



Our God Reigns

Therefore my people will know my name; they will know therefore in that day that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I.

Beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who proclaim tidings, who say to Zion, Your God reigns!

Open your eyes! Your watchmen will see it with their eyes. When they shout for joy, they will see it with their eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD will lay bare his holy arm!

The Suffering and Glory of the Servant of the Lord
See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him,

These prophecies came 700 yrs. before Jesus was born.

53 Who has been appalled at him. When the message was sent to the ruined city of Tyre (Eze 27:35), disgraced and to whom had the LORD been tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him.

Pat James

Devotions for Overcomers

55 pearls of wisdom to help
God's children be overcomers in this life

*"Blessed is the man who finds wisdom,
the man who gains understanding,
for she is more profitable than silver
and yields better returns than gold.
She is more precious than rubies:
nothing you desire can compare with her.
Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honor.
Her ways are pleasant ways
and all her paths are peace.
She is a tree of life to those who embrace her;
those who lay hold of her will be blessed."*

Proverbs. 3:13-18.

Introduction

As I was preparing this introduction, the Holy Spirit reminded me of a beautiful cultured pearl necklace I received from my parents when I graduated from High School. He spoke to me that it was a prophetic gesture of the spiritual string of pearls I would receive some 40 years later from Him. It appears my destiny was to impart to you some of what I have learned over the years walking with the Lord.

In 2002 the Lord encouraged me to make a list of these pearls and string them together to form a graceful devotional necklace. Proverbs 1:9 encourages us that wisdom should be “a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.” Following each pearl are scripture references for your extended study. Some selections are short and to the point, while others have illustrations from my own life. May this string of devotional pearls provide you with the grace, understanding and wisdom needed to experience the blessings of God as you fulfill your destiny in the kingdom of God.

The “word of wisdom” mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12: 8 is one of God’s spiritual gifts to believers. Whenever the Holy Spirit has graciously released this gift through me for the benefit of others, I have experienced the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the person who received them was blessed with understanding and encouragement. The thoughts that follow are pearls of wisdom the Lord has given to me over a number of years. They come out of countless hours of meditating on the Word, and listening to the Holy Spirit who has been my faithful teacher and counselor.

Old and new believers alike may have a tremendous zeal for *servicing God* and a consuming passion to reform the church, but one thing they often lack is wisdom. We are not born again with the wisdom that comes from our Heavenly Father above. Acquiring true Godly wisdom, requires years of walking in the Spirit and learning many lessons-- some the hard way. I hope the following pearls will supply you with more understanding and grace needed to serve the people of God, and the spiritual discernment to understand the ways of God. Now after a lifetime of following after God, growing in Christ and the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, this is my gift to you.

May you be richly blessed with God’s presence and anointing as you read these pearls of wisdom.

*Pat James
Tree of Life Ministries
Easter, 2004*

Addendum- On December 25, 2005 my daughter Mary and her fiancé Kent Tinsley gave me a lovely pearl cross for Christmas. The card enclosed with the cross informed me that pearls represented wisdom in Christian art. That evening the Holy Spirit prompted me to retrieve this long neglected collection of pearls from the deep recesses of my computer. He gently chided me with, “It is not doing anyone any good in your computer. Print it as it is and give it away.” So in obedience to the Spirit here it is—without any editing or changes.

1. ***Have you wondered why you are not growing in Christ-likeness as you know you should be?*** Perhaps the reason is you have not submitted to the dealings of the Holy Spirit for the crucifixion of your flesh. You are continuing to live life in the flesh by your own power and understanding. You are continuing to demand your rights and desires before those of others. One must volunteer to be crucified before change can happen. Seeds that fall upon the ground and don't get buried become food for the animals. Except a seed fall into the ground and die, it cannot spring forth to resurrection life. We are the seed that has to be buried and reckoned dead before Christ can be made alive in us. John 12:24.
2. ***We can fall on the Rock of Jesus Christ, or the rock will fall on us. It is our choice.*** Our Heavenly Father gives us freewill to make decisions. If we study His Word and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, we will make Christ-like choices in life. We must choose to trust and obey the scriptures even when we don't fully understand. Rocks represent hard places in our life when things do not go like we think they should. We can choose to obey God's Word and give a godly response, or we can refuse. If we choose to do it God's way, we will be blessed. If we choose to have our own way, God will need to chastise and correct us. Circumstances and people will be more difficult than before, because we have not learned the way of righteousness. 1 Peter 2:4-8.
3. ***The spouse God gives to us is just the person we need in our life to help us be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.*** They were given to us by God to help us die to our sinful nature, and experience resurrection life. If your spouse is the opposite of you, it is not by accident, but by divine purpose. A gemologist uses a rock tumbler to transform unsightly, rough pieces of gravel into beautiful semi-precious stones. When given enough time, water and grit, they are polished into beautiful gems that have much more value and beauty than the original. Rom. 8:29.
4. ***Conflict is an opportunity to die to self and live to be more like Jesus.*** Conflict produces change. As long as there is no conflict, change does not take place. People continue along in the same manner, content to stay the same. One day I noticed a large tree growing beside the sidewalk in my neighborhood. The roots had pushed the concrete up and broken it into pieces. The concrete would have been content to stay in one piece undisturbed, but the oak tree needed room to grow. Something had to give. How much better when we yield to the desires and needs of others so they have room to grow. Rom. 12:1.
5. ***It is true that opposites attract.*** We instinctively see in each other what we are missing in ourselves. A magnet has two opposite poles that attract or repel iron or steel objects. When the object is placed near one pole, it is drawn to it or repelled by it. For the most part, we are attracted to other's strengths and repelled by their weaknesses. We are magnetically drawn to people that will balance our personality. Two people with the same weakness will only pull each other down, or lead each other astray. So God puts opposites together for balance and stability. Parents who are opposites provide balanced perspectives, emotional support, spiritual insight and safety for their children. Matt. 15:14.

6. ***As the old saying goes, “It takes one to know one.”*** Before you criticize someone of a fault, stop to ask the Holy Spirit if you are guilty of doing the same thing. You might be surprised by the answer. I have discovered over the years that people tend to point out the same faults in others they have themselves, but are blind to. That’s how you unconsciously recognize it so well. You are guilty of the same sin, but have been blinded by self-deception and denial. People who complain that others are critical and judgmental, usually have the same stronghold operating in themselves. And that’s the simple truth. Matt. 7:1-9.
7. ***Healthy relationships are built on respect for one another.*** It is the foundation for all other attitudes. Without respect, there can be no positive relationships. If respect is gone, love will be impossible to maintain. Guard your heart and be careful to maintain respect for others even if they don’t show respect toward you. Husbands are instructed to love their wives, however wives are told to *respect* their husbands. They need to show respect even when they are not loved or appreciated by their spouses. Also do not tolerate disrespect from others for your loved ones. Disrespect undermines love, understanding and commitment. Eph. 5:33.
8. ***The secret of working through adversity is maintaining a grateful heart.*** Your situation could be a lot worse except for the grace God has extended to you. Gratefulness assures one of a positive attitude when the circumstances dictate hard times and negative outcomes. When I am tempted to complain of my own circumstances, I do not have to look far to find others with far worse problems than I have. “There go I, but for the grace of God,” was instilled in me by my mother.

As a child, we often went to the Home for the Crippled in Memphis, Tennessee to provide holiday programs, sing Christmas carols or give birthday gifts. Seeing others with Multiple Sclerosis, birth defects or amputations living on stretchers or in wheel chairs the rest of their lives, really impacted my young spirit. Gratefulness will carry you through any adversity. Be grateful you are alive with a strong body and mind. Be grateful you have loved ones who support you. Be grateful that God will be with you, and never forsake you. Col. 3:15-17.

9. ***Practice the spiritual law of sowing and reaping to get the victory over difficult situations.*** Christ in us can sow seeds of the fruit of the Spirit, which will come back to us multiplied. One year I was substituting for three months in the fourth grade for a teacher out on maternity leave. It was one of the most difficult challenges I have ever experienced. Daily I found myself frustrated with the student anger, disrespect and rude behavior. I found myself becoming like them: mad, yelling and on the verge of tears. I had to maintain control of the classroom and get the victory over this stressful situation. I wanted to lay down the law, and demand that they adhere to the school rules, or suffer the consequences. After all, children need to obey the rules. Right?

However, the Holy Spirit instructed me to sow the fruit of the Spirit into my students instead of focusing on their sinfulness. I began sowing seeds of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self-control. Daily prayer on the way to school enabled me to demonstrate these Christ-like attributes toward my students even when I didn’t feel like it. I began greeting them in the morning with hugs, compliments and encouraging comments. I patiently listened to their problems, maintained my peace, and demonstrated self-control. Before long

there was an amazing change in several of the worst students. They began to respond with admiration and respect toward me. They recognized that Christ in me genuinely loved and cared for them, and I began to reap good fruit in return from them. Gal. 5:22-26, 6:7-10, 2 Cor. 3:6.

10. ***When God calls you to do something, he will supply all the money, materials and people to help you do it.*** Our responsibility is to obey in faith believing He is directing our steps as we go. Noah was commanded by God to build an ark, and then fill it with animals and food. It took him 100 years to accomplish that task during which he faced ridicule from family, friends and neighbors. They had never even heard of rain, nor seen a boat. Noah trusted God to supply everything he needed and never questioned how it would get done. He believed God was a man of his word and what He said, He would do. If rain was coming upon the earth flooding every living thing, then Noah wanted to be ready. Our responsibility is to make sure we have heard from God and have our orders clearly defined. The rest is up to him. Genesis 6-8.
11. ***From time to time even God needs a reminder.*** That's why he placed the rainbow in the clouds. It serves as a reminder to him of his everlasting covenant with all living creatures to bless them and never again to destroy all life on earth with a flood. God is a covenant keeping God and life will go well with us if we maintain our covenant relationship with him. That means we are to love him and obey his Word. The rainbow is the first of many covenants God made with his people. His desire is to establish a loving relationship that will last a thousand generations. If we will be faithful to him, he will remain faithful to us. The next time you witness a rainbow in the stormy sky, give thanks to God for his faithfulness to you. Gen. 9:12-17.
12. ***Our adversary will take us to court even if we are only 10% wrong.*** If we refuse to repent, blame others or justify our actions and attitudes, then we will find ourselves in prison until there is complete restitution. Does it not seem strange that our adversary knows when we are wrong and takes full advantage of it? You see, God created "the adversary" to test us and refine us into pure gold. All the dross has to be refined out of us, even that last little bit of sinful nature that would keep us separated from God. As long as we maintain our own self-righteousness, or are determine to have our own way, we will find ourselves in a prison of our own making. And we will not get out until we have paid the last penny. Matt. 5:25-26.
13. ***Unity brings about power, and accomplishment even for the wrong motives.*** The story of the Tower of Babel illustrates the corporate pride of man—unity for the wrong reason. The whole world had one language and a common speech. There on the plains of Shinar men decided to build a tower that would reach to heaven so that they could make a name for themselves, a flagrant violation of God's command to "fill the earth." "Nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them." The Lord came down and confused their language so they couldn't understand each other. God, Satan and the disciple Paul understood the power of confusion. Confusion divides and destroys a work. Genesis 11, Matt. 12:22-28, Acts 23:6-10.

14. ***Without the fear of God in us, we will not obey Him.*** Our obedience to God's Word is proof that we have an awesome, reverent respect for his power and authority. Fearing God means we honor, worship, trust and serve him as the one true God. Disobedience is evidence of our unbelief. Much of the world today does not know God nor fear his power. That is why sin is so rampant. It is the responsibility of each generation to pass along the miraculous stories of how God has been their provider and protector. When one generation fails to do this, the next one does not have a healthy respect for God. Doubt and unbelief take hold of their minds and they begin to openly disobey God's word without any understanding of the disastrous consequences. The Lord delights in those who fear him, in those who put their hope in his unfailing love. Ps. 145:4, 147:11, Prov. 9:10-12.

15. ***God tests his children in order to prove what is in their heart.*** Obedience, trust and faith have to be proven first before God can bless us. Only then can he bring us into our destiny and purpose for living. He already knows what is in our hearts, but do we?

In 1980 we sold everything we had and moved to Pensacola, Florida to attend Liberty Bible school. After six months, we were out of money and Tommy still did not have a good job. Had we missed God? Surely if we had heard correctly, God would have provided for us. As time went on, anxiety, fear and even resentment arose from our hearts, but still no relief.

Finally, God spoke to us that we were experiencing a test to see if we were really going to serve him whatever the cost. This experience was quite humbling and not one we enjoyed. When we answered, "Yes, Lord," the door was opened to a marvelous job which blessed us financially for years to come. God often gives the test first and then reveals the lesson that was learned.

I called this experience "From Food Stamps to Lake Charlene." See Gen. 22 for the story of how God tested Abraham.

16. ***Jesus would never have made it through his experience on the Cross-if he had focused on his pain, suffering and humiliation.*** Instead, he focused on the joy set before him scorning its shame. He was looking forward to overcoming Satan and sitting down at the right hand of God. Shame will come to us in many ways through out our lives. We have the choice to embrace it as a part of who we are, or reject it as a lie from the enemy. Shame says we are inferior, a failure, rejected, or unloved. The Word says... we are accepted and loved by God, successful through Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Heb. 12:2.

17. ***Objective seeing and hearing are pre-requisites for understanding.*** The Holy Spirit gives revelation of spiritual truths as we take time to look and to listen with an open heart. Our own biases and limited experience can deceive us and make us think we have heard from God when indeed we have not. Neutral thinking is the key to hearing what the Spirit has to say. Centuries ago man used to think the world was flat and you could sail off the edge of it. Time, experience and knowledge have changed our beliefs. Now we know how to fly off into space and return safely. Be careful not to let your own limited experience in spiritual matters set the perimeters of your beliefs. Be open minded and allow the Spirit of God to guide your understanding. Matt. 13:11-23.

18. ***The real you . . . is Christ in you.*** When Satan tells you that you are rotten to the core, remind him that you have been born again and your old, carnal nature is now dead and buried. You are a new creation, growing daily in Christ. He is living his life through you. The old you was rotten to the core, but the new you is being re-created in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. Romans 6, John 3:3-8.
19. ***Sometimes we have to wrestle with God until He blesses us.*** Overcomers struggle with God and with men in the spirit realm until the victory is achieved. Both Jacob and Jesus wrestled in prayer during the night hours for God's power and grace to be manifested the next day. Disaster may be averted, or we may be given the strength to go through the adversity. Either way we are trusting in God's divine intervention. Gen. 32:22-32, Matt. 26:36-46.
20. ***The fear of God in us produces abundant blessing on us:*** prosperity, provision, protection, success, wisdom, strength, a good life, health and godly families. Not to mention miracles, and eternal life. It is imperative that we teach our children to fear God, love and obey Him. Without this awesome respect for God, disobedience takes hold of the next generation and there is a great falling away. Ex. 1:17-21, Deut. 6:13ff, Psalms 36:1-4, 111:10, Prov. 9:10, and 19:23.
21. ***Circumcision and Passover are to the Christian faith as conception and birth are to all of nature.*** One must first enter into a covenant agreement to love and obey God before he can appropriate the blood of Christ for the atonement of sin and divine protection over his life. As in nature, first comes commitment, and then comes provision. Conception occurs when two agree to mate and the birth of their offspring follows. In the Old Testament, circumcision is to Passover as repentance is to the blood of Christ in the New Testament. "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." Ex. 12:43-51, Ps 32, Acts 3:19.
22. ***Our children were the seed in our loins when we made our commitment to Christ.*** When we repent and are born-again into the kingdom of God, then our children and grandchildren are heirs to the same covenant with God that we enjoy. If we are called by God, then they are called by God as well. Both Satan and our heirs need to be reminded of this from time to time. We are not our own, but bought and paid for by the blood of Christ at the Cross on Calvary. Acts 3:25, Gal. 3:26-4:7.
23. ***Give us this day our daily bread.*** Some seasons God's provision may come only in daily amounts in order to test our trust in him to provide for each new day. Storing up provisions for tomorrow can mean we are anxious and not trusting in God. He is testing our obedience and we are given the opportunity to prove our trust in Him. Ex. 16, Matt. 6:11.
24. ***Grumbling and complaining brings on a meager existence.*** It shows our lack of trust in God and anxiety about our future provision. When the Israelites grumbled against God, he responded with manna and quail for them. Most people marvel at God's divine provision for his children, but the reality is for forty years there was no variety, and only limited provision. If we want God's blessing of abundance, we must demonstrate gratefulness, thanksgiving and trust. Exodus 16.

25. ***Worship is to winning, as fuel is to a fire.*** A fire needs fuel to burn and without it will go out. When the enemy attacks us, our best strategy may be to worship our Abba Father. For he gives us victory over our enemies. This tactic demonstrates our faith and trust in him. Worship brings him honor and glory and gives us the strength to fight the battle. Worship provides the fuel we need to fight the battle of faith. “The Lord is my banner.” Ex. 17.
26. ***Does your illness have a spiritual root?*** When the Israelites contracted an infectious skin disease, they were isolated from others and sent outside the camp. The priest sacrificed sin offerings to the Lord to atone for their sin. The blood of a dove, three lambs and a log of oil were sprinkled on the person. When the sin was atoned for the person was pronounced clean. Disease was associated with sin in their lives and good health was a sign of righteous living. Sometimes the sickness we contract is due to sin in our life, or that of our ancestors. David’s bones wasted away and his strength was sapped when he refused to acknowledge his sin before God. When he repented and asked forgiveness, he was healed of his affliction. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what you need to repent of and ask forgiveness for so you can apply the blood of Jesus to your body for healing. Isaiah 53, Psalms 32:1-5, 103:1-5.
27. ***Priming the pump produces results.*** If you have ever lived in the country and had to get your water from a well, you know firsthand what happens when the electricity goes out. Without electricity, the pump loses its pressure. To get the water flowing again, first you have to pour water in the pump to create the vacuum needed. The same is true with life in the Spirit. You have to receive Christ first, before you can draw out the living water of Jesus Christ. Just like the analogy of the well, there has to be that divine connection of Spirit to spirit before life can flow out of us. John 4:13.
28. ***The external work of the Holy Spirit is to give our minds the divine revelation of Jesus Christ’s atonement for our sin.*** To have more and deeper revelations, you must invite the Spirit of God to dwell within you. He works internally to quicken our spirit, counsel us, comfort us and guide us into truth. For centuries man has tried to understand God apart from revelation by the Holy Spirit. It simply can’t be done. It takes the Holy Spirit working from within to open the eyes of your spiritual understanding. John 14:26.
29. ***Self-righteous judgment and condemnation of God’s leaders can make you susceptible to physical disease and pain.*** Miriam’s attitude and criticism of Moses prompted God to strike her with leprosy. She was not afraid to criticize God’s servant and he dealt with her severely. Bitterness and resentment can be pre-cursors of arthritis, stroke and heart disease. Num. 12.
30. ***Like Jesus, we should practice the law of multiplication.*** He took the little that he had, gave thanks, broke it into and passed it out to others. Seven loaves of bread and a few small fish fed 4,000 one day. As ministers of God and members of the family of God, we should exercise the gifts the Spirit gives to us and impart blessing to others. In so doing, the blessing is multiplied to 1,000s beyond ourselves. Giving thanks before God, acknowledges our dependency on him and shows our faith in his ability to meet our needs. Mark 8.
31. ***Faith and fear are the two most important attitudes in a person’s life.*** Faith brings us into God’s blessings and fear of God keeps us from disobedience. Satan tries to rob us of faith and

give us a spirit of fear instead. It's the "what ifs" that cause anxiety. Where do we put our faith? Whom do we fear the most? Ps. 34, Phil. 4:6.

32. ***God gives us abundant life, but we can lose it.*** Obedience and trusting in God produces blessings in our lives: provision, protection, and prosperity. Disobedience and not trusting in him produces curses: death, destruction and destitution. Deut. 28:11.
33. ***What do Balaam, a man who practiced occult divination, and Jesus, the son of God, have in common?*** They both understood how important it was to speak only the words God gave to them to speak. Likewise, we are instructed to speak the words the Holy Spirit gives to us. Believe that the Spirit of the Father wants to speak to others through us. Num. 22 and Matt. 10:20.
34. ***Objects of God's wrath are prepared for destruction.*** Objects of his mercy are prepared for glory. God raised up Pharaoh to be a hard-hearted and stubborn man and put him in charge of ruling over Egypt. God demonstrated his sovereign power and purpose in his election. He does this in order to make known the riches of his glory toward his people whom he has also prepared in advance to receive his glory. Yet, God also gives us the free will to choose our eternal destiny. Exodus Chapters 4-15, Josh. 6:21.
35. ***Patience is a virtue that allows us to experience God's perfect timing.*** He alone can bring together the people, the resources, the provision necessary to produce his perfect plan for our lives. Sarah's impatience drove her to get ahead of God and produce an Ishmael who was not the child of promise. Any product or program of our own will, power and scheming is a work of the flesh. It is characterized by strife, contention and jealousy.

The peace of God is missing, because God himself is not in it. Therefore, have patience. Wait for God's perfect timing and provision, a work done by the Spirit of God. Gen. 16.
36. ***Our homes need to be kept holy before the Lord.*** If we want to experience his presence, we must rid our homes of any unclean articles: idols, pornography, pagan artifacts, or occult items. Unclean articles invite the presence of demonic activity into our homes. These spirits will try to destroy us. If we choose to co-habit with them, God will not fight for us, nor deliver our enemies into our hands. As in the garden of Eden before Adam sinned, God wants to live among us, talk to us, and commune with us. He wants us to be holy as he is holy and our homes must be holy as well for him to abide with us. His manifest presence is felt when our homes and our lives are clean and undefiled. Gen. 3, Deut. 23:14, Joshua 8 and 23:12-13.
37. ***The Lord has the power to control our enemies for his purposes.*** Sometimes he hardens their hearts toward us so we will destroy them. At other times he causes them to live at peace with us. When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, even his enemies will have respect for him. Then there are times when the enemy is allowed to harass us and tempt us away from God. This is called a test; one allowed by God to prove what is in our heart. See Exodus, the story of Pharaoh against the Israelites, and Job, the story of his time of testing.

38. ***At different times through out our life, God tests us to prove what is really in our heart.*** The test with the daily provision of manna in the wilderness proved whether or not the Israelites would follow his instructions. Job was tested to see if he would curse God for all his misfortune. Abraham was tested for his obedience and whether he feared God more than he loved his son. The test is not so God will know what is in our heart for he already knows the deep things within us. The test is so we will know for a certainty that we can trust and obey him no matter what the trial. Exodus 16, Job 1-2, 5:17.
39. ***God wants to heal us, but we have to take the time to reach out and touch the hem of his garment.*** We must choose to believe, before we can receive. We have to exercise our faith first and believe for healing. If the healing does not come when we expect it to, ask the Holy Spirit if there is any sin or other hindrance that is keeping us from receiving our healing. Perhaps there is something we will need to change first, or some act of obedience that we must comply with before God will heal us. After all, it is so much easier to put our faith in medicine and doctors than in the direct healing power of Jesus Christ. And certainly more convenient to take a pill, than to spend the time in prayer seeking God for results. Matt. 9:21, 21:22, James 5:15.
40. ***“Stop, drop and roll.”*** These are the instructions firemen give elementary students when they visit the school to teach them about fire safety. Following this simple rule when our clothes are on fire, can save our life. This is a great rule to practice in our spiritual life as well. When we find ourselves in conflict, turmoil or danger, stop what we are doing, drop to our knees in prayer and roll with whatever the Holy Spirit tells us to do. “To roll with” means to obey, to take action, to comply. The Spirit may tell us to surrender, to repent, to show the fruit of the Spirit, or to do battle with the enemy until righteousness, peace and joy are once again established. John 14:26, Rom. 14:17.
41. ***Some nations have a destiny of death, destruction, destitution and bondage.*** According to Genesis 9 and 10, certain nations, civilizations and family lines are under the curse of Canaan. God has ordained it since the days of Noah. However, he also sent his son Jesus Christ to be the sacrificial lamb for our sins so we could be freed from these curses. We serve a god of justice and a god of mercy. We may be born into the iniquity of our forefathers, but if we call upon Jesus Christ we can be born again in the kingdom of God. All those that call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Joel 2:32, John 3:16.
42. ***Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit for two purposes.*** First, it is so we will be filled with power, wisdom and truth. Secondly, so we can bless others with the gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are given not for our own benefit, but for the benefit of others. Jesus taught his disciples to pray the Lord’s Prayer and then told them a story about a man who went to his friend’s house at midnight to ask for bread. His friend needed three loaves of bread to take on his journey. The neighbor responded to his friend’s boldness and concern for another’s need. God responds to our requests when we come boldly asking for help to meet the needs of others.

The gifts of discernment, prophecy, words of wisdom, or miracles could be just the thing someone needs to receive from you. Don’t be caught in the middle of the night with nothing

to give to someone else in need. Ask Jesus to baptize you in the Holy Ghost so you can have boldness and his gifts to share with others. Luke 11:13.

43. ***Have you been established in the kingdom?*** In Luke 13 Jesus tells us what the kingdom of God is like. He compares it to a mustard seed that a man took and planted in his garden. It grew, became a tree and the birds perched in its' branches. That mustard tree provided protection, shade, and a place of rest for God's little creatures. Likewise, if we are established in the kingdom of God, all our needs will be met by a loving and wise Father who knows what we need even before we do.
Matt. 6:33, Rom. 14:17.

44. ***Which group will you be in during the millennium?*** Jesus told us the parable of the ten minas to illustrate what would happen to three types of people on judgment day when he comes to set up his millennium reign. His faithful servants will be given various numbers of cities over which to rule depending on their trustworthiness here on earth. The second group is comprised of people who were unfaithful and irresponsible with what God gave them. They will not be given any authority or responsibility to rule and reign with Jesus. The third group consists of Jesus' enemies. They will be brought before him to be destroyed and no longer allowed to remain on earth. Luke 19:11-27.

45. ***Fulfilling our destiny will mean laying down our life for others.*** On September 11, 2001, a small group of men on a Pan American flight were determined to overcome the terrorists who had taken control of their plane. After assessing the dangerous situation and coming up with a plan, they proclaimed "Let's roll!" History records that they were willing to stand up against and overcome the enemy at all costs to their own lives. They were fighting for a cause they believed in and gave their lives to protect our nation's capital. Scripture commands us to love each other as Christ has loved us. "Greater love has no one than this; that he lay down his life for his friends." John 15:11-13.

46. ***Faith is a muscle that grows with exercise.*** When we have a need that we can't provide for ourselves, then we go to Him in prayer. One September morning I planned on making some homemade peach ice cream to take to a Labor Day picnic at our neighbor's house. At the time we were living in the woods of rural Georgia. I drove 12 miles to town to buy fresh peaches, and was greatly disappointed when there were none at the grocery store.

On the way back home, I prayed. "Lord, I need some peaches. Please, show me where I can find some." His reply was, "Stop at Mrs. Black's house. She can help you." Sure enough, she was home and had a late blooming peach tree in her back yard. Delighted to be of help to me, she gave me a basket full- free for the asking. God's provision is available to us- free for the asking, because he delights in meeting all our needs. Phil. 4:19. "My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

47. ***Resurrection Day can come any day of the year.*** For someone to become a believer and experience the resurrection power of Christ, three things have to happen. 1. The Holy Spirit has to open their blind eyes and minds to reveal their need for Jesus Christ as Savior. 2. They have to invite Christ to live in them acknowledging he died for their sins. 3. They have to ask

the Holy Spirit to fill them with his enabling power. That's what being "born again" is all about. John 3:3, 16:7-15, Acts 1:8

48. ***To be transformed, our minds have to be renewed by the Word and our spirit has to be empowered by the Holy Spirit.*** Many Christians live way below their potential in Christ and their inheritance in the kingdom of God. Churches are full of people who come regularly, listen to the sermon, sing the hymns and even tithe faithfully. Yet, they are bound in tradition, serving God on their own terms, and spiritually blind. Come Holy Spirit and save us from ourselves! Rom. 12:1-2, Acts 1:4-8.
49. ***Great distress in our lives can mean we have forsaken God and are living our life independently of Him.*** When we bow down and serve other gods, the one true, living God will not stand and fight for us. We are on our own and subject to the evil, demonic forces we are serving. According to the scriptures, God will hand us over to our enemies. Other gods can include the pursuit of education, power, fame, fortune, sexuality, self-interests, or involving ourselves in the occult. God is a god of mercy and of judgment. We can turn away from God, or pursue God. He may allow our enemies to pursue us, and we will reap destruction from our own choices. The Solution! A deep, sincere repentance from our sins and crying out to God for his intervention. Acknowledge we have sinned against him, ask for forgiveness and plead for his mercy and grace. Josh. 23:12-13.
50. ***The kingdom of God must be established in us first before we can be used to establish it in the earth.*** The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. If our lives do not reflect these three attributes, how can we influence others? As ambassadors of His kingdom, we must be walking in the fullness of the Spirit to have a positive effect on the world around us. When Christian parents complain and get discouraged that their children are not following after God like they did, maybe it is because they never truly demonstrated victorious, kingdom living in their own lives. Prayer: "Dear God, let your kingdom be established in me. Let Christ rule and reign in my heart and mind. Let everything I do and say bring you glory and reflect the life of Christ. Rom. 14:17.
51. ***God knows the end from the beginning and has a divine plan already set in motion.*** Just before the Israelites crossed the River Jordan to take possession of their promised land, they camped at a place called Shittim. The Lord commanded them to consecrate themselves before going into battle. The word shittim in Hebrew means "to pierce, to scourge, to flog." That is a description of what Jesus experienced when he was crucified on the Cross 2,000 years later. He was the sacrificial lamb slain for us so we can be forgiven and cleansed from our sins. As we appropriate his atonement for our sins and consecrate ourselves to His service, God will dwell among us. He will lead us into battle and enable us to overcome all our enemies. Joshua 3, Ex. 29, Matt. 1:23.
52. ***Are you experiencing a fulfillment of all the promises of God, or just some of them?*** Is your life characterized by success, financial prosperity, Godly relationships, good health, and holiness? Do you feel blessed above and beyond what you could ever hope for, or expect? If not—the reason could be you haven't destroyed all your enemies and taken possession of your inheritance in the kingdom of God. Satan and his spirits have come to kill, steal and

destroy God's people and keep them from experiencing the fullness of the promises. God planned for us to enjoy the abundant life through his Son, Jesus Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas where you have allowed the enemy to rob you, to control your behavior, or keep you in bondage thereby reaping destruction in your life. God promises to give your enemies into your hands so you can destroy them. Asking God to do something is like asking him to drive the car for you while you sit there and watch. He has done everything He already needs to do and it is up to you to appropriate the victory by going to war against your enemy. When you have destroyed your enemies and their influence on you, then you will experience the fullness of the promises. Deut. 28, Joshua 1:1-11, John 10:10.

53. ***Water, water everywhere, but are you drinking it in?*** Water is the most precious element on earth and without it we would die. With soap and water, we wash our bodies, clothes, cars, pets and houses. Drinking eight glasses of water a day cleanses our bodies on the inside, removing toxic waste that poisons us. As Christians, we are being contaminated daily by the world and often don't do anything to get detoxified spiritually. But with the water of the Word, we can wash our soul and spirit. We are cleansed by the internal washing of water through the Word. We can then be presented to Christ without stain, wrinkle or blemish, holy and blameless. As our minds are renewed by the Word, we are transformed into the image of Christ. We begin to think and act like Christ. Also, like Christ, we will offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is our spiritual act of worship. Rom. 12:1-2, Eph. 5:2-6.
54. ***When a nation's leader sins against God's commandments, both he and the people can suffer punishment.*** The scriptures give us many examples of God's judgment by famine, floods, plagues or attack by our enemies. These curses are brought on by disobedience to God's laws. The same is true of the head of a family, a church or other organization. One example comes to mind from Joshua's life. He made a covenant with the Gibeonites not to kill them which went strictly against what God had told him to do. They were allowed to live among the Israelites as laborers instead. Years later Saul in his zeal for Israel, annihilated the Gibeonites, breaking the covenant Joshua had made. In Sam. 21 we read that during David's reign, there was a famine for three successive years. The reason why? It was the result of Saul's disobedience to the Lord. The family of God suffered famine and death, because of his failure to obey God. The curse was finally broken when David made restitution to the Gibeonites. Rain once again poured down from heaven and God answered prayer on behalf of the land. Deut. 28, Josh. 9, Sam. 21.
55. ***If you give God the first part of your day, then he will bless you the rest of your day!*** We humans presume to be in control of our lives and naively think we can get along fine without daily asking for the loving protection and provision of our Heavenly Father. We get up, go to work and come home each day thinking we are doing just fine without spending time communing with our Father God. As long as things are OK, we don't take time to read His Word, or pray.

Warning! Pride goes before a fall. Don't make the mistake of neglecting your spiritual life while in pursuit of natural endeavors. If you want God to bless you every day, spend some

time in His Presence acknowledging your love and appreciation for His watch care over your life. Prov. 16:18.

Conclusion

One beautiful, autumn afternoon in 1991, my daughter Mary and I were heading home after a day at school. As we were passing over a viaduct, we were struck from behind by a drunk, teenage girl driving 70 mph. Our car spun out of control and rammed into the wall sliding backward along the overpass. I could just imagine us going over the side and landing on the highway below during rush hour traffic.

There wasn't time to pray, quote the Word or even cry out to God. But in that instant of panic and fear, I heard the Holy Spirit say in a near audible voice, "Just relax. You're going to be alright!"

The car stopped safely, but was totally wrecked from the rear bumper forward to just behind our seats. We suffered only minor injuries and temporary trauma to our necks. When the car was towed away, we discovered the words, "Jesus Saves" written in brown paint on the wall in the exact spot where we crashed. Amazingly, it matched the paint scraped off our taupe-colored Taurus. Praise God for his divine intervention and protection!

God spared our lives that day, because he has a divine plan and purpose for our existence. My prayer for everyone who reads this devotional book is that they also will discover the plan and purpose God has for them as they fulfill their destiny in the kingdom of God. May these pearls of wisdom guide you along the way.

Thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness to me even when I have not remained as close to you as I should. Thank you for sparing my life so I could live again to serve you and praise your name.

Psalm 27:1-6

*"The Lord is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?
When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh,
when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall.
Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.
One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble,
He will keep me safe in his dwelling;
He will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle
and set my feet high upon a rock.
Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me;
at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the Lord."*