for them." (TLB)

The Lord had planned a beautiful spot for his people. This was his blessing to them. He told them he was giving it to them. But they doubted. They did not trust him to be faithful. Because they did not trust him, because they doubted, they did not receive the promised blessing God had in store for them.

What is interesting is it was already theirs. They did not have to earn it. They only had to receive it by faith. But they doubted the Lord. They did not believe. And therefore they did not receive.

Jesus says to pray, believing you have received, and it shall be granted you. James says let not the one who doubts expect to receive anything from the Lord.

Just as with Peter walking on the water, there are two outcomes in each circumstance. One outcome is to receive God's blessings by faith. The other outcome is to receive consequence by sight, doubting what could have been believed by faith.

How we believe determines our outcome. How we believe determines whether we get God's highest and best blessings in our life... or not. 2/18

### **Mat 17:19-20 - with true faith nothing is impossible**

"Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you

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will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.'" (ESV)

Here is an amazing truth. According to Strong's Concordance, the word for "little faith" is a different word than the one used for "if you have faith like a mustard seed." The definition for "little faith" means a "lack of trust."

The word used in for "faith as a grain of mustard seed" is the same word as faith in Jesus for salvation, and also in Hebrews 11:1 where the Lord defines it as the assurance or title deed of things hoped for. AMP Bible translates this section as "if you have faith [that is living] like a grain of mustard seed." It is a living, active faith of complete conviction of something you cannot see.

Therefore, this passage is not talking about the size or the amount of one's faith, such as someone having more faith than another. This is saying that either you have faith or you don't, it's not a degree of how much. (This correlates to the understanding that faith is a conduit between the heavenly realm and the earthly realm, and belief is how big that conduit is. Faith is only the connection. You either have it or you don't, it's not a matter of size. Size has to do with belief.)

Not only that, but when you have this true, living faith nothing is impossible. Strong's defines the Greek word translated "nothing" as "no thing"... exactly how it reads in this passage.

Therefore, with true faith, nothing is impossible as long as you believe and do not doubt (cf Mar 11:20-23). With faith you have the title deed as long as you believe in the title deed. Once you doubt, the title deed disappears. This is what happened with Peter walking on the water. As long as he kept his eyes on Jesus, believing in the title deed, the miracle occurred. Once he doubted, the title deed disappeared and he sank. 2/18

### **Mar 11:20-24 - Faith vs belief**

"As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. Being reminded, Peter said to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered." And Jesus answered saying to them, "Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all

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things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you." (NASB)

The faith that moves mountains is faith in God who moves the mountain. The faith is in Him and the title deed from Him that the mountain will move.

"Doubt" means "to stagger, hesitate or waver" (Strong's Concordance). It is the opposite of faith (confident assurance and title deed of things hoped for).

"Believe(s)" is derived from the Greek word for faith. It is not faith, but it's tied to faith. It means "to have faith in or upon a person or thing; to entrust or commit something to" (Strong's).

In essence, this passage means that our belief in the mountain moving rides on our faith in God making it happen who gives us the title deed or assurance that it will happen.

When we pray and ask for anything, believing with a living, active faith on God's title deed for what we are praying about, that's when it is granted us.

Have faith in God, and believe in the outcome. That's the key! 2/18

### **Joh 12:23-24 - an inexplicable mystery**

"Jesus replied that the time had come for him to return to his glory in heaven, and that "I must fall and die like a kernel of wheat that falls into the furrows of the earth. Unless I die I will be alone--a single seed. But my death will produce many new wheat kernels--a plentiful harvest of new lives."" (TLB)

Here's an inexplicable mystery. First a background concept...

In the movie Men in Black, an entire galaxy was contained in a ball that hung on the cat's neck. That ball was within our galaxy, but it contained a galaxy that was not within our galaxy. It was almost like a doorway to another galaxy that was completely separate.

When we accept Christ, the Holy Spirit comes and dwells within us. It's not a portion of the Holy Spirit. It is 100% all of him. All of the Holy Spirit's power and authority now dwells inside me and each

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individual believer. The Holy Spirit is not diluted, he is 100% complete in each believer.

This passage in John is talking about Jesus's death. If he preserves his life there will be no fruit. But if he dies, he will produce much fruit (many seeds). In other words, one death creates multiple lives (more seeds). And as the multiple lives die, they create even more life. Unless life dies to itself, it cannot create life in others.

So an inexplicable mystery is, in a sense, Jesus did not die for me, He died as me. He paid the penalty for my sins in my place, as if I paid those penalties myself. But the mystery is that his death was not diluted. In a sense He died as each believer. Just as the holy spirit is in each believer in 100% concentration. 2/18

### **Exo 17:11-13 - Success in our endeavors is dependent upon the Lord and our intercession for it. It is more spiritual than physical**

"Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword." (ESV)

It didn't matter how hard Israel fought or with how much skill. Whether they won or lost was entirely up to the Lord... and dependent upon Moses' interceding in holding up his staff.

Within the framework of "how God acts for one he acts for all," one's success in a vocation is not so much determined by how hard he works and with what amount of skill. Ultimately it's the Lord who provides victory. Our responsibility is to persistently intercede with him in prayer for that result. 3/18

### **Joh 12:37 - Signs and wonders don't convince people of Christ**

"Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him." (NIV)

People don't believe in Christ simply because of signs and wonders. Signs and wonders are only effective for those who Christ has already elected.

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What's also interesting is the text says "they would not believe in him." TPT says, "his critics still refused to believe."

The picture I get is that of a hardened heart. It's not that his critics were searching to determine if Jesus was real. Their heart was so hard they refused to believe even in the presence of the evidence. In other words, it was an act of their will to reject Jesus. This gives us insight into human nature. When people reject Jesus it's not necessarily because they don't have evidence to believe. It's like the astrophysicist when talking about time having a beginning in the universe, he said "all evidence points to the fact that time had a beginning, but I choose not to believe it because to believe it would mean there is a God who created it." In other words, he rejected it as an act of his will, not because of a lack of evidence. 3/18

### **Joh 12:47-48 - Keeping Jesus's words is key to eternal life**

"If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person... the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day." (NIV)

Keeping Jesus's words creates the image of holding onto his words until the end. If someone holds onto His words and then lets go because of the deceitfulness of riches or the worries of this world, then just as in the parable of the sower, that person doesn't persevere to the end, doesn't produce a harvest, and therefore doesn't have eternal life. 3/18

### **Heb 3:18-19 - Unbelief is the root of disobedience**

"And to whom did God swear that they [Israelites who came out of Egypt] would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief." (NIV)

Though God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, they continued to disobey God. They continued to be afraid. They continued to want to return. When they sent spies into the land they believed the bad report rather than trusting God. In all cases, it was their unbelief in God's goodness that caused their disobedience.

Unbelief is the root of disobedience. The opposite, therefore, is belief is the root of obedience. 3/18

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### **Heb 4:12 - What is the difference between soul and spirit, and what is the interaction between body, soul and spirit?**

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (NIV)

What is the difference between soul and spirit?

Jesus says in **Joh 3:6**, "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

The soul is who we are - our personality, our emotions, our memory, etc. Strong's defines it as "the animal sentient principle only" - that part that feels, sees, hears, smells and tastes - the sensory side of things.

Strong's defines spirit as "our rational and immortal soul." The word for spirit is used to describe evil spirits, Holy Spirit, the spirit of man, etc. So spirit is that spiritual side of our being.

**1 Joh 3:9** shares on this a little deeper: "No one who is born of God will continue to sin because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God." (NIV)

Jesus says to be born again we must be born of the spirit. This passage in 1 Joh 3:9 tells us that whoever is born of the Spirit (that is, born of God) will not continue to sin because God's seed is in him. God's seed creates a sinless spirit nature. We see this illustrated in Jesus' life in **Rom 8:3** where it says God "sent his own Son in a human body like ours--except that ours are sinful" (TLB). Because Jesus' father was God, his physical body had no sin nature. In other words, those things born of God are sinless because that's the nature of God.

The spirit is that spiritual existence we have. It's similar to the physical body in that our physical body is in the physical realm, connecting us to the physical side of creation, while our spirit being is in the spirit realm, connecting us to the spiritual side of creation. The physical body exhibits the sin nature of our physical father while our spirit being exhibits the sinless nature of our spiritual father.

And our soul, the "who we are," is that part of us that joins it all together.

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A simple illustration, but by no means complete, may be as follows. Imagine on a sheet of paper two circles side by side, next to but not touching each other. The circle on the left represents our physical body with its sin nature. The circle on the right represents our spirit being with its sinless nature. They are completely separate. Then, draw a circle in the middle overlapping both the physical body and the spirit being circles. That new circle represents our soul. Our soul, the "who we are," is somehow knitted into both our physical body with its sin nature and our spirit being with its sinless nature. And in some mysterious way we are actually all three at one time -- body, soul and spirit (1 The 5:23). Our eternal soul lives and operates in our sinful body while also living and operating in our sinless spirit being as well.

Then, to take this a little deeper, imagine the circle that represents your soul moving back and forth, left and right, at one point covering more of the physical body than the spirit being, and then shifting right and covering more of the spirit being and less of the physical body. This is a simple illustration of what it means to live in the flesh or to live in the spirit. The more we live in the spirit, represented by our soul shifting to the right and covering more of our spirit being and less of our physical body, the more we are influenced by our new, sinless nature and the less we are influenced by our physical sin nature. However, when we shift our focus from the spiritual to the natural, our soul "shifts" left, covering more of our physical body and less of our spirit being. When this happens that's when we live more in the flesh and less in the spirit, being controlled more by our fleshly desires and less by the Holy Spirit's desires -- and receiving more of the natural consequences than the spiritual promises. So the struggle is to keep our soul focused and on top of our spirit being, denying our physical body's attraction to pull our soul back over itself.

To take this a little deeper and in chronological order, God knew us before we were formed. That seems to indicate our soul was created before conception. Then, at conception, our soul is knitted together with our physical, sin nature body. At that time we are spiritually dead in a sin nature body. We continue to be a soul knitted into a physical, sinful body but dead in the spirit until that point in time we accept Christ as our savior. At that moment we are born again by the Spirit and are given a sinless nature in our new spirit being. That's when we

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become spiritually alive, with our spirit united with Jesus's spirit as one (1 Cor 6:17).

Then, from this point on we have the struggle that Paul talks about. Paul says "I do not do the things I want to do, but do the things I do not want to do because of my flesh." What he's talking about is even though we've been born again and Christ lives in us, because he is Spirit he lives in our spirit being that has no sin. Our physical body is still full of sin. Our soul, the "who we are," is constantly struggling to live in our spirit being and stop living in our physical body. But we can never fully shed our physical body while we are alive on earth. So there is a constant struggle between those two natures of ours.

As an illustration of how the struggle manifests itself, consider a Siamese twin. Siamese twins are two separate people with two separate bodies connected together, operating, in a sense, as one person. Because they are connected together neither is free of the other and there's always a struggle between one twin versus the other. They can never shed the struggle until one of the bodies dies. In a loose sense, we are Siamese twins: our sinful physical body is connected, through our soul, to our sinless spirit being, both separate yet operating as one. And as long as our physical body continues to live there is a constant struggle between the two -- the struggle of sin vs. sinless. We strive to live in the spirit from our sinless spirit being, rather than to live in the flesh from our sinful physical body. And though we want to win the battle against sin, we can never fully win until our physical body dies and we're released from the stronghold of sin. 3/18