

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS 2020



**THE BATTLE IS REAL
BUT IT'S NOT FOUGHT IN THE FLESH**

BY DAVID DE JOHN

Pilgrim's Progress 2020

COPYRIGHT 2020 - Pilgrim's Progress 2020. All rights reserved.

No information contained in this post should be viewed as medical advice. The reader should use their own determination on whether any medical condition they have requires professional medical advice.

No portion of this book whether in part or its completed form may be copied in any way, reproduced or distributed without the written permission of the author.

Scriptures from BibleGateway.Com, King James Version, Amplified Bible and New International Version.

The following is a compilation of verses from the King James Version and others. Care was taken to reference the original Hebrew and Greek original words and their meaning to verify the intent of the verse(s).

FYI: I realize Maserrari is not a real car. I realize I have not capitalized the S in satan. I have done this on purpose. I refuse to acknowledge his name with a capital letter.

Copyright 2022
David De John
Dd1013@comcast.net

Cover Image by: Shutter Stock, RANGIZZ

Forward

“Pilgrim’s Progress 2020” is not the standard remake of the original book. It is set in the year 2020 and it is definitely not your typical novel. It was written to be a life changing journey for the reader in a unique screen play format. The main character “Christian Pilgrim” literally takes on the role of every person and emotionally captures the reader through his challenges, struggles and victories. The reader will quickly understand while the battles are truly physically and emotionally real, they are not won in the flesh.

The original “The Pilgrim’s Progress” was written in 1678 while the author was in prison for preaching against the beliefs of the established church. At one time the book was the second most read Christian book in the world (second only to the Bible).

No matter where you are in life, “Pilgrim’s Progress 2020” will take you on an incredible journey. You will find yourself getting life changing answers to your own challenges through “Christian” and his family’s journey.

“Pilgrim’s Progress 2020” answers the question, what would happen if the original Pilgrim’s Progress was written today? How would it view Christianity, churches and a christian’s walk with God? Would it, could it, have the same impact on the world as the original book? Wonder no more, we now know, the answer is yes.

I hope you enjoy your journey as you walk page by page with Christian and find a new relationship in the Holy Spirit. A relationship which will allow you to live out your true purpose and calling.

Romans 11:29 “for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable”

Chapter 1

NARRATOR: Christian, his wife Christiana, and 3 children live a comfortable life in the city of Materialism. Johnny and Jennifer their youngest children attend the middle school nearby and their oldest Son Bill attends Materialism High School. Their home is in a quiet cul-de-sac and is the gathering spot for the neighborhood children. Christian loves his job as an account executive for a large pharmaceutical company and is continuously winning monthly awards and trips. Everything is going smoothly for Christian and his family. No stress, drama, or surprises, just the way Christian and Christiana like it.

It's Monday morning and Christian is walking from his appointment at Acme Medical Group to the parking garage in the downtown section of the city. There is a man walking in the park on the sidewalk toward Christian. As the man approaches Christian, the man reaches out and offers Christian a pamphlet.

STRANGER: Hello friend, here can you look at this when you have time?

NARRATOR: Christian walking at his regular fast pace reaches out and grabs the pamphlet and stuffs it in his jacket pocket and continues walking.

STRANGER: Do you have a minute to talk?

CHRISTIAN: No sorry Friend, I'm in a hurry.

NARRATOR: A few weeks go by and Christian realizes he can't find a potential client's business card. When he gets home, he searches through his desk and jacket pockets. When he reaches into one of his jacket pockets, he finds the pamphlet Stranger handed him a few weeks ago. Christian opens the crumbled pamphlet and sees the words: "Do you know God loves you and there is more to life than things?" Christian tosses the pamphlet on the hall table and continues looking for the business card.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana have you seen a business card from the Acme Medical Group?

CHRISTIANA: No Christian, I have not. Did you check you jacket pockets?

CHRISTIAN: I just did. I hate the idea of having to call back and not know who I spoke with that day. It's embarrassing.

CHRISTIANA: Sorry Christian.

NARRATOR: A few hours later.

CHRISTIANA: Christian what's this pamphlet on the hallway table about God. Who left that there?

CHRISTIAN: It was me, some guy handed it to me downtown and I stuffed it in my jacket pocket, and I found it as I was looking for the business card.

CHRISTIANA: Don't leave it out like this, the kids don't need to see propaganda like that.

CHRISTIAN: Sorry, I'll throw it away

CHRISTIANA: I already did

NARRATOR: A few days later Christian is walking downtown to his appointment and sees Stranger handing out the pamphlets again. Christian crosses the street, so he doesn't have to deal with him. When Christian walks into the medical office, he is surprised to have the receptionist tell him the Head of the Company is waiting for him in the conference. The receptionist walks Christian to the conference room where he sees Head of Company and 3 other people sitting quietly.

HEAD OF COMPANY: Hello Christian sit down.

CHRISTIAN: Is something wrong?

HEAD OF COMPANY: You could say that. Christian, we have been tracking the pharmaceutical samples and boxes you have been leaving over the last few weeks and you are not leaving full boxes. Some of the samples have been missing. Can you explain that?

CHRISTIAN: No, I can't. I have no idea. When I leave the sample boxes they are still sealed. It's our company policy.

HEAD OF COMPANY: Well Christian, we are conducting an internal investigation into the missing pharmaceutical samples and we intend to prosecute whoever is responsible.

CHRISTIAN: I agree, that sounds like exactly what you should do.

NARRATOR: One of the other people in the room mumbles under his breath, it's probably you. Christian hears the comment and quickly looks at the Head of Company.

CHRISTIAN: Come on, you guys cannot possibly think I am stealing the samples, do you.

HEAD OF COMPANY: Christian, we have an extremely limited number of people that go into the supply room and you were one of the last people who have been in there. Christian, we will have to call your company and let them know about the problem and let them know you are under consideration. Now Christian, I will stress, we are not accusing you of stealing the samples, but we must look into all possibilities.

CHRISTIAN: I do not understand this at all. The boxes are sealed when I leave them. Someone in your company must be able to verify that fact. My company will fire me if there is any suspicion of stealing samples if I can't prove I didn't do it.

HEAD OF COMPANY: Christian I'm sorry, but we have interviewed every employee with access to the sample storage room. Every one of them has said the seal on the boxes was broken when they went in to get samples.

CHRISTIAN: Do you really believe I would actually break open a box and leave the box open? Don't you really think if I was doing this, I would at least try to make the box look resealed?

HEAD OF COMPANY: Christian, our meeting is done for now. I will be contacting your company to let them know about our investigation.

NARRATOR: Christian walks out of the building in shock, numb and in a daze about what this accusation will do to his reputation at work and the community. As Christian is walking back to the parking garage Stranger walks up to him.

STRANGER: Hello, my name is Evangelist, I'm sorry I couldn't help but notice you look very troubled.

NARRATOR: Christian stares at Evangelist for a few seconds.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I am, I don't understand what just happened. My entire career, my life could be destroyed.

EVANGELIST: Come sit down on the bench for a minute and take a couple of deep breaths. Can I get you anything?

CHRISTIAN: No, I have to call my company and my wife. But I don't know what to tell her. My kids, what are my kids going to think. What are our friends going to think? If this lie gets out, it will affect everyone in my family. I didn't do anything wrong. I didn't steal anything.

EVANGELIST: I understand the confusion, the anxiety and fear you are dealing with right now. But you have to understand, you are a child of a loving God and even if you walk through the shadow of death, God will be with you to hold you up. To help you fight your fight, to help give you favor. What is your name?

CHRISTIAN: It's Christian. Look I don't have time for this, I don't believe in God, only people that are weak emotionally, or insecure rely on God. I am a successful person, I worked hard and accomplished everything on my own, nothing was ever given to me. Do you understand, I am a self-made person?

NARRATOR: Christian starts getting up to walk away.

EVANGELIST: Listen before you go, will you at least take this (handing him a pamphlet).

CHRISTIAN: No, you gave me one before and we threw it out.

EVANGELIST: Maybe this time you should read it.

CHRISTIAN: No thanks, I don't need any fake security and just because I'm distressed right now, doesn't mean I'm going to be vulnerable to fairy tales. Do you understand?

NARRATOR: Christian gets up and walks away towards the parking garage. When Christian gets into his car, he calls his supervisor.

CHRISTIAN: Hello Supervisor, this is Christian, did the Head of Company call you?

SUPERVISOR: Yes, he did, I've talked to VP and he suggested to do our own due diligence. We will be calling some of your other clients and inquire if they have experienced any open box situations.

CHRISTIAN: You can't do that. It will destroy my reputation with my clients. If they think I'm being investigated for pharmaceutical sample theft, they will never trust me or want me in their office. Come on Supervisor you know that.

SUPERVISOR: I'm sorry Christian, we don't have a choice, we have to protect our company's image and show we will not ignore potential serious issues. Christian, I'm sorry but until we conclude our internal investigation you can't have any contact with your clients, and you are suspended without pay until further notice.

V What am I supposed to do? Who is going to contact and work with them? If I don't keep in contact, they will go somewhere else.

SUPERVISOR: Christian, I suggest you stay away from the office for a few days and we will be in touch as to what our investigation determines. I hope everything works out with this. Regarding your clients, we will have Envy follow up with them until this is cleared up.

CHRISTIAN: No please don't do that, not Envy. He will do his best to undermine me and manipulate the situation. You know he has already visited some of my existing clients.

SUPERVISOR: Sorry, but that is what we have decided.

NARRATOR: Christian hangs up and starts his drive home. Christian start thinking out loud. I can't call Christiana and tell her the news over the phone. What do I tell the kids if they ask if everything will be ok? What do I tell Christiana when she asks if we will be able to afford to stay in our home if things don't go well? Christian pulls into the garage and when he walks in the door he is greeted by Christiana smiling.

CHRISTIANA: Wow, you're home early. This is great, do you want to take a ride to the new pizza place that opened up downtown.

NARRATOR: Christian looks at Christiana with a blank stare.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, what's wrong. Something's wrong. Are you ok?

CHRISTIAN: No, I'm not ok. The Head of Company at Acme Medical company called me into a meeting and said someone has been stealing samples and they are investigating me.

CHRISTIANA: Oh no. That can't be. Did you tell them you didn't do it?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I did, but they said they have interviewed everyone in the company that has access to the medical supply room and they haven't found any proof of anything, so I'm next on the list. The worst part is they called Supervisor and that didn't go well.

CHRISTIANA: What happened?

CHRISTIAN: Listen, can you give me a minute, I need a glass of water.

CHRISTIANA: Did you get fired; are we ok?

CHRISTIAN: I didn't get fired and I don't know.

NARRATOR: Christian gets a glass of water and then turns to Christiana

CHRISTIAN: They have suspended me without pay and they are going to do their own internal investigation. Which to be honest, I understand, they must. But they will be calling my clients and asking them if they have experienced any open boxes after delivery or sample shortages. The problem is if they did, it makes me look bad. Even though I didn't do anything wrong, it will make me look bad. And to make it worse, they are having Envy take over the follow up with my clients.

CHRISTIANA: No, not Envy. He will steal them from you. He did that before. Does Supervisor remember that? Does he remember that Envy used his son's teacher to bend the ear of one of your client's? And convinced him to call Supervisor and say he wanted to work with Envy instead of you, even though Envy had never talked to him?

CHRISTIAN: No, I didn't bring that up. I'm sure he remembers. But VP is making the decisions on this and you know how Envy kisses VP's butt and manipulates him.

CHRISTIANA: Yes, I know. What are we going to do?

CHRISTIAN: There is nothing I can do at this point, it's out of my control.

CHRISTIANA: What do we tell the kids?

CHRISTIAN: I don't think we tell them anything. Let's hope this stays quiet and word doesn't get out about the situation and I'm cleared of this mess.

CHRISTIANA: Ok, but what are you going to do in the morning when they expect to see you leave for work?

CHRISTIAN: I'll just tell them I'm working from home for a few days.

NARRATOR: The next morning, Christian has breakfast with Christiana and the kids and tells them he is working from home. Later that day Johnny and Jennifer get home from middle school.

JOHNNY: Mom, mom, where are you?

JENNIFER: Mommy, mommy where's dad

CHRISTIANA: I'm in the kitchen kids what's all the excitement about

JOHNNY: Mom, where is dad is, he ok?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, he is fine, he is in his den, what's wrong?

JENNIFER: Envy's daughter said daddy is going to get arrested for stealing medical samples from work.

JOHNNY: Envy's son is saying the same thing to everyone. Everyone in middle school is whispering behind our backs that dad is in big trouble. Mom what's going on.

CHRISTIANA: Everything will be ok kids. Let me get your dad.

NARRATOR: Christiana goes into Christian's den.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, things are bad, Envy's son and daughter are spreading lies at the middle school that you are stealing medical samples.

CHRISTIAN: That back stabber. That snake. It's not bad enough he's trying to destroy me, but now he's hurting my children.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, calm down we can deal with that part later. Right now, you have to talk to the kids about this. They are in the kitchen.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana walk into the kitchen.

CHRISTIAN: Hi kids, listen what you heard is not true, it's a lie. One of dad's client's is experiencing a problem. Someone at their company is stealing medical samples and since I have access to the medical sample room, they have to notify my company that I am one of the people that are being investigated. But kids let me assure you, I didn't steal anything. I

delivered the sample boxes myself. So, I know they were sealed when I left them. But Supervisor must do his due diligence to protect the company and do some checking. Unfortunately, the VP assigned Envy to follow up with my clients. I will call Supervisor right now and let him know what Envy has done by spreading lies to his kids.

JENNIFER: Mommy what are we supposed to do if everyone starts whispering about us behind our back?

CHRISTIANA: Jennifer, just ignore them for now. This will all work out.

NARRATOR: Christian walks back to his den to call Supervisor

CHRISTIAN: Hello Supervisor, this is Christian, I have a problem.

SUPERVISOR: Yes, I think you do, Envy just had a meeting with VP and myself and told us he visited a few of your clients and checked on their supply sample room. He then talked to the bosses and they went into the room and did a quick inventory and one of the clients was short medical samples.

CHRISTIAN: That can't be, it's not me. I've never stolen anything in my life. If Envy said he went into the supply sample room before going to talk to the bosses, how do you know he didn't take the samples just to set me up?

SUPERVISOR: Whoa now Christian, you are making a serious accusation that Envy is stealing medical supplies to maliciously set you up. I think, I need to call VP into the room for this call.

NARRATOR: A few minutes later.

VP: Hello Christian, this is VP, I'm here with Supervisor and Envy on speaker phone. Can you repeat what you said earlier to Supervisor?

CHRISTIAN: What's going on? Why is Envy in the room?

VP: Well Supervisor said you are making an accusation that Envy is stealing the supplies and setting you up. Don't you think he deserves a right to respond?

CHRISTIAN: This is crazy, it seems like a nightmare. How can you believe all of this? Envy why are you doing this? You lied to your kids and told

them I'm stealing medical supplies and they spread it throughout the entire school. The kids at the school are now whispering behind my kids back.

VP: Christian wait. Envy, did you tell your kids Christian was stealing medical samples?

ENVY: Come on VP, you know kids, you know how they exaggerate things and blow things out of proportion. I told them I'm going to be a little extra busy for a while because you asked me to follow up Christian's clients while he is being investigated. The kids must have just assumed he was guilty, you know kids. It's just an innocent misunderstanding.

VP: Ok Envy, that makes sense.

CHRISTIAN: No, it doesn't make sense. Envy manipulated the situation by how he explained it to his kids so they would get that impression. Don't you see that? He is letting his kids do his dirty work for him, so his hands look clean. Just to destroy my reputation and affect my kids.

VP: Now, now Christian listen, I think you are making too much out of this. It's just an innocent misunderstanding with the kids.

ENVY: VP you know he is probably just trying to reflect the attention away from the news I found out today and trying to put negative attention on me.

VP: Christian, what is your response to the information that Envy found one of your other clients missing samples also?

CHRISTIAN: That has nothing to do with me. How do you know Envy didn't take them when he went into the supply room alone, before going to talk to the boss?

ENVY: Ok VP check my pockets, check my briefcase. If I took any samples, I would have had to put them in my pockets or briefcase to get them out of the clients building wouldn't I.

CHRISTIAN: Come on Envy, you could have thrown them out once you got outside the building.

ENVY: Ok, I've had enough of these false accusations. I'm tired of you trying to reflect the blame off yourself to me.

VP: Christian stop that right now. We will not tolerate any employees making slanderous statements, accusing one of our employees of stealing medical supplies without any proof.

ENVY: I understand it's not your fault VP. But it really makes me nervous about coming to work here. I mean think about it, how do I know Christian

won't try making other unfounded accusations against me to other employees or worse yet our clients. No, I'm sorry VP, I'm not sure about this whole situation anymore. I think this has become a hostile work environment and will be one as long as Christian is working here.

VP: Envy, I am sorry about all of these problems Christian is causing. Christian this call is over, I will be having a meeting with Supervisor to come to a decision on how to best handle this problem we are now dealing with.

CHRISTIAN: But wait, wait. This isn't right.

NARRATOR: The call ends and Christian put's his head down and then feels a hand on his shoulder. It's Christiana's hand.

CHRISTIANA: Are you ok?

CHRISTIAN: How long have you been in here?

CHRISTIANA: From just before VP got on the phone. Since you were on speaker phone, when I walked by your den, I could hear Envy manipulating Supervisor.

CHRISTIAN: I can't believe this. How can my whole world turn upside down like this in 48 hours? The kids, my job. What is VP going to do? I know Envy is manipulating them to fire me. I just know it. He's saying that I'm creating a hostile work environment and the only thing that will stop him from suing the company is if they fire me and give him all of my clients.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, let's try to relax and go for a walk.

NARRATOR: As Christian gets up to leave his den with Christiana, the phone rings.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana stay here with me, it's the office

NARRATOR: Christian answers the phone call.

CHRISTIAN: Hello this is Christian

VP: Christian, this is VP, I'm with Supervisor and Envy. We have reviewed the series of events since Supervisor received the call from Acme

Medical group and the evidence of theft that Envy uncovered at one of your other clients.

CHRISTIAN: Evidence of theft. What theft, I didn't steal anything.

VP: Based on the evidence from Head of Company at ACME and compounded by you creating a hostile work environment for Envy.

CHRISTIAN: But, but.

VP: Based on what has been presented we are left with no other choice but to terminate your employment as of today. You will not be allowed back in our offices or to make contact with any of our clients. Supervisor will bring your personal items from your office and pick up your company laptop, your company cell phone and of course your company car.

CHRISTIAN: Wait, wait.

VP: Christian this call is over, and I am disappointed in you.

NARRATOR: VP ends the call

CHRISTIANA: Christian how could this be happening

CHRISTIAN: I don't know, it's like a dream. No, a nightmare. I don't know. I don't feel good right now, I think I'm going to be sick.

NARRATOR: Christian runs out of the room.

Later that day, Christiana and Christian sit quietly while Johnny and Jennifer eat some of the frozen pizza Christiana heated up. Christian and Christiana walk out of the room and without saying a word, just hug each other for what seems like hours. They feel like it's now the two of them against the world. They have no doubt the children at school will tell their parents about what Envy's kids are saying. Then it's just a matter of time before everyone in the area knows about it and no doubt believes it. It seems like people always want to believe the worst.

The next day Christian and Christiana decide to take Christiana's car and just go for a ride to get away from the city of Materialism. But on the way back Christian has an idea.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, I think I want to stop by and talk to Head of Company at the Acme Medical company where this all started, maybe I can clear this all up.

CHRISTIANA: No, I don't think that is a good idea. Even if they had an open mind before, I guarantee you they don't anymore after Envy manipulated them and didn't VP tell you that you can't have any contact with them?

CHRISTIAN: I know but maybe, I'm going to try.

NARRATOR: Christian goes to his normal parking garage and walks to Acme Medical group building a few blocks away. But the receptionist won't let him talk to anyone. When Christian insist, she calls the Boss who comes out.

HEAD OF COMPANY: Christian I'm going to be blunt. I don't want you to ever come into our company again. I didn't this at first. I argued in your defense. But then Envy helped us do an inventory check of your samples. Sure, enough some samples were missing. Samples you just dropped off the day before.

CHRISTIAN: Don't you understand Envy could have taken them when he went in the supply room by himself before talking to you?

HEAD OF COMPANY: Christian that's enough. I will not tolerate you making a scene in our office. Envy has never done anything to make us doubt his word or character.

CHRISTIAN: How can you say that?

HEAD OF COMPANY: That's enough, either leave or I'm calling the police.

NARRATOR: Christian turns and leaves the office not saying another word and walks to his car.

CHRISTIANA: How did it go?

CHRISTIAN: He said he believes Envy and if I didn't leave, he was going to call the police.

NARRATOR: For the first time a tear flows out of Christians eye.

CHRISTIANA: What are we going to do?

CHRISTIAN: I don't know, how am I ever going to be able to get another job in the pharmaceutical industry if I have to use Supervisor or VP as a reference?

NARRATOR: Christiana's cell phone rings.

CHRISTIANA: Hello.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: I would like to speak to Christiana.

CHRISTIANA: This is Christiana, who is this?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: I am calling to tell you to come down to the school at once to pick up your son Johnny. He has been suspended and the school board will be considering a full expulsion.

CHRISTIANA: Why, what happened?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: Johnny without being provoked started a fight with Envy's son and we have a zero-tolerance policy for fighting.

CHRISTIANA: No, there is more to this situation. I will come right now with my husband to talk to you.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: That's fine you and your husband can come pick Johnny up, but there is nothing to talk about.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana arrive at the Principals office. But Johnny is nowhere to be seen.

CHRISTIAN: Hello we are here to see School Principal.

NARRATOR: The receptionist leads them into the School Principal's office.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: Well that didn't take you long to get here, if only you were that concerned about your children at other times we wouldn't be in this situation.

CHRISTIAN: What exactly happened?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: According to 2 witnesses Envy's son was walking out of the school building through a back door and your son Johnny ran up to him and started hitting him completely unprovoked.

CHRISTIANA: Where is Johnny? That doesn't sound like him at all.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: He is with the school security officer waiting for the police to arrive.

CHRISTIAN: The police?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: Yes, after we called you, we called Envy's son's house and talked to his mother. His mother just called back and said her husband Envy wants to press charges against your son Johnny. Apparently, there has been some ongoing harassment from you towards Envy because he exposed you for stealing medical samples from work and they terminated you. Envy said he expected you to try to have your son take it out on his son. Which is exactly what happened.

CHRISTIAN: No that's not true at all. We want to see Johnny.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: Are you saying you weren't just fired today, and you are under suspicion of stealing pharmaceutical samples from your job and Envy exposed you for it?

CHRISTIAN: No that's not true. Well yes, I was fired today, but.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: And what about being investigated for stealing pharmaceutical samples?

CHRISTIAN: OK yes, I am being investigated but that doesn't mean I am guilty.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: I've heard enough this meeting is over.

CHRISTIANA: Wait, wait can't we talk about it?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: There is nothing further to talk about. I have a meeting with Envy in about 15 minutes and I have to call a board member first. Envy believes, your son has created an unsafe and hostile environment for the entire school.

CHRISTIAN: Who are the witnesses?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: I'm not at liberty to say.

CHRISTIANA: How can you not tell us?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: There were two other boys, they are Envy's son's cousins.

CHRISTIAN: What? His cousins, how do you know we can believe them?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: That's enough, I will not tolerate you insinuating our students our liars. I can see where your son gets it from.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana walk out of the Principal's office towards the school security guard's room when they see a police officer entering the building.

CHRISTIAN: Hello Officer, I'm Christian, Johnny's father. Are you here about him?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Yes, we were told a formal complaint is being made by the victim's father.

CHRISTIAN: Police Officer Hopeful will you be talking to the supposed witnesses also?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Yes, I will. That is why I'm here. I'm going to ask you to wait outside while I talk to your son.

CHRISTIAN: Can we at least say hello to him? He has to be scared being in the security officer's room and then with you walking in.

CHRISTIANA: Please.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Just please wait out here until I'm done.

NARRATOR: Sometime later, Police Officer Hopeful opens the door and calls Christian and Christiana into the room.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Well it sounds like there is quite a lot going on right now in your family.

CHRISTIAN: Yes Sir, there is. I don't understand it and it's overwhelming us.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: You don't have to call me Sir, you can call me by my name. See it's right here on my name tag. I'm Police Officer Hopeful.

CHRISTIAN: Thank You Officer Hopeful. What happens now?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Your son explained what Envy's son has been doing and the rumors he has been spreading throughout the school. Now, I'm calling them rumors because there is no proof of you stealing anything from what I understand, is that correct?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it is.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Your son said the two witnesses that are substantiating Envy's son's story were not even present at the time and they are his cousins. Johnny said there were 3 other people walking right

behind your son and they can verify your son's story. He said, the 3 girls can substantiate Envy's son started harassing him and threatened him and then punched him. Johnny said the girls can also verify Envy's cousins weren't even there at the time. We have had trouble with Envy's son, bullying multiple kids and having these same 2 cousins back his story that the other kids started it.

CHRISTIAN: That is the first good news I've heard all day.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: I will be going to the Principal's office to get the home addresses of the 3 girls that were walking behind your son and visit their homes to get their story.

CHRISTIAN: Great then this will all be cleared up.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Well understand, in a lot of cases like this, witnesses do not like to get involved. They sometimes say they didn't see anything or hear anything. But all you need is one witness to make a statement and I am Hopeful, that will happen.

CHRISTIANA: Can we see Johnny now?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Yes, he is free to go while I conduct the investigation. But remember, the School Principal and your son's suspension and possible expulsion are still a possibility. If we can clear this up, I'm Hopeful the suspension will be lifted.

NARRATOR: That evening Christian and Christiana talk to Bill, Johnny, and Jennifer about the chain of events over the last few days.

Christian couldn't sleep all night long, he kept tossing and turning. He was worried about his job, his financial situation, his reputation and what his friends are going to think and believe. He wonders if at least one of the girls that saw Envy's son starting the fight will speak up or if Johnny would end up getting expelled from school. Christian couldn't help blaming himself. Maybe if he was nicer to Envy. Maybe, if he didn't try so hard at work and Envy won a couple of the sales contest he wouldn't be as jealous. Maybe, if he was more cautious and had someone verify the boxes of samples were placed into the storage room and they were sealed, this all could have been avoided. Maybe if he would have taken the other job offer at the competing pharmaceutical company none of this would be happening. But all Christian knew was, his career and family's life would

never be the same after this and he couldn't help but blame himself in some way.

The next morning Jennifer leaves for school, while Billy stays home serving his suspension and Christian and Christiana impatiently wait for Officer Hopeful to call them with good news.

Later that day, they get a call from Police Officer Hopeful.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: I talked to the girls over the phone/ Two of them said they saw what happened. But when I got to their house, both sets of parents started off saying their daughter didn't see anything. I tried talking to the girls. But they just reiterated what their parents said. I am sorry, but I am still Hopeful one of the girls conscious will get the best of her and she will call me back.

CHRISTIAN: Oh no.

CHRISTIANA: Is there anything else we can do? This is our son. He is being punished for something he didn't do.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: No mam, I'm sorry. Please don't try to take matters into your own hand, just remain hopeful. I will be in touch. Goodbye.

NARRATOR: Bill comes down the stairs into the kitchen.

BILL: Can the police help?

CHRISTIAN: No, he tried. But, he's still Hopeful.

BILL: I'm sick of the Envy's. I've had nothing but problems with that arrogant family. Now, his punk son picks on Johnny who is smaller than him and then he lies and gets Johnny kicked out of school. I'm not going to sit back and watch them destroy us.

CHRISTIAN: Bill, stop don't do anything stupid. Bill no, stop.

NARRATOR: Bill walks out of the house.

CHRISTIANA: What do you think he is going to do.

CHRISTIAN: I don't know, but nothing good will come of anything he does right now.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana repeatedly call and text Bill's cell phone. But he doesn't answer, and anxiety and fear start running wild. Later that evening Bill walks in the door.

CHRISTIAN: Where have you been? We've been worried sick and why didn't you answer your phone?

BILL: I'm sorry. I guess my phone has been on silent mode.

CHRISTIANA: Where have you been?

BILL: I've been sitting down the block from the Envy's house considering going to their house and then beating him till he can't think straight.

CHRISTIANA: Bill, no that's not the answer.

BILL: Then what is?

CHRISTIANA: I don't know, I wish I did.

NARRATOR: Both Christian and Christiana have a restless night of not sleeping. Their whole world has blown up. The next day. The school Principal calls.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: Hello, I need you to come to the school right away.

CHRISTIANA: Why, what's happened?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: Your daughter Jennifer has been hurt. There was a fight and we have called an ambulance.

CHRISTIANA: An ambulance? What happened to her?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: A teacher said a group of girls were bullying her saying her father is a thief. Jennifer yelled at one of the girls and another girl pushed her down the stairs. We think she broke her arm.

CHRISTIANA: Oh no, where is she?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: She is in the nurse's office. I can see the ambulance pulling up to the school now. They will be taking her to the hospital.

NARRATOR: Christiana goes running out of the house screaming for Christian, who is in the back yard and explains what happened to Jennifer. As they rush to the hospital. Thoughts of guilt and blame run rampant in Christian's mind. Jennifer has x rays of her arm and it is broken. But she

won't need surgery. However, she has a bump on her head and the hospital wants to keep her overnight for observation. They put her arm in a cast in the emergency room and transfer her to a regular room upstairs.

Bill drives Johnny up to visit Jennifer that evening and Christian and Christiana spend the night with Jennifer in her room. That next morning the doctor comes in to see Jennifer and says she is doing fine, and she can go home this afternoon. A few of Jennifer's friends come to visit her, so Christian and Christiana go down to the cafeteria so Jennifer can talk to her friends.

Christian is overwhelmed with a wrongful feeling of guilt and fear, he starts thinking there has to be some way of controlling his uncontrollable life.

CHRISTIANA: Oh Christian. isn't there anything we can do? Our lives are out of control.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, no there isn't I wish there was. I wish there was someone to turn to, someone to give us hope, someone to, wait a minute.

CHRISTIANA: What?

CHRISTIAN: I'm going to call Police Officer Hopeful

CHRISTIANA: Why? If he had any good news, he would call us.

CHRISTIAN: No not about that. He's been the only person the last few days that gave us any type of hope and I want to know why.

CHRISTIANA: Don't be silly and start thinking there is some type of supreme being that oversees everything.

Chapter 2

NARRATOR: Christian calls Police Officer Hopeful and leaves a message at the station for him. A few hours later Christian gets a call.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Hello this is Police Officer Hopeful, you asked me to call you.

CHRISTIAN: Hello Police Officer Hopeful, is it possible for you to meet with me personally after you get off work later today?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Yes absolutely, I will come by your house.

CHRISTIAN: No, how about we meet at the coffee shop.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Sure, I'll see you at 8pm.

NARRATOR: That evening at the coffee shop

CHRISTIAN: Hello Officer Hopeful, thank you for meeting me.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: No problem at all Christian. What did you want to talk to me about?

CHRISTIAN: Police Officer Hopeful.

NARRATOR: Police Officer Hopeful Interrupts Christian.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Wait, let's get rid of the formalities, call me Hopeful.

CHRISTIAN: Ok thank you. I don't know what is going on in my life or my family, it seems like something beyond my control is attacking my family all at once. I can't control it. I don't understand why and I'm losing all hope. I don't know why, but something just prompted me to call to talk to you.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: First, never, ever lose hope.

CHRISTIAN: How do you stay hopeful, even when things look so dark and terrible? What do you do when you feel like you are falling into a deep dark pit and you can't grab onto anything to stop yourself?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: I know the feeling some years ago, my partner and best friend was shot and killed during an attempted bank robbery and it almost destroyed me. I thought somehow, I should have done something different. I know now, there was nothing different I could have done/ There was a 2nd bank robber hiding behind a partition. No one signaled us, no one said anything to us. He jumped out and fired one shot that hit my partner. I immediately returned fire and stopped him. But it was too late. My partner was dead. I felt like my life was falling into that deep bottomless pit you are talking about. I couldn't talk to my wife or kids about anything, I distanced myself from everyone I knew. I was seriously considering resigning from the police department. I took a leave of absence to get my thoughts together.

CHRISTIAN: What did you do? How did you bounce back, how did remain Hopeful?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: I wasn't always Hopeful, I was filled with despair, depression, sadness, anxiety, fear and anger for quite a while after that happened.

CHRISTIAN: What happened?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: I met someone named Evangelist. He was standing on the sidewalk by the park handing out pamphlets by the parking garage just east of Main Street. Do you know the one I'm talking about?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I do, in fact I think I saw that guy. I don't know his name. I never asked him. But he gave me a pamphlet the first time I saw him. Then I saw him again the day I was fired. He gave me another pamphlet. He saw I was distressed and had me sit down on a bench. He wanted to talk to me, but I didn't want to listen. I just got up and walked away.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Well did you read the pamphlet he gave you?

CHRISTIAN: No, I don't believe in that kind of stuff. That's for emotionally weak people. You know insecure people.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Oh, I see, do you think I'm emotionally weak or insecure?

CHRISTIAN: Oh no way. Not you. You have a feeling of confidence and emotional strength about you.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Yes, Christian I have Hope, because I've learned. I've learned a lot.

CHRISTIAN: From who, what did you learn?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: From Evangelist of course. The one handing out the pamphlets.

CHRISTIAN: But that stuff is all propaganda, how can it be real. There is no one supreme being that see's over us or watches over us. That's just nonsense from people in churches. And those same people that talk about God, are getting drunk in the bars, beating their spouses, stealing, cheating on their spouses, and doing the same things everyone else does.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Christian let me tell you something. You are absolutely right. Absolutely, it is probably the most saddening thing to the God that created us. You see Christian, we are human, and we are not perfect. The God that created heaven and earth gave us all free will. The ability of making our own choices and decisions. He will never force His will on anyone. That means God doesn't force us to do or say anything. Our decisions and actions are completely up to us. But for those who accept Jesus as their personal Savior, they receive God's amazing Grace and forgiveness for all their sins. They are assured to spend eternity in Heaven. But it's by choice. We are saved by Grace through our Faith. Does that sound like a cruel God? Christian, did you know the Spirit of God the Holy Spirit comes to live in every one that accepts Jesus as their Savior? Christian, with the Holy Spirit comes His divine Fruit of Peace, Love, Joy, Peace, Faith, Goodness, Kindness, Gentleness and Self-Control. That is what is waiting for you when you accept Jesus as your Savior.

CHRISTIAN: I don't know.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Christian, why did you call me? You don't know me. You didn't know anything about me. But you sensed something. It's not that I'm special as a person. It's that you sensed the Spirit of God in me and inside you know, that is what you are searching for.

CHRISTIAN: But that can't all be true. I went to church when I was young and as hard as I tried, I couldn't live the way the church wanted me to, no one could. They were all hypocrites and phonies.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Yes, Christian you are right. But the God that created Heaven and Earth isn't about church, he is about what

His word says. Unfortunately, people even after accepting Jesus as their Savior continue to live by their flesh, their own thoughts, and desires. So, what has changed in their life? Nothing. Not a thing. The only thing that has changed is they are saved and that is incredible. But they are walking through life, like every other person. They are ignoring the power of the Holy Spirit living in them. They are ignoring what God's word says.

CHRISTIAN: I don't understand what do you mean what His word says?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: His word is the Bible.

CHRISTIAN: Wait, that's not real, it's just like a history book.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Oh, is it? Is it really? Suppose I told you it is real. Suppose I told you that the Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit and put into print by men specially selected by God.

CHRISTIAN: That can't be possible.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: It took me from living under the curse of the Old Testament law, to the new covenant of the New Testament that was birthed because of Jesus crucifixion and resurrection.

CHRISTIAN: Do you mean that we are not supposed to be living by the Old Testament laws?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: No, we are not Christian. We have an entirely new covenant with God. Now that doesn't mean we are not supposed to obey and keep the 10 commandments. It doesn't mean we have a free pass to sin or do what we want. When Jesus died and was resurrected God gave us a new covenant, and remember God also gave us His Holy Spirit to live in us. Which means God's own character, His own nature is living in us. I want this to sink in. As a Believer we have the supernatural Fruit of the Spirit. God's own Love, Peace, Joy, Faith, Goodness, Kindness, Gentleness, Patience and Self-Control also live in us. So, Christian you decide would you rather try to live your life by your own will power, determination, personality, skills, strengths, or the supernatural Fruit of the Spirit?

CHRISTIAN: It sounds interesting, but I'm not sure.

Police Officer Hopeful smiles at Christian and seeks the Holy Spirit for direct. Does he continue, push or back off and allow the seed he planted grow? He feels prompted by the Holy Spirit to direct Christian back to Evangelist.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Christian, can I make a suggestion to you?

CHRISTIAN: Yes.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Go back out and look for Evangelist. Talk to him. Listen to him. Will you do that for me?

CHRISTIAN: I'm not sure if I'm ready to accept some type of supreme being or God as you refer to it and oh boy my wife, my wife will never agree to me looking into something like this or going along with it.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Christian, will you promise me, you will at least look for Evangelist and talk to him?

CHRISTIAN: Um, I guess. But I'm not sure where to find him.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: If I know Evangelist, he is waiting for you. Just look for him, you will find him. And Christian just take things one step at a time. God will honor your heart and help you lead your wife in the right way. But for now, I have to let you go, so you can begin your journey. Go find Evangelist and tell him what you've learned. I will keep in contact with Evangelist and he will keep me informed about your progress. Goodbye Christian.

CHRISTIAN: Goodbye Hopeful

NARRATOR: Christian returns home and his mind is spinning. Is it possible? Is there more to life than what he has believed?

The next day Christian gets up early and doesn't say much at breakfast and then tells Christiana he's going out for a while. Christian drives downtown, parks in the parking garage and walks out to look for Evangelist. Christian sees Evangelist down the block and walks towards him.

EVANGELIST: Well Hello Christian. You're looking better today.

CHRISTIAN: How did you know my name?

EVANGELIST: I spoke with Police Office Hopeful this morning and he said you might be coming by to see me.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I did talk to him last night and I want to hear what you have to say.

EVANGELIST: Christian, why don't you take a walk with me and let's go have a seat in the park.

NARRATOR: Evangelist asks Christian about how his family is as they walk a few blocks to the downtown park area and have a seat on at a picnic bench.

EVANGELIST: Christian what is YOUR perspective of God?

CHRISTIAN: Well I guess I don't really know if there is a single supreme being that people refer to as God. If there was really a single supreme being or as people say "God is in control" then why does all the bad stuff happen?

EVANGELIST: Oh Christian, that is such a great question. I really wish more people would break it down to something as basic and specific as that. Let me answer it the best I can. First you must understand the history of the beginning. God reigned over everything that existed in all forms. When God created man and woman, he gave them Free Will. That is one of the most important things people must understand and accept. God does not control or force His will on anyone. Adam and Eve the first Earthly humans, had a wonderful, flawless life in the Garden of Eden. God gave them rule over everything, with one condition, under NO condition should they eat from the tree of knowledge. Now also understand, one day an angel named Lucifer rebelled, he was jealous of the attention and worship that God was getting. Lucifer wanted that worship for himself. God cast Lucifer out of heaven and Lucifer came down to earth and is considered the ruler of the Earth. Lucifer wanted to be a God and wanted control over things. So, he took the form of a snake and tempted Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge. Eve then talked Adam into eating from the tree. In the Amplified Bible in Genesis Chapter 3 verse 1 it explains how deceitful lucifer was. It says he was more deceitful than any of the creatures Eve and Adam have encountered so they had no idea of what lucifer was doing. They wrongly trusted him and his deceitful and lying cost them everything.

Now the serpent was more crafty (subtle, skilled in deceit) than any living creature of the field which the LORD God had made. And ^[a]the serpent (Satan) said to the woman

Christian it was at that second, Sin entered the world. It was at that second Lucifer, that we refer to as satan, took control over Adam and Eve and the

world. You see Christian if God forcibly controlled everyone's actions, then He would have never allowed Adam and Eve to disobey Him and eat from the tree of knowledge. This doesn't mean that God is not God. It means God is a God of promises and He promised Adam and Eve and their descendants Free Will. The ability to freely make their own choices.

Now, let me take it a step further. In 1 Peter 5: 8 it says

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Christian satan even tried tempting Jesus when Jesus was on Earth. In Matthew 1:3-6 it says:

The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down."

In the Old Testament people were bound by the original covenant God made with the people. They were bound by punishment for disobeying the laws which meant eternal death for sin. You see Christian, people had to live a life free of sin back then to enter Heaven or repeatedly repent and make sacrifices, animal blood sacrifices for the cleansing of their sins. But it was impossible for people to do.

That is why Jesus was born, tortured, died, and was resurrected to sit at the right hand of the father.

CHRISTIAN: I never understood all of that before. When I was young, I went to church and heard about all of the evils of sin and if you sin, you're going to hell. That people had to keep trying to be better, do good deeds and try to be better people. But when I looked around, it seemed like everyone was just a phony. People would act one way in church and completely different when they left. They would smile and shake your hand and then the next day when I would be at a friend's house, I would see his father drunk, yelling at his wife and shaking her. His father said all kinds of mean stuff about everybody, including the minister.

EVANGELIST: I know that saddens God's heart so much. Christian, too many people try to talk someone into believing in God. But that is not man's job. That is the Holy Spirit's job, to convict someone's heart. All we

do is share the good news. Christian, have you ever heard people talk about the Good News?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I have but what exactly is that?

EVANGELIST: Christian the Good News is that God put an end to the covenant of the Old Testament. You see, people cannot always resist the temptations of satan, not just to do or say something, but to dwell on certain thoughts. So, Jesus was born to be our eternal sacrifice for sin. Jesus death would take the place of people having to perform animal blood sacrifices for the cleansing of their sins. Christian, a single death. God's own son would change the world. After Jesus was crucified on the cross, he was rose from the dead on the 3rd day. Jesus then walked on Earth with them for 40 days to instruct His people. Jesus death frees us from the being judged by the law. By accepting by Faith Jesus death is the ultimate sacrifice for our sins, and by God's Grace we are saved. It is that simple. We are set free from judgement of the law of the Old Covenant through Jesus death and the New Covenant. Christian, do you understand why this is Good News?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, yes I do, we are no longer bound by the judgement and penalty of living under the law of the old covenant. Jesus death was the ultimate sacrifice for our sin and accepting Jesus as our Savior, gives us forgiveness of sins and eternal Salvation.

EVANGELIST: Yes, Christian that's right, but there is more. When Jesus was resurrected another incredible supernatural miracle happed. It allowed the Spirit of God Himself to enter and live in every person who accepts Jesus as their personal Savior. When the Spirit of God comes to live in you so does His Fruit. The Fruit of the Spirit is God's OWN character, His own nature. The Bible says the Fruit of the Spirit Is; God's supernatural Love, God's supernatural Joy, God's supernatural Peace, God's supernatural Patience, God's supernatural Kindness, God's supernatural Goodness, God's supernatural Faith, God's supernatural Gentleness and God's supernatural Self-Control. When the Holy Spirit comes and lives in a Believer so do all of those qualities. You see Christian most people in church are still living through their own flesh and ignoring the Holy Spirit and His supernatural nature and character living in them. This Fruit (characteristics) live in Believers so God CAN manifest each element of His nature and character through them as His earthly human vessel. That is

what is truly waiting for someone when they accept Jesus, Eternal Salvation, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is for when someone dies and the Holy Spirit, His Fruit and Gifts are for while they are alive. Christian would you rather try to handle the situation you are going through relying on your own peace, your own faith, your own self-control or have the Holy Spirit manifest His supernatural peace, faith and self-control in you and through you?

CHRISTIAN: Well the Holy Spirits. I can't believe it's that simple.

EVANGELIST: Christian, it's so simple, that most Christians but not always accept and believe it. The problem is most people try to go through life relying on their own ability to have faith, or joy, or peace or self-control. They try to accomplish or deal with things with their own strength, determination and will power. They will grit their teeth and clench their first out of determination to get through a challenge or problem. The sad part is some people have the more ability than others to get through some of the minor issues, but what about their spouse, their children or parents that might not have the same abilities? You see Christian we have been turned into a people of self-reliance, saying we acknowledge the Holy Spirit is real, but we deny His power. What a shame. Christian what would you rather do, try to live by the laws of the Old Testament or accept Jesus as your Savior?

CHRISTIAN: I am kind of relieved to hear about why Jesus was born and crucified, I never understood that. I definitely know I can't live up to the rules of the Old Testament laws and I think that's why I stopped going. But if what you're telling me is true, I want to accept Jesus as my Savior.

EVANGELIST: Let me share a couple of scriptures with you. In John chapter 14 verse 6 it says.

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

In John chapter 3 verse 16 it says.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

In Mark chapter 16 verse 16 it says.

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Let me share one last verse with you in Ephesians chapter 2 verses 8 and 9 it says.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast.

Christian, salvation has nothing to do with your good works or good deeds. It has nothing to do with how good of a person you try to be. Did you hear the words? You are saved by grace, God's grace through faith, your faith in Jesus and not by anything you have done, so that no man can say, hey look at how good I am, I earned my salvation.. It is a gift from God.

Christian it sounds like you believed in Jesus at one point when you were young but were never taught the necessary truths. Are you ready now?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I am, I am ready. What do I do now?

EVANGELIST: That's good Christian, that's really good. Here is what you should do. First repent with a sincere heart to God for the sins you have committed and tell God you give your heart to Him, want God to direct your steps and to fill you with His Spirit and for His Fruit and Gifts to flow in you and through you as a willing vessel. That's it Christian, that's all you have to do.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I could do that. Can I do it right now?

EVANGELIST: By all means, go right ahead.

NARRATOR: Christian goes on to repent and ask God into his heart. Then after he's done.

CHRISTIAN: I feel different, I feel good, I feel like...

EVANGELIST: Like you have hope?

CHRISTIAN: Yes exactly. I'm glad I did this and now it's all done.

EVANGELIST: No Christian, no, it's not done. Unfortunately, that is how a lot of churches wrongly look at it. This is only the beginning of your journey. I will give you some important insight to keep in mind. First you need to get a Bible. There are many different versions and translations out there and that gets confusing for some people. Some versions of the Bible have been watered down and have completely warped the true meaning of God's anointed word. I know some of the more accurate versions are a little harder to read because of the wording used. But let me stress this.

Always and I mean always pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you read the Bible. Do not rely on your own fleshly understanding Rely on the Holy Spirit to make the true meaning of the anointed words of God be etched into your mind and heart. Then find a good church, a church that teaches the real truth of the Bible. That will be the hardest part. Every church you go to will tell you they do that. I've never heard of a church say, come join us, we lie about the scriptures, we are false teachers.

CHRISTIAN: I'm starting to get excited about this. But I am concerned about the church situation. I know when I was little, my mom took me to a couple of different churches. But I didn't like them.

EVANGELIST: Let me share some words of wisdom with you about the people you will meet along your journey to finding your true calling and Spiritual Gifts.

CHRISTIAN: What calling, what Spiritual Gifts. I never heard about anything like that. Listen I don't want to end up a missionary in some faraway place.

EVANGELIST: (laughing) No Christian, God has a calling for you, a calling that You will be excited about. Remember God gives you Free Will. The choice to follow God and your calling is up to you. In Romans 11:29 it says:

for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable

The Bible is telling us, God will never change His mind or take your calling away, no matter how long it takes you to understand it. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verses 8 to 11 it says:

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines

CHRISTIAN: Wow are you kidding me? Am I really going to receive Spiritual Gifts like that? They are literally supernatural things.

EVANGELIST: Yes, Christian you will. If you sincerely seek God and accept them. You will find out what your Spiritual gifts are on your journey.

CHRISTIAN: You know what's confusing is, why don't I see more people manifesting Spiritual Gifts?

EVANGELIST: Oh Christian, that is so sad. There are two reasons. One is most people are taught God changed His mind and those Gifts are not for everyone. But the Bible clearly says they are for everyone.

Unfortunately, when a Spiritual leader doesn't see God move in their life their pride can't handle it. They are worried about people questioning their relationship with God. So, to save face, they make excuses, they start saying those things the bible states aren't real, or they are not for today.

Christian that is such a dangerous path for a Spiritual leader to walk down. Because they are leading God's innocent, trusting children down that destructive path. A path that is denying the deity of God, the power of the Holy Spirit living in Believers and in essence denying one of the major reasons Jesus went through His torture, crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus on multiple occasions told the people, that they would receive the Holy Spirit. But yet some spiritual leaders deny that truth and are insulting the miracle the blood Jesus shed on the cross. They are misleading God's children that are under their protection, all because of pride. The second reason is simple, their relationship with God is not what it has to be. Now I can't tell you why, everyone's is different. But the Bible doesn't lie. If the Bible says it's truth, then it's truth. If it's not manifesting in someone's life, it's not because of God, but because of the person. Again, pride, oh pride that ugly nasty fruit of satan, will cause the person to make excuses and say that it isn't for people today.

CHRISTIAN: This all makes so much sense. I've been troubled by some of these things my whole life, wondering why we don't see God manifesting if he is real. But everyone in most churches seem to be happy, just being a good person and doing good deeds.

EVANGELIST: That is an exceptionally good observation Christian. But don't fret. Not all churches are like that. There are a lot of good Bible based truth preaching, Spirit filled churches out there. You just have to search and not give up.

Before you go, I have a few other things to share with you. Is that OK?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, please do.

EVANGELIST: the true power the Holy Spirit will empower you with as a Believer. The last words Jesus spoke after He was crucified and resurrected just before ascending into Heaven are life changing for people. Would you like to know what they were?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, yes, please tell me.

EVANGELIST: In the book of Mark chapter 16 and verses 16 to 20 it says:

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well. After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

EVANGELIST: Christian do you remember the very first word of those verses?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it was Whoever.

EVANGELIST: Exactly Christian. Whoever, not some people, not only the young or the old, not only people alive back then, but whoever believes. Now, Christian don't be stupid and try drinking poison to test it or go pick up a rattle snake. God is telling us, that He will empower us, to do His work, not show off or test Him, got it?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I got it.

EVANGELIST: That power doesn't come from a person's determination or trying and trying. It comes from the Holy Spirit. Next, I would like to share with you the secret to the Kingdom of God, would you like to know what that is?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, yes are you serious, you can tell me? Yes, what is it?

EVANGELIST: Christian in the book of Matthew chapter 13 verse 11 it says.

to you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven

EVANGELIST: The verses prior to that reveals that secret. In Matthew chapter 13 verses 3 to 9 it says,

A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear.

Then in Matthew chapter 13 verses 18 to 33 it explains it. It says,

Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty. He put another parable before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds¹ among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants^[d] of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds? He said to them, 'An enemy has done this. So the servants said to him, Then do you want us to go and gather them? But he said, No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest,

and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn. He put another parable before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches. He told them another parable. The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.

Christian, do you understand the message there?

CHRISTIAN: I think so, but I'm not sure.

EVANGELIST: This will grow deeper in your heart on your journey. It is important to understand satan works through people. Just like God does and he will try to destroy the word of God being planted in your mind and heart. Unfortunately, most people do not even realize they are being manipulated through the seed thoughts satan is putting in their mind and heart. You must understand you will grow along the journey, do not be tempted or fooled by those that try to convince you, you've grown enough, and you can just coast. It is then the reality of the parable of the sower will come back to haunt you. Now one last thing. I want to tell you about people you will meet along your journey. They will not always be what they seem, you will encounter many wolves in sheep's clothing. Some will be obvious and try to get you to turn on God. Hopefully, you will identify them immediately. But it is the ones that come across as well-meaning people. They will deceitfully try to plant seeds of destruction, of doubt and unbelief in God's promises to destroy the truth of the word of God. They will very subtly try to plant seeds that will if not confronted and cast out will take root and destroy the words of God that are meant to empower you, to protect you and give you hope and faith. You will not always recognize them, even though they tell you who they are. You will find them everywhere, at work, next door, and oh Christian I am so sorry, but even in church. So, beware of: Discouragement, Self-Righteousness, Legalistic, Doubt and Unbelief (the twins), Despair, Distraction, Manipulator, Selfish, Prideful, Life Coach and Materialistic. But be at peace my good Christian, for you will have help along your journey. Keep

an eye out for: Hopeful who you have met and will continue to see, Faithful, Belief, and of course Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Goodness, Kindness, Gentleness, and Self-Control. You might meet some of them or all of them on your journey to encourage you and empower you. Be alert because you will not be able to identify them by their appearance of name. You must use Spiritual discernment to identify and test the spirits.

CHRISTIAN: Thank you so much Stranger. So, what do I do now?

EVANGELIST: Get a Bible and start reading it. Start with the New Testament. I would start in the book of John and then go back to the beginning in Matthew and start looking for a church. I understand you will want to talk to your wife and children about your newfound faith in Jesus. But, be aware they might not be ready to accept it. God doesn't want you to beat people over the head with a Bible, He wants you to plant seeds so the Holy Spirit can work in the people's hearts and minds.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, that is one of the things that turned me off to God in the past. self-righteous people trying to force me to believe what they believe.

EVANGELIST: That's right Christian. Did Police Officer Hopeful try to force you into believing what he believes?

CHRISTIAN: No, not at all. He shared things with me, and I wasn't ready to go any further and he let me go and told me to talk to you.

EVANGELIST: Exactly Christian that is called Spiritual Discernment. It is being sensitive to the Holy Spirit and sensing His prompting and direction. Police Office Hopeful knew that if he pushed you any further, you would get turned off and maybe walk away from God completely, maybe forever. So instead of acting out of pride and believing he was going to win you to God, he refrained. He used self-control; he relinquished His will to God's will. He allowed the Holy Spirit to work in your heart and he prayed that you would come looking for me today.

CHRISTIAN: This is incredible, absolutely incredible. I can see it all. I can see it all so clearly.

EVANGELIST: That's exciting Christian. I am so filled with Joy that you understand everything we have shared today, and you have learned from Officer Hopeful. Keep in mind you still have a long journey ahead. But you have friends. You will meet new friends to help you along the way.

NARRATOR: When Christian leaves Evangelist he goes to a bookstore to look for a Bible.

CHRISTIAN: Hi, I'm looking for a Bible, but there are a few different ones on the shelf. Can someone tell me the difference?

STORE EMPLOYEE: No, sorry I don't know anything about them.

CHRISTIAN: Can I talk to someone else who might know?

STORE EMPLOYEE: I don't know anyone here that reads the Bible.

CHRISTIAN: Well, can you ask a few other employees or give me a suggestion on where I can go to talk to someone that might know?

NARRATOR: The store employee walks away and comes back a few minutes later.

STORE EMPLOYEE: No one knows anything about them. One person said there is a Christian bookstore on 2nd street by the shopping mall.

NARRATOR: Christian leaves the bookstore and heads to the Christian bookstore. He is feeling a bit overwhelmed and nervous there were 4 different types of Bibles on the shelf and no one there could answer a question about them. He wonders how can, what is supposed to be the most read book in the world be so foreign to people who work in a bookstore. Christian arrives at the Christian bookstore and approaches an employee behind the counter.

CHRISTIAN: Hi, I'm looking for a Bible.

STORE EMPLOYEE: Hello Sir, yes, we have a lot of Bibles to choose from. They are along the wall over there (as the Store Employee points off to the side).

NARRATOR: Christian walks over to the wall and is completely overwhelmed. There must be dozens of different types of Bibles. He wonders how this can be. How can what is supposed to be the anointed word of God, written under the direction, and inspired by the Holy Spirit be interrupted so many different ways. He heads back to the store employee.

CHRISTIAN: Hi, sorry to bother you, but I'm overwhelmed with all the choices on Bibles. Can you or someone please help me.

STORE EMPLOYEE: Yes Sir, I would be happy to.

NARRATOR: Christian and the Store Employee start walking to the wall of Bibles.

CHRISTIAN: Can I ask if you know why there are so many different Bibles?

STORE EMPLOYEE: Is this your first time buying a Bible?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it is.

STORE EMPLOYEE: Well the most used Bible over the years was the King James. But maybe in the last 10 or 20 or 50 years the market exploded with all types of different Bibles.

CHRISTIAN: How can that be?

STORE EMPLOYEE: Well they are being translated and written by regular people and that doesn't mean the people writing or translating them are really inspired by God.

CHRISTIAN: How do I know what I should get?

STORE EMPLOYEE: Well Here is my understanding. The King James Version was very popular, but a lot of people find it hard to read, because of the old English words used. Then another Bible version was released that changed the words to a more modern English and made it easier to read. But it changed the meaning of the verses from the King James Bible. Then another Bible version was released and that changed some more of the meaning of the scriptures from the King James and that kept happening. But each Bible that was released says they are a more accurate interpretation of the original manuscripts. Some people feel, the new Bibles are coming out to match the current mood of society. You know to be more acceptable to people's life views.

CHRISTIAN: That is surprising. Is changing the Bible to fit the current mood of society a good thing? I mean there is a lot of immoral things going on that people support as acceptable.

STORE EMPLOYEE: Well that depends on who you ask. Some people think it's a good thing because it gives people more options, using words

they can personally relate to and that they won't find offensive. I mean think about it, someone that's 60 years old might use different words than someone in their 30's or a teenager like me. Other people say it's a ploy from satan to water down some of the most important parts of the Bible that teach about the power and authority of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Then some people feel it's been done to sway or brainwash Christians into accepting immoral behaviors as being ok, because society says it's ok.

CHRISTIAN: Wow I am completely overwhelmed; I have no idea what to do. By the way, my name is Christian, what's yours?

STORE EMPLOYEE: Hi Christian glad to meet you, my name is Helpful. Have you recently accepted Jesus as your Savior?

CHRISTIAN: Nice to meet you Helpful and yes, just this morning. I've basically rejected God since I was a teenager, until today.

HELPFUL: Congratulations Christian and welcome to the family of God.

CHRISTIAN: Thanks, do you have a suggestion for me?

HELPFUL: Well, as I said the King James has been the most read Bible. I don't know about recently. It's harder for a lot of people to read because they use the words like: thy shall do this or that. A lot of people like the Amplified Bible. It actually includes definition words to help the reader understand what the original word means. They are placed in brackets. Here let me show you one. Then some people like the NIV which stands for New International Version and the English Standard Version. There are other versions that are written just like a book. But a lot of people believe they aren't good because they are so different than the King James and the Amplified. Some people believe that sure they might be easier to read. But if what you are reading is wrong stuff and giving you the wrong impression, that's not good. Just so you know.

CHRISTIAN: OK, I'll take the King James and the Amplified.

HELPFUL: (laughing) I really like your excitement. If you decide at some point that you like the King James Version but want more modern English. There is a New King James version that is supposed to keep the same belief structure but use some modern words.

CHRISTIAN: Do you have any suggestions on how I can understand the Bible better when I start reading it?

HELPFUL: Yes, I do. Don't just pick it up and start reading it like you're reading a book. I personally believe that is one of people's biggest

problems. They read the Bible like it's a novel or newspaper article or someone's blog. But it is not. It is the inspired word of God. Before I start reading, I pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the real inspired meaning of every word of God I read and allow them to settle in my heart and my mind. When I feel ready, I start reading. I hope that's Helpful.

CHRISTIAN: You know, the person I met today gave me the same advice.

HELPFUL: Who was that?

CHRISTIAN: Evangelist

HELPFUL: (laughing) I know Evangelist, he led my dad to the Lord and then my mom about 10 years ago and that's how I received Jesus as my Savior. He taught us the foundational truths of the Bible so we could see the difference to what's being taught in some churches.

CHRISTIAN: Well, you have been very Helpful.

NARRATOR: Christian buys the Bibles and says goodbye to his new young friend Helpful. Rather than heading right home, he heads over to the coffee shop to start looking through the Bibles. He starts reading through the New Testament in the book of John like Evangelist suggested. Shortly after he hears a familiar voice.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Hey Christian what do you have there?

CHRISTIAN: Hello Police Office Hopeful. I bought a couple of Bibles.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: What book are you reading?

CHRISTIAN: Evangelist, suggested I start in the book of John.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: That's a good idea. That will give you an overview of Jesus life. Just so you know there are some Bible reading plans out there to help you read the Bible in a year or something. It directs you to read a few chapters in a Book in the New Testament then read a few chapters in the old Testament and bounce back and forth. Personally, I don't agree with that.

CHRISTIAN: Why?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Do you mind if I sit down.

CHRISTIAN: No go right ahead, here let me move my stuff.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Well Christian it's like this. Imagine a student reading a book for an important test the next day. They read 15 minutes in the book and then pick up another book and read 15 minutes in

that book. Then they pick up another book and read 15 minutes in that book and then go back to the original book they were studying and read for another 15 minutes from where they left off. And they continue to repeat that same process the entire evening. Do you think that is the best way for something important to sink in?

CHRISTIAN: No, not at all. Your train of thought would be constantly distracted.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: That is how I feel. Would you ever recommend you children study for a test that way?

CHRISTIAN: No.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: The Bible is even more important than a test. It is the anointed word of God. We want to be able to stay focused on what God is telling us and capture the entire meaning of that chapter or book.

CHRISTIAN: I can see that being a problem alright. You would definitely get more out of it, if you continued reading from one chapter to the next to the next.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Well, that's at least how I feel about it. I think people would get more out of reading the Bible if they just read through the Chapter, book after book without the distraction of bouncing around. You see Christian the books of the Bible weren't written in chapters and verses the way they appear in the Bible. The books of the Bible were either written as complete letters to people in certain churches or areas, or they were spoken words to people. Each chapter is not always a separate situation, it is part of an entire thought.

CHRISTIAN: I never knew that.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Can you imagine taking 10 people and giving them one page out of a 10-page letter and then asking them what it meant to them? None of them would have an accurate understanding of what the letter was saying. They might have a general idea, but every one of them could be missing crucial information that could completely change their understanding on what was really being said. Christian, you can take a single verse and leave out a few words after the last comma and change its complete meaning. Imagine leaving out complete sentences, pages, or chapters.

CHRISTIAN: I never knew that. But I completely agree with what you said. Thanks for the advice.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: That is also an example of why there is so much false teaching in churches. The ministers will take a verse to support their message and only use part of a verse and that could change the entire meaning of it. Here for example, in Romans chapter 8 verse 1 in the King James says

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

I have heard ministers leave out the everything after the first comma. Look at the difference in how it sounds,

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

That gives the impression that as long as someone is saved, they have a free pass to sin or do whatever they want. But look at what comes after the comma,

who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

That changes everything. It specifically says that we must ignore the desires of the flesh and walk after the Spirit. That means walking by the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit cannot sin, He cannot fall to temptation, but your flesh can.

CHRISTIAN: Yes absolutely, it's not the whole verse. It doesn't portray the true meaning of what God was saying. It literally changes the whole meaning of the verse. Are people really doing this?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Yes, Christian some ministers purposely do, just to support the point they are trying to make in their message. So, you have to question what else is wrong about their message.

CHRISTIAN: Wow, that's amazing.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Yes Christian it is and it's why it's so important that when you read the Bible, you read it like you are reading an inspired letter of God written just for you.

CHRISTIAN: I can see how important that would be.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: So, Christian, I'm assuming you saw Evangelist today since you are reading a Bible.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I did, and he led me to accept Jesus as my Savior

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Welcome to the family. We are now Brothers in Christ.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I guess we are. I also met a very nice young man named Helpful at the Christian bookstore.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Helpful, now he is a great guy, especially for his age. A lot of people his age are not walking down a good path. But, Helpful he is a great example for young people.

CHRISTIAN: Hey that's right, I wonder if he would talk to my older son Bill. Bill has been struggling with all of the issues our family is going through and with Envy's family.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Oh yes Envy's family. Listen I'm going to swing back by the 2 girls homes later today when their parents get home. I'm going to try talking to them again and explain the seriousness of the consequences to your son and see if the Holy Spirit can convict one of their hearts to speak up.

CHRISTIAN: Thank you Police Office Helpful. Thank you very much

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: No problem at all Christian. It's my job. But it's a lot more enjoyable when I know I'm actually helping someone good. By the way how is your daughter doing. I heard about what happened to her.

CHRISTIAN: She has a broken arm, but we are thankful she won't need any surgery. It will mess up some of her plans for the summer, but she has a real good attitude.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: I want you to know, if you don't already, that Evangelist and I have been praying for you, your wife and your children. I'm going to have to get going. I will contact you after I speak to the 2 girls and their families later today. Keep the faith, I'm Helpful.

CHRISTIAN: Thank You very much Police Officer Helpful.

NARRATOR: Christian stays for a while reading and then heads home.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana what would you say if I told you I'm beginning to wonder about this whole thing, um, you know about, well God?

CHRISTIANA: Christian not now. Don't start that nonsense with me. You want to talk to me about God after this week? You get framed by Envy and get fired and Envy gets a promotion and a raise out of it. Then Envy

spreads lies to his kids, so they can spread the lies through the school and then his punk kid bully's Johnny and Johnny gets suspended and maybe expelled. Then Jennifer gets pushed down the stairs and breaks her arm, and you want to talk to me about a God. If that is what God is like, oh man, if any God would allow this to happen to our family after all of the good things we do for people, and this is how we are repaid by a God? If there is some type of God and he allows this to happen to us I don't want anything to do with him. So, stop the nonsense.

CHRISTIAN: But maybe that's not how it works.

CHRISTIANA: Stop it Christian.

NARRATOR: Christian gets a feeling of, don't push, don't try to do it all yourself, just plant seeds. Just like Evangelist, to use spiritual discernment. Christian wonders could this be what he was talking about?

CHRISTIAN: Christiana this has been a stressful week for all of us. It's beyond anything we could have ever imagined happening to us. We have to be careful to not let it put a wedge between us.

CHRISTIANA: What's gotten into you. That doesn't sound like you, I thought you would be pacing the floor angry about all of this.

CHRISTIAN: I was angry Christiana. I don't understand it at all. But you are more important to me than any anger I feel.

CHRISTIANA: Well thank you for that.

CHRISTIAN: How about if we go get some coffee. I really could use some. I'll buy you the coffee with the chocolate in it that you like and an apple muffin if they have any.

CHRISTIANA: Might as well, at least it will keep our minds occupied.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana head out and take a ride through the drive through donut shop. Later that evening as they are watching TV, Christian is thinking he would really like to read more in the Bible. But where can he go. He can't read it in the house Christiana will see him. Then, he gets an idea.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana do you mind if I run up to the convenience store and get a magazine to read. This way if I can't sleep tonight, I can maybe sit out on the back porch and read.

CHRISTIANA: Sure, I don't mind, can you pick up some chocolate that I can add to my coffee in the morning? That cup I had today was really good.

CHRISTIAN: Sure, be back shortly.

NARRATOR: Later that night after Christiana is asleep Christian gets his Bible out of the garage and goes on the back porch. He spends some time praying thanking God for His Mercy and Grace and ask for the Holy Spirit to reveal the true meaning of the words he reads. But he struggles getting distracted after every few verses and keeps starting over praying each time before he starts again. But it keeps happening. He can't seem to stay focused. They seem like just words from a book. He stops and starts praying again, thanking God for His love, and sending His Spirit to live in him. He thanks God for the Fruit of His Spirit and again ask for the Holy Spirit to help him concentrate and reveal the true meaning of the words he reads. He ask God to allow him internalize every word as if they were written just for him. Christian notices a peace coming over him and starts reading again. He realizes he read the entire first chapter without getting distracted or thinking about something else. He stops and prays some more and starts reading the second Chapter and the third and fourth.

The next morning Christian wakes up feeling different. His world in everyone else's eyes is crashing in around him, but for some reason today, he isn't as anxious and scared. He starts realizing while Christiana is blaming God for everything that's happened. He is realizing that God protected Jennifer by having the teacher run out to stop things when she did or Jennifer could have been hurt a lot worse. He realizes God didn't allow his daughter to be beaten, SATAN DID. It's satan that bring the suffering and pain into people's lives, not God. It's satan that was tempting, encouraging and manipulating those girls to pick on Jennifer. Christian asks God to help him forgive Envy and his family and the girls that beat up his daughter. But he can still feel the anger inside of him.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana I don't know if I told you yesterday with everything going on, but I ran into Police Officer Hopeful and he said he is going to try to talk to the 2 girls that witnessed the fight Johnny was in and their parents again.

CHRISTIANA: That's good. But I don't think anything will become of it. That's just how people are today. They don't care about anyone else. They don't want to get involved. They just turn their head and say, "duh I don't remember anything"

CHRISTIAN: Well Police Officer Hopeful said he was Hopeful. So I'm going to try and believe that something good will come out of his trying. Please try to stay hopeful Christiana, ok?

That evening while Christian and Christiana are sitting outside on the deck.

CHRISTIAN: You know Christiana, I've got to start looking for a job.

CHRISTIANA: I guess you should. Do you have any ideas on where to start?

CHRISTIAN: No, none at all. I don't think I can even try anything in the Pharmaceutical industry after the lies Envy has spread and how he's manipulated Supervisor and VP. I will never get a good recommendation from them.

CHRISTIANA: So what are you thinking?

PILGRIM: I don't know. I will start searching online tomorrow and put some feelers out with some friends to see if they have any ideas on openings. That might be my best bet. If someone recommends me that's already working for the company, maybe they won't be as likely to call my old company for a reference.

CHRISTIANA: Maybe, I don't know. I don't know how you're going to get another job. You're only experience for the last 15 years has been in Pharmaceutical sales with the Company.

CHRISTIAN: I know Christiana but be Hopeful.

NARRATOR: With Sunday just 2 days away, Christian is starting to think about churches. But he has no idea where to go. Maybe he can ask Police Officer Hopeful when he calls or Helpful from the Christian Bookstore. Later that day.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Hello Christian.

CHRISTIAN: Hi, any good news?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: No, I'm sorry. One of the fathers took a strong stand saying his daughter doesn't know anything. But she interrupted him twice saying, but dad, and he told her to be quiet. I have an idea but I have to talk to my supervisor. The girl's family goes to the church on Maple Avenue and I've met the Pastor a few times under good conditions. I want to ask my supervisor if it's ok if I talk to the pastor and explain the situation. Maybe he has some ideas on what or how to proceed with the girl's father.

CHRISTIAN: Do you think it will help?

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Well, I'm Hopeful. Has there been any news on Johnny's suspension or expulsion?

CHRISTIAN: Not yet, the School Principal called and said they are having a meeting this evening about it.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Ok, listen Christian keep praying and trusting God and remember stay Hopeful.

NARRATOR: Christian decides to start jogging again to help get rid of some of the stress that's built up.

CHRISTIAN: Hey Christiana, I'm thinking about going jogging, do you want to come with? It could be like the old days when we met.

CHRISTIANA: No not at all.

CHRISTIAN: Well, I'm going upstairs and change and then go run.

NARRATOR: The School Principal doesn't call that evening like Christiana and Christian were hoping and they don't know what to make of it.

Chapter 3

NARRATOR: That next morning is Sunday and Christian goes for a morning run. He sees a church up ahead. He notices people outside smiling and shaking hands and he slows down. He decides to cross the street to get a better feel for the church.

CHRISTIAN: Hi my name is Christian

CHURCH GREETER: Hi My name is Greeter and this is the Self-Righteous church, can I help you?

CHRISTIAN: I was just jogging by and I've been thinking of going to church and I thought since I'm here that maybe I will go in.

CHURCH GREETER: (looks down at Christians running shorts and the expensive shiny watch he's wearing) well I guess it won't hurt.

NARRATOR: Christian walks past numerous people that don't seem to even notice him. Someone comes up to him and says excuse me that's my seat, can you please move. Christian apologizes for sitting in their seat and gets up and moves to another seat. The minister walks up to the pulpit and starts the service after a few songs and messages.

MINISTER: Brothers and Sisters you are Blessed today to be in this church. For it is a church like no other the church. It is the church that teaches the only real way to get to heaven. While other churches will lead you astray and lie to you by not telling you all of the works you must do to get into heaven, we do. We Brothers and Sisters are superior to the others, we are the chosen ones, our church is the only one that really understands the truth of the Bible. I have dedicated my life to understanding what others do not and cannot understand.

NARRATOR: Christian takes a Bible from the book holder on the back of the pew in front of him. He tries following the minister's preaching by looking for the Bible verses, but he isn't fast enough to find them. But then he hears something familiar, the Bible verse Romans 8:1.

MINISTER: Brothers and Sisters we are the chosen church and God removes all guilt and condemnation from us. This is why other churches can't quote the scripture I'm going to quote with the confidence and boldness I can. The Bible tells us,

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus".

You are free of all condemnation and you are free of the guilt of sin. God loves you just the way you are. You don't have to change for anyone. It's my job or your job to fix anyone here. We are to just accept our Brothers and Sisters the way they are let them live their life. Are you happy with your life? Then you must be living the life God created you to live.

NARRATOR: Christian is shocked it's exactly what Evangelist warned him about. A minister taking only part of the scripture and warping it's true meaning to please the people in the church.

As Christian is leaving the Pastor is waiting outside greeting people. The minister makes eye contact with Christian and glances down at his running shorts and makes a face, then looks back up at Christian.

MINISTER: Hello Brother, what is your name?

CHRISTIAN: It's Christian, I was jogging by the church and thought I would stop in.

MINISTER: Well you found the right church. The only church, the Self-Righteous Church. I know you were blessed by my message. But please understand just visiting our church once, doesn't entitle you to the special Blessings God has promised our church members. If you are interested, I can have one of our new member advisors explain the benefits of being part of our church and set your direct debit tithing account.

CHRISTIAN: What's a direct debit tithing account?

MINISTER: Well brother, you don't expect to receive God's special blessings without doing your part do you? Our new member form allows you the blessing of having your tithes automatically debited every month for your tithes.

CHRISTIAN: Well I'm not working right now. I lost my job.

MINISTER: What about your wife, does she work?

CHRISTIAN: No, she isn't working either.

MINISTER: Have you been attending a church at all this year?

CHRISTIAN: No this is the first time I've gone to church since I was young.

MINISTER: Well Praise the Lord, brother, you are truly blessed to find us. Brother Bob, Brother Steve, Brother Paul, come on over here and meet our newest family member.

CHRISTIAN: Well, I'm not sure....

MINISTER: That's ok Christian. Say hello to your new brothers. The men show some very insincere interaction toward Christian.

MINISTER: Listen Brother Christian, since you haven't attended a church at all this year, you have a lot of ground to make up. Go with Brother Paul. He will go over your income for the year and see how much money you should have donated to a church for tithing. You can fill out a direct withdrawal from your bank to our bank. Brother Christian, we have forms for every bank in the area. Oh, Brother Christian, you are going to be so blessed by being part of our family.

CHRISTIAN: But....

MINISTER: Brother Bob take a look at Brother Christians watch. Is that a real Rolex Brother Christian?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it is, but...

MINISTER: You must have had a pretty good job. What type of job did you have Brother Christian?

NARRATOR: The Minister puts his arm around Christians shoulder and starts guiding him back into the church.

CHRISTIAN: I was a Pharmaceutical Account Executive.

MINISTER: Praise the Lord, Brother Christian, I know a minister that had a Pharmaceutical Account Executive in his church. Oh, the financial blessings that brother was able to do for his church to expand the Kingdom of God. Brother Christian, you do want to please God, don't you? I mean you aren't a fake Christian, are you?

CHRISTIAN: No of course not. But, but, I have to go now. Thank you for everything.

NARRATOR: Christian immediately starts jogging away. He realizes even if he didn't wasn't wearing his running clothes he would have still wanted to run. Run away from the Self-Righteous church as fast as possible. On the way home he sees an old high school friend and stops to talk.

CHRISTIAN: Hey Discouragement how have you been?

DISCOURAGEMENT: Hello Christian. I'm doing good. How about you?

CHRISTIAN: Well over all surprisingly good, but I'm looking for a job right now. Do you know of any place hiring?

DISCOURAGEMENT: What kind of work did you do?

CHRISTIAN: I was a Pharmaceutical Account Executive.

DISCOURAGEMENT: Wow that sounds like a good job, why did you leave?

CHRISTIAN: Well, I didn't exactly leave, I was let go.

DISCOURAGEMENT: Oh no Christian. Do you have any idea how hard it's going to be to find any type of job, if you've been let go by your former company? Let me tell you something. I am in the Human Resources department at my company. Let me tell you Christian, we check out everyone's background. We contact their former supervisor and the human resource department at their former company. If they let you go, oh boy, no one is going to hire you around here. Heck, you might have to actually move out of the area to get a job. I hope you got let go because business was slow, and it wasn't because you got fired. Christian did you get fired? Because if you did, you are screwed. I just attended a Human Resource seminar last month with hundreds of Human Resource people from companies from all over the city. The speakers stressed to be careful about hiring someone who was fired by their last employer. Christian, do you know why?

NARRATOR: Christian looks down towards the ground.

CHRISTIAN: No, I have no idea.

DISCOURAGEMENT: They said, because if someone was fired then they are not a good employee, or they did something wrong. They might have even falsified numbers or stole something. Christian you didn't steal anything did you? Because if you did, you're really screwed. Any

company you apply at will find out. Oh Boy Christian you're screwed if you got fired.

NARRATOR: Christian is feeling like he just got ran over by a truck. He feels like his breath was just sucked out of him.

CHRISTIAN: Listen Discouragement I have to be going, nice seeing you ok.

DISCOURAGEMENT: Sure, I understand, I have to go to. I'm really busy. Hey, I will let you know if I hear of any jobs opening up in sales with my company, ok Christian, ok? But we will have to contact your old company, ok Christian? Ok?

NARRATOR: Christian doesn't answer he just keeps jogging and then running, faster and faster, as if he can somehow outrun his problems. Later that evening

CHRISTIAN: Christiana I ran into Discouragement today when I was running.

CHRISTIANA: I remember him from High School, he was always a nice a guy, a pretty smart guy wasn't he, a lot of people really respected his opinion on things.

CHRISTIAN: Great.

CHRISTIANA: What do you mean, great?

CHRISTIAN: He is in the HR department at his company and...

CHRISTIANA: Great did you ask if they are hiring salespeople?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I did and He asked if I quit or was let go. When I said I was let go, he went on and on about how it will be impossible for me to get a job and I'm screwed. Do you still think his opinion is so good?

CHRISTIANA: Oh no, I hope not. How do you feel about it?

CHRISTIAN: Pretty Discouraged. No, I'm very discouraged.

NARRATOR: Christian doesn't sleep very well that night. Between visiting the Self-Righteous church and running into Discouragement, it was too much in one day. Christian gets out of bed and goes into the family room.

CHRISTIAN: God are you really there? Are you real? I try to trust in you and go to church and look what happens. How can people call themselves Ministers and be like that minister today?

NARRATOR: The next day is Monday and Christian starts planning his day of searching for jobs online and praying and reading the Bible. Later that afternoon the phone rings.

CHRISTIAN: Hello.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: Hello may I speak to Christian or Christiana?

CHRISTIAN: This is Christian.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: I'm calling to tell you we have decided to expel your son Johnny for fighting and creating an unsafe and hostile environment.

CHRISTIAN: What? No, you can't.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: But that is our decision. We have typed up the expulsion report and added it to his school file.

CHRISTIAN: Wait, does that mean any other school we try to enroll Johnny in will see a report saying he created an unsafe and hostile environment and fighting?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: I'm sorry Christian, but that is correct. Have a nice day.

NARRATOR: Christian breaks the news to Christiana and Johnny.

JOHNNY: Where am I supposed to go to school? I mean I don't really want to, but I was hoping to get a scholarship for either baseball or football. I was hoping to play in high school so I could play in college and now what? Dad, is this going to haunt me for the rest of my life?

CHRISTIANA: Christian, what are we going to do? Do you want to tell me now about how some God is always in control?

NARRATOR: Christian was still discouraged from his conversation with Discouragement yesterday and now this. Christian silently calls out to God for His Spirit to flow in him. He needs His supernatural peace, His

supernatural faith and more right now. He needs to be a pillar for Christiana and his family.

CHRISTIAN: Listen, I don't know how or when, but I just feel like things will work out ok.

CHRISTIANA: And what are you basing that on?

CHRISTIAN: I don't know. I can't explain it. I just feel hopeful that things will work out. Like there is a silver lining somehow, somewhere. I can't explain it, but I feel it.

NARRATOR: Later that evening Christian goes out to sit on the back deck to pray and talk to God.

Christian starts wondering, God is this you? Is this your peace that I'm feeling? I mean it doesn't feel like any type of supernatural overwhelming peace that I would expect. But when I compare it to how discouraged and hopeless I was feeling earlier, I feel much better. God, I could feel myself falling deeper into a dark hole. Then I remembered Evangelist told me to take control of those thoughts and feelings and destroy them with the word of God. I have to stop those seeds of satan's from taking root. So, your Fruit could flow through me. I guess, when I compare where I could be right now if I didn't fight those thoughts with the sword of the Spirit and where I am now, it is something like a miracle. I mean it's definitely not something I could have changed by myself. Thank You Lord. I think I'm learning.

Christian realizes with each word he feels more and more peace flowing through him.

The next morning the phone rings.

CHRISTIAN: Hello.

MANIPULATOR: Hi Christian this is Manipulator, remember me?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I do, how have you been?

MANIPULATOR: If I was any better, I would have to be twins (laughing)

CHRISTIAN: Yea I get it, what's up?

MANIPULATOR: Well I have an opportunity for you, are you interested?

CHRISTIAN: An opportunity, yes, sure, of course, what is it?

MANIPULATOR: Well, as you know I've been pretty successful in a few different business ventures. I just got involved in something recently that is making me more money than I can believe. Are you interested?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, more than you know, what is it?

MANIPULATOR: Well, the good part is it won't take up any of your time. So, you can keep working and doing what you do now. Does that sound good?

CHRISTIAN: More than you know. I lost my job last week and I could really use a job.

MANIPULATOR: No, no Christian, this isn't a job, it's an opportunity. We let other people do the work and we make the money. You get it? Hey, do you know I have a luxury car and a 40-foot boat? I just bought both of the them in the last couple of months. Now how would you like that kind of money?

CHRISTIAN: Yes absolutely, tell me more?

MANIPULATOR: Well Christian tell me, if you could have an extra \$100,000, \$200,000 or \$500,000 in the next year what would you do?

CHRISTIAN: I would pay off some bills, probably pay off my mortgage and help out Christiana's parents.

MANIPULATOR: No, wrong answer. Let me explain something to you. If you want to make money and make other people know you are successful, you have to show it. What kind of car do you drive?

CHRISTIAN: Well right now we only have two. Christiana drives a small SUV and our other car is a 5-year-old sedan.

MANIPULATOR: (laughing) Christian, come on, your killing me. First of all, if you're going to be successful you have to think and act like your successful. If you don't, no one else will believe you are. So, let me ask you again, if you had an extra \$100,000, \$200,000 or \$500,000 in the next year what would you do with it?

CHRISTIAN: um I'm not sure, buy a new car I guess and maybe get the kitchen remodeled.

MANIPULATOR: Well that's a first step. Listen what are you doing right now? Can you meet me at the diner in about an hour?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I guess so. But I still don't know what this is about.

MANIPULATOR: I will explain everything when we meet and listen, I am living proof, you will make money from this. More money than you ever dreamed. I'll see you in an hour.

CHRISTIAN: Ok see you then.

NARRATOR: Christian walks out of his den to look for Christiana.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, I just talked to Manipulator. I don't know if you remember him. He used to work at the company with me. He's, kind of a flashy guy.

CHRISTIANA: I think I remember the name.

CHRISTIAN: He called to say he might have an opportunity for me. He has been involved with it for a while. He didn't explain everything. But he said he just started it this year and bought a luxury car and a 40-foot boat this year. He was throwing numbers around like \$100,000 and \$200,000 and even \$500,000 this year.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, that's incredible you were always a better salesperson than he was. So, whatever he's selling, you could sell more and then make more money. Oh, Christian think about it, we could get a summer house on the lake like the Jones have and get the kitchen remodeled. Christian if you can make \$500,000 a year do it, do it. Oh, Christian, I could get the Italian Maserrari sports car I've always dreamed of. That will teach that Julie Jones with her little sports car.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, slow down. You're moving pretty fast on this and I don't even know what it's about.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, it doesn't matter. Listen I've been feeling you were in a dead-end job for a few years now. Your income hasn't really gone up and there was no chance for a promotion unless Supervisor quit. Remember that other job you considered a couple of years ago? It paid a little more, but it had all of that traveling 3 weeks a month. But this thing with Manipulator sounds perfect. Do it Christian, do it.

CHRISTIAN: Well I have to get changed I'm supposed to meet him in a bit at the Diner.

CHRISTIANA: Well go, go, hurry. Don't be late it will make a bad impression. Christian, we can go to Fiji, ever since Julie Jones that show off went to Fiji for a week, none of the women have heard the end of it.

But now we can go for 2 or 3 weeks, wait till I rub that in her face. Hurry Christian you will be late.

NARRATOR: Christian arrives at the Diner.

CHRISTIAN: Hello Manipulator.

MANIPULATOR: Hello, my good friend, how have you been?

CHRISTIAN: Well it's been an interesting week.

MANIPULATOR: How's things at the old Company going? You still topping the sales list every month?

CHRISTIAN: Well not exactly, that's one of the interesting things. I was let go last week.

MANIPULATOR: You're kidding. What the heck happened?

NARRATOR: Christian tells him the whole story.

MANIPULATOR: Christian listen, I don't know if you know this, but my sister is married to Head of Company at Acme Medical Group. Did you know that?

CHRISTIAN: No, I didn't know that.

MANIPULATOR: I don't like or trust Envy, I never did, He is a snake. The first week he worked with us, he stole one of my clients. He golfed with a guy that was a friend of the owner of Company B. His friend set up a golf 4some with Head of Company B so Envy could meet him. Then Envy did what he does best. He lied, manipulated and sweet talked the guy into transferring his account over to him. I don't know if you know this, but that's why I left. I was upset with Supervisor for allowing it to happen. I thought if they allowed it once, they would allow it over and over again.

CHRISTIAN: I didn't know that.

MANIPULATOR: Well listen, I'm going to go visit my sister next weekend and talk with Head of Company personally. I will let him know I completely vouch for you character and what Envy is really like. Hey, I just got an idea, does Acme have security cameras?

CHRISTIAN: Not in the storage room, I already asked.

MANIPULATOR: But I think they do in the hallways? If they do, maybe it will show something. Do you remember how long you were in the storage room?

CHRISTIAN: Just a matter of seconds. Not even a minute. You know how it goes. I carried three boxes in and put them on the shelf and walked out. Oh, by the way, the door was always open. I always leave the door open as a precaution. That way no one can accuse me of stealing anything. A lot of good that did me.

MANIPULATOR: Christian, let's see what happens. Believe me, I am going to enjoy this. I would love nothing more than finding dirt on Envy and putting him in his place.

NARRATOR: Christian is getting a feeling of excitement. He can possibly clear his name, get his job back and get even with Envy all at once.

CHRISTIAN: Thank you Manipulator. That gives me hope.

MANIPULATOR: Now let's get on with the business at hand. First of all we have to make some changes. Christian you have to understand, you are not dealing with businesspeople anymore. So, the suit and tie stuff you are wearing is done, throw it away. Buy yourself some expensive casual clothes and shoes, especially shoes. People always think anyone can buy a nice shirt, but they always skimp on the shoes. So, if you have expensive shoes, people think you are the real deal. Oh, and your car, we have to get you a new car. I know you're not working or making money right now but that will change quickly. How do you feel about Mercedes, or Porsche or a Maserrari?

CHRISTIAN: Maserrari, you just said my wife's dream car.

MANIPULATOR: OK, I'm going to teach you a couple of secrets to success. First: You are who you think you are and second dress for success. But not with the suit and tie bit, that's over. Second, Next act the part. This is about what you drive, where you eat and where you live. Now are you still living in the cul-de-sac?

CHRISTIAN: Yes I am, same house.

MANIPULATOR: Well that's Ok. It's not that bad of a house. Now for the car, oh man, the car is so important. There are people out who leased an expensive car and they can't afford the payments anymore. Maybe they

leased it for 3 years and there is one year left on the lease. Now Christian, if you wanted to lease that same new car today maybe it would cost you \$1,000 a month for 36 months. That's a big commitment. But suppose you can take over a lease from someone that only has 12 months left at only \$700 a month. How's that for a deal and you don't have the long commitment?

PILGRIM: It seems interesting.

MANIPULATOR: If you wanted to get your wife a nice new car and finance it for 60 months, its going to cost you about \$500 to \$700 a month, right? But for about \$750 a month you can get Christiana, that's your wife's name, right?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it is?

MANIPULATOR: You could possibly get Christiana her Maserrari for a few dollars more than a basic SUV. Can you imagine the look on that snake Envy's face when he sees you driving that around in a Maserrari? I'm sure there are a few neighbors Christiana would like to rev the engine in front of, to make sure they see her driving the car.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, that would drive Envy crazy trying to figure out what I'm doing to afford a Maserrari (laughing). And Christiana, she has already said if I make a lot of money with you, she wants a Maserrari to shove in face of one of the women in the area that drives that little sports car.

MANIPULATOR: There you go Christian. You get 3 benefits from this. You get a fun car to drive at a discount and you and Christiana both get to use it to put some arrogant snob in their place.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it sure would.

MANIPULATOR: Ok, let me show you how this works with the car. Do you have you cell phone with you?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, right here.

MANIPULATOR: OK good, go to www..... Now just type in your zip code and then hit enter.

CHRISTIAN: Holy Cow, look at all of these. I don't believe this. Wow, there's a Maserrari and in Blue. That's Christiana's favorite color. Oh, she would love this.

MANIPULATOR: Christian, do it. Contact them. Come on, look at the stress Christiana has been under for the last week, look at the crap you said

she is getting from that Julie Jones on your block with her old sports car. Get it for her. How much is it?

CHRISTIAN: Well let's see. It's only \$745 a month and 14 months remaining. Manipulator, I don't know.

MANIPULATOR: Christian, think about how surprised and excited Christiana is going to be. Think about the smile on her face as she drives by Julie Jones house and revs the engine nice and loud (laughing). Does Envy still like eating lunch at the European Restaurant by the auditorium?

CHRISTIAN: I think so, I know he did quite a bit.

MANIPULATOR: Well, when you get the Maserrari, you come and pick me up, dressed up in some new expensive clothes that scream success and we will go have lunch at that restaurant and park the Maserrari, right in front of the windows. He won't sleep for days. Christian, you will be living rent free in his mind for days and days (laughing). Come on Christian, do it. Let's have some fun.

NARRATOR: Christian gets wrapped up in the excitement of Manipulator's plan and fills out the acceptance form for the car.

MANIPULATOR: Great, good for you, that's step number one now let's get you some clothes. Christian, you don't need to go crazy. Keep things reasonable that's what I always say. Go to the Men's Luxury Shop online and see what they got.

CHRISTIAN: Wow, \$600 for a shirt.

MANIPULATOR: Think about this Christian. How do you think you're going to feel wearing a \$600 shirt? How do you feel wearing that Rolex on your wrist? We both know a \$10 watch will do the same thing. But there is just something about having that Rolex name on there. You know people see it and it does something for you, am I right, or am I right?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, you're right, but \$600?

MANIPULATOR: Ok so you buy something for \$400? But every time you put on that \$400 shirt you will know it was not the best. It was second best. Is that the image you want to have for yourself, second best? Come on Christian second best are for the Envy's of the world, right? Think about the look on Envy's face when we walk in for lunch and you're wearing that shirt.

NARRATOR: Christian orders the \$600 shirt, then a \$500 pair of pants, a \$120 belt, a \$450 belt buckle and a pair of \$650 shoes.

CHRISTIAN: I don't feel real good about this.

MANIPULATOR: Stop worrying you are going to make so much money this will seem like chump change. Oh no, look at the time, listen Christian, I have to go, I have someone else to meet. I will talk with Head of Company this weekend when I visit my sister about looking at the security video in the hallways. Hopefully, we can get some dirt on Envy. In the meantime, call me when you get the car and clothes and we will start having lunch at the European restaurant until we see Envy.

NARRATOR: Manipulator gets up and starts walking away

MANIPULATOR: Hey Christian listen great seeing you again I'll call you next week and will meet again and go over the opportunity. I have to run see you later.

NARRATOR: Christian sits there somewhere between stunned and numb. He starts thinking. What did I just do? What just happened? I don't even have a job and I just spent thousands of dollars on clothes and a car, oh no the car. What am I going to tell Christiana? Christian goes back online and tries to cancel the deal with the Maserati, but it's too late. It's been approved, and he can pick up the car tomorrow. Christian leaves the restaurant in a daze and walks out of the Diner and hears a voice.

EVANGELIST: Christian my friend, how are you?

NARRATOR: Christian turns to see Evangelist, but can't speak

EVANGELIST: Oh, my Brother Christian, what happened, what's wrong?

CHRISTIAN: I don't know what to say. I don't know how it happened. I don't know what to do.

EVANGELIST: Listen you need to sit down, let's go back inside the Diner.

NARRATOR: Evangelist puts his arm around Christian and walks him back into the Diner and sits down at a booth.

EVANGELIST: Christian, tell me what happened.

CHRISTIAN: I don't know where to begin. It's honestly like a blur. It's like some force overcame me and persuaded me to do something stupid, really, really stupid.

EVANGELIST: Christian, what did you do?

CHRISTIAN: Well let me start from the beginning.

NARRATOR: Christian tells Evangelist about the call from Manipulator and the meeting at the Diner just minutes earlier and all of the money he spent, that he can't afford.

EVANGELIST: Oh, Manipulator. I know him.

CHRISTIAN: What is so hard for me to accept is, I did all of this and I still don't know what the opportunity is that Manipulator has. I just got so excited about his offer and willingness to help out with Head of Company. I felt like my entire guard went down and I wasn't even thinking for myself anymore. I am usually a very strong-willed person. People can't manipulate me like that. I don't know how he did it.

EVANGELIST: Oh no Christian. Ok first let's address the money situation. Can you cancel the order for the clothes?

CHRISTIAN: No, I checked online, and orders can't be cancelled once they're completed.

EVANGELIST: What is their return policy?

CHRISTIAN: There's a 10% restocking fee.

EVANGELIST: That's \$230. Christian, you can at least return the clothes, but you are not going to walk away from this without paying a price for your decisions.

CHRISTIAN: I understand, and Christiana isn't going to like us losing \$230. I don't like us losing \$230. We need the money so badly right now. But at least it's not \$2,300.

EVANGELIST: Is that at least some type of relief?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it is. Oh no, the car, what am I going to do about the car. It's \$745 a month for over a year.

EVANGELIST: Ok, we know you can't cancel it. But maybe there are some other options. Let's take a minute and silently pray and seek the Holy Spirit for some answers.

NARRATOR: A few minutes later

CHRISTIAN: I have an idea. I don't know where it came from, if it was just something I thought of or if it was from God. Maybe, once I pick up the car, I can relist it back on the website and someone else might be willing to take over the payments. I might get stuck with \$745 for a month or two. But that's better than paying for 14 months, and Christiana would probably enjoy driving it during that time. Once she stopped yelling at me for being so gullible.

EVANGELIST: Well, at least that's a start.

CHRISTIAN: I'm starting to learn. I'm starting to see how both the Holy Spirit and satan work. If I'm sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit I can sense His prompting or hear His still quiet voice. I can see His Fruit manifest in me and through me as His vessel. When I allow Him, my actions and words become His, rather than my own. But, satan plants seeds of fear, destruction and lies in my mind to torment me. When I dwell on those thoughts or even ignore them, they are still growing. He is watering them, and they are taking root. I have to destroy those thoughts with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. I can't just try to distract myself and ignore them. Is that right?

EVANGELIST: Exactly Christian.

CHRISTIAN: It seems the Holy Spirit and satan both work a lot through people. The Holy Spirit working through people like you and satan working through people like Envy and Manipulator. I can see why it is important to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit when He prompts us. Our prompting to say or do something could be the encourage to help someone get through their spiritual battle. Just as you and Police Office Hopefully have been to me..

EVANGELIST: That's a pretty accurate perspective, Christian.

CHRISTIAN: I can really see the importance of using spiritual discernment rather than relying on our own thoughts, or desires. For example, I told Christiana that I was beginning to wonder if there is a God. Just to see her reaction. It wasn't good. I want so badly for Christiana and the kids to see what I now see. Her response was almost demeaning. I wanted to continue, but I felt something saying, don't do it, not now, don't push. I remember what you told me about how Police Officer Hopeful didn't try pushing me. He just planted seeds and listened to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. He then knew when to keep talking and when to stop. He allowed the Holy Spirit to work in my mind and heart. He didn't try to convince me on his own talking abilities or debating skills. Sometime after I left, I could feel my heart softening towards talking to you. Then it developed into, I wanted to talk to you, to find out more. So, I tried to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit when I was talking to Christiana and I backed off. Was that using spiritual discernment?

EVANGELIST: It could have been. Christian I can't say for sure, I'm not God. But I can tell you that is how spiritual discernment works. Remember you said you told Manipulator you didn't feel good about buying the clothes and getting the car? That could also have been spiritual discernment, but you didn't listen to it or obey it that time and look at the consequences.

CHRISTIAN: Wow, I can't tell you how much better I feel talking to you. I'm still looking at losing a couple hundred dollars and I know Christiana is going to be upset. To be honest I wouldn't blame her. But I'm Hopeful that things will work out.

EVANGELIST: There you go Christian, I'm proud of you. You've come a long way in a few short days.

CHRISTIAN: Thank You Evangelist. There's something else I would like to talk to you about. On Sunday, I went out for a run and I came across a church. I noticed people outside smiling and talking to each other. They seemed friendly, so I crossed the street and walked over. I approached a guy that was saying hello to everyone. He looked down at my running shorts and shoes and made a face. He said Hello in kind of a demeaning way. He asked my name and said this is the Self-Righteous Church.

EVANGELIST: Oh, and did you go in?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I did, and I was very, very uncomfortable. The Minister said things like his church was the only right way to God. He said they were special and blessed beyond other churches. He went on and on. In fact, he quoted that Bible verse you used. I don't remember what the numbers were. It was the one where people are free of condemnation and he stopped at the first comma. Just like in the example you gave me. I knew right then; I didn't belong there.

EVANGELIST: That's another example of spiritual discernment. Christian, many Christians want to be reassured that God loves them. But wrongly, listen to a man rather than the Bible. They want to please God, but they fall victim to traps of false teachings like that. Sooner or later Christians have to stop relying on a man to tell them what the Bible says and start getting the truth for themselves.

CHRISTIAN: After I left I kept wondering, how could all those people not see through the falsehoods the Minister was preaching. They just kept smiling and clapping and shouting Amen. It was like he was purposely just saying what they wanted to hear to get a reaction from them. Like he was trying to make them feel special about themselves and better than everyone else.

EVANGELIST: That is so sad to hear.

CHRISTIAN: But there is more. When I was leaving the Minister was outside saying hello and goodbye to people and then he spotted me from a distance and must have known it was my first time there.

NARRATOR: Christian continued to explain the encounter

EVANGELIST: Christian, that uncomfortable feeling you had could have also been spiritual discernment protecting you.

CHRISTIAN: I told them I had to leave and started walking away, then jogging, then running faster and faster. I don't know if I was running because I was out running that day or if I was running away from that church.

EVANGELIST: What's important is you did get out of there.

CHRISTIAN: But, after I left, I ran into an old friend from High School and it wasn't good.

EVANGELIST: Tell me about it Christian.

CHRISTIAN: Well, his name is Discouragement; I don't know if you know him.

NARRATOR: Christian tells Evangelist about the conversation with Discouragement.

CHRISTIAN: No matter how I tried to stop him, he just continued. I started feeling such a burden. I started feeling hopeless, anxiety, despair, and then fear. I walked away feeling beaten. Like there was no hope. After I left, it seemed like with every step I took the burden felt heavier and heavier. Evangelist, how could I still have such heavy burden's when the Holy Spirit is living in me?

EVANGELIST: Christian, just because the Holy Spirit is living in you doesn't mean satan will leave you alone. He will still try to tempt you with thoughts of despair, fear, anger, bitterness, unforgiveness and more. Those are satan's Fruit. Just like there is the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, there is also fruit from satan. Do you remember after Jesus was Baptized; the Holy Spirit came down on Him? Then the Bible says, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to fast and pray for 40 days. Do you remember that?

CHRISTIAN: Yes

EVANGELIST: Then do you remember what happened? Even though Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, satan still tried to tempt Jesus. In fact not just once, but three times. Do you remember that?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I remember that. Wow, so when satan tries planting thoughts in our mind, we have to be quick and strong. As the Bible says we have to take those thoughts captive and not let them take root. We have to immediately destroy those thoughts with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. I get it. As soon as satan started using Discouragement to plant seeds of despair and despondency in my mind. I should have told myself, stop. Then used scripture verses that I had memorized as my weapons to repeat to myself to destroy those thoughts. Is that right?

EVANGELIST: Yes, it is. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit. That is how you destroy the attacks of satan.

CHRISTIAN:: OK, now to be honest. I don't have scripture verses memorized for all of these different situations.

EVANGELIST: I understand. But do you realize now how important it is that you do have them memorized? Christian, most Christians are walking through life as victims. Because, they don't have any weapons to fight off those destructive thoughts satan tries planting in their mind. They are powerless against them. Do you know why?

CHRISTIAN: I think probably two reasons; Maybe they have never been taught that using Scripture verses is not only important, but it's imperative to fighting off satan's attacks or they are just too lazy to spend the time to do it.

EVANGELIST: I agree. Christian, far too many churches have become country clubs, or ego boosters. They have replaced teaching the importance and power of the Holy Spirit with a watered-down feel-good message. A message that forces Christians to rely on their own personal strengths and will power when they are faced with a challenge or spiritual attack. How are you feeling now?

CHRISTIAN: I feel better, much better. I think it's because I have more hope. I am learning the importance of being sensitive to the Holy Spirit and use spiritual discernment. I'm also learning how important it is to empower myself with scripture verses to fight off satan's attacks and the destructive thoughts that he tries planting in my mind through people. That is something I'm becoming more aware of. Just how satan uses people without them even realizing it to say or do something to affect others. It bothers me to think, I might have been one of those people to others. But, no more Evangelist. I am determined to grow more and more sensitive to the Holy Spirit and build my arsenal of Scripture verses as weapons against those thoughts. I understand how important it is to not just distract myself from those thoughts or ignore them. Because, all that does is give them a chance to take root in my mind without any interference. Instead, I will take those thoughts captive and destroy them with the word of God.

EVANGELIST: When satan is able to successfully plant a seed in our mind and we don't stop it and destroy it, it will take root. Then that leads to satan planting another seed and another seed. Then it's like that garden overrun with large weeds. You can't easily pull them out anymore. The roots have taken hold and have grown strong. When you try pulling them, the roots generally break. That means there is still some root left that you can't see or sense. That root will grow back stronger than before. This

makes it more difficult and even stops us from allowing the Holy Spirit to manifest in us. This is why at times we need the encouragement and prayers of a Brother or Sister in Christ. We need them to help us rebuke and destroy the seeds satan planted. You see Christian, we need each other. We need sincere, powerful Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Believers that are filled with the Holy Spirit and walking in His authority and power to help us along our journey. But too often we are fooled by people in the church that pretend to be those people. But they're not. Unfortunately, you will find some people are pure phonies. They will act a certain way in front of others for the attention, just to feed their ego and insecurity. You will also find some very nice people, maybe church going people, they might volunteer at a church or maybe even in a leadership position. But that doesn't mean they are walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. It just means they are nice people. You see Christian, without even knowing it, they could be just going through the motions in their relationship with God. In most of those situations, it's because they don't have a good example to follow. They don't have anyone to show them what a Spirit Filled empowered Christian looks like. Christian, what people need are empowered Christians, not intellectual Christians. It is not a matter of how many Scripture verses someone has memorized. It's a matter of the power that flows through them from the Holy Spirit. when they speak those Scripture verses. It's not about how loud someone is when they are praying for someone. It's about how much of the Holy Spirit powers flows through them when they pray.

CHRISTIAN: I am starting to really see that clearly now.

EVANGELIST: I want to suggest two sets of scripture verses for you. If you are interested.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, absolutely

EVANGELIST: Please read John 12:14 over and over again. Until nothing in this world can convince you of anything different. Do you remember what it is?

CHRISTIAN: I'm not sure.

EVANGELIST:

Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father

I would also like you to read and reread the parable of the sower. Do you remember I told you it says it contains the secret to the Kingdom of God?

CHRISTIAN: What were those Bible verses again?

EVANGELIST: It's Matthew chapter 13 verses 18-33. Write them down or save them in your phone.

CHRISTIAN: Evangelist, what do I do about a church. Can you tell me what church is good?

EVANGELIST: That is not for me to tell you right now. That is part of your Journey. You will learn and grow as you visit different churches and the people you meet there. Your spiritual discernment will grow and your walk with the Spirit will become stronger and stronger. You will start seeing the Spirit's Fruit manifest in your life more and more. God's call for your life will become clearer and His Spiritual Gifts will start manifesting in your life. Now Christian beware of this, Spiritual Gifts are just that, they are Spiritual Gifts. They are not something you go out and try do to or practice. They aren't magic tricks or skills you have to develop. They are not something you develop in the flesh or through your own works. They are something that grow as you grow in the Spirit and become more prevalent and powerful. With every action or word, you use when using a Spiritual gift, it should be with boldness and confidence. Because it is the Holy Spirit manifesting through you. It is not you just trying to do something on your own. Do you understand?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I do, that makes complete sense, after everything you have taught me.

EVANGELIST: Ok Christian, I am going to leave you for now. You must go home and talk to Christiana about what happened today and then try to find time to draw close to God and pray. Read more of God's anointed word and when you read spend some time in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of those words to your mind and heart.

CHRISTIAN: That is exactly what Helpful at the Christian bookstore told me to do.

EVANGELIST: A fine young man that loves God and seeks His will daily. Oh, by the way Christian who do you think taught his parents to pray in that way before reading the Bible?

CHRISTIAN: (laughing) You? Helpful told me you led his father and mother to Jesus some years ago.

EVANGELIST: Yes, that's true. But only after other's had planted seeds. Just like Police Office Helpful did with you. And Helpful's parents have probably planted hundreds of seeds in other people's lives and have probably led dozens of people to Jesus after other people planted seeds. Do you see this Christian?

CHRISTIAN: Yes I do Evangelist, yes I do. I can't wait to start telling people about how God loved the world so much He gave His only son to be crucified for the forgiveness of our sins and to receive the Holy Spirit. I just don't know what to say.

EVANGELIST: Well those words sounded pretty good to me (laughing). Christian listen for the Holy Spirit's direction, that quiet nudge or prompting you sense to do something or say something. The Holy Spirit will direct your steps and your words. But be careful, satan is a liar and a manipulator. There is nothing he would like more than for people to get overzealous and push people away from God. He loves it when well-meaning people try force their will on someone. Because it just pushes people away from God. You see Christian just as satan turns people away from God through evil and bad events by having them blame God. Christians also turn people away from God because of their, pushiness, rudeness, self-righteousness, and overzealousness.

CHRISTIAN: I can see that; I really think that is what happened to me. I probably had 10 or 12 people over the years try to talk to me about God. But two of them and I remember it like it was yesterday, were so pushy, so forceful, so demeaning, and self-righteous that it completely turned me off to God.

EVANGELIST: Yes, Christian that is exactly the problem and whenever that happens, satan won that battle for the person's soul. I completely understand people get excited and want to share their newfound faith. But they need to be taught about walking in the Spirit of God and using spiritual discernment. Too many churches make it like a sales competition. Some churches basically say, OK church let's see who can win the most people to Jesus this month and the winner will receive a free copy of my new book and dinner for two.

CHRISTIAN: I see that now. And a lot of the people that area being approached are being pushed away from God, by God's own Children.

EVANGELIST: We can't say we believe and trust God in one breath and then turn around and ignore the Holy Spirit in the next. We can't do things how and when we think they should be done and ignore the Holy Spirit and say we trust God. Just mouthing the words oh please God guide me and then doing what we feel is best is not trusting God. It's self-reliance. It's pride. It's actually denying the power of God and His Spirit living in us. It's saying, we don't need you God. It's not just about what you say and how you say it, it's about WHEN you say it. It's about God's timing.

CHRISTIAN: You know it's a lot like sales, you must be able to discern the person's mood and readiness to move forward and if you push too hard you lose the sale forever. But in this situation, the Holy Spirit will guide us to know exactly what and when to do or say something which is something that NO human can discern on their own, right?

EVANGELIST: Yes, yes, exactly. I am proud of you my Brother. Now it's time for us to part. We will see each other soon.

Chapter 4

NARRATOR: A few days go by and Christian has submitted 127 resumes online for jobs in every possible sales position listed within about 30 miles.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, I just got an email response from one my resumes.

CHRISTIANA: What company?

CHRISTIAN: ABC Company, it's an HVAC warranty company.

CHRISTIANA: What is that?

CHRISTIAN: They sell extended warranties to Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning companies. Then those companies sell them to the homeowner. It's a pretty big territory, I would have to be gone overnight maybe one or two nights a month for some of the clients that are further away. But probably only if the weather is real bad and I don't want to drive back in it. But, let's not worry about that right now, it's a job interview.

CHRISTIANA: Yep, you're right.

NARRATOR: Christian continues to try to spend time praying and reading the Bible when he can without Christiana seeing him, because he knows it will upset her and push her away and he wants to be careful and use Spiritual Discernment.

A few days later.

CHRISTIAN: I just got another email. That makes 28 jobs I've been turned down for and I haven't heard back from the 2 interviews I've had. There are still about 100 other resumes I sent out, that I haven't heard back from yet.

CHRISTIANA: Do you think things will be OK?

CHRISTIAN: They will. Hey it's a beautiful day, let's take the Maserrari out for a ride and get some ice cream.

CHRISTIANA: OK, but I'm driving.

CHRISTIAN: No way, not after the last time.

CHRISTIANA: What do you mean? I wasn't speeding. I never went over the speed limit.

CHRISTIAN: I know but you plastered me back on the seat accelerating up the expressway entrance ramp to get up to speed. I don't think the speed limit sign means you have to get to that speed in 3.4 seconds. Geez. I'm driving.

CHRISTIANA: Come on Christian. I'll be good.

CHRISTIAN: Ok, where do you want to go. Hey about taking a ride to the lake and we can have lunch at the Restaurant out on the deck?

CHRISTIANA: Sounds good, let's go, vroom, vroom (laughing)

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana drive off. Johnny has been adjusting well to his new school. He's made some new friends. Jennifer's friends have been treating her like a princess at school. Christian and Christiana arrive at the restaurant at the lake and are seated at a table out on the deck

WAITRESS: Hi are you ready to order.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, we are, I don't even need the menu.

WAITRESS: The friend Chicken lunch special?

CHRISTIAN: How did you know?

WAITRESS: Look around that's what 80% of the people get for lunch here.

PILGRIM: (laughing) It is the best. We drove an hour to come here for it. We will take two of them with lemonades,

WAITRESS: You got it.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana can't help but overhear the conversation from the people sitting at the table next to them.

MAN AT THE OTHER TABLE: Steve, things will work out for us. I'm Faithful, I know God will make things clear to us. Remember the Bible says, He will never leave us or forsake us.

WOMAN AT THE OTHER TABLE: Steve, I'm Peaceful about it.

CHRISTIANA: Are we going to have to listen to this all through lunch.

CHRISTIAN: Shhh, they will hear you.

MAN AT THE OTHER TABLE: We already did. The man gets up and turns to Christiana, I am very sorry if I was talking to loud. I didn't mean to disturb your lunch. Will you forgive me?

CHRISTIANA: Forgive you, for what?

MAN AT THE OTHER TABLE: I obviously disturbed you by talking to loud. That was not my intention at all.

CHRISTIANA: You're kidding me right? Are we on some hidden TV show? You're actually apologizing for talking at a normal volume?

MAN AT THE OTHER TABLE: No, I'm being serious. I will let you get back to your lunch and I hope you enjoy this beautiful day.

CHRISTIANA: It is a beautiful day isn't it. We drove up from Materialism to have lunch here.

WOMAN AT THE OTHER TABLE: Really, we used to live there. Over by the library, we moved about a year ago.

CHRISTIANA: We live about 2 miles from there.

WOMAN AT THE OTHER TABLE: What a coincidence. My sister still lives there. She is very involved in the area.

CHRISTIANA: What's her name?

WOMAN AT THE OTHER TABLE: Her name is Goodness.

CHRISTIANA: You're kidding. I know Goodness, she was our daughter's group girl's leader. Christian, remember Goodness? My daughter and the girls loved her. Our daughter Jennifer used to say, there was something about Goodness that made everyone feel comfortable and you know what? I think you have that same quality.

WOMAN AT THE OTHER TABLE: Well thank you, what's your name?

CHRISTIANA: It's Christiana and this is my husband Christian.

WOMAN AT THE OTHER TABLE: My name is Gentleness, and this is my husband Faithful and our son Steve.

CHRISTIANA: It's really nice meeting you Gentleness and you too Faithful and Steve.

CHRISTIAN: Hello, faithful, Hello Steve, Hello Gentleness.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Listen if you guys are interested and there's nothing special you were talking about, your more than welcome to join us. Our table has a great view of the lake.

CHRISTIANA: (laughing) I know it's blocking our view. Christian do you want too?

CHRISTIAN: Are you guys sure we wouldn't be intruding?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Not an inconvenience at all. We always like meeting new people and making new friends. We have the same waitress, so it shouldn't cause them any problem.

CHRISTIANA: In fact, it will free up a table for them.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana, tell the waitress they are moving to the other table.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: So, what brings you guys all the way up here for lunch?

CHRISTIAN: (laughing) the fried chicken and the view.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I agree, you can't beat either of them.

CHRISTIANA: Do you guys live around here now?

GENTLENESS: Yes, we have a little house on the lake right down there (she points down the shoreline).

CHRISTIANA: It has always been a dream of Christian and mine to have a house on the lake. But with the kids growing up and in school and Christian's job or at least his ex-job we just never got around to it.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Did you just change jobs Christian?

CHRISTIAN: Not exactly. I was let go. A dishonest salesman at my company caused me some difficulties and I was wrongly let go.

GENTLENESS: Oh boy, we know that feeling. It must be the season for deceitful people to come out of the woodwork.

CHRISTIANA: Did something happen to you guys?

GENTLENESS: Oh boy did it. It almost completely destroyed our lives. It was so bad, we had to move. The deception and lies were just exposed yesterday and they asked us to come back. But we haven't decided if it's what we are really supposed to do.

CHRISTIANA: We're going through something ourselves. It's very concerning and scary. Can I ask what happened to you guys?

GENTLENESS: Faithful, do you want to talk about it?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Sure. Well, I'm a Pastor and I was a Pastor at the New Beginning's church in Materialism.

CHRISTIANA: Where is that?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Do you know where the car dealership is on Grant Avenue?

CHRISTIANA: The white church with the steeple and the bell?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Yes, that's the one. Well, I was the Pastor there for about 5 years. We had a great church family and then a new family started attending and they started having a real negative affect on the church. Then they invited another family and they were doing the same thing. People started becoming more interested in trying to make more money, than their relationship with God. Don't get me wrong. I like money as much as the next guy. But there is a difference between trying to make more money and becoming obsessed with it. Obsessed to the point where people justify their actions even if it hurts other people. All of a sudden people that couldn't afford things, started buying them. Men started coming to church with expensive shirts. I don't mean \$50 shirts. I'm talking shirts costing hundreds of dollars, new expensive shoes and even belts. I don't get it. One person spent something like \$500 for a belt. I grew up on a farm and we sometimes used a rope for a belt and it worked just fine.

CHRISTIANA: Oh no (and she looks at Christian). Christian it couldn't be, could it?

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, let Faithful finish.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Well one day, a board member comes to me. He says the Sunday donations seem to be substantially less over the previous weeks than they should be. He goes on to say, one Sunday after the collection an usher stepped in and went off to the side and counted all of the money in the baskets. He then gave the baskets to another usher to put in my office. The next day the first usher checked my computer log and noticed it was different than what he counted. He went to the board to tell them the dollar amount I was registering for that Sunday was about \$400 less than what he personally counted. You know I should have noticed the decrease over the last few months myself. But I trust people and just thought some people just didn't tithe that day.

CHRISTIAN: I can see what's coming. This seems all too familiar right now.

CHRISTIANA: Oh Christian it does, doesn't it.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Well the board called a meeting with me and the head usher. The head usher basically accused me of stealing the money and they were removing me from my position as of that moment. This was devastating. I inquired about the other usher that put the money in my office and they said he had someone with him that said he didn't take it.

CHRISTIANA: What did you say?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: What could I say. I stated I would never do that, and I never took any money. I've never even taken a paper clip for my own personal use. But they had made their minds up. So, I thanked them for the opportunity of being their Pastor and I will leave with no issues. They wished me the best and I said I will be fine, I am Faithful.

GENTLENESS: The rumors started spreading and it affected our children at school. So, we sold our house and moved up here. To be honest we love it up here. When people ask me to describe it, I use one word: Peaceful.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Well yesterday I got a call from one of the board members saying they would like to come to our house to talk to us.

CHRISTIANA: I would have hung up the phone on them after giving them a piece of my mind.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I understand that would be most people's first reaction. But, Gentleness and I try not to react on our fleshly emotions. We try to give the Holy Spirit an opportunity to direct us. I'm sorry I hope me saying that doesn't offend you.

CHRISTIANA: You know what, 30 minutes ago it would have, but for some reason right now it doesn't.

NARRATOR: Christian is amazed, the wall around Christiana's heart and mind seems to be cracking and allowing her to at least listen to someone talk about God. Christian sits back and just listens to Faithful talk. He realizes this is a real living example of spiritual discernment. Faithful doesn't push and he doesn't force people. He is respectful of other people's views. He just allows the Holy Spirit to guide his words and actions.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Well the entire board drove out to our home yesterday evening to meet with me and Gentleness. They said someone had the idea of checking the hallway security camera videos. What they

found was the head usher was taking money out of the basket and jamming it in his pocket as he walked down the hallway.

CHRISTIAN: Wow, really. That's great news.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: They met with the usher who admitted to stealing the money yesterday morning. Then they immediately called us asked and came out to our home last night.

CHRISTIAN: So, this is this kind of like a celebratory lunch?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Yes, it is a thanksgiving lunch and a time to seek what God wants us to do. You see, they asked us to come back as the Senior Pastor.

CHRISTIAN: Wow, that's great. Are you going to? I would even come.

CHRISTIANA: What?

CHRISTIAN: I mean, it's the least we can do, to support our new friends.

CHRISTIANA: I'm sorry Christian gets ahead of himself. We don't believe in God.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I understand. I want you to know, my door is always open as a friend. If you ever want to just talk or visit.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, do you mind if I tell them what we are going through if they are open to listening?

CHRISTIANA: I don't mind, maybe they have some suggestions for us.

NARRATOR: Christian explains the whole situation at work with Envy, He tells them about their son Johnny being expelled, Jennifer getting beat up and then the meeting with an old work associate Manipulator about the opportunity. That led to him spending over \$2,000 on clothes and the Maserrari.

Faithful looks over at Peaceful.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: We know Manipulator. Christian, be careful with opportunities that are offered to you right now. Just think them through, before reacting. I understand you both might be anxious to have Christian working again. But there are some very dishonest people out there parading around as something they are not. Their promises of an opportunity with streets of gold might come with a price you don't want to pay. But they don't tell you the truth until it's too late.

CHRISTIAN: In other words, use Discernment?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Exactly. Christian, I think you understand.

CHRISTIANA: Discernment, I've never heard you use that word before. Where did you pick that up?

CHRISTIAN: From someone I was talking to downtown a few weeks ago, He was sharing a few things with me and I realized how important it really is.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Hey would you guys like to come up next Saturday to visit? You could bring your children. We have a water ski boat and a pontoon boat to just cruise around in and relax. I leave the water skiing to Steve and the younger people like you and Christiana.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, what do you think?

CHRISTIANA: It sounds really nice. Are you sure we wouldn't be intruding?

GENTLENESS: Christiana, don't be silly, how else do you make new friends unless you spend time with them, right?

CHRISTIANA: True, but, but, you guys aren't going to try to talk us into going to church or something like that are you? I mean I don't want to be rude. But I don't want any part of that.

GENTLENESS: Christiana, I assure you we will not.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Christiana, let me explain something about Gentleness and myself. We are who we are, you get what you see. We would never try to force or push our beliefs down your throat, never. Christiana, we both know even if we tried and you said ok sure I agree, it wouldn't be sincere Either we talked you into something you weren't ready for, or you were just saying ok, to nicely blow us off. That's not how friends treat friends. Do you agree?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, absolutely. You're not offended by how we believe?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Christiana, we believe a relationship with God has nothing to do with church. It is between the individual and God. I can't force anyone to have a personal relationship from their heart with God. That's impossible, so why even try. It just upsets people. It's up to the person to decide that's what they want or don't want. Does that make sense?

CHRISTIANA: Yes exactly

GENTLENESS: So, is it a date, will you guys come up? If you want we can barbeque?

CHRISTIANA: We love barbeque. We used to do a Saturday evening barbeque at our house for our friends before all of this happened and they started treating us differently.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Well great. Do you think your oldest son Bill, would want to come up? He's about our son Joshua.

JOSHUA: He would have a great time. We could water ski, go tubing, fishing, throw a football around, there's an arcade on the other side of the lake, a go kart track. Batting cages, there's a lot to do up here.

CHRISTIAN: We will definitely let him know. I think you guys are about the same age.

JOSHUA: I'm a Senior in high school also. So, we're probably the same age.

CHRISTIAN: Do you play any sports?

JOSHUA: Yes, I play soccer, basketball, and baseball. Basketball is my favorite. I made All Conference in basketball.

NARRATOR: The group finishes their lunch and says their goodbyes until next Saturday.

CHRISTIAN: Ok Christiana I'm driving this time.

CHRISTIANA: Ok but remember the speed limit is 55, not 35. You drive like an old lady.

CHRISTIAN: You drive like a race car driver when they're in a real hurry.

NARRATOR: On the way home Christian's mind starts thinking of the positive affect Faithful and Gentleness could have on Christiana and their son Steve on Bill. He was thinking there were a few times, he was surprised they didn't try to talk more about God. But he realizes, they probably felt the Holy Spirit's prompting and knew better than him, what to do.

Christian continues to look for a job over the next few days. But has no success. The week fly's by and they are greeted on Saturday morning with a beautiful forecast 82 degrees and sunny. A perfect day to be at the lake. All three of their kids are going. Bill is going to dry himself and follow them in case he wants to leave early.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, I don't feel like going to Faithful and Gentleness's house today.

CHRISTIAN: Are you kidding me? Why not?

CHRISTIANA: I just feel like their playing us. They talked us in to coming over to their house and I know once we're there, they are going to try talking to us about God. Christian, I am so tired of those type of people.

CHRISTIAN: Where is this coming from? What did they say to make you believe they are like that? I don't think they are like that at all. They didn't do that at lunch

CHRISTIANA: I think they were on their best behavior at lunch. But if we didn't agree to come over to their house they would have pushed.

CHRISTIAN: You are really being paranoid. I'm looking forward to it. The kids are looking forward to it. Even Bill is looking forward to it. If you're not comfortable once you're there for a while, you can make an excuse and go home when Bill leaves. You know he won't stay long.

CHRISTIANA: Paranoid? How can you say that. We know what those people are like. I don't want to go. You can go with the kids. But, I'm not going.

CHRISTIAN: OK if that's how you feel.

CHRISTIANA: You mean, you trust them?

CHRISTIAN: Listen, they seemed nice. I really don't think everyone that goes to church is a phony and self-righteous. I don't see a problem with giving people that seem nice a chance to be friends. But if you're that set on your feelings, I will call them and say we can't go.

CHRISTIANA: Yes, call them and tell them we're not coming.

NARRATOR: Christian calls Faithful and tells them they will not be able to come over today. It's a brief 20 second call.

CHRISTIANA: What did they say?

CHRISTIAN: You heard me. I was right hear. I said I'm sorry but we can't make it today. I didn't say why or anything.

CHRISTIANA: But what did he say, did he try to talk you into coming? Did he try to make you feel guilty?

CHRISTIAN: Geez, Christiana. No, he didn't. He said, that's a shame. But let's keep in touch, maybe another time. Yep, you were right Christiana/ That Faithful is a real pushy, judgmental guy, isn't he? Wow.

NARRATOR: Christian starts walking out of the room.

CHRISTIANA: (with a tone in her voice) Well I'm just not comfortable going.

CHRISTIAN: (getting upset) I got it Christiana. I got it, I called didn't I? You tell the kids were not going, I'm not.

CHRISTIANA: What are you getting upset about?

CHRISTIAN: It would be nice to get out of the house and meet some new people. Things haven't been the same with our old friends since Envy's kids spread the lies at school. Have you noticed how our friends have been acting differently towards us?

CHRISTIANA: Yes I have, but it doesn't matter, I still don't want to meet with any church people. Christian, the mailman just came by, can you go get the mail?

NARRATOR: Christian walks outside to the mailbox and starts browsing through the mail as he walks in. There is a flyer from a church. It has multiple pictures of groups of smiling people and the words "Is it time for the truths of the Bible to flow in your life". Christian gets a small smile on his face and thinks, yes and quickly folds up the flyer and sticks it in his pocket so Christiana doesn't see it.

That next day is Sunday morning, Christian tells Christiana he is going for a walk. He tells her a walk instead of running so he can wear his jeans and a nicer shirt and not shorts like he wore to the other church. This way he can check out that church from the flyer. It's about 2 miles away, so he will have to leave quite early if he is walking.

Christian arrives at the church and sure enough there are groups of people standing outside smiling and laughing and hugging each other. Christian thinks, yep this is the one.

CHURCH GREETER: Hello my name is Church Greeter. What's your name?

CHRISTIAN: It's Christian and this is my first time visiting.

CHURCH GREETER: That's great. Welcome to the Works Church. Hey Good Deeds, come here (a man walks over). This is Christian, it's his first time here.

GOOD DEEDS: Hi Christian. Are you meeting anyone here or are you by yourself?

CHRISTIAN: I'm by myself.

GOOD DEEDS: Well, if you want, why don't I show you around and introduce you to some people.

CHRISTIAN: Wow, that would be nice. But I'm not ready to join any church.

GOOD DEEDS: (laughing) I see you've been to some other churches in the area. Christian, no one is going to try to pressure or force you to join our church or tithe or anything like that. In fact, since you're a visitor, don't worry about putting any money in the basket when it's passed around. Just enjoy the service. We're not here to take your money. We are here as a church to worship and please God.

CHRISTIAN: That sounds great.

NARRATOR: Christian is starting to get a good feeling about this church. Good Deeds takes Christian around and introduces him to about 4 different groups of people and then walks him over to their information table.

GOOD DEEDS: Christian, here is some information on our church. Here is some info on our small groups and ministries and this is an update report of who has done what from last month.

CHRISTIAN: What do you mean, who has done what?

GOOD DEEDS: Well Christian the Bible says Faith without works is dead. So, it is important to make sure everyone is always committed to doing something for God every day. Here, look there at the top name, that's me. I'm involved in the Monday evening outreach program and I led 11 people to Jesus last month. See over here, there is my name #4 on the list for the Tuesday evening prayer meeting. Here is the Wednesday weekday church service and I'm an usher for that. Thursday is donation day where we bring in donations, clothes, and food for people in the city.

Look up here see there's my name again at #2. Friday evening is youth group and I help out with that and Saturday is helping neighbor's day. See up there at the top? That's my name at the #1 spot. I lead the teams to go out and help elderly people in need in our area with home repairs, car repairs or just visit and talk to them. Christian, we have a group for everything. So it gives everyone a chance to get points and show God how much they love Him.

NARRATOR: Christian wonders if Good Deeds is married and when he has any time for his wife and kids.

CHRISTIAN: Are you married?

GOOD DEEDS: Yes, I am, for 15 years. We have 4 children that attend the Christian academy here. See this name here in the 9th position? That's my wife. She does a lot of things here. But not enough. I have to keep pushing her to do more. It's not that I'm not sympathetic. I understand she works, takes care of the house and kids, but that doesn't excuse her from her responsibilities to the church or God, right? I mean, it was an embarrassment for a while. She wasn't even in the top 10.

CHRISTIAN: Can I ask what they do while you and your wife are out doing works for the church?

GOOD DEEDS: Sure they play with their friends, or stay home and watch TV or play video games or surrrrrrrfffff the internet (making movements with his arms and laughing).

CHRISTIAN: Sounds like you and your wife are very busy at the church.

GOOD DEEDS: It's not just for the church. Christian, it's for God. Most of the families here are just as committed as we are to showing God how much they love Him. Christian here look here. See the number after our names? That's how many points we earned for the last month. We get points for every deed we do for God and then it's totaled up at the end of the month. We post the results because it makes it known who isn't doing anything for God. No one wants to be left off the list, so it motivates people to fall in line.

CHRISTIAN: I see, kind of like in sales. I was in sales.

GOOD DEEDS: Exactly, well then you will understand this. I can talk direct to you. I'm a sales manager at Worldly Company and I talk to the

pastor all the time about implementing everything we use in the Worldly Company to motivate people. You see, a lot of people love recognition as a reward even more than winning money or a prize. Most people feel insignificant in their jobs and lives. Most people feel they have no real purpose. So, we help them feel good about themselves and significant. Christian, when you give people money, they spend it and poof it's gone. Then a little later so is that good feeling about themselves. BUT, recognition, oh boy, we have that down to a science here. Every month a list is posted and every 3 months a plaque is put up in the hallway showing the top three people in each category. Those people get a blue pin.

NARRATOR: Christian never had such a bad feeling about people getting recognition before. But he does now. He is seeing how people can be so easily manipulated just to feel significant.

GOOD DEEDS: That's the pin you see people wearing. When they get their 3rd pin, they get a red pin and when they get their 10th pin, it's a white pin. Christian check out my pin. It's Silver. Do you know what that means?

CHRISTIAN: Not exactly, but I guess, you've won a lot of pins.

GOOD DEEDS: Exactly Christian. You need 20 Pins to get a Silver Pin. I have 32 now. The next Pin is a Gold Pin for 50. Hey, it's getting close to the service starting time let's go in. I will sit with you so you're not alone.

CHRISTIAN: Well, OK.

NARRATOR: Christian has a pretty good idea of what the Works Church is about, and the minister's message confirms it.

MINISTER: Welcome everyone. Always remember you
ARRRREEEEEEEE a Child a God. Can I get an Amen? Always remember to pray the Holy Spirit blesses your steps. Always, ask for guidance and then go just go DO IT. Always, remember inactivity creates mediocrity and there is nothing mediocre about the Kingdom of God is there? So, if you don't hear from the Holy Spirit after praying, don't worry about it. Just go do something. That's how you get better, right?

CHURCH MEMBERS: Amen

MINISTER: Remember our motto “practice makes perfect?”. That’s right keep practicing. Just keep trying and trying until you see results. Don’t worry about the mistakes. It’s the numbers game of life. Remember you can do anything you set your mind to.

NARRATOR: When the service ends Christian, thanks Bill for sitting with him.

GOOD DEEDS: So, what did you think Christian? Isn’t this the most incredible experience ever. Remember Christian You ARRRRREEEE a child of God, right? And don’t get discouraged, you can do anything you set your mind to doing. Hey Christian, what kind of sales were you in? I worked with a fairly new company and can always use good people.

CHRISTIAN: I was in pharmaceutical sales.

GOOD DEEDS: No way are you serious?

CHRISTIAN: Yes why?

GOOD DEEDS: I work for a new pharmaceutical company. We are looking for a liaison, with our manufacturer in China. But they have to know the pharmaceutical industry inside and out to discuss product development and priority statuses. Christian the pay is incredible. I wish I qualified for it.

CHRISTIAN: How much is the pay?

NARRATOR: Good Deeds tells Christian.

CHRISTIAN: Wow, that is twice what I was making, and I was the top salesperson.

GOOD DEEDS: What company were you with and why did you leave

NARRATOR: Christian tells Good Deeds the company name and just says there was some issues that happened and well you know how those things go.

GOOD DEEDS: Listen Christian I’m a great judge of people and I can tell you are a straightforward guy. I know you’re a Christian, so I know I can trust you. My Uncle and Father own the company. If you are interested in

the position. I will call my father right now. You can talk to him and he will probably schedule an interview with you tomorrow. With all the years of experience you have and your sales record, I can't see them letting you walk away.

CHRISTIAN: Yes absolutely, can you call him.

NARRATOR: Good Deeds takes out his cell phone and calls his father. He tells him that he just met Christian at church and a little about Christian's experience. Then he hands the phone to Christian. Christian talks to Good Deeds father and they schedule an interview for the next day. Christian is excited because they completely bypassed Human Resources. Christian gets home and tells Christiana while he was out walking, he met someone, and his father owned a pharmaceutical company and he has an interview tomorrow.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, that is incredible.

CHRISTIAN: Do you feel like taking a ride. Maybe we can go have lunch at the restaurant at the lake and celebrate?

CHRISTIANA: Why? Christian who is going to be there? Did you arrange to meet with Faithful and Gentleness there?

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, no. I haven't talked to him since I called yesterday, and you were in the room. Why are you so paranoid about them?

CHRISTIANA: Have you texted him?

CHRISTIAN: No, I haven't. This is getting ridiculous. OK just forget it.

CHRISTIANA: You've been acting strange lately, there's something different about you.

CHRISTIAN: I lost my job. I was set up at work. Our son got expelled from school. Our daughter got picked on and broke her arm. I let Manipulator persuade me into spending thousands of dollars on clothes and take over the payments for a Maserrari. Christiana, I'm sorry if I am distracted, confused and maybe anxious at times.

CHRISTIANA: No that's not what I'm talking about. You haven't been acting like I thought you would, after being in all of those situations. Never mind. Can we just go get something to eat?

CHRISTIAN: Ok, then where would you like to go for lunch?

CHRISTIANA: We can go to the restaurant at the lake. But I want to drive.

CHRISTIAN: I would rather not. If by some chance Faithful and Gentleness are there you are going to believe I set it all up. I'm not in the mood for that. I haven't talked or texted either of them. Except to call him and tell him we weren't coming over.

CHRISTIANA: Ok then let's go.

CHRISTIAN: No, seriously. I would rather not now.

CHRISTIANA: Fine let's go through a drive through then.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana get in the Maserrari and head out. Bill gets a hamburger and Christiana gets a chicken sandwich.

CHRISTIANA: This is a poor substitute for the Chicken meal at the Restaurant at the lake. Why did you get a hamburger? It's going to spill and you're going to make a mess in the car.

y Christiana, between my last 2 jobs, I've been a salesman for 15 years. Driving and eating a hamburger at the same time is a way of life for me. I will be careful, I'll keep the wrapper around it. Christiana, I know you are concerned about everything that has happened and not knowing what's going to happen. But please, you can't be short with me. I am not the enemy. We have got to have patience with each other and try to control our fears and emotions.

CHRISTIANA: I'm sorry, I understand. Why don't we take a ride and just talk about things that might be bothering or concerning us, ok?

CHRISTIAN: Sounds good. Where do you want to go?

CHRISTIANA: Let's go to the lake and get ice cream at the ice cream shop.

CHRISTIAN: Sounds like a great idea.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana have a good talk and Christiana feels a lot more relieved after talking to Christian about her concerns. A few hours later.

CHRISTIAN: This was a good idea. Thanks for talking and listening.

CHRISTIANA: I agree. I thought it was good too. Plus there is still your job interview tomorrow. That's a good thing.

CHRISTIAN: I agree. The money, can you imagine making that kind of money?

CHRISTIANA: Christian, we could keep the Maserrari, and afford to keep Johnny in his new school and maybe even buy our own small house on the lake up here.

CHRISTIAN: I can see things starting to look better. Look the Sun's finally coming out. That's a great sign.

CHRISTIANA: It's not a sign. It means the clouds moved away.

CHRISTIAN: Hey I can hope can't I (laughing)

CHRISTIANA: Hey Christian look, the traffic light turned green, it's a great sign.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana both start laughing. It's the first time they've laughed together in years. After the last few weeks, they've had, it's like a new beginning.

Chapter 5

NARRATOR: The next day Christian goes on his interview. As he pulls into the parking lot in the Maserrari a man starts walking across the aisle Christian turned into. Christian smiles and waves the man to go ahead. The man waves a thanks and points to Christian's Maserrari and gives a thumbs up. The parking lot is crowded. But Christian finally finds a parking space. He walks into the building and proceeds to take the elevator to the 5th floor to his interview and meets with Bill's father.

COMPANY OWNER: Hello Christian, I've heard a lot about you from my son Good Deeds. From what I understand you met him in church yesterday?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, sir I did. It was my first time there.

COMPANY OWNER: I've been there a few times. Not my cup of tea. But, let's get down to the business at a hand. Tell me about your experience in the industry.

NARRATOR: Christian spends the next 10 minutes highlighting his knowledge, experience, and accomplishments.

COMPANY OWNER: Pilgrim it sounds like we could have a good match here. Now let me tell you about the responsibilities of the position.

NARRATOR: The Company Owner goes over some pages of charts and procedures.

CHRISTIAN: Excuse me. Exactly how many days would I have to spend in China a month?

COMPANY OWNER: Probably 2 weeks out of the month. More during the first year or so while we get things established. Is that a problem?

CHRISTIAN: Well it might be. I've never had a job where I had to travel and stay away from my family.

COMPANY OWNER: Christian, I really think you would be a great asset to our company. How about if we include a couple of perks? We can give

you up to a \$1,000 a month car allowance. You will always get an extended suite hotel when you are in China. You will always have a living room and kitchen to make it more comfortable. Plus you can bring your wife on every other trip and we will include an extra \$500 a month in spending money for your wife while she is there. What do you think?

NARRATOR: Christian quickly adds all the extras in his mind. The salary, which is almost 2 ½ times his best year in sales, the car payments, Christiana's airline tickets and money to spend in China. It's close to 3 time the most money he ever made in a year. But Christiana would still be alone in a strange country all day, while he is working.

CHRISTIAN: I can't tell you how exciting the offer sounds. But I have 3 kids, 2 of them in grammar school, I don't know who would take care of them for 2 weeks at a time. I'm sorry, but I have to say no. I can't tell you how great of an offer it is.

COMPANY OWNER: Well Christian, I understand. I want you to know, if you walk out the door, the offer ends. I need people who are decisive. Do you want to change your mind?

CHRISTIAN: No, I'm sorry. I can't accept it, with all of the travel. Do you have any sales positions open that I might be qualified for?

COMPANY OWNER: No Christian, not at this time. Not until we get the manufacturing restructured and production up. Christian thank you for coming in.

CHRISTIAN: Thank You for your time Company Owner

NARRATOR: Christian walks down the hallway discouraged and gets in the elevator. When he turns around, a man quickly steps in trying to beat the elevator doors from closing. The man looks at Christian and says Hello.

CHRISTIAN: Hello, I think I saw you outside in the Parking lot when you were walking into the building.

MAN IN ELEVATOR: Were you the guy in the Maserrari?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I was.

MAN IN ELEVATOR: You must be doing pretty well for yourself. What line of work are you in?

NARRATOR: Christian was kind of surprised a complete stranger would ask him that.

CHRISTIAN: Well no line right now, I'm looking for a job. That's why I was here, I had an interview.

MAN IN ELEVATOR: Do you see your opportunities as good or bad?

CHRISTIAN: It gets discouraging at times, but I'm trying to stay hopeful

MAN IN ELEVATOR: Good for you, by the way my name is Self-Reliant.

CHRISTIAN: My name is Christian.

SELF-RELIANT: What kind of work were you in?

CHRISTIAN: I was in pharmaceutical sales.

SELF-RELIANT: Well let's see, that means you have experience working with doctors, who are professionals, the receptionists and some staff members also, is that right?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it is. But what's your point?

SELF-RELIANT: Most people sell themselves short. They kind of pigeonhole themselves into believing they are only qualified to do one thing. But you my friend are very diverse. I just want to see you walk out of this elevator feeling confident that you are more than you think you are. You see Christian. I have attended a few seminars with Life Coaches, and I've learned so much about myself and others. We can accomplish whatever we want. If we just convince ourselves of it. We don't have to worry about what anyone else says or believes. We just need to reprogram our mind to think only positive things and picture ourselves successful. Christian think about this. We only use 10% of our brain. Imagine the possibilities, if you can figure out how to use the extra 90% you could be superior to everyone else. You could accomplish anything. You and I have already been given all of the skills we need. We just have to tap into the resources of our mind. I have recently been reading about spiritualism and mediums. Wow, what power they have. Can you imagine being able to converse with any person who ever lived throughout history? Imagine

having them at your beckoning to give you advice and direction. The power, Christian, the Power of the possibilities.

CHRISTIAN: I'm not sure if I agree with those things.

SELF-RELIANT: Here, let me show you the book I'm reading. Remember the title. It is the most read self-help success book of all time. There is a chapter that explains to you how to call up Spirits to have your own council of advisors at your beckoning.

CHRISTIAN: Well, recently I've realized, I am the child of God and it's not through my own strengths or abilities but through God that all things are possible. The Spirit of God is living in me.

SELF-RELIANT: You got it. You have the power of a supernatural force living in you. So, you don't need anything else. Just muster up that power and the world is your oyster. Christian think about it. If God is living in you, then everything God can do, you can do. Doesn't that sound exciting? So what do you want Christian, a big house, a Million dollars, a yacht or private plane?

NARRATOR: Christian realizes that Self-Reliant is very confused and is relying on satanic powers to try to succeed. But not sure how to tell him. He asks the Holy Spirit for guidance and the right words.

CHRISTIAN: Self Reliant are you in a hurry, or do you have time for coffee?

SELF-RELIANT: I have some time. Do you want to walk to the coffee shop down the block?

CHRISTIAN: Sure, that will work.

NARRATOR: As they walk to the coffee shop Christian keeps seeking the Holy Spirit for direction on how to handle the conversation with Self-Reliant.

SELF-RELIANT: Christian do you see the big picture here. There is obviously some supernatural force or power that created everything. There are no limits to what we can accomplish if we can find out how to tap into it. I like the idea that the supernatural force lives in us. Where did you get that from? It means all we have to do is tap into it, right?

NARRATOR: Self-Reliant never gives Christian a chance to answer and that is probably a good thing. Because Christian isn't sure what to say yet.

SELF-RELIANT: Imagining a supernatural spirit living in you makes it easier to visualize that way. The seminar I went to talks about a lot of this stuff. We have to accept there is a supreme being, some call him God, some other names. But the fact remains, that it is up to us, to succeed.

CHRISTIAN: I have kind of a different way of looking at this.

SELF-RELIANT: I would like to hear about it. I remember listening to a video online. I think the guy was a church goer because he said we have to communicate with a Holy Spirit. Then the Spirit will guide us. That's basically the same thing I'm looking into with the spiritualism. I'm tapping into a spirit to guide me. Then the meeting's I have with my council of spirit advisors is going to prove to be very valuable to me.

NARRATOR: They get to the coffee shop and sit down.

CHRISTIAN: Self-Reliant, do you believe there is good and evil?

SELF-RELIANT: Of course, I do.

CHRISTIAN: Do you believe there is a heaven and hell?

SELF-RELIANT: Yes, what are you getting at?

CHRISTIAN: Well if you believe there is good and evil and you believe there is a heaven and hell and you believe there are spirits, doesn't it make sense that there are good and bad spirits?

SELF-RELIANT: I guess so. Ok, yes. I can see that.

CHRISTIAN: Self Reliant, this is important. If Heaven has spirits that we call angels, then hell must also have spirits, right?

SELF-RELIANT: Ok.

CHRISTIAN: They are called demons.

SELF-RELIANT: Ok, what's your point?

CHRISTIAN: Do you think there is any danger if we communicate or open spiritual doors to spirits from hell, you know demons?

SELF-RELIANT: Can we actually do that?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, Self-Reliant we can. God created heaven and earth. The Bible says He is a spirit and He communicates with us through our

spirit. satan is also a spirit and he tries to communicate with us also through spirits. God sometimes uses angel spirits and satan uses demon spirits. Does that make sense?

SELF-RELIANT: Yes, it does.

CHRISTIAN: Self Reliant look at this. I picked it up in a bookstore when I was buying a Bible.

There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire [as a sacrifice], one who uses divination and fortune-telling, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a charm or spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or a necromancer [who seeks the dead]. For everyone who does these things is utterly repulsive to the LORD.....” That’s from the book of Deuteronomy chapter 18 verses 10 to 12

Self-Reliant looks up at Christian with a shocked look on his face.

CHRISTIAN: Did you hear that? It’s repulsive to God, some Bible versions say it’s an abomination to God. There is no such thing as good witchcraft, white magic, or good spells. It’s all a lie from satan. Mediums, fortune tellers, they are very dangerous, even if they seem innocent.

SELF-RELIANT: Can I really be dealing with evil spirits?

CHRISTIAN: Yes absolutely. Self- Reliant, people can only get their insight or spiritual wisdom from 2 sources, either God and His angels OR satan and his demon spirits. What other choices are there?

SELF-RELIANT: I’ve seen things on TV about demon spirits. They are nothing to mess with. I never, ever even considered that. But what about all of these seminars, books and Videos that are teaching people about a supreme being and tapping into its power or seeking it for wisdom or direction?

CHRISTIAN: Well what do you think?

SELF-RELIANT: Are they promoting people practice in the occult and deal with evil spirits?

CHRISTIAN: What do you think?

SELF-RELIANT: Do they realize they are doing that? This is terrible. This could destroy people. How can they do that?

CHRISTIAN: Self-Reliant, I really believe most of them do not realize what they are teaching people to do.

SELF-RELIANT: Does that mean I've cursed myself forever?

CHRISTIAN: No, I don't think that at all. That's not what the Bible says and that's not who God is. Self-Reliant from what I understand, God loves us, you, and me the same. No matter what sins we have committed or no matter what practices we have wrongly participated in. God still loves us. Think about this Jesus was tortured and crucified because He loves you and me. He did that so that we would be free from the punishment of not obeying the laws and could be saved by grace.

SELF-RELIANT: What do I do. Do I burn the books I have? Is there something to break any curses that might now be on me?

CHRISTIAN: I believe what you should do, is go directly to God. Do you know who Jesus is?

SELF-RELIANT: I know people say he is God's son.

CHRISTIAN: Do you know the Bible says Jesus came to earth specifically to be the ultimate sacrifice for the forgiveness of all of our sins?

SELF-RELIANT: No, I didn't.

CHRISTIAN: Self-Reliant before Jesus was born, priest had to do animal blood sacrifices for the forgiveness of their people's sins because they weren't obeying God's laws. The punishment for not obeying God's laws was spiritual death. But because of Jesus being the perfect sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins, we are now saved by grace through faith so that no man can boast.

SELF-RELIANT: I don't understand.

CHRISTIAN: Sorry. When I say, so that no man can boast, it means so that no man can take credit for his salvation. It means no man can say they are saved because of all of the good deeds they have done. God is not keeping a score card or a ledger. It's not about your works, your deeds or your actions. It's not about how good of a person you are. It's about accepting Jesus as your savior. It's that simple. All you have to do is accept that Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins and sincerely repent for your sins. Self-Reliant, let me stress the word sincere. It doesn't mean ok God forgive me and then you willfully continue to do the same things. Sincere repentance means you intend to resist repeating those same sins. Do you understand?

SELF-RELIANT: Yes, I do.

CHRISTIAN: Would you like me to walk you through it?

SELF-RELIANT: Yes, I would.

CHRISTIAN: Just say: Heavenly father, I now know you love me unconditionally and your son Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of my sins. I sincerely apologize for all of the sins I have committed in my life and I commit to resisting my old sinful nature and ask that your Spirit dwell in me, guide me and cleanse my heart.

NARRATOR: Self-Reliant is repeating Christian's words and starts crying as he is speaking. Christian reaches across the table and shakes Self-Reliant's hand and welcomes him into the family of the Kingdom of God.

CHRISTIAN: You are now set Free Self-Reliant. There are other benefits of accepting Jesus as your Savior. Do you want to hear about them? I mean talk about being empowered.

SELF-RELIANT: Yes, I would like that. How did you learn all of this?

CHRISTIAN: From other people and reading the Bible.

SELF-RELIANT: Have you been involved in this a long time?

CHRISTIAN: Only a few weeks.

SELF-RELIANT: Your kidding and you know this much and you are this confident in your beliefs.

CHRISTIAN: Here, let me tell you about some powerful truths. As I mentioned earlier the Spirit of God now dwells in us and so does His character and nature. That means you don't have to struggle and rely on your own will power, patience, abilities and strengths. You now have the Fruit of the Spirit which is: Love, Joy, Peace, Faith, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness and Self-Control living in you. I'm not sure if I'm being clear. Do you understand what I am saying?

SELF-RELIANT: I think so.

CHRISTIAN: You now have the supernatural nature of God living in you. This is so it can manifest in you and through you to others. Do you want to talk about the ultimate spiritual council? You have the Holy Spirit's own Peace, the Holy Spirit's own Joy, the Holy Spirit's own Patience, the Holy Spirit's own Self-Control. Do you get that? The Holy Spirit's own character

and nature are now living in you and He wants to manifest those traits through you.

SELF-RELIANT: Wow, this is incredible. I feel so, so, I don't know how to explain it. Overwhelmed.

CHRISTIAN: I know the feeling. I went through what you're going through just a few weeks ago.

SELF-RELIANT: Did someone help you, like you, like you're helping me?

CHRISTIAN: Yes. Do you know the park downtown by the parking garage?

SELF-RELIANT: Yes.

CHRISTIAN: There is a man that walks around there. He has black hair and glasses. He's about 60 years old. He hands out pamphlets to people walking by. When you have time, go there, and see if he is there. His name is Evangelist and tell him we talked.

SELF-RELIANT: Ok, I will go there right now.

CHRISTIAN: He can give you a lot more guidance and direction than I can right now. But, promise me, you will go look for him. If he isn't there, please try again some other times until you meet him. He can help fill in some cracks I can't answer for you right now.

SELF-RELIANT: I will thank you

CHRISTIAN: I have to be going now. But let's exchange cell phone numbers and keep in touch. You will probably have questions later today or over the next few days. Feel free to text or call me. Oh Self-Reliant, please understand, satan is not going to just give up on you. He doesn't want you serving God. So, stay strong and resist any urges you get to fall back into your old habits. You might want to buy a Bible or at least for now, you can even use these online Bible websites. They have the complete Bible word for word. I would start in the book of John in the New Testament. Again, if you start getting concerned about anything call or text me.

SELF-RELIANT: Christian, I can't thank you enough. I don't know what to say.

CHRISTIAN: I completely understand. Is it ok if I call you tomorrow to talk a little bit more?

SELF-RELIANT: That would be great.

NARRATOR: Christian and Self- Reliant shake hands and go their separate ways for now.

Christian is overwhelmed and a tear comes to his eyes as he walks back to the parking lot. He keeps thinking what just happened. Where did I get all of those words? I remember reading them. But I didn't know they sunk in. What made me even ask a complete stranger in an elevator to go have coffee. This must have been the Holy Spirit guiding me. I am so glad I was sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit to be able to sense His prompting and just didn't blow it off as nothing.

Christian gets back to his car and decides to text Pastor Faithful to see if he has time to talk on the phone.

Christian arrives home but hasn't heard back from Pastor Faithful.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana I'm home.

CHRISTIANA: Why didn't you call me after the interview. It was a long one so it must have gone well. Did you get the job?

CHRISTIAN: Well I was offered the job.

NARRATOR: Christiana runs to Christian and hugs him.

CHRISTIANA: How much money is it? Is it what they said?

CHRISTIAN: There was actually more. It was the salary I was told, plus they offered some perks.

CHRISTIANA: What kind of perks?

CHRISTIAN: Well a \$1,000 monthly car allowance and a \$500 a month expense account for you when you travel with me.

CHRISTIANA: \$500 a month for me? Christian, that is incredible. When do you start? Wait, travel to where?

CHRISTIAN: China, I would be gone about 2 weeks a month maybe more for the first year and they said they would pay all of your expenses and give you \$500 in spending money to travel with me every other month.

CHRISTIANA: That is incredible.

CHRISTIAN: What? What are you saying?

CHRISTIANA: That's about 3 times more money than you ever made in your best year. I don't have to go to China every other month do I. Could we just cash in the airline ticket and just keep the \$500.

y What are you saying. I would be gone over half the year in another country. I wouldn't be with you and the kids.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, we can adjust

NARRATOR: Christiana is writing numbers down on a piece of paper.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, do you realize we could pay all of our expenses, keep the Maserrari and we could buy a house on the lake. Not a Small house Christian, a big house, and a nice boat.

CHRISTIAN: But what about me, I won't be here.

CHRISTIANA: It will be ok. We will adjust. I know you're worried about us. If we get the house on the lake, the kids will stay occupied, and it wouldn't be so hard on them.

CHRISTIAN: So, in other words, as long as everyone is happy and has new stuff, then it's ok and no one will miss me, right?

CHRISTIANA: No that's not what I'm saying. But would it be so bad for one year. You said it would only be bad for one year. Christian, you will probably figure out a way to work from the office and handle everything online once you get everything established.

CHRISTIAN: I told them no.

CHRISTIANA: You said no to what?

CHRISTIAN: I said no to the job.

CHRISTIANA: What, are you crazy? Christian, what are you thinking?

CHRISTIAN: I'm thinking I love you and the kids, and you are more important than the money and stuff.

CHRISTIANA: The money, what money, we have no money. You're not working remember. I can't believe you turned it down without even talking to me about it. So much for us communicating more, I'm going for a drive.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, wait.

NARRATOR: Christiana walks out of the house, and quickly pulls out of the driveway and drives away. Christian is stunned. What is going on with Christiana. His cell phone rings. He looks at it, it's Pastor Faithful.

CHRISTIAN: Hello.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Hello Christian, are you busy?

CHRISTIAN: No not at all.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I was glad to see your text. How are you doing?

CHRISTIAN: I initially texted you because I was excited about something that happened. I accepted Jesus as my Savior a few weeks ago and I had an opportunity to talk to a complete stranger today his name was Self Reliant. I helped lead him to accept Jesus as his Savior.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: That's incredible Christian

CHRISTIAN: Yep, I thought so too. I met him after I had left a job interview. The company offered me 3 times more money than I ever made, and I turned it down.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Oh, why?

CHRISTIAN: Because I would have to travel to China at least 2 weeks every month. I thought Christiana would understand. But she just focused on all the things we could get with the extra money. She got more and more upset because I didn't call her and discuss the offer, before I turned it down. You know I probably should have. But no matter what she said, no matter how much she wanted me to take it, I wouldn't have accepted it. I don't want to travel overseas and be away from my family that much.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I understand Christian. What happened with Christiana?

CHRISTIAN: She got real upset and she got in the car and drove off. She's not acting like herself. These last few weeks have really taken a toll on both of us and I'm afraid possibly our marriage.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I understand how pressure and stress can affect people and relationships.

NARRATOR: Christian and Faithful continued to talk for about an hour and Christiana has still not come home.

CHRISTIAN: Faithful, I have to go, I have to call Christiana and see where she is and what's going through her mind.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I understand. Before you go, can I pray for you and Christiana.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, please do.

NARRATOR: Faithful prays and they end their call. Christian tries calling Christiana, but she doesn't answer. He tries texting but she doesn't respond to that either.

Christiana gets home about 3 hours later.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, why didn't you answer my calls or texts?

CHRISTIANA: I didn't hear the phone.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, how could you not hear the phone.

CHRISTIANA: I saw some old friends from college standing outside of the Deuces Wild bar and I stopped to say hello. We started talking and I went in with them to talk more.

CHRISTIAN: Who was it?

CHRISTIANA: Steve, Seducer, Joe, and Sue.

CHRISTIAN: The Seducer you dated, before we started dating?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, and wow he doesn't like you at all. He blames you for us breaking up. He feels you snaked him and I'm the one that got away.

CHRISTIAN: Were you there this whole time with all of them?

CHRISTIANA: No, Steve, Joe and Sue left about an hour after I got there.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, you mean you spent the last hour or so with Seducer?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, what's the big deal?

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, you would never have done anything like that before.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, I really don't feel like arguing right now.

CHRISTIAN: I'm not trying to argue.

CHRISTIANA: Well for not trying, you're doing a good job of doing it.

NARRATOR: The next day Christiana is somewhat distant with Christian and they don't talk much.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana can we talk? I don't like seeing you feel and act this way.

CHRISTIANA: There is nothing to talk about. I needed to blow off some steam. I had a drink with some friends, that's all.

CHRISTIAN: That's my point. You have never done anything like that before.

CHRISTIANA: Just forget about it. It won't happen again. It was just nice catching up with them.

CHRISTIAN: Ok thanks Christiana. Would you like to go to lunch today?

CHRISTIANA: No, we have to save money. We don't know when you're going to get a job and we better watch what we are spending.

NARRATOR: Christian felt the way Christiana commented about not knowing when he would get a job sounded more like a dig, then real concern.

CHRISTIAN: I'm going to my den and send out more resumes.

NARRATOR: Christian turns on his laptop and starts searching for jobs. He decides to turn on some music on an online station. He searches for a song he heard last Sunday at church. He finds it and clicks on the channel with the playlist and continues to search for jobs. He finds himself getting immersed with the worship songs and starts giving praise to God. His time with God is interrupted when Christiana surprisingly opens the door to his den.

CHRISTIANA: Police Officer Hopeful is here and says he has good news.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana walk into the living room.

CHRISTIAN: Hey Police Officer Hopeful.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: Hi Christian, I have some good news for you folks. Sorry it took so long. The girls weren't willing to talk at first. But today one of the girls called the station and left a message to come by their house. When I went there. Her, her mother, and I talked. She

described the situation at the school exactly as your son Johnny did. She verified that Envy's son was waiting for him outside, almost like an ambush. As soon as Johnny walked down the few steps outside, Envy's son came up behind him and pushed him to the ground and started verbally bullying him. The girls became afraid and ran away. A teacher must have come out and broke it up after they left. At some point before the teacher came out, Envy's cousins must have shown up. Because the girl verified, they were not there when the fight started. The girl and her mother will be going into school together tomorrow to talk to the principal and explain what they saw. Hopefully, that will be enough to get Johnny reenrolled in the school, his record cleared, and we can pursue the issue with Envy's son.

CHRISTIAN: That is great news. At least my son's name will be cleared. That is so good. Thank You so much Police Officer Hopeful.

CHRISTIANA: Thank you Officer for not giving up and helping to clear my son.

POLICE OFFICER HOPEFUL: No problem. I felt Hopeful something would work out well and it did. I will be leaving now. I will be in touch to follow up on this in a few days. Good luck with the school principal.

CHRISTIAN: Thank You again.

CHRISTIANA: Yes, thank you.

NARRATOR: Police Officer Hopeful leaves.

CHRISTIAN: That is such a relief, where is Johnny?

CHRISTIANA: I guess he's out with his friends. Let's call him.

NARRATOR: That next morning Christian goes back into his Den to do some more job searching. He puts on the Christian music channel in the background.

A few minutes later Christiana walks in and ask Christian when they should call the school principal about getting Johnny reenrolled. She stops when she hears the music.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, what is this?

CHRISTIAN: What?

CHRISTIANA: You know what, the music? Since when do you listen to this stuff?

CHRISTIAN: I find it relaxing.

CHRISTIANA: Relaxing? I thought we were on the same page about this stuff. Religion is for emotionally weak people. People, who need a crutch, because they can't accept life on their own and now, you're listening to those people's music.

CHRISTIAN: It's not a big deal. I find it relaxing. Christiana, you know it's possible we've been wrong and there is something to it.

CHRISTIANA: You mean like God is real? Woaaaaahhhhhh (moving her hands around)

CHRISTIAN: Have you ever considered just how everything came to be. I mean do you really believe everything was just some huge accident? Do you really believe the Earth, the Sun, the Solar system, in fact all of the other solar systems were all some type of freak accident? Christiana, please listen, could it be, could it just be that maybe there is a God?

CHRISTIANA: Wow, I've heard enough. You know Christian, Seducer said you wouldn't be able to hold up through all of this. He said you would crack, and you are. I mean come on; you want me to believe God is real. After all of these years of being convicted to our beliefs, the first time we face some problems you're going to crack emotionally and go running to some made up God.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, I am not emotionally weak. I've just realized I am a child of God and so are you and God loves us, Both you and me and the kids.

CHRISTIANA: OK, Minister Christian. Time for me to go write my letter to Santa Clause and before you leave, check the back yard for Martians, ok?

NARRATOR: Christiana walks out of the room, and Christian's not sure what to think. He's not happy with Christiana's response. But at least his feelings and beliefs about God are out in the open. He tried to use discernment. He tried not to push. It's pretty quiet around the house the rest of the day. There is not much interaction between Christiana and Christian. Christian tries going to the living room to talk to Christiana. But she gives him the cold shoulder and just watches TV. Christian goes back

to his Den and listens to Christian music and continues reading his Bible and praying, praying for direction, and for Christiana and his children. Things stay the same for the next few days and then Christian receives a phone call.

CHRISTIAN: Hello

MANIPULATOR: Hey buddy, this is Manipulator. Sorry it took me so long to get back to you. My sister's husband Head of Company wasn't at home when I visited last weekend. But I wouldn't leave you hanging. I told you I would do my best and I always keep my word. I went over last night and talked to him.

CHRISTIAN: What did he say?

MANIPULATOR: Listen, I don't like talking over the phone. Why don't you meet me later today? I'm meeting with a few friends at the Bar B Que Joint over on 4th Street. Can you meet me around 7pm I should be done with the meeting by then?

CHRISTIAN: I'm not

NARRATOR: Manipulator interrupts Christian

MANIPULATOR: Great, I'll see you then. You are going to like what I tell you this evening, and hey drive the Maserrari. I want to show it to someone.

CHRISTIAN: Yeh I guess, see you later.

NARRATOR: Christian is really distraught. He does not want anything to do with Manipulator after what happened the last time they met. Then suspecting he was the person that stole the money from the church that Pastor Faithful was blamed and fired for, made him more uncomfortable. But Christian realizes he might have good news about his old job. Maybe he can get him his old job back. He just wishes Christiana wasn't acting the way she is, so he can talk to her about this. He doesn't understand what has gotten into her. He goes looking for Christiana, but she isn't home. He checks the garage and the Maserrari is not there. He tries calling Christiana on the phone, but she doesn't answer, he calls again and again. He is really

uncomfortable meeting with Manipulator and doesn't want to do it. He really wants to talk to Christiana about it. Finally, Christiana answers her phone with a frustrated tone in her voice.

CHRISTIANA: Hello.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, where are you? I have been trying to call you to tell you something important.

CHRISTIANA: I went to the grocery store and ran into Seducer and we started talking. He said he might have a job for me with his company. He owns a Diamond import business. Christian, you wouldn't believe the money they make. It makes that China job seem like an entry level position.

CHRISTIAN: What are you talking about? You don't need to get a job and why are you talking to Seducer again, I don't trust him at all?

CHRISTIANA: I told you I ran into him at the grocery store, geez Christian. Have you become emotionally weak and insecure too? I guess they go together.

CHRISTIAN: Stop talking like that.

CHRISTIANA: Seducer said he's been thinking about our situation and wants to help for old times' sake.

CHRISTIAN: That's a lie. Christiana if he wanted to really help, he would offer me a job and not you. He's up to something Christiana. Don't you see that?

CHRISTIANA: Christian stop it, you're acting like an immature insecure child. That's what happens when you start messing around thinking you need God. You lose all of your own self esteem.

CHRISTIAN: Where are you?

CHRISTIANA: I'm at Seducer's house.

CHRISTIAN: What? What are you doing there? Leave there now, please.

CHRISTIANA: I can't. He drove and he's on the phone in his office talking to his suppliers in South Africa.

CHRISTIAN: Where is your car?

CHRISTIANA: I told you, he drove. My car's still at the grocery store.

CHRISTIAN: What is going on?

CHRISTIANA: Christian this is a great opportunity. I would be his personal assistant dealing with his distributors here in the United States

and I would get a percentage of their purchases. He works with some of the most well-known Jewelry stores in the country. I would be talking to their corporate buyers. Christian, I would get 10% of the existing business. Isn't that exciting?

CHRISTIAN: Please leave there now.

CHRISTIANA: I can't. I told you, I don't have my car.

CHRISTIAN: What is the address? I will come and get you. Just wait outside. Christiana, I don't feel good about this. I can hear the Spirit warning me.

CHRISTIANA: (laughing) you can hear the spirit? What in the world are you talking about? Christian, Seducer makes about \$100,000 a month from United States sales alone. Did you hear me Christian \$100,000 a month I would make \$10,000 a month? I could buy my own stuff. I wouldn't have to rely on you. It would be incredible. Seducer says, I would be great at it and when I am established, I could start calling on new accounts and make even more money.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, think about it. Why would anyone pay you \$10,000 a month just to keep in contact with company buyers? That's a \$15 to maybe \$20 an hour job. Christiana that's \$3,200 a month job., that's all that job should pay. Christiana, he is trying to buy you. Don't you see it?

CHRISTIANA: Stop it, oh he's off the phone I have to go.

NARRATOR: Christian drops down to his knees and realizes that none of his life is in his control and it never really was. He has learned how fragile life's circumstances are. At any given moment something can happen that you have no control over, and it can devastate your life. Your skills, abilities, will power and determination can't help you. The only thing that can help you is God. Christian starts praying and praying. He prays for a hedge of protection around Christiana and for her to see the weave Seducer is creating. About an hour later, Christian, gets a call from his daughter Jennifer.

CHRISTIAN: Hello Jennifer.

JENNIFER: Dad, I just called and talked to mom. I had to call her 3 times before she answered. She sounded flustered and then started crying.

CHRISTIAN: What? Is she Ok?

JENNIFER: She said she was. She said she was just leaving someplace and was waiting for a cab.

CHRISTIAN: Are you sure, she is ok?

JENNIFER: Yes, daddy what's going on?

CHRISTIAN: Everything is ok honey. Mom went to visit an old friend and I think she had car problems.

JENNIFER: Ok, well I'm over at Nicole's ok?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, that's fine Jennifer. Listen I going to hang up now so I can call mom, ok?

NARRATOR: Christian calls Christiana

CHRISTIANA: Hello.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana are you ok, Jennifer just called.

CHRISTIANA: Yes, I am. Christian I am so sorry.

NARRATOR: Christiana starts crying.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana what happened, is everything ok?

NARRATOR: There is Silence.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, are you Ok, what happened?

CHRISTIANA: Oh, Christian you were right about everything.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana take a deep breath. Are.... You.... OK?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, but you were right about him. When I said I was excited about working with him, I didn't mean with him. I meant about the job. But he took it that I meant with him. He had me sit in front of his computer and start pointing out sales numbers for the months and saying how he makes about \$200,000 a month with worldwide accounts. Well I made a big smile and he got up and walked behind me and started rubbing my shoulders and saying how great this would be. That I would be traveling with him when he visits the accounts. That I wouldn't believe the types of hotel suites he stays in. He showed me a picture of one on the computer and it's bigger than our house. He said he gets such a big suite

because he entertains the corporate buyers there with parties. Then he started saying things like, this is going to be just like the good old days, and he let me get away once but not again. And then it started becoming clear. It was like I had blinders on and couldn't see what was happening. Then my phone rang. It was Jennifer and when her picture showed up on my phone screen, it's like something snapped me out of it. I told him to get his hands off me and I ran out of the house. When I got outside, I called a cab. It just picked me up before you called.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana the important thing is you're ok right. You're ok right, nothing happened?

CHRISTIANA: I'm Ok, Christian and nothing happened. But Christian, he made everything sound so wonderful. It was like I wasn't me anymore, it was like I was someone else in a fairytale. It was like I was under a spell.

CHRISTIAN: Where are you at now?

CHRISTIANA: We're on the expressway, we just passed exit 17. So, I'm only 5 minutes from the house. Christian, I'm coming right home. I'm not going back to the store to get my car is that ok?

CHRISTIAN: Yes absolutely, come home Christiana.

A NARRATOR: few minutes later Christiana gets home and runs up to Christian and hugs him.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, I don't understand what happened, it's like I was under some sort of spell.

CHRISTIAN: I know the feeling. Christiana, that's how I felt when I was with Manipulator.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, is everything ok.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it is Christiana. But there are some things I need to tell you.

NARRATOR: Christiana and Christian go into the living room and sit down and Christian tells her about meeting Evangelist, Helpful, his talks with Police Officer Hopeful and his encounter with Self-Reliant and his experiences with the churches he visited and what he has learned.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, you mean this is all real. God is real. There really is a God and a Devil. And by denying there is a God, we are playing right into satan's hands?

CHRISTIAN: Yes Christiana, now you get it. When I first realized it, I thought, how can that be? Why hasn't satan tried making his big move sooner, why wait until now?

CHRISTIANA: Exactly

CHRISTIAN: See if this makes sense. Satan already had us convinced there was no God, so we weren't a threat to him, right?

CHRISTIANA: I guess so

CHRISTIAN: But satan is power hungry. Just having us deny there was a God wasn't enough for him. He wanted us to too start blaming God for everything that went wrong in our lives. Up until recently we were quiet about saying we didn't believe God existed. BUT, if satan could get us to start blaming God for our problems, then we would probably become more vocal. We would be more of a tool for satan to use and work through. Think about it Christiana. When Envy set me up and got me fired, I really wanted to hurt him. I wanted to hurt him really bad. That's not like me. Look at Bill, he sat on Envy's block for an hour considering going up to Envy's door and beating him up. That's not at all like him either. But none of those temptations worked. So then satan went after our kids. First Johnny get's beat up and framed by Envy's' kid. Remember how mad and furious we were? Envy's actions hurt our child. Christiana I really considered getting a baseball bat and beating the heck out of Envy. But I didn't and you didn't take any actions, did you? But remember how angry you were?

CHRISTIANA: No, I didn't. But I thought about it, a lot.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana satan is relentless. He wanted more. Just denying God's existence wasn't enough for him. He wanted us to blame God, to hate God, to make it our mission in life to destroy anything that God was involved with. And then little Jennifer. Those girls beat her up and hurt her so bad. We both knew it was because of Envy's kids. But Christiana again, neither you, I or Bill took matters into our own hands, did we?

CHRISTIANA: No Christian we didn't. I don't know where we got the will power to resist that temptation.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, listen to your words. You don't know where we got the power to resist that TEMPTATION. First where did that temptation come from and second where DID we get the power to resist it?

CHRISTIANA: Oh, my goodness. The temptations were from satan, I can see that clearly now. I can remember the feelings I had at that time. They were so mean and evil. Christian they were not me at all.

CHRISTIAN: Exactly and where did the power to resist them come from?

CHRISTIANA: Was it God?

CHRISTIAN: Yes Christiana, that was from God. That was the Holy Spirit, giving you strength to resist satan. Christiana that's how much God loves you. You denied His existence. You mocked Him. You ridiculed the people who loved Him. And yet Christiana, He still loved you and He was protecting you from doing something terrible. Do you see that Christiana?

CHRISTIANA: Yes.

NARRATOR: Christiana starts crying. Christian walks over and hugs her. A few minutes pass. Christian is praying for the Holy Spirit to guide him. Does he continue to talk to Christiana about God and if so what should he say? Should he bring out his Bible or will that push her away. Should he just stop for now and just sit with her and hold her hand? Then Christian feels a prompting he believes is from the Holy Spirit. But he wants to be sure. He knows he hasn't reached a point of knowing the difference between his own emotions and the Holy Spirit. He feels more confident about the prompting now.

CHRISTIAN: Can I tell you more?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, Christian go ahead.

NARRATOR: Christian tells Christiana about the purpose of Jesus birth, crucifixion, and resurrection, about the gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling in Believers. He tells her about the Fruit of the Spirit and His Gifts and Calling. He keeps stopping and asking Christiana if she understands and if it's Ok to continue, and she repeatedly says yes.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, God loves you and wants you to understand and accept that. Are you willing to accept Jesus as your Savior? Are you ready to accept Jesus into your heart?

CHRISTIANA: Yes Christian, I am.

NARRATOR: Christian leads Christiana through words of accepting Jesus as her personal Savior and repentance for her sins.

Christiana and Christian spend the rest of the evening hugging. Jennifer comes home a few hours later and sees them both sitting on the couch.

JENNIFER: Is everything ok?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, Jennifer sweetie, things have never been better and everything is going to be great.

JENNIFER: That's good mom, I was worried. But where is the car?

CHRISTIANA: Oh no Christian I left the car at the grocery store with all of the groceries.

NARRATOR: Christian laughs.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, it's ok, really. If that's the worst thing that happens to us today is that a few frozen things thaw out and go bad. Well, compare that to what could have happened to today.

CHRISTIANA: Thank you for being so understanding.

CHRISTIAN: It will be ok, let's call Bill to come home and we can use his car to go get the other car. When we get home, we can sort through the food. Then what do you say, we sit down with the kids and have a talk with them?

NARRATOR: Christian calls Bill who comes home and Christian and Christiana go to pick up the car.

Chapter 6

NARRATOR: That evening Christiana and Christian have a life changing talk with their kids. It was a long one, because Christian wanted to explain everything, he went through. He wanted them to understand everything that happened and that built up to Christian and Christiana accepting Jesus as their Savior.

Bill and Johnny were reluctant at first. Jennifer starts crying

JENNIFER: Mom, Dad I've never said anything, but when I was over at Shelly's house last year, she gave me a pamphlet about God. I read it and I accepted Jesus into my heart last year. I've been praying every day for you and dad and Johnny and Bill.

CHRISTIAN: Why didn't you tell us?

CHRISTIANA: Christian, how could she? We set such a terrible example always saying there was no God. She was probably terrified to say anything us. Oh, my baby Jennifer, I am so sorry. Bill, Johnny please come here and hug me. Boys I am so, so sorry, I was wrong, so very wrong.

CHRISTIAN: Boys, I'm sorry, I was a terrible example. I thought all there was to life was being a good person and making money. I thought I was strong enough, that I was smart enough, that I had enough skills, abilities, determination and will power to overcome any challenge I faced. I thought it was all about my abilities. I was so wrong, please forgive me.

NARRATOR: Christian starts crying. Which makes Johnny start crying and Bill turns away.

CHRISTIAN: Bill, please look at me, I'm sorry. Are you ok? Please son, talk to me?

NARRATOR: Bill turns around with tears in his eyes. He can sense the sincerity in his dad and mom's voice. The words were coming straight from their hearts and they were piercing his heart in some way that he couldn't describe.

BILL: Dad, I don't understand what I'm feeling. I feel confused, you guys have taught me since I was a little kid there was no God and only emotionally weak people need a God. But dad I feel something. Almost like something is tugging at my heart.

CHRISTIAN: Bill, that could be the Holy Spirit. Bill would you like to accept Jesus as your personal Savior.

BILL: Yes dad I would.

JOHNNY: Dad, mom I'm ready too.

NARRATOR: Christian helps lead Bill and Johnny to accept Jesus as their Savior and through repentance for their sins. Afterwards to everyone's surprise little Jennifer runs out of the room and then comes running out with a piece of folded paper.

JENNIFER: Mom, Dad can I read this?

CHRISTIANA: What is it honey?

JENNIFER: It's the prayer I've been praying every night for you guys.

CHRISTIANA: Yes absolutely.

JENNIFER: Thank You heavenly Father for sending Jesus to Earth to be the substitute for my sins, for going through such pain and suffering so that I can be saved from Hell. God thank you for saving my mom and dad and brothers, Johnny, and Bill. Please work in their hearts and let them know you are real. Amen

NARRATOR: Heartfelt words spoken from a child, a 10-year-old child brought complete silence. The kids ask Christian to share more about what he has learned from Evangelist and if they can him someday. Christian talks to the family into the night. Stopping occasionally to ask for their thoughts. He is amazed and thrilled at the level of understanding they have gained in just a few hours. On their way to bed for the night, Christian stops in his Den to turn off his computer and sees the little blue light on his cell phone on. He has some missed calls.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, I completely forgot about Manipulator. He called and texted me 7 times this evening and I didn't realize it. I left my phone in the Den.

CHRISTIANA: Well it's too late to call him now. Let's decide what to do in the morning. Our evening was far more important than you talking to Manipulator about your old job.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana go to bed and have the best sleep of their lives.

The next morning everyone comes down for breakfast, a little tired but they are all together.

BILL: When is the last time we all had breakfast together?

CHRISTIAN: It's been a long time. I didn't expect to see you up this early.

BILL: I'm really tired. But I wanted to be with everyone. It's like there is something special going on and I couldn't get Jennifer's prayer off my mind.

CHRISTIANA: Thank You Jennifer for being so diligent and not giving up on us.

JENNIFER: It's ok mommy, I knew God loves all of you and sooner or later, you would realize that.

CHRISTIAN: Well that is kind of embarrassing. Our 10-year-old daughter realized it and we didn't. What do you think of that guys?

CHRISTIANA: She is a special girl and we should all be grateful that she listened to God.

JOHNNY: Jennifer, I've heard you saying that prayer through the bedroom wall sometimes at night.

BILL: Dad can we all go and see if we can find Evangelist today? I would really like to see what he is like.

JOHNNY: Yea dad, I would to. What does he look like?

JENNIFER: I know what he looks like.

EVERYONE: WHAT?

JENNIFER: I met him.

CHRISTIAN: What?

JENNIFER: He was over at Shelly's house when I was there once.

CHRISTIAN: Did he talk to you?

JENNIFER: Shelly's mom and dad called Shelly into the family room one evening and I went with her and they introduced him to us. Shelly told him I was her friend and I was a Believer.

CHRISTIAN: What did he say?

JENNIFER: He asked if my parents were saved and I said no, and neither were my brothers. He asked if I was praying for you guys and I said sometimes and he said oh no, no, you have to be praying for them every day and then he offered to help me write out a prayer. He said I should say my prayer every night and that was the prayer I read you guys last night. Then he asked what your names were and said he would be praying too. That was it, then me and Shelly went to her room and played.

CHRISTIAN: Well I'll be. Christiana, go figure. It's like there is a hidden element of Believers all around us, praying for our Salvation and we don't even know it. You know, I wonder if Evangelist knows who I am and realizes I'm Jennifer's dad.

CHRISTIANA: This is almost like a movie or a book.

CHRISTIAN: I've only seen Evangelist at the Park a few times and that was in the afternoon, Why don't we plan on going down there this afternoon. How do you guys, feel about that?

NARRATOR: There was a resounding yes from everyone.

CHRISTIAN: Wait I have another idea. Police Office Hopeful, he is a Believer also. Remember I told you guys I met with him for coffee after I met Evangelist? Let's call him too.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, why don't we call Shelly's parents down the block.

CHRISTIAN: That's a good idea. What time is it?

CHRISTIANA: It's 8:30am now and Shelly's dad is probably at work. But maybe her mom is home.

CHRISTIAN: Do we have their phone number?

JENNIFER: I have Shelly's mom's number.

NARRATOR: Jennifer gives the phone number to Christian and he calls Shelly's mom.

SHELLY'S MOM: Hello

CHRISTIAN: Hello, this is Christian, Jennifer's dad.

SHELLY'S MOM: Hello Christian, how are you?

CHRISTIAN: I'm find thank you. I was wondering if your husband is home, I'm sorry I don't remember his name. I know we met you guys a couple times before and I apologize about not remembering your names.

SHELLY'S MOM: His name is PATIENCE and mine is JOY and as a matter of fact he is home. He has an appointment this afternoon a few hours away, so he is staying home this morning.

CHRISTIAN: Well, that's ok, I don't want to bother him. But can you ask him to call me sometime?

JENNIFER: Dad, can I talk?

NARRATOR: Christian hands the phone to Jennifer. Jennifer grabs the phone and excitedly screams.

JENNIFER: My mom, dad, and brothers all accepted Jesus as their Savior last night.

NARRATOR: Jennifer quickly pulls the phone away from her ear and Christian and Christiana can hear Shelly's mom screams Patience, Patience, Patience, come quick. Joy tells Patience that little Jennifer's family all accepted Jesus last night and her father is on the phone and wanted to talk to him.

PATIENCE: Hello.

JENNIFER: Hello, hang on here's my dad. Dad this is Shelly's dad.

CHRISTIAN: Hello, my name is Christian and I'm Jennifer's dad.

PATIENCE: Hello my name is Patience, I'm Shelly's dad.

CHRISTIANA: Put him on speakerphone.

BILL: Yea dad put it on speakerphone.

CHRISTIAN: Patience, do you mind if I put you on speakerphone, my whole family is here, and they all want to hear.

PATIENCE: Sure, go ahead.

CHRISTIAN: Let me start by thanking you for being such a good example to Jennifer. It is embarrassing that her mother and I were so prideful and thick headed. I just thank God for you guys.

PATIENCE: No problem at all and welcome to the family of God.

NARRATOR: Patience, Joy and Shelly give out a big and loud
YAAAAAAAYYYYYY

CHRISTIANA: I have so many questions. Christian has been filling us in on the last few weeks of his journey and the progress he has made. But we are thinking there has to be so much more. Christian said a man named Evangelist started it all downtown in the park and that you know him.

JOY: Yes, we know Evangelist very well. He led us to accept Jesus. I met him some years ago, in the park when I worked downtown. I would see him every day. The first time he gave me a pamphlet and then after that he would say hello as I walked past. I guess he could tell from the look on my face or maybe from the fact that I would always look away when I came close to him, that I didn't want to talk. But that didn't stop him. He was always there just saying good morning or hello as I walked by.

CHRISTIAN: I know the feeling. I actually walked across the street once to avoid him.

JOY: (laughing) I did that too. But it never seemed to bother him. Eventually, I started smiling and saying hello back to him. But I would never stop to talk to him. This must have gone on for about 2 or 2 ½ months. I just kept walking by him and never stopping to talk when he asked if I had time. I kept wondering who he was and how come he wasn't getting discouraged with everyone ignoring him. I finally stopped to talk to him. I asked him why are you out here every day, even in the rain. He said, people still need God even during a storm. In fact, sometimes that's when they people finally realize it. Pretty powerful thought isn't it.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it is.

CHRISTIANA: That sure describes our situation. I mean about being in the middle of a storm.

JOY: I'm sorry to hear that Christiana. But I'm glad you accepted Jesus.

CHRISTIANA: I'm sorry Joy, tell us more about Evangelist.

JOY: I asked him if he got paid you being out there every day. I mean he is out there every day in the morning and the afternoon. He said no one pays him and it's not about the money. I have to tell you; you don't find people committed like that every day. So, I assumed he must have been a minister or something. I asked where his church was, and he said right here and pointed to the ground. That gave me chills. I asked what do you mean and

he said that God loves me and wants to meet me right where I am. He said, if I'm not in a church, then he will meet me right here and he points to the ground again. I was speechless. I asked if he was an Angel or something (laughing). He said no, he was just a man, a man who knows how much God loves me and wants to help me. I asked what he meant by that and that's when he started telling me about Jesus and Salvation. You see, I was raised in a church. But it was kind of a turn off as I got older. Because everyone and I mean everyone was just going through the motions on Sunday. But this was different. He was different. There was something real about what he was telling me. He led me to accept Jesus as my Savior and I came home and told Patience.

CHRISTIANA: How did Patience react. I didn't handle it really well. Both Christian and I were absolutely committed to the fact there was no such thing as God.

JOY: I will let Patience tell you about how he felt.

PATIENCE: Listen instead of doing this over the phone why don't you guys come over for lunch, it will be a lot easier to talk. We and can Barbeque. Do you guys like Barbeques?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, we love them. But you have a meeting to go to don't you?

PATIENCE: Yes, I do, but it's ok. The meeting is at 4:00pm and it takes about 2 hours to get up there. So as long as I leave by 2pm, I will be fine.

NARRATOR: Christian looks around at his family and ask, what do you think guys?

Everyone says yes.

CHRISTIAN: That sounds great, I think we are all really hungry and not just for food (laughs)

PATIENCE: Do you need our address?

CHRISTIAN: No, I remember the house. You're the second from the corner right?

PATIENCE: Yes, how is 11:30 is that too early? This way we have more time to talk.

CHRISTIAN: That sounds great to us, see you then.

NARRATOR: Later that morning at lunch.

PATIENCE: Christian, what made you talk to Evangelist?

Christian explains the details of what happened at his former job and how he feels he was set up. But never mentions Envy's name. He explains about his conversation with Police Officer Hopeful and how he led him so far and then suggested he talk to Evangelist.

PATIENCE: I am sorry to hear that Christian. There are evil people in the world. We know Police Officer Hopeful really well.

BILL: Can you share some things that you feel would be important to us being new Believers in Jesus? If that's ok with everyone?

PATIENCE: Bill, that is a very wise idea. If you guys don't mind, maybe I can bring some further understanding to your walk with God.

NARRATOR: Everyone says yes

PATIENCE: There are some very important foundational things you should completely understand. First, do you completely understand that the Holy Spirit, which is God's own Spirit now lives in you as a Believer?

NARRATOR: They say yes.

PATIENCE: This is God's own nature and character living in you guys right now. You don't have to rely on your own fleshly or human peace or joy or patience or self-control. Sure, you want to use whatever you have on a daily basis. But it is the supernatural fruit of the Spirit that we should rely on and allow to flow through us. Always remember the Fruit of the Spirit is: Love, Joy, Peace, Faith, Patience, Goodness, Kindness, Gentleness and Self-Control. Now guys think about this what would you rather rely on? Your own strengths or the Holy Spirit?

NARRATOR: Everyone says the Holy Spirit.

PATIENCE: What most people don't understand is it's much harder for someone that is successful, or confident or has developed people skills to truly accept that truth. Do you understand why?

CHRISTIANA: Is it because they have become self-reliant and don't believe they need any help from anyone else or God.

PATIENCE: Exactly. Kids, do you understand what that means?

JOHNNY: Not exactly.

PATIENCE: Do you play sports?

JOHNNY: Yes, I play football, I'm a running back and I play shortstop in baseball.

PATIENCE: Does your coach ever have practices or ever step in to make suggestions on how you should do something different?

JOHNNY: Yes, all the time.

PATIENCE: How's your batting average?

JOHNNY: I'm really good. I have the highest batting average on the team and 3rd in the league. It's 320.

PATIENCE: Let's say one day, your coach invites an old college friend who happens to be the batting coach for a professional baseball team. After the batting coach watches you take a few swings, he approaches you and quietly ask if you want some pointers. What would you say?

JOHNNY: Are you kidding me? I'd say yes.

PATIENCE: Now just look at the Holy Spirit as your professional batting coach for every aspect of your life. Think about it. The ALL powerful, ALL knowing God, who can see every aspect of what is going to happen wants to advise you. Will you listen to Him?

JOHNNY: Yes absolutely.

PATIENCE: Does that make sense to everyone? Bill, do you understand?

BILL: Yes, I thought I did before. But that example really makes it clear to me.

PATIENCE: When we are younger, and we don't want to listen to our parent's direction we are called stubborn and we are punished. But when we become adults, there is no one to usually correct us or punish us, unless it's something illegal. People get prideful and as your mother said Self-Reliant. Sure, we say we need God. But our first reaction is to try figuring it out and doing things on our own. We rely on what we think is the right way of handling things, what the right words to say are and when to do it.

We should be relying on the Holy Spirit to guide us. I mean come on, if we believe God knows everything, then why don't we listen for His direction. Is that making sense to everyone?

NARRATOR: Everyone says yes

PATIENCE: When adults start becoming successful you often hear the term "self-made man" used a lot. Because they believe they did it all on their own and that is where the problem comes in. Self-made men, or self-reliant people believe they have all of the necessary skills, sales skills, people skills, determination, will-power, common-sense, etc. to accomplish whatever they want. So they don't understand what it means to relinquish their will to God and follow the Holy Spirit's direction. Christian, how do you feel about that?

CHRISTIAN: I'm getting a big wakeup call from this. I completely agree. Kids, I was always the top producer in the company. I won almost every award and contest. Whenever a challenging new customer was given to me, my first reaction was, I got this, I can sell ice cubes to an Eskimo. I now understand, I never left room for God. Over the last few weeks, I've noticed more and more what people refer to as the voice of God. Sometimes it's a feeling, sometimes you might literally hear the word stop, don't say anything, run or go ahead, or say something. But we have to be careful, because it could be our own emotions, it could be the Holy Spirit protecting and guiding us or it could be satan, wanting to use us to cause more harm than good. Is that right Peaceful?

PEACEFUL: It's absolutely right.

CHRISTIAN: I remember in the Bible it said the Holy Spirit actually stopped Paul from entering into a couple of different cities. It specifically said the Holy Spirit stopped him. It wasn't people that stopped him. It specifically said the Holy Spirit. I can't stop thinking about that. Paul was sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit to hear His warning or prompting to stop, don't do it, walk away and that could have protected him. That's the kind of relationship I want with God.

CHRISTIANA: Me to Christian.

PATIENCE: Does everyone understand what it means to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit?

NARRATOR: Everyone says yes.

PATIENCE: Does everyone understand that we have God's own supernatural peace living in us as Believers, God's own supernatural Faith living in us as Believers, God's own supernatural Self-Control living in us as Believers and the rest of His Fruit?

CHRISTIANA: I understand that now. I can see how the Holy Spirit's Self-Control stopped me from doing something bad to people that hurt our children. Because personally, I guess you would call that in the flesh, I really wanted to hurt them for hurting my babies.

PATIENCE: Exactly. So, we know we have the Supernatural Fruit of the Spirit living in us and we also have supernatural spiritual gifts.

JOHNNY: What are you serious, like superpowers.

PATIENCE: (laughing) Well I guess you can say they are superpowers. But flying isn't one of them. The Bible says the Holy Spirit has a call and gifts for everyone, no matter how young or old we are and the Holy Spirit never, ever takes them back. You see in the book of Romans chapter 11 and verse 29 it says.

“for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.”

Do you kids understand what irrevocable means?

JENNIFER: No.

PATIENCE: It means it cannot ever be changed or taken away. Pretty cool isn't it?

JENNIFER: Yes, what kind of present do I get?

PATIENCE: (laughing) Jennifer it's not actually a physical present, it's better than that. It's a supernatural spiritual gift. Let me explain it. There are different gifts and the Bible says every Believer in Jesus gets one. The Holy Spirit gives them out to each one of us. They are explained in the Bible in 1st Corinthians chapter 12 verses 4 through 11. It says the Holy Spirit WILL manifest one of the following gifts in each one of us: Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Miraculous Powers, Prophecy, Discerning different spirits Speaking in Tongues and interpreting tongues. Keep in mind this is all based on the individual Believer being sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit to be able to discern them and allow the Holy Spirit to manifest in their life. Let me explain them. First was Wisdom and

Knowledge, this doesn't mean book or intellectual wisdom or knowledge, it means supernatural wisdom and knowledge from God.

Next was Faith, and it means the supernatural faith from God. For example you guys will probably at some point read about Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt and when they get to the promised land, Moses sent out 12 spies to see what the promised land was and how strong the army was. Well 10 of the spies came back with a terrible and frightening report. They said how the army was like giants, they were strong, and there so many of them. They said their people didn't stand a chance. They were looking at the situation through their own eyes, their fleshly and human eyes. But two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb came back with a different report. You see in the flesh; through their own human eyes they would have seen the same things as the other 10 spies. But they saw things through the Supernatural eyes of God and they basically said, we can do this through the power of God. Did you notice they didn't say we can do this through their own strength or the amount of people they had. Because they were greatly outnumbered. But Joshua and Caleb said they can do this through the power of God. They knew that God guaranteed them victory. They just had to have Faith. The supernatural faith of God. That supernatural Faith would allow them to obey God and follow His directions even in the face of overwhelming odds. That is also a great example of the difference between being self-reliant and relying on God. Next was the gift of healing. Did you guys know that God provides a gift of healing to Believers?

CHRISTIANA: Are you serious? I thought those people on TV were just con artists.

PATIENCE: I'm not saying if the TV people or tent revival healers are phony or not. Some of them might be and some of them might really have a gift of healing. The Amplified Bible in Isaiah in chapter 53 verse 5 says:

But He was wounded for our transgressions (violation of Spiritual laws), He was crushed for our wickedness (that means our sin, our injustice, our wrongdoing) the punishment (that was required for our well-being fell on Him), And by His stripes (the whipping and wounds Jesus suffered) we are healed.

Do you see the Bible is telling us that Jesus death also provides us healing? I will explain more on that another time. There is a gift of healing and the right that every Christian has to be healed. They are two different things.

BILL: Wow.

CHRISTIAN: Now I have a question about that. Why don't we see that happening more often?

PATIENCE: Because it's not being taught correctly. It might be mentioned at times but being mentioned without belief is just empty words. I will talk more about this later, Ok?

NARRATOR: Everyone shakes their head in agreement.

PATIENCE: The next gift was Miraculous Powers. I want to also include the gift of Prophecy with this. I want to be clear. The Bible is NOT talking about fortune tellers, mediums, spiritist, or what seems like an innocent thing like Ouija boards or horoscopes, dark or white witchcraft or casting any type of spells bad or good ones. Those are not innocent practices, no matter what you've been made to believe. We have been completely desensitized by tv, movies and video games to believe these are just innocent fun things. They are not. None of those things are from God. Remember any type of spirit is either from God or satan. That's it, there are no other options. So, if it isn't from God, then it's from satan. Does everyone really understand the importance of what I'm warning you about?

NARRATOR: Everyone shakes their head yes.

PATIENCE: The Bible says these practices or any involvement in them is an abomination to God. You have to take this seriously. That is a very serious sin in God's eyes. Because people are trying to rely on some other source of power instead of the Holy Spirit. With or without their knowledge the power they are relying on is satan. Kids, I know there are movies, tv shows and video games that include some of these things and they make it seem cool and innocent and, in some cases, even good. But it's not. I want to stress this right now. If you have gotten involved in anything like this in the past, you must repent and apologize to God right

now and promise you will never, ever mess with any of it again. This is serious, even if it means not spending time with some friends because they are going to play a video game with that stuff in there.

CHRISTIANA: Oh, my goodness, I thought talking to a fortune teller was just innocent fun.

PATIENCE: Christiana, they are either con artist just stealing your money, or they are real. If they are con artist, then people are foolish to go to them. If they are real, then what type of spirit are they communicating with? What type of spiritual relationship are they opening into your life?

CHRISTIANA: Oh my. I need to repent for this.

PATIENCE: Let's take a few minutes of silence, so if you need to repent you can.

CHRISTIANA: Thank You very much for this Patience.

PATIENCE: We are called to be warriors for God. Bill, Johnny, Jennifer did you hear me, you are a warrior.

JOHNNY: I want to be a warrior. A good warrior. A warrior for God.

NARRATOR: Christiana leans over and kisses, Johnny.

CHRISTIANA: You are a warrior Johnny. Did you hear that Bill. You are a real-life Spiritual warrior.

BILL: Yea, that's pretty cool. Better than any video game.

CHRISTIANA: Johnny I am so sorry your dad and I have been so prideful and stubborn about God.

PATIENCE: There is also a spiritual gift to distinguish between good and evil spirits. I will cover these more the next time we talk. I want to cover a couple of other important details really quick. If that's ok?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, please do.

PATIENCE: I would like to share with you are Jesus final words on Earth before ascending to Heaven. Jesus could have said anything as his final words. But these are the last words he left as instructions for EVERY Believer, that includes you and me. Do you want to know what he said?

NARRATOR: Everyone quickly says YES. Bill gets up and moves his chair closer to the group so he can hear better. Christiana scoots up to the

edge of her seat and Johnny, Jennifer and Shelly get off their chairs and move closer to Patience and sit on the floor.

PATIENCE: Is everyone ready, these are Jesus final words. Let me read it and explain it to you. In Mark Chapter 16:14-20

Later He appeared to the eleven, as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

Did you notice Jesus specifically said, he who believes and he who doesn't believe? That means everyone who believes and everyone who doesn't believe. And the Jesus even told us what to expect. Look at the last few sentences: And these signs will follow those who believe. It doesn't say for only some who believe. It doesn't say those words are only for old people or only young people. It doesn't say only men or only women and it doesn't say only for the disciples that were with Jesus at the time. This is important because a lot of churches are wrongly teaching Jesus final words only applied to the disciples and those alive at that time. But if that was the case, that would mean that no one after that time could be saved, because it says who believes will be saved. To believe those verses are no longer truths, is literally stealing the power and authority of Jesus crucifixion and resurrection.

BILLY: I don't understand how preachers can say things that aren't in the Bible. Don't people see what they are saying isn't right?

CHRISTIAN: Bill, I think the problem is most people don't read the Bible. They just listen and believe whatever they are told by the minister. Is that right Patience?

PATIENCE: Yes, that's true Christian. But it's even sadder than that. You see there are people that read the Bible and see what it says. But when they question the minister or pastor they are told; those words are not for us today. Those words were only for when the apostles were alive.

BILL: But it actually says, what were the words again, something like he who believes? That says everyone who believes will be saved. So then who believes has to mean everyone who believes will also do the miracles that Jesus described, Isn't that right?

PATIENCE: Exactly Bill, I'm proud of you. But here is the saddest part of it all. PRIDE, pure evil, manipulative pride. Pride is one of satan's biggest weapons against people. Christians and Ministers who pridefully believe they have reached that ultimate relationship with God have to come up with a reason why people aren't healed when they pray for them. But the Disciples even taught us not to be prideful when it comes to seeing the power of the Holy Spirit manifest through them. If only Christian's would pay attention to what the Bible says. In Matthew 17: 18-21 it shows a man bringing his son to Jesus because the disciples couldn't heal the boy. There are actually 3 important points in these verses. First please watch how the disciples didn't try making excuses when they couldn't heal the boy. They didn't say, it must not have been God's will to heal him, or the boy or father must have sin in their life, or they must not have tithed, or God must be teaching the boy a lesson, or the sun must have been in their eyes. Everyone of those are pure nonsense. The disciples approach Jesus after the boy is healed and asked Him, why couldn't they heal the boy. They wanted to learn. They wanted to know what they were missing. No pride and no excuses at all. Every Christian should follow their example. There is no room in the Kingdom of God for pride. Next notice how the Bible says, Jesus rebuked, meaning cast out the devil from the boy and the boy was cured. Many, many ministers, and Christians ignore the fact that a lot of healings in the Bible involved casting out demons that were causing the illness or problem. Finally pay attention to Jesus telling the disciples why they couldn't heal the boy. It was because of their unbelief. Jesus says all you need is faith as a grain of mustard seed and you can move your

mountain, meaning your problem. But you can't have any unbelief. Because unbelief will render your faith powerless and ineffective. Now let me read it to you.

And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Always remember, it is not about what any man tells you about the Bible, including me or Evangelist. It's about what the word of God says. Does everyone understand? Bill do you understand that?

BILL: Yes, I do.

PATIENCE: Now let me add one more set of scriptures to really let the truth of what I've been teaching you sink in. The power of the Holy Spirit is living in you as a Believer. That means you really do have at least the same or more power in you than the Apostles did when they walked with Jesus. Does that sound hard to believe?

BILL: To be honest, it seems impossible. Does the Bible actually say that?

PATIENCE: Yes, it does. In the book of John chapter 14 verses 12 to 13, Jesus is speaking to His disciples and says:

Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Did you hear that? Jesus Himself said whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing and they will do even greater things than these. It's because when Jesus was resurrected and ascended to Heaven the Holy Spirit was released to enter and live in EVERY person who accepts Jesus as their personal Savior. Guys, the same power that created Heaven and Earth and rose Jesus from the dead now lives in you as a Believer. Being a Christian is not about going to a church building and singing a few songs and listening to someone talk. You have been empowered; you are a warrior. Being a Believer is about the Holy Spirit manifesting His Fruit

and Gifts through you. Let's all give thanks to God for His Mercy, His Grace and His Spirit.

NARRATOR: Everyone in the room starts praising God. A room where about half the people just 24 hours earlier didn't believe in God were being filled with the Holy Spirit. After they stop praying, Patience explains he will have to get ready to leave. As he is walking out of the room the doorbell rings.

PATIENCE: I have a big surprise for you guys.

NARRATOR: Patience leaves the room to answer the door. Everyone looks at each with a confused look on their face. Joy is looking at everyone smiling, and Shelly looks at Jennifer.

SHELLY: I know what the secret is.

NARRATOR: Patience reenters the room and behind him is Evangelist. Christian jumps up, Evangelist what are you doing here?

EVANGELIST: Hello Christian, my brother. Patience called me this morning and told me about your journey and the great news that your wife Christiana, (he turns to look at Christiana), I assume you are Christiana.

CHRISTIANA: Yes, I am. I've heard a lot about you.

EVANGELIST: You are in for an incredible journey. I hope you're excited.

CHRISTIANA: I am, I really am

NARRATOR: Evangelist looks over at Jennifer.

EVANGELIST: Hello Jennifer, do you remember me?

JENNIFER: Yes, I do. look my mom, my dad and my brothers Bill and Johnny.

EVANGELIST: Hello, Johnny.

NARRATOR: Evangelist walks over and shakes Johnny's hand

JOHNNY: Hello Evangelist.

NARRATOR: Evangelist then walks over to Bill and shakes his hand.

EVANGILIST: Hello Bill.

BILL: Hello Evangelist.

EVANGELIST: I want to say just how happy I am to meet everyone. You have a fine family Christian.

CHRISTIAN: Thank You.

EVANGELIST: Jennifer, God answers prayers, doesn't He?

JENNIFER: Yes, he does. I started to get discourage and Police Officer Hopeful told me to stay hopeful.

CHRISTIAN: Christian: Jennifer, when did you talk to Police Officer Hopeful?

JENNIFER: He came to visit me in the hospital when you and mom went to get a cup of coffee. But told me not to tell anyone he came.

CHRISTIAN: Well I'll be. Christiana, do you believe that? There were so many people praying for us, and we didn't even know it.

CHRISTIANA: I'm still trying to wrap my head around all that's happened in the last 24 hours.

CHRISTIAN: Evangelist, did you know I was Jennifer's father when we talked?

EVANGELIST: I didn't know for sure. But I felt something in my Spirit that someone or multiple people were praying for you.

PATIENCE: Guys, listen I'm sorry, but I really have to leave.

NARRATOR: Everyone says goodbye to Patience as he leaves.

EVANGELIST: I'm sorry, but I won't be able to stay long today, maybe 10 or 15 minutes.

BILL: Evangelist: Please before you leave can you share something with us?

EVANGELIST: Sure. As a Believer, the most important element is having the Holy Spirit manifesting in your life. Without that, you are powerless.

What you do or say is just of the flesh. It is hard for a lot of people to relinquish their will and let God be in control. We as people are conditioned to rely on our own talents and skills. Most people do not even understand how to allow the Holy Spirit to flow in us and through us. We hear churches talk about it and tell people that they should. But are we really seeing results? So, what's wrong? Either the Bible is a lie or most Christians, in fact I regretfully say the vast majority of Christians are missing something in their relationship with God. The obvious answer is Christians are missing something very important.

CHRISTIAN: I've been to a couple of churches and even as a new Believer I've been shocked on how wrong their teachings are. But the people smile, clap and shout Amen. It shocks me.

EVANGELIST: Most people don't base Biblical truths on what the Bible says but instead on what they see from people who they believe are religious people. They compare their walk with the Holy Spirit to the people they know or sit next to in church. In other words, people base their walk with God on if they are doing just as good as everyone else they know is. If they see or hear about the people in their church praying for sick people, but no one is healed, then they will accept and believe God doesn't heal everyone. But I guarantee you of this. When ONE person, just one person, are you listening to me Christian and Christiana? When just one person steps up, accepts and believes the power of the Holy Spirit and allows the Spirit to flow through them, and people start getting healed, marriages are miraculously saved, people miraculously are delivered from drug addiction, guess what? People will start knocking the doors down to get prayed for by that person. But more importantly other people will accept and believe the promises of the Bible are REAL. People will start turning their backs on the false teachers. Bill, Johnny, Jennifer listen to me. It only takes ONE person, just one. Joy and Shelly, you know this already. God is looking for people who are willing to stand up and say Heavenly Father let it be me. God is waiting for those people.

That should be one of your biggest goals, to connect with the Holy Spirit on a level so the Spirit can flow through you. Watch and see the supernatural gifts and supernatural Fruit of the Spirit flow in you and through you to others. That won't and can't happen to someone who refuses to believe it's real or that brushes it off when the Spirit tries

empowering them. God gave people free will and their thoughts, beliefs and decisions will determine if you will see the Holy Spirit manifest the promises of God in their life or not.

JOY: I went on a mission trip a few years ago to a foreign country. A few pastors from the United States put the trip together. The area we went to was quite a distance from the city. The pastors started holding meetings and by the end of the week hundreds of people accepted Jesus as their personal Savior. Pastors from small churches brought sick and handicapped people from their churches when word spread what was going on. I will never forget what I witnessed that week. I saw miraculous things happening that were physically impossible. I was right there, I saw it happening with my own eyes. On the flight home I asked one of the pastors why don't we see those types of miracles here in America. He said he wondered the same thing. He said he asked some pastors from the towns before we left. He said we was surprised at what he saw. They said, WHY? Isn't that what the Bible says will happen? They told the pastor they don't have hospitals or doctors offices on every corner. If someone gets sick or badly ill, it could take hours to get to a hospital. They said the people there have to rely and trust on the healing power of God or else they could die. The pastor said, it was the most humbling experience of his life. He said he thought at first the healings were because of his faith and relationship with God. But after talking to the pastors there he realized it was in spite of his doubt and unbelief. He said he kept thinking how he was shocked by the miracles. But the pastors there weren't, they were expecting it. He said it showed him, how much doubt and unbelief in the promises of the Bible he had. He kept saying, the people there believed the word of God unconditionally, they expected to be healed, and here I am a pastor and I was shocked to see God move. It was humbling, very humbling. Do you guys see what he experienced?

BILL: Yes, I do.

CHRISTIANA: Wow yes.

NARRATOR: Everyone else was shaking their heads in agreement.

JOY: I talked to the pastor a few months later and he was almost ready to leave the church. He said, when he came back, he tried sharing his

experiences from the other country with his church members and board. He tried explaining, he didn't really understand what faith was until he witnessed the people's faith over there. But his church didn't believe it was real. In their prideful minds, if God really did heal people and perform miracles, then God would be doing it for them. Talk about pride, do you see that? Some people believed the pastor, but felt it was some type of special occurrence. That sucked the life out of the pastor. He felt his lack of true belief in God's word and promises had caused him to lead the people in his church into a life of spiritual complacency. Unfortunately, that is the same situation that exists in most churches, complacency.

EVANGELIST: Joy, I know exactly who you're talking about. Sadly, I have heard so many stories like that from other pastor and missionaries. The sad part is some pastors and ministers will never come to that realization. Their church will be led down a path of complacency and never experience the power of the Holy Spirit living in them. You see Salvation is for you when die and the Holy Spirit is for when you are alive. Sorry, but I have to leave now. There is one thing I want to leave you with, please read Matthew Chapter 13 Verses 1 through 43. You can read the rest of the chapter if you want, but specifically those verses. In that chapter Jesus is saying the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you. How exciting does that sound? The secretes of the kingdom of heaven will be revealed to you in that chapter. You might have heard that or read it before. But please read it again and again. Until it really sinks in. But don't read it like you're reading a book. It's not to be read intellectually. It's not to be read like a novel or magazine article. Pray first that the Holy Spirit give you wisdom and understanding of its meaning. Goodbye everyone

NARRATOR: Evangelist leaves and Christian and Christiana, thank Joy for her hospitality and say goodbye and head home.

Chapter 7

NARRATOR: As they walk home words are spoken, but not to each other.

CHRISTIANA: Oh, Thank You Lord for loving me and protecting us.

CHRISTIAN: Holy Spirit, reveal more to me. Help me understand the words I read in the Bible, not in an intellectual way, but through the Spirit.

BILL: God, show me what my gifts are so I can help other people on their journey.

JENNIFER: Thank You God for saving my family

JOHNNY: God I want your Spirit to manifest in me, I want to be that person that is the example for everyone else.

BILL: Yes, God me too, me and Johnny both. We want to be the examples. We want your spirit to work through us.

NARRATOR: The next day Christian calls Manipulator.

CHRISTIAN: Hello Manipulator.

MANIPULATOR: Christian, I'm really upset with you. You never returned my calls or texts. You embarrassed me. I had a meeting set up with Head of Company about them accusing you of stealing the pharmaceutical supplies and you don't even call me back. What's with you?

CHRISTIAN: I'm sorry Manipulator, I really am sorry. What did he say?

MANIPULATOR: He wanted to talk to you personally. If you're going to guarantee me you will not pull another stunt like you did yesterday and you will show up, I will call him back.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, please call him back.

NARRATOR: After they hang up, Christian tells Christiana that he called Manipulator and the Head of Company wanted to meet with him.

CHRISTIANA: That's good news. Be careful around Manipulator, OK?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I will be.

NARRATOR: Later that day Manipulator calls Christian back

MANIPULATOR: Ok Christian, I called him back. I told him your phone battery died and you didn't realize it until this morning. I told him you were very apologetic about missing the meeting. He said he will still meet with you. I set it up for Friday evening. I will text you the details after he lets me know.

CHRISTIAN: Ok, Manipulator thank you.

NARRATOR: Christian spends the day sending out resumes and spending time reading the Bible. Later that day, him and Christiana go grocery shopping. While stopped at a traffic light, they hear their names being called. They look to the side and see their old friends Doubt and Unbelief.

DOUBT: Hey guys pull over.

NARRATOR: When the light changes green Christian goes through the intersection and pulls into a parking space along the curb. Christiana and Christian get out of the car.

UNBELIEF: How are you guys doing?

CHRISTIAN: We're doing really good Unbelief. How are you and Doubt doing?

DOUBT: We're doing ok so far.

CHRISTIAN: How long has it been?

DOUBT: I think the last time I saw you was at the mother daughter party at school with the girls about 4 years ago before we moved.

CHRISTIANA: Yes, I remember that. You got up and started doing the twist and embarrassed your daughter, remember?

DOUBT: Yep, I remember. I didn't think I was that bad (laughing).

CHRISTIAN: So, Unbelief, what have you been doing, still golfing?

UNBELIEF: My golf game, well not so good. I'm taking lessons now and the instructor says I'm getting much better. But I don't really believe him. I played last week and parred the first two holes, but I knew that had to be just luck and I wouldn't be able to keep that up. In fact, I was playing with Pliable. Do you remember him?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I do.

UNBELIEF: He is the most likeable guy I know. Everyone likes him. No matter what he believes about something, if someone disagrees with him, he ends up changing his mind and agreeing with them. What a likeable guy.

CHRISTIAN: As long as he keeps changing his beliefs to get along with everyone, no one will ever have to argue with him.

UNBELIEF: Well, after paring the first two holes, I told Pliable, I know I'm going to choke. Something inside of me told me things would go bad and you know what? I hooked the very next tee shot 2 fairways over. I didn't get another par, all bogies and double bogies. I don't how the golf instructor can say he's an expert, and to think he is the instructor for about a dozen professional golfers. But I knew better. Something inside of me told me, he was wrong when he told me I was getting better and there was the proof.

CHRISTIANA: Where are you guys going?

DOUBT: We're going to get some coffee and pie at the diner. I would ask you guys if you would like to come with us, but I know you will probably just say no.

NARRATOR: Christiana looks over at Christian for some type of sign of agreement or not.

UNBELIEF: Where are you guys going?

CHRISTIAN: We're going grocery shopping.

UNBELIEF: Come with us. You can go grocery shopping later. Everything will still be there. It's not like there is going to be a run on toilet paper, hand sanitizer or something.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana what do you think?

CHRISTIANA: I'm good with it. I haven't talked to Doubt in years.

NARRATOR: The four of them walk to the diner and have a seat at a table by the window so they can watch the people walk by. It's one of Christian's favorite things to do.

UNBELIEF: So, what's new with you guys?

CHRISTIANA: Geez, where do we begin.

CHRISTIAN: It's been an interesting few weeks. Unbelief, are you still working in Real Estate?

UNBELIEF: No I left there. It was the same story as the car dealership, insurance sales, and the MLM company. They tell you that you can make a lot of money. But I can know based on all of my past experiences, it's probably just hype. , I never believe them. But I try anyway and everything it's the same results. Every time I figure I will give company the benefit of the doubt and try it, even though I don't believe them. Really, ask Doubt. I've been right every time.

DOUBT: He's telling the truth. Each time, he told me, you know I really don't believe them. But I'm going to give it a try for a while. You know test the waters, so to speak. And every time he was right. They were all exaggerating or lying about the possible money. Seriously, how much more can someone ask from Unbelief? He keeps trying.

UNBELIEF: That's right. No one can say I don't give people the benefit of the doubt. That's for sure. Now, my latest experience is another example of people over hyping things. I had one family that was moving here from out of town. They were really interested in a house that I showed them. It was exactly what they were looking for. After we walked outside the house, they said they wanted to meet that evening at 7pm to put in an offer. I told them I was really surprised they were interested in the house because I thought the front of the house looked ugly. They said they thought it looked unique. Well, let me tell you, I walked them out to the street and had them look at the house again and pointed out, to most people driving by it's going to look like it was just pieced together. Now, do you believe, they disagreed with me? I kept trying to explain to them, the front of the house is actually ugly. I told them; I'm not trying to change their mind. I want to sell them a house. But they should think about it. Well you are not going to believe this. They never showed up at my office that evening to put in an offer. I tried calling and calling. But they never returned my phone call. Now, listen to this. I actually called Doubt when I got home that afternoon, that something inside of me just doesn't believe they are going to buy that house. I couldn't put my finger on it. But I just know it wasn't going to work out and it didn't.

CHRISTIAN: No kidding. I wonder what happened?

UNBELIEF: I have no idea. But I knew something would go wrong. The office manager called that evening to find out how things went with the offer and I told him, the people blew me off, just like I knew they would. I told him, I never believed they were serious buyers. Now check this out. The office manager tells me, my problem is I'm negative and I never believe things will work out. That I have no faith. Who is that guy to be making accusations like that? I am one of the most positive people I know. I have faith, or I wouldn't keep trying. Every time I start something, I just know it's not going to work out. Wouldn't you say that's being pretty positive about my beliefs?

CHRISTIAN: Wow, sorry to hear that Unbelief.

UNBELIEF: So, what's new with you guys?

CHRISTIAN: Well I'm looking for a job. Christiana and I and the kids kind of had a life changing experience recently.

DOUBT: A life changing experience?

CHRISTIANA: Yes.

UNBELIEF: Well Christian, tell us about it.

CHRISTIAN: Well to make a long story short. I don't know if you guys know this or not, but Christiana and I were absolutely against any idea of God. Then one day in the park I met someone.

NARRATOR: Unbelief starts laughing and interrupts.

UNBELIEF: Wait you met someone in the park, let me guess. You met God,

CHRISTIAN: No, I didn't meet God. Well wait I guess I did in a way. But anyway, I realized there really was a God and that Jesus was real and He gave His life so we could all be forgiven of our sins.

UNBELIEF: Do you really believe that? Do you guys really believe that God is real and all loving? If that's the case, why does all the bad stuff keep happening to us?

NARRATOR: Christian starts to answer, and Unbelief interrupts him.

UNBELIEF: Christian, be careful or your kids will get wrapped up in this. We know a family that started going to church and their child got sick. The

pastor and the people came over to pray for the child and he died the next day. Did you guys hear me, the pastor, the head of their church prayed for the kid and he still died. Where was God then?

CHRISTIANA: Unbelief, believe me, we used to feel the same way.

DOUBT: Christiana, there is no way, that any loving God that has control of everything would allow bad things to happen to good people. No way. I doubt it. Maybe there is a God. But either he isn't in control of everything or obviously doesn't love everyone.

CHRISTIANA: I don't know how to answer that, but I just know He is real.

DOUBT: There you go. You don't know how to answer it. Do you know why? Because there is no proven answer, there is just your feeeeeelings. Christiana, just consider maybe you're wrong. Maybe even if there is a God, he can't do what everyone says he can do. Christiana, you gave birth to your kids, do you have complete control over their lives, their actions, what they think?

CHRISTIANA: Well no.

DOUBT: And neither can any God. Listen we were in a church for over 20 years. 20 years guys. We've seen it all. The phoniness, the hypocrisy, the false promises, all of it. I really doubt anyone with common sense really believes what they say tell people they believe. I really doubt it.

UNBELIEF: The biggest problem with trying to justify there's a God is, it gets your hopes up and you start believing things will work out for good. Then you get a false sense of security. You get your hopes up and then your devastated by the disappointment. Just look around, if God really had control of everything, if healing was real, if the fruit of the Spirit was real, then where is it?

CHRISTIAN: Well it's

NARRATOR: Unbelief interrupts him again.

UNBELIEF: I'll tell you where it is. It's nowhere, because it doesn't exist. Those people are trying to convince you that you're just not good enough to do things on your own. That you need to rely on a God that never comes through for people. I don't believe any of it anymore. How can they

convince you Fruit of the Spirit or His gifts are real, when we never ever see them manifest? Where is it Christian? Where is it?

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana are now having seeds of doubt planted by a very, very confident Doubt and Unbelief and are left speechless. A few minutes pass and after finishing their coffee, they say their goodbyes. Christian and Christiana get back into their car and without saying a word drive around the block and head straight home, ignoring the grocery shopping. Not a word is said in the car between Christian and Christiana as they pull the car into the garage.

They both spend the day completely quiet sitting in front of the TV. They aren't really paying attention to what is even on. They go to bed that night very confused with a heaviness, a very real heaviness on their hearts. They wake up in the morning with that same heaviness. But Christiana is also dealing with feelings of anxiety. An uncomfortable feeling of anxiousness and she doesn't even know why.

CHRISTIAN: Good morning kids, how's everyone?

NARRATOR: The kids answer their doing good. All but Bill who is still in bed.

CHRISTIANA: Sorry everyone breakfast is going to be late. I burned the eggs and the bacon. Christian I forgot to put coffee in the pot before turning it on. I didn't even realize I was putting sugar in cups of plain hot water. I didn't sleep well last night, and I guess I'm half a sleep.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, what's wrong?

CHRISTIANA: I don't know. I feel a heaviness. I just feel anxious. and a bit confused about things.

CHRISTIAN: That talk with Doubt and Unbelief really got to me. I thought my faith was so strong and yet they were able to make me doubt things so easily. Was I ever really a Believer? Did I just get wrapped up in the hype? Is God, I mean Is there a, I mean, I don't know what I mean right now.

CHRISTIANA: Let's just have breakfast and watch TV, to get our minds off of things.

CHRISTIAN: Sounds good. Or how about taking a drive.

CHRISTIANA: Yes, that sounds much better. Let's get out of the house for a while.

NARRATOR: Christiana and Christian finish breakfast and then head out for a drive. They are driving around for a couple of hours not talking at all, just listening to the radio. Instead of listening to Christian music they are listening to some older music from when they were younger. They start off heading south and then go west and then head north. They eventually realize they are only a few miles away from the lake.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana do you think we should call Faithful and Peaceful about what just happened?

CHRISTIANA: I don't know. Wouldn't it be embarrassing?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, a bit. But I feel like I have such a burden and it's weighing me down. I don't know why. I don't understand it.

CHRISTIANA: Then let's not do it.

CHRISTIAN: Ok, let's just take a drive around the lake and head home.

NARRATOR: A little later.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, I have a feeling like we need to talk to someone. I feel satan wants to keep us separated from other Believers right now that could help us. I really feel the longer we isolate ourselves from Believers, the more my burden and your heaviness will grow.

CHRISTIANA: But not Faithful and Peaceful, that will be embarrassing.

CHRISTIAN: Then who do you think we should talk to? Should we call Manipulator and ask his opinion or Envy? Christiana, I really think Faithful and Gentleness are the perfect people to talk to about this. We have to talk to someone we trust that will give us honest information.

CHRISTIANA: But will they give us honest information, or will they just try to brainwash us.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana are you serious? Have you fallen that far?
Christiana starts crying.

CHRISTIANA: I don't know how far I've fallen, but I, I, don't know.

CHRISTIAN: I'm calling Faithful. Christiana. If we were sick, we would call a doctor right?

CHRISTIANA: Yes.

CHRISTIAN: Even if we called or visited a doctor, we wouldn't have to do what he tells us to do. We could still make our own decision on what to do. But at least he could give us some insight to what's going on. I feel the same way right now. I don't know where this burden I feel came from. But I think it originated from meeting with Doubt and Unbelief yesterday.

CHRISTIANA: Ok, give them a call.

NARRATOR: Christian calls Faithful. No one answers, so he leaves a message telling Faithful something happened yesterday that really disturbed them and they are very confused and troubled, and they are hoping they could talk to him. Christian and Christiana complete their drive around the lake. But still haven't heard back from Faithful and decide to start heading home.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, now I really wish we could have talked to Faithful and Gentleness.

CHRISTIAN: I do too. I wasn't sure about it in the beginning, but this burden just seems to be getting heavier and heavier.

NARRATOR: A few minutes later Faithful calls.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Hello Christian. Sorry it took so long to call you back. I was counseling with someone on the phone.

CHRISTIAN: I understand, do you feel like doing it again?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I heard your message. What happened?

CHRISTIAN: I didn't think anything of it in the beginning, but it really affected me, and Christiana is really troubled.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Your message said you were up around here are you still close by?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, we just started heading home. We're about 10 minutes from the restaurant on the lake.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I really don't want to meet at a restaurant to talk. Can you come by our house?

NARRATOR: Christian looks at Christiana for her reaction. Christiana nods yes

CHRISTIAN: Yes, we can do that. I remember where your house is. We will see you soon.

NARRATOR: A few minutes later Christian and Christiana are pulling into Faithful and Gentleness's driveway. Faithful and Gentleness are both standing on the front porch waiting for them and immediately start walking up to meet to their car. With a big smile, they give them both a hug. It's a hug that Christiana doesn't want Gentleness to stop.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Hello friends, come on in.

NARRATOR: They all walk inside and settle in the living room.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Tell me what's going on.

NARRATOR: Christian tells them about their meeting with Doubt and Unbelief yesterday. He explains about the emotional burden he has been carrying since yesterday and the heaviness and anxiety Christiana is feeling.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Before we even start talking, I want Gentleness and I to pray for you.

NARRATOR: After they pray, Faithful starts talking to them.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: You have learned an important lesson. One that a lot of Christians, both new and experienced do not rebound from. They crawl into a hole and fall further and further into the pit. Rather than immediately turning to God, they look for distractions as you guys did. Whether it's TV, the internet, drinking, or whatever. But you guys will be ok. Do you hear me? You guys will be ok. You did the right thing by calling us when you did. Now let me explain what happened and what you are experiencing if that's ok?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, absolutely tell us.

CHRISTIANA: Yes, thank you so much for reassuring us that everything will be ok.

GENTLENESS: It will Christiana. We have seen this a lot before in our Ministry. Unfortunately, most people try to deal with it by themselves. But they don't have the Spiritual understanding, wisdom or discernment to see through the lies of the deceiver. But in most cases, we all need someone. Doubt and Unbelief are satan's weapon against people.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Let me start by stressing, no matter how much faith you think you have, no matter how spiritually strong you think you are, no matter how good of a relationship you think you have with God, Doubt and Unbelief will render your faith powerless and ineffective. Once Doubt and Unbelief can get a seed planted in you, it opens a door for satan's other fruit. Do you understand about the Fruit of the Spirit?

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana say yes.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Well, satan also has fruit. But his are destructive. They consist of things like Doubt, Unbelief, Fear, Anxiety, Greed, Jealousy, Hate, Unforgiveness, Hopeless, Discouragement and more.

CHRISTIANA: Yes, I have had that happen to me. I have felt anxious during the night and this morning. Then it started feeling like fear.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: The Bible shows us there are good Spirits, Angels and evil spirits known as demons. Satan is incredibly good at using people to do his work. Did you ever hear the verse Ephesians 6:12?

CHRISTIANA: I don't think so.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Ephesians 6:12 says:

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Did you hear that? Our struggles are against powers of this dark world and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. satan works through people to do his dirty work and plant seeds. Then once a seed has been accepted by someone, satan can water it and build on it, until it takes root. It's kind of like a computer virus. Once some viruses are in a computer they open a door for other viruses to affect your computer. They are called

Trojan viruses. Have you ever run a computer scan and your computer had not just one, but multiple, even dozens or hundreds of other viruses in it? That is how satan works. Once he gets a virus planted in your mind, it opens the door for more viruses. It might start with a seed thought of anxiety, then fear is added, then with each new situation more seed thoughts are planted like unforgiveness, anger, hate, greed, impatience, etc. And the longer they are there unchallenged, the stronger their roots get. Meaning strongholds exist that the person is completely unaware of. I mean completely unaware of. The person will even get defensive and argumentative if the idea is even brought up that they might be dealing with some strongholds like, fear, anxiety, bitterness, anger, impatience, unforgiveness, etc.

CHRISTIAN: I am very aware of how that works. Christiana do you understand that?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, I do, and it makes absolute sense.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: What happened yesterday was your friends planted a seed of doubt and unbelief in your mind about God's promises. But thank God, you acted before they had a chance to take root and become a stronghold. Now Christiana, those feelings of anxiety, have no power or control over you. It is a spirit of the doubt and unbelief that satan had someone plant in your mind. The more you questioned your relationship with God, or the true deity of God, the more that seed got watered. If you don't remember doubt and unbelief will render your faith powerless and ineffective. Do you see how that happened?

CHRISTIAN: Yes. But how? I've been praying, I've been reading the Bible. How did it happen?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: If a 5-year-old child hit a 2-year-old child would it hurt him?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, of course.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: But if a 5-year-old child hit a 25-year-old man, it probably wouldn't bother him at all. Right now, you guys are like the 2-year-old child being hit by a 5-year-old. In most cases it's going to hurt. But if you continue to grow in the Lord through reading the Bible and prayer, you will be growing every. Before you know it, you will be like the 25-year-old, laughing when you get hit. Does that make sense?

CHRISTIAN and CHRISTIANA: Yes

PASTOR FAITHFUL: But keep in mind, even a 5-year-old child can hurt the 25-year-old man if he catches him by surprise. But, if he's healthy, he will bounce right back. Our job as the church is to help our people grow from a 2-year-old in the Lord to a 25-year-old in the Lord as quick as possible. How does that sound?

CHRISTIANA: That sounds great.

CHRISTIAN: I'm all for that. How long will it take?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: That's up to you. It could take weeks, months, years or never. Unfortunately, I've noticed most believers are stuck at the 2-year-old phase.

CHRISTIAN: But, why does that happen?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Because, unfortunately most churches are focused on attracting and keeping people more than their real growth in the Holy Spirit. A lot of the churches put new believers through an 8 week or a 16-week new member classes. But the problem is what those classes focus on. A lot of these classes are focused on teaching why their denomination or church is better than the rest. It's basically a self-serving platform, so new people don't consider leaving and going to another church. Some churches teach the class like it's a history class, providing an overview of the Bible. None of that helps a new believer grow in the Holy Spirit. I personally believe, the most important thing to teach people in the first few weeks is about the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. They need to be specifically led from being a 2-year-old spiritually to a 25-year-old spiritually as soon as possible. You can lay a strong foundation in the first few weeks if it's done properly and build from there. If people are growing in the Spirit, they won't consider leaving the church and going somewhere else. So, the church doesn't have to worry about their self-promoting efforts. But spreading information out here and there over 8 or 16 weeks has destroyed more Christian's growth than you can imagine. Either they will be repeatedly attacked with challenges, with no knowledge of how to deal with them, or they will be led into a life of complacency. Never really experiencing the Holy Spirit living in them. I have heard so many believers say, the Holy Spirit only manifest in someone when they are facing a terrible devastating situation. I completely disagree. I think the only reason that is the only time most believers experience the

manifestation of the Holy Spirit's peace, joy, love, etc. is because that is the only time they relinquish their will to Him. It seems that most people, even believers are so set in their ways, so independent, so stubborn the only time they relinquish their will to the Holy Spirit is when they are completely and totally broken emotionally. And that is sad. That is heart breaking, because it doesn't have to be that way. In fact, it shouldn't be that way. I am a firm believer in true one on one discipleship. Not being done by just the nice people in church. But, being done by Spirit filled, powerful warriors of the Kingdom of God. Keep this in mind. Most people will never spiritually grow beyond the person leading them. So, any person doing any type of pastoring, leading, mentoring or discipling must be a Spirit filled believer. For example, how many churches led by a pastor that doesn't really believe the Fruit and Gifts of the Holy Spirit are real and should be constantly manifesting in a believers life, will have people in their church have the Holy Spirit manifesting daily in their lives?

CHRISTIAN: I can understand that.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Would you feel the same way if the church with all of the friendly and nice people had an incredible music ministry team and Spirit filled church only had 2 people singing, what church will people flock too?

CHRISTIAN: If they had nothing else to compare it to. If all the churches in the area were the same with nice friendly people probably the one with the good music ministry. But if there was a real Spirit filled church, not one that just claimed to be, but was really and the Holy Spirit was manifesting through the people in the church. I think that would attract a lot more people. I mean, isn't that what people are really looking for.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Only some people Christian. Some people are happy being entertained like they were at a concert. They are only there because of a feeling of obligation. That is why the people that are doing the discipling have to be real Holy Spirit filled believers. Or it turns into another a social or intellectual experience. Where people are just enjoying their time together and there is nothing wrong with that, but that's not what their time together is about. Or it turns into a college class, where the new people are overwhelmed with one scripture verse after another. Neither of those examples will develop strong believers that people will see the Holy Spirit manifesting through them.

Look at the direction, the training the discipling you have been getting from people like Evangelist, Shelly's parents Peaceful and Joy, Police Officer Hopeful, Gentleness, and myself. We used to have 6 families that were specifically trained as disciples. They would meet with each other as a group once a week, too stay sharp and prepared. They were always praying and ready to step in, lead and disciple any new people that attended our church. They were always ready to provide new people with the same knowledge and direction you have been getting from people. They would offer to meet with the new people 2 to 3 times a week for a few weeks and then weekly for another month or two. They were committed to be there for the new person until they were well rooted in the word of God and had a firm foundation for their Spiritual growth. I want to mention, they were not all deacons or elders in the church. They weren't all the nice people or main volunteers in the church. There were many people that wanted to be part of that team, but I didn't believe they were ready. The discipleship team had the responsibility of taking a new person by the hand Spiritually and guiding them on their first steps and making sure they were growing. If they felt, the person was falling off or backsliding, they would ask them if they could invite another person or two the next time they met to pray with them and then talk more. We take a person's Spiritual growth very seriously and do you know why?

CHRISTIANA: Because in God's eyes they are like infants that need Spiritual nurturing and care. Just like an infant needs physical nurturing and care.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Exactly Christiana. Too many churches take a position that a new believer is like a rose. Just leave them alone and they will grow by their self. People are not roses. Roses don't have financial problems, family problems, work problems, health problems. Roses don't have anxieties, fears, anger, bitterness, sadness, loneliness. Roses are not under attack from people being used by satan to cause them to stumble, fall or even be destroyed. As the church and especially as a pastor we have the responsibility of taking care of God's children spiritually. This isn't a game, or competition. It isn't an opportunity to show off a building or things. It's a very important responsibility, one that sadly a lot of pastors and leaders don't really understand. There are going to be a lot of shocked pastors when they meet with God face to face. It will be a sad day when

some of them finally realize what they have done. When they realize how many people they've spiritually hurt because of their own selfish philosophies. That is why our discipleship team takes their responsibility so seriously.

They understood their role was vital to the success or failure of the new believer's walk with the Holy Spirit. They knew they could be the difference between the person walking in the power and authority of the Holy Spirit or being complacent and walking through life as a victim to satan's attacks.

CHRISTIAN: WOW. I love that. I can't even begin to explain how important everyone has been to us.

CHRISTIANA: We would never have made it to this point, if it wasn't for the help, we received from everyone. We would have slid back to not believing in God or believing there was a God, but He is a part time God. Sometimes He gets involved and sometimes he doesn't. We would never have understood it's up to us to allow the Holy Spirit to manifest.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I hope you realize satan has no control, power, or authority over you if you are rooted in the word of God. You have the power to deflect satan's fiery arrows with your shield of faith. But don't settle for being a punching bag deflecting satan's arrows all day. You want to attack and destroy those arrows with the word of God. We sincerely want to set believers free from the chains of complacency and powerlessness that satan has deceived them into walking in. Too many believers live in a world where they say they believe in God, but they are powerless. They say they believe in the Holy Spirit living in them. But they deny His Fruit and authority. They walk through life being a punching bag always on defense always weary from the battle. But the Word of God, the Bible is their offensive weapon. The Bible says it is their sword of the Spirit. Christiana, Christian do you understand what I'm saying?

NARRATOR: Christiana and Christian say yes

PASTOR FAITHFUL: In Ephesians 6:10-18 it says:

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the

devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."

Did you hear it says to pray in the Spirit on all occasions?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, but I don't understand why praying in the Spirit is necessary?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: God is a Spirit and He wants us to worship him in Spirit and in Truth. In the book of John 4:23-24 it says:

"... true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

Christian, Christiana most churches ignore and even deny the importance of praying in the Spirit. So, if they are not teaching about praying in the Spirit or if they are teaching about it with no proof of His power. Then in people's minds, it's not real. It is powerless. It's important for it to be taught. But it's just as important to understand people have to be doing it. Especially church leaders and ministers or else it's just lip service. If they don't, then the people will not take it seriously and they will not follow one of the most important instructions in the Bible for Believers. I have actually replaced leaders in our church that did not agree with that Biblical teaching. I told them, I can not have them as a leader. They can continue to attend the church and I hope at some point they accept and see the Holy Spirit manifesting in their life. But if they do not agree and believe in one of the most vital foundational positions of the Bible, then maybe they

should find a church that they agree with. His feelings were really hurt and he caused a big fuss with the board. I told the board, we cannot jeopardize the entire foundational beliefs of our church because it might hurt one person's feelings. It was after that; the board took their position against confronting church members. Which opened the door to the families that came in and caused the problems.

CHRISTIAN: This is all so empowering. I can see why the Bible says we perish for lack of knowledge. Apparently, a lot of believers are putting their trust in a church's system, instead of the Bible.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: That is completely right. Sadly, there are churches that rely completely on manmade systems. There are churches that say they are anti manmade system. But they don't rely on the Holy Spirit either. They feel it's not their job to try to fix people or even help people. They don't do a thing to really help guide and shepherd the people so they can hear God. It would be like you're taking a cross country trip with your family in a car. Something start's going wrong with your car. It could be something serious. You get off the expressway and pull into a beautiful large gas station with 6 bays to repair cars. You tell the repair shop owner you're having trouble and he tells you and your family to have a seat in their waiting area. He comes back a few minutes later and says, ok you're ready to go. Your bill is \$14.57. You're shocked because it was so easy. You ask what was wrong, what did they do? The owner says, they filled up your car's gas tank. When you ask, did not having a full tank of gas cause all of the shaking in the steering wheel. He replies no, of course not. You stress, you are driving cross country with your wife and little children and you need help in fixing the car. His response is, oh we don't fix things here. We just give you gas and send you on your way. When you ask about the 6 repair bays, he says, that's for our personal family cars. He turns to walk away and says good luck, have a nice day and stop back again on your way home. That is how some pastors run their church. They see themselves like a gas station on your journey through life. Incredibly sad.

CHRISTIAN: I agree. Don't they realize people are literally putting their lives in their hands. Don't they understand the pressure a husband feels because of the responsibility of watching over his wife and children?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Maybe they do or maybe they don't. I can't answer that. All I know is there are pastors like that out there. That is not what the

Bible describes as a Pastoral leader. It's a Bible class teacher. People have to be taught and led to understand our power as a Christian, comes from the Holy Spirit living in us. The power to resist sin, the power to rebuke temptations, the power to communicate with God in Spirit and Truth. Do you understand?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, I do.

CHRISTIAN: I feel like my burden is completely gone. What was it, do you know?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Yes, I absolutely know. Both of you were under a spiritual attack and what you felt, the anxiety and burden were evil spirits attacking you. But you have overcome them with the word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. You see the Word of God is God. In John 1:1 it says,

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

The Bible is not a history book or an educational book. It is the anointed word of God. It is God. In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God. Isn't that powerful? I hope you two never, ever look at the Bible the same way again. Each word you read is God Himself. Too many churches treat the Bible like a reference or history book and too many Christians read the Bible like they're reading a novel or magazine article. That's why they have no spiritual power. Before you ever read the Bible you must and I want to stress you must pray and ask God to anoint your mind and heart to help you understand every word you read, to have every word resonate in your mind and heart as if each word was written by God especially for you. Because it was.

CHRISTIANA: I understand.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana do you remember that's what we heard at Peaceful and Joy's house?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, I do.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: They are good people. Did you know that Peaceful and Joy attended our church back in Materialism? They grew in the Lord, fast, extremely fast. Their commitment to God was incredible. In fact, they affected a lot of people's lives. There were some people who had been in the church for quite a while and were comfortable just going through the motions. They came to church every Sunday and Wednesday. They said

they read the Bible and prayed every day. But I didn't see any change in them. When you really spend sincere time with God, you're going to be changed. The Bible actually says you will be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Well, some of the people that knew Peaceful and Joy started seeing a change in them. It wasn't what Peaceful and Joy said. It was who they were becoming. It wasn't an act. They weren't faking it. They weren't practicing trying to be a better person in the flesh. God was changing their hearts and who they were. Well let me tell you, more than a few families saw that change in them and they wanted that in their lives. Keep in mind, I'm talking about people that were already Believers. So, we had Peaceful and Joy have some time on Saturday morning to help teach people what they did and answer questions. I really believe sometimes a question and answer session is better than just teaching. It specifically addresses people's issues and where they are at that time. I wasn't giving glory to Peaceful and Joy. I was allowing them to teach people how to grow in the Lord. Do you understand?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, that is great. They were really nice to us. They live down the block from us.

CHRISTIANA: They led our daughter Jennifer to Jesus last year.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: How are you guys feeling now?

CHRISTIANA: I feel a lot better. I feel like a weight was lifted off my heart and I feel at peace.

CHRISTIAN: I feel great too. No more feeling of a burden weighing me down.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Did you notice you guys both used similar words to describe how you were feeling? Christiana you said you felt a heaviness weighing you down and Christian you said you felt a burden weighing you down. Coincidence? Not at all. That is how satan works. We will have to say goodbye for today. We have someone coming over in about 15 minutes. But I want to leave you with this. When you notice anything that is making you feel a heaviness, a burden, a strange feeling, uncomfortable, a warning of any kind, be alert, be very alert. It could be the Holy Spirit trying to warn you. But it could also be satan or an evil spirit trying to distract you away from something God is doing for your good. You must use Spiritual discernment to be able to tell the difference. That will get stronger and clearer as you grow.

When you realize you are being tempted, you must stop it immediately. Do not, and let me stress, do not give it an opportunity to take root in your mind. Because when it does, it opens the door for other seeds to be planted. Remember the Trojan virus example? When you notice a thought in your mind that is wrong. Immediately tell yourself, NO and rebuke that thought. Tell satan, I refuse to allow that thought in my mind and then repeat a scripture verse that empowers you. Keep on repeating that until that thought is gone. In 2 Corinthians 10:4-6 it tells us,

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.”

We should demolish, destroy, rebuke any thought that is not in agreement with the word of God. Do you understand we are not just trying to push the wrong thoughts away or rebuke them? We should be aggressive, warriors and demolish and destroy those wrong thoughts. We don't stop by just being on defense, we take those thoughts captive and punish any wrong thoughts by replacing it with the word of God. Remember folks, you are not victims, you are victors, through the blood of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit living in you.

CHRISTIAN: Faithful, thank you so, so much, I feel empowered again. I have learned so much. We are not punching bags for satan, we are victors through the blood of Jesus. We are warriors that will not just fight to defend ourselves, but to destroy the attack by satan.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana say goodbye to Faithful and Gentleness and start off on their long drive back to their home. On the way home Christian gets a text from Manipulator. It says to meet him at 7:30pm at the No Tell Lounge. Christian tells Christiana and Christiana tells Christian to be careful with him. To keep his guard up.

Chapter 8

NARRATOR: Later that evening Christian arrives at the No Tell Lounge and walks inside. He sees Manipulator sitting at a table with 2 women. Christian figures Manipulator's just being a player and he will move to another table to meet Head of Company. Or maybe one of the women was manipulator's sister the Head of Company's wife and the other was Manipulator's date. Christian walks up to the table.

CHRISTIAN: Hello Manipulator.

MAMIPULATOR: Hello Christian, I want you to meet Lustful and Tempress.

NARRATOR: Christian makes eye contact with the two women and says hello. They are both attractive. He catches himself focusing on one of the women, Tempress. There is something about her eyes that reminds him of an old girlfriend in college. But Tempress is even prettier. He catches himself staring and looks away and focuses on Manipulator.

CHRISTIAN: Hello Lustful and Tempress it's nice to meet you. Manipulator is Head of Company here?

MANIPULATOR: No, he texted me a little while ago and he's at the convention center. We are going to go meet him there.

CHRISTIAN: Ok, well it was nice meeting you Lustful and Tempress I guess we will have to be going.

MANIPULATOR: What are you kidding me. They are coming with, aren't you ladies?

CHRISTIAN: Manipulator, can I talk to you for a minute?

NARRATOR: Manipulator gets up and follows Christian a few feet away.

CHRISTIAN: Manipulator, I will meet you at the convention center, where will he be at?

MANIPULATOR: Don't be silly buddy we will all ride together. Listen these women didn't come cheap and this is for Head of Company.

CHRISTIAN: What, I thought he was married to your sister?

MANIPULATOR: Yea, so what. That's how he lives. He gives my sister every material thing she wants in life and she lets him have his occasional fun. You know what I mean buddy.

CHRISTIAN: I'm not comfortable with this situation.

MANIPULATOR: Listen, I stuck my neck out for you, not once but twice to talk to him. You blew us off the first time and if you do it again, I guarantee you there won't be a next time. Keep in mind this isn't just about your job. It's about clearing your name and proving Envy is a liar, thief and con artist. It's about giving your kids their reputation back and justice for what Envy's kids did to your kids. Didn't your boy get expelled and your daughter beat up?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, but we are having a meeting with the principal to get him back in.

MANIPULATOR: oh and that makes it aaaaalllll better right. Envy get's away with destroying your name and reputation and you go unemployed for who knows how long. Your son's life could be ruined being expelled and your daughter gets beat up and you're just going to let bygones be bygones? But hey buddy, it's your call. All I'm saying is even if you don't get your old job back, isn't it worth meeting with Head Of Company to clear your name, expose Envy, think about your children. Christian, think about what your children have been put through. Don't you want justice for them?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, but I will meet you there.

MANIPULATOR: Stop acting like a little girl. This is completely innocent. The girls aren't for you. They're for me and Head of Company. Or do you need to call your wifey and ask her permission. Man, I thought you had a spine, I guess I was wrong about you.

CHRISTIAN: Ok, Ok. Let's go. But how will I get back? How long are you going to stay?

MANIPULATOR: Not long at all. The girls are staying with him for the night. So, we will be there maybe an hour or so. That's it, we will be back before you know it.

CHRISTIAN: Ok.

NARRATOR: Manipulator walks back to the table.

MANIPULATOR: Ok girls the party's on, let's go.

NARRATOR: As they get to the car Manipulator opens the door for Lustful to get in the front passenger seat meaning Christian will have to sit in the back with

Tempress. That's not what he wanted at all. He is trying his best not to give any wrong signals to Tempress, even though Manipulator said Tempress was going to be with Head of Company. He answers Tempress with one-word answers and doesn't ask her any questions. He just stares straight ahead at the back of the seat headrest in front of him. Tempress let's out a sudden scream

CHRISTIAN: Are you ok, what happened?

TEMPTRESS: NO, I dropped an earring and it's worth a lot of money.

CHRISTIAN: Where do you think it fell?

TEMPTRESS: Off to my side somewhere in between us, do you see it Christian?

NARRATOR: Christian looks over at Tempress as she looks at him with her captivating eyes. It brings back memories of his old girlfriend in college that broke up with him.

TEMPTRESS: Christian can you feel around on the seat cushion, it's too dark to see anything.

NARRATOR: Christian starts moving his hand back and forth on the seat towards the back where it probably would have rolled. All of a sudden, he feels Tempress hand covering his.

TEMPTRESS: Christian, you have such nice hands.

NARRATOR: Christian pulls his hand away.

CHRISTIAN: Sorry Temptress, I didn't find it. Maybe when we get to the convention center Manipulator can turn the light on back here and you can look for it.

TEMPTRESS: Thank You for looking Christian, you are a real gentleman. Most successful men like you wouldn't waste their time to help a woman. But I feel there is something special about you.

CHRISTIAN: No, nothing special, just your typical married man with 3 children.

NARRATOR: Manipulator leans over and whispers to Lustful.

MANIPULATOR: She is really good, isn't she?

LUSTFUL: She isn't called Temptress for nothing. She knows how to get a person to lower their guard and then slowly draw them into her web.

NARRATOR: Christian hopes him saying he is married with children would make Temptress back off.

TEMPTRESS: I love children. I'm just too busy right now, to have any. But one day. When I do if I have a boy, I hope he looks like you. You have such strong facial features. Has anyone ever told you that before?

CHRISTIAN: No.

TEMPTRESS: Do you have any pictures of your children?

NARRATOR: Christian's first reaction is to say yes. He always loves the opportunity to show pictures of his children. But something is telling him. Don't do it. It's a trap. She is just trying to flatter you and engage you further into her web. Don't interact with her, even if the others say you are being rude. Be careful.

CHRISTIAN: Sorry, I don't have any pictures.

NARRATOR: Christian is trying his best not to even say her name to keep the conversation as impersonal as possible.

TEMPTRESS: Christian when we get there will you have a dance with me?

CHRISTIAN: What? I thought he was at a convention. Manipulator, is Head of Company at the Convention Center?

MANIPULATOR: Yes, he is. But it's over now and we are meeting him at the bar at the place. No problem buddy, everything will be fine, trust me.

NARRATOR: Christian doesn't answer and just sits silently. They arrive at the convention center and Manipulator pulls up to the valet parking area. He gets out and walks around to let Lustful out as Christian gets out.

LUSTFUL: Christian, aren't you going to open the door for Temptress? You can't leave her sitting in the car waiting.

NARRATOR: Christian takes a few steps back towards the car to open the door. But then he gets a feeling, stop, don't do it. He doesn't have to wait for what comes next. He turns back around and starts walking toward the convention entrance.

CHRISTIAN: No sorry, I don't think so. I only open car doors for my wife and daughter.

NARRATOR: Temptress hears Christian and gets out of the car by herself. The four of them start walking into the convention center. Christian makes it a point to walk by himself a few steps behind the 3 of them. They walk into the bar area and look around. They don't see Head of Company. So, they walk over to a table and sit down.

MANIPULATOR: What would you ladies like to drink.

NARRATOR: The women tell Manipulator what they would like and he gets up to go to the bar.

MANIPULATOR: Come on Christian take a walk with me.

NARRATOR: As they walk to the bar

MANIPULATOR: Hey buddy what's wrong with you? Temptress likes you. Don't you think she is gorgeous?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, she is. But I'm not getting involved in this. I'm here to meet with Head of Company.

MANIPULATOR: So you do think she's gorgeous. I knew you would. Who wouldn't right? Listen, you're among friends here, Ok. So just relax. Did you notice Temptress's eyes? You could get hypnotized by those eyes. They just kind of pull you into her web (laughing). You better be careful Christian; she is already getting to you.

CHRISTIAN: Where's Head of Company.

MANIPULATOR: I don't know, I know he's here someplace.

CHRISTIAN: I'm going to the washroom.

MANIPULATOR: Yea sure you are buddy. You're afraid of a girl (laughing).

NARRATOR: Christian walks away and he realizes just those few quick glances at Temptress eyes were enough to affect him. He remembers Faithful saying do not allow that seed to take root. To immediately rebuke it and destroy it. Christian realizes how weak the flesh is. But he is thankful that he is being sensitive to the Spirit and hearing His direction. He wonders if he would have realized all of this just a few months ago. He feels a tap on his shoulder and it's Head of Company.

HEAD of COMPANY: Hello Christian, we have a few things to talk about.

CHRISTIAN: Hello Head of Company, I hope it's good news.

MANIPULATOR: Listen I have a room upstairs. When I come to these conventions I usually stay for a few nights. Why don't we all go upstairs and talk.

NARRATOR: Christian wonders how he should handle this. He doesn't want to go anywhere especially with the two women. Especially with the way Temptress has been acting towards him. But he is worried how Head of Company will react if he says he doesn't want to go upstairs.

CHRISTIAN: I would feel a lot better if you and I could just sit down here at a table and talk personally, just you and I.

NARRATOR: Christian anxiously waits for Head of Company's response. Head of Company looks like he's looking right past him. He tells Christian to wait there. Head of Company walks over to another man and say's something, they both start laughing and talking. Christian's anxiety level rises. Did he insult Head of Company? Is he going to be upset with him for saying no to his invitation? Christian tried rebuking those thoughts, taking them captive and repeating a scripture verse in his head. He was determined not to allow any seeds of anxiety or doubt take root in his mind. He fixes his mind on Jesus and reminds himself, he is going to do what is right by God and his wife and family. If that means Head of Company is upset and doesn't want to talk to him, well so be it. Head of Company turns around and walks back to Christian.

HEAD of COMPANY: Now what did you say Christian, I didn't hear you?

NARRATOR: Christian thinks what? He was being nervous and anxious for nothing. He was worried that Head of Company was upset with him and that's why he walked away. But he didn't even hear what he said.

CHRISTIAN: I was wondering if it was possible if you and I could sit down here at a table and talk. Just you and I?

HEAD of COMPANY: Sure, not a problem.

NARRATOR: They sit down for about an hour talking while Manipulator and the two women talk at the other table. Christian and Head of Company get up and shake hands and walk back to the table with Manipulator, Lustful and Temptress.

CHRISTIAN: Thank you Manipulator for arranging the meeting, it went great. If you don't mind, I will be leaving now.

NARRATOR: Temptress gets up and grabs Christian's arm. Wait you promised me you would dance with me.

CHRISTIAN: No sorry Temptress, I never agreed to that. Not at all.

MANIPULATOR: You got to be kidding me. You are going to spit in Head of Company's face and insult his invitation to join us for a party upstairs.

CHRISTIAN: I am not insulting Head of Company.

MANIPULATOR: Head of Company are you going to allow him to insult your hospitality like this after everything you've done for him.

HEAD of COMPANY: Manipulator, shut up. If you weren't my wife's brother, I wouldn't even talk to you.

NARRATOR: Christian gets up and says goodbye to everyone.

HEAD of COMPANY: Christian thank you for your honesty and I am sorry again about how you've been treated and slandered. I will call Supervisor and VP at your company first thing Monday morning.

CHRISTIAN: Thank You again Head of Company.

NARRATOR: Christian walks out of the bar and into the convention center lobby. He calls a car service to pick him up and drive him home and immediately calls Christiana.

CHRISTIANA: Hello

CHRISTIAN: Hello Christiana, I met with Head of Company and they have security video from the hallway outside the Pharmaceutical supply room. It shows there were no bulges in Envy's front suit pockets when he went into the room. But when he walked out, both pockets were bulging with something inside of them. They also checked the security video for when I walked in and out of the room and the time stamp showed 8 seconds and no bulges in my suit pockets when I walked out of the room. Envy was in the room for 1 minute and 22 seconds. Head of Company will be calling Supervisor and VP first thing Monday morning to tell them what they found. They no longer suspect me of stealing anything. Now they suspect Envy.

CHRISTIANA: That is incredible, do you think you will get your job back?

CHRISTIAN: I hope so. I'm waiting for a car to pick me up and take me home. I won't be home for about an hour.

CHRISTIANA: What about Manipulator?

CHRISTIAN: Yea Manipulator, wait until I tell you what he tried to pull this evening. Christiana, if we didn't meet with Faithful and Gentleness today and learned about not just immediately rebuking thoughts that are in disagreement with the word of God, but to take them captive and destroy them with Scriptures. This evening could have been much different. But everything is great, and I feel so empowered by the Holy Spirit right now.

NARRATOR: Christian arrives home about an hour later and fills Christiana in on the evening.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana first of all and most importantly I will be cleared of the accusations of stealing and Head of Company is going to pursue theft of against Envy. They probably won't be able to absolutely prove it. Because you can't see what's in his suit pocket. But the video evidence should be more than clear enough to get my job back and get him fired.

CHRISTIANA: Great, Christian, that's great.

NARRATOR: Christian tells Christiana about Manipulator's game with the women. But how he stood firm. The he starts telling her how he even got to witness to Head of Company.

CHRISTIAN: Head of Company and I talked for about an hour. But not just about the issue with the missing samples. We talked about what I've been doing since I left my job. I told him I ran into a guy outside his building in the park named Evangelist that gave me a pamphlet. He said, oh yea, I know that guy. I see him a lot out there, rain or shine. He gave me a pamphlet once. I told him I already go to church.

CHRISTIANA: What, how can he be a Christian, married and meeting with those women?

CHRISTIAN: I know, right? I prayed for the Holy Spirit to guide my words and felt compelled to explain how you and I didn't believe in God at all.

How I blew Evangelist off the first time I saw him and we threw his pamphlet in the garbage. But the day I went back in to see Head of Company and he basically threw me out of his office, Evangelist was waiting outside his building. I explained what happened from that day until now. With you, Bill, Johnny, and Jennifer all getting saved. He said he's been going to church for 40 years almost every Sunday. He gives money to the church and their programs. But he has never experienced any of the things I was talking about. He said he is having a lot of trouble with his oldest son he goes to school with Bill. He thinks its drugs. But he can't get his son to even talk to him about it. I wanted to keep telling him more. But I felt something telling me to stop. So, I said you have people waiting for you and I should be going. Maybe I can stop by your office sometime and we can talk more. He said he would really like that. Isn't that something? I said if we're done talking, I will be going. He asked if I would like to come up to his room. I said I'm sorry, but not if he two women will be there. I told him I felt it would be very disrespectful to my wife and hurt your feelings. He said he understood and asked if I thought it bothered his wife when he did that stuff. Do you believe he felt comfortable enough with me to ask me that?

CHRISTIANA: What did you say?

CHRISTIAN: I said I don't know. But as a Christian do you think it bothers God? WOW Christiana, you should have seen the look on his face. He turned pale. I didn't know what to expect. I didn't even know why I said it. I was just hoping it was the Holy Spirit and not one of my stupid quick-witted comments.

CHRISTIANA: What did he say?

CHRISTIAN: He said, Christian. I never thought about that. I guess it's not the right thing to do. But I do so many good things for the church. This one indulgence shouldn't make a difference. I said do you really sincerely believe that? Do you believe God really wants to have to turn his back, so he doesn't watch what you do? If anything, maybe God, expects more from you because you have more. He looked at me and said, Ok Christian, we're done for now. You go home to your wife and family. He asked if I wanted him to call me a car. I said I will be ok. I thought I really pushed him to far with my last comment. I asked him if he was upset and he said yes. But not in the way I might be thinking. He said he is going to send

Manipulator, Lustful and Temptress on their way and just go up to his room alone and think for a while. He told me while his wife doesn't make a fuss or complain about his extra marital activities. He remembers the look on her face this morning when she asked if he was coming home after the convention and he said no he is getting a hotel room. He said he never noticed it before. But the look of disappointment and sadness she had stuck in his heart. He said he might even go home tonight and surprise her.

CHRISTIANA: Christian can you believe everything that is happening?

CHRISTIAN: I can't believe, oh wait we better not say we can't believe anything with God. Christiana, remember, the words we speak brings life or death and opens or closes doors.

CHRISTIANA: You're right Christian.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, I have a feeling we are on a journey of a lifetime, an incredible adventure.

CHRISTIANA: And the if we let Him, the Holy Spirit is our driver.

CHRISTIAN: Amen Christiana, Amen

Chapter 9

NARRATOR: Sunday morning Christian and the family decide to all go to church together, but they aren't sure where. Christian starts searching online for churches.

CHRISTIAN: I think I found a good one. Their website says, we are a church built on the foundation of the Bible. No, fluff or false teachings here. We are a Bible based church that believes Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. We believe the Holy Spirit lives in all Believers. We believe the Holy Spirit's Fruit and Gifts are real and for today. We believe that God loves you just the way you are. But we should continue to grow and change to fulfill His calling on our lives.

CHRISTIANA: That sounds perfect.

BILL: That sounds like what I'm looking for. How about it Johnny? All it takes is one person to change the world.

JOHNNY: I can't wait to go. I'm really excited.

JENNIFER: Mom, can I sit next to you?

CHRISTIANA: Sure, you can sweetie. I can't wait to hear what they have to teach us today.

NARRATOR: As they walk from their car in the parking lot towards the church Christian realizes there is no one standing outside the church talking like at the other churches. They walk into the church and there are two people talking to each other.

CHRISTIAN: Hello, excuse me, my name is Christian, and this is our first time here.

FIRST GREETER: Oh, Hi, the service is through those doors.

NARRATOR: First Greeter immediately goes back to his conversation with the second Church Greeter ignoring Christian and Christiana.

CHRISTIANA: Hello, my name is Christiana.

SECOND GREETER: Hi, can I help you with something?

CHRISTIANA: Well I was hoping that we could meet some people here and I thought you were a church Greeters. My mistake, sorry if I interrupted you.

NARRATOR: Christiana and Christian start walking to the doors to enter the service area.

CHRISTIAN: (whispers to Christiana) Christiana, I think they were church greeters. I think you insulted them.

CHRISTIANA: If they are a representation of the friendliness of this church, I'm ready to leave now.

JOHNNY: They were rude. They completely blew us off.

NARRATOR: Christian and the family walk inside the church and realize they must be early. The church is empty. They take some seats about halfway towards the front on the aisle. A few minutes later, they hear a voice behind them.

WOMAN BEHIND THEM: Let it go, we can sit in this row.

MAN BEHIND THEM: That is where we always sit and the Johnsons sit in the row in front of us, so we can talk to them.

WOMAN BEHIND THEM: It's ok. it's just one week. I think they're just visiting today. They probably won't be back next week.

CHRISTIANA: (mumbles to Christian) that's for sure.

NARRATOR: The worship team walks up and picks up their instruments and the worship leader says, can we all stand. The worship time is powerful. Christiana and Christian are really seeking God for direction. Christian is sitting at the end seat and feels a tap on his shoulder.

USHER: Can you folks step back a little to let this couple in?

NARRATOR: Christian taps Christiana on the arm and interrupts her worshipping God and ask her to inch back so the people can get in and let the kids know. The couple say's thank you as they squeeze past Christian, Christiana, and the family. As they do Christiana looks around and notices

half the church is empty and thinks they could have sat somewhere else. Why interrupt someone in the middle of their worship just so someone that is late can sit down. The worship Music continues, and the family tries to go back to worshipping God. But a few songs later Christian feels another tap on his shoulder.

USHER: Can you folks step back a few inches so this man can have a seat?

NARRATOR: Christian taps Christiana on the arm again and ask her to move back and let the kids know.

CHRISTIANA: (quietly) Oh come on, half the church is empty.

MAN BEHIND THEM: Well maybe you shouldn't be sitting in other people's seats.

NARRATOR: Christiana hears him and makes a face. Christian leans over and says Christiana let it go. Johnny leans over to Bill.

JOHNNY: I can't believe this. Dad said churches have a time with music to worship God and draw close to him. This isn't right. If those people can't get here on time, then they should wait in the back until the worship time is over.

BILL: You are a wise one little grasshopper, wise beyond your young age.

JOHNNY: Yea and don't forget it.

NARRATOR: The worship time ends, and a man walks up and starts making announcements about upcoming church activities.

CHRISTIANA: (whispers to Christian) This sounds nice. But I can't get over the rudeness of people here.

CHRISTIAN: (whispers back) Let's give it a chance

WOMAN BEHIND THEM: sssshhhhhhh.

NARRATOR: Christiana takes a deep breath and thinks, you've got to be kidding me. The minister walks up and says good morning.

MINISTER: The message today will be on the power of the Holy Spirit.

NARRATOR: Bill looks over at Johnny and says yes, perfect. Jennifer leans over to Christiana.

JENNIFER: (whispers) see mom it will be worth it all.

NARRATOR: Minister starts teaching in words that only someone with 4 degrees in theology would understand. Christian leans over to Christiana

CHRISTIAN: (whispers) what is he talking about?

CHRISTIANA: (whispers) I have no idea.

NARRATOR: The service ends and the family heads towards the exit. A few people smile and say hello, but that's it. The minister is standing by the exit doors and says hello to the family.

CHRISTIAN: Hello sir.

MINISTER: Did you like the message.

CHRISTIANA: I'm not really sure I understood it all.

MINISTER: That's understandable, you are new here. I have 2 doctorate degrees in Bible history, and I studied under a world renown Bible professor.

CHRISTIAN: My name is Christian, and this is Christiana and our children.

MINISTER: My name is "Pastor I know things you can't understand".

CHRISTIAN: It's nice to meet you Pastor um, I know everything?

MINISTER: That's not my name.

CHRISTIAN: Sorry, I think we should be going now.

NARRATOR: The family walks back to the car.

BILL: I felt like I was in school. He reminded me of my psychology teacher. No one can understand what he's talking about.

CHRISTIAN: I'm kind of disappointed

CHRISTIANA: Kind of? Those were the rudest people I've ever met, and we are first time visitors. Wouldn't you think they would want to make a good impression?

CHRISTIAN: What I don't understand is the information on their website and the church are two entirely different things.

CHRISTIANA: There is no way in the world, people could really understand what he was saying.

CHRISTIAN: I'm no expert, but I'm pretty sure some of the things that I could understand are not what I've read in the Bible at all.

JOHNNY: Like what dad?

CHRISTIAN: Remember when he said, the power of the Holy Spirit is something that exist on a plain far above what the human mind can conceive? Then he said only people like him with superior knowledge and education can reveal the Spirit's message

CHRISTIANA: I remember that. It sounds like he's on a huge ego trip.

CHRISTIAN: The Bible says, the Holy Spirit is for everyone that accepts Jesus as their Savior. Kid's it says the Holy Spirit has Spiritual Gifts for each one of us and He will manifest those gifts in our lives. We have to just accept, believe and allow the Holy Spirit to flow. It doesn't say anything about we have to reach a certain level of intellect or education to be able to relate to the Holy Spirit. This was disappointing.

JENNIFER: Don't get discouraged. We'll find a good church.

CHRISTIAN: Jennifer, I hope so. What is amazing, is you can literally see the major Biblical flaws and wrong teachings in the churches. But the people keep going back. It's almost like they are brainwashed or just blind sheep following a man and not God.

CHRISTIANA: I wonder if they start going to a local church and then they just accept what is said and don't want to question the minister. So they just fall inline and eventually it becomes acceptable to them.

BILL: Do you mean like desensitization?

CHRISTIANA: Bill something like that. Doesn't everyone read their Bibles?

CHRISTIAN: I saw a lot of people with Bibles there

JOHNNY: I saw people on their phones they could have been using a Bible app.

CHRISTIAN: Did you notice all of the partial scripture verses he was using.

CHRISTIANA: I was going to bring that up. I wrote them all down. After lunch I would really like to do some studying and look up those verses and read the entire chapter to find out what they really mean. You know, were they being used in the right context or was he taking a few words out of a verse or chapter out of context to support his teaching?

CHRISTIAN: That would be a great idea. If he is teaching the truth. Then when we read the entire chapter it will help it become more real in our mind and hearts. If he was using a partial scripture verse out of context, we will find out. But either way we will learn a lot and learn the truth of what those verses really mean.

BILL: A win, win situation. I'm in on that.

JENNIFER: I want to do it too. We can all take a different scripture verse and look it up on our phone. Then take turns reading it out loud. We can get everyone's thoughts on it and see what we believe. We can each take turns. We do that in school sometimes. This will be fun.

CHRISTIANA: I like this idea. We will be learning God's word as a family and discussing our personal understanding on each of the verses.

NARRATOR: They finish a few hours later and had a great time. The word wow was said a lot by each of them.

CHRISTIAN: That was incredible, what did you guys think?

BILL: I liked it. I really learned a lot for myself. When I heard some of you guys read a chapter, I had an idea of what it meant. But when someone else gave their thoughts, I realized, I never even thought of that. I didn't even remember hearing some of the words when they were read from the chapter.

CHRISTIANA: That same thing happened to me a few times. I must have zoned out for a few seconds while you guys were reading your chapters.

CHRISTIAN: That happened to me a few times too.

BILL: We learned about it in school. People daydream, their mind wanders. It just happens. It is inevitable a person will miss something said,

or even something they read themselves. When you hear something that gets your attention, maybe you hear it for the first time, your mind stays focused on that point for a few seconds or longer. You can actually miss the next few words or even sentences spoken after that because your mind is still processing that new thought you had.

CHRISTIANA: I really liked doing this as a family. It gives us the ability of hearing each other's thoughts and like I said on more than one occasion, I had the wrong idea of what something meant because I didn't hear the whole sentence.

CHRISTIAN: This was great. So, let's see. From my notes on 16 scripture verses we looked up and read the entire chapter, we agree with the pastor on 7 of his uses of the scriptures, 4 are questionable that maybe we don't have enough understanding to really grasp them and maybe the Pastor was right and 5 were absolutely used out of context and were used in a very misleading way to support his message. Is that where we are?

CHRISTIANA: I don't really think we will ever find a Pastor that we agree with 100% of the time. We didn't even agree with each other 100% of the time (laughing). I think what's important is if we have questions about what was taught by a pastor, do we feel comfortable enough with him to ask him about it? If we feel concerned we will be demeaned, embarrassed or ridiculed by the Pastor or other people for questioning the him, that's not a good situation.

CHRISTIAN: Well then, we keep looking

BILL: I'm comparing that pastor to people like Evangelist or Shelly's dad Peaceful. I would feel completely comfortable with talking to them and ask if they could explain something they taught. I think they would accept my question and concern with open arms and welcome the opportunity to help me learn.

JENNIFER: I agree, that's what I like about talking with Shelly's dad. He never makes you feel stupid or embarrasses you when you ask questions.

CHRISTIAN: I am beginning to see why there is so much division in the Kingdom of God here on Earth. If I can say this in the right way. There are pastors that shouldn't be pastors. They are not teaching the truth. Do you remember I told you about some of the pastors I met? One of the churches was all about making you feel special and all warm and fuzzy and be a happy place, so people want to come back. But they are coming back for

the wrong reason. And one pastor that basically denied the power of the cross and was basically teaching Jesus crucifixion really had no power over sin. We know that Jesus death and resurrection set us free and we are now saved by Faith through grace so that no man can take credit by his own actions, works or deeds. A church literally kept a score board and gave points out for every good deed someone did. And then today, it seemed that it was all about an intellectual experience with God and not a supernatural relationship with Him.

CHRISTIANA: Look at the time it's already 5:30. I have to get dinner going. Who is hungry?

NARRATOR: Everyone yells me. Christiana and Christian decide to cook some hamburgers out on the grill and have a wonderful dinner on the back deck.

On Tuesday afternoon Christian gets a phone call

CHRISTIAN: Hello.

SUPERVISOR: Hello Christian. This is Supervisor from your old company. We talked to Head of Company about the video they have showing you were only in their Pharmaceutical storage room for just a few seconds and then what the security video showed about Envy going into and out of the storage room and we would like to talk to you about coming back. Both VP and I are incredibly happy and relieved to hear about the security video clearing you. Christian, hopefully you understand, we had no choice when the Head of Company made a formal complaint. Can you come in tomorrow afternoon to meet with VP and myself?

NARRATOR: Christian gets off the phone and takes a couple of deep breaths and then calls for Christiana.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, Supervisor just called me and said Head of Company called and spoke to him and VP yesterday about the security video and want me to come in tomorrow at 2pm to talk about my job.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, that's great. What did you say?

CHRISTIAN: I said I will see them tomorrow. But, but, Christiana, I just don't feel right about this.

CHRISTIANA: How, why, what's wrong?

CHRISTIAN: I don't know. I don't know if it's my pride and my feelings are hurt, or if the Holy Spirit is warning me about going back there, or if satan is trying to keep me from something good. I mean after all after all the years I've worked there, look how quick they turned on me and fired me without any opportunity to try to clear myself.

CHRISTIANA: But what else are you going to do? We need the money.

CHRISTIAN: I know, I understand that. I will meet with them. But Christiana, we have to pray real hard to get God's direction on this. As of right now, I will not give them a decision tomorrow. I will tell them I have to think about it for a few days after what's happened.

CHRISTIANA: Suppose they say, they want an answer right then?

CHRISTIAN: I don't know right now. Let's not worry about it right now and just pray this evening and tomorrow morning and see how the Holy Spirit guides us.

NARRATOR: The next afternoon Christian and Christiana still do not have clear direction from God on how to handle the situation.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, I have to leave to meet with Supervisor and VP

CHRISTIANA: Any clear direction on what you are going to say?

CHRISTIAN: Unless the Holy Spirit really convicts me while I am there, I will ask them for a few days to think things over. I think they will understand.

CHRISTIANA: Ok, I will be praying, give me a call when you get out, Ok?

CHRISTIAN: Arrives at his old company for the meeting.

RECEPTIONIST: Hi Christian, how are you?

CHRISTIAN: I'm doing very well thank you.

RECEPTIONIST: Supervisor said to ask you to wait for them in the small conference room.

NARRATOR: Christian gets situated in the conference room and looks around. He's had many meetings in that room. He hears the door open and Supervisor and VP walk in and walk over to Christian to say hello and shake his hand.

SUPERVISOR: Christian, thank you for coming in today to meet with us. I'm going to turn this over to VP.

VP: Christian, I want to start by apologizing for what you've been through, both personally and with your children and Christiana.

CHRISTIAN: Thank you for that.

VP: You know I don't beat around the bush. So, let me get right to the point. As you know we talked to Head of Company yesterday and I want to let you know, he thinks the world of you. To be completely upfront with you, he said if we don't make you an incredible offer, he will be calling you tomorrow to come to work for his company. That is a pretty impressive vote of confidence and from one of the most respected people in our city. Christian, as you know because of the complaint filed by the Head of Company we had to let you go. But, because of the security video Head of Company now has, it completely clears you of the accusation. So, you know, it didn't prove anything against Envy. It was mere circumstantial evidence. Company Owner suggested we ask Envy if we could look through his car. We couldn't force him, but we thought it was worth a shot.

CHRISTIAN: I understand.

VP: Supervisor called Envy yesterday afternoon and asked him to come in to meet with us. When he got here, we told him with his permission we would like to look through his car. He said ok. Supervisor looked on the front and back seat and there was nothing there. We asked to look into his glove compartment, console and trunk. He said we could look wherever we wanted. When Supervisor looked under the front passenger seat he found a small box. It was a pharmaceutical sample box. It was one of the boxes the Head of Company reported missing. Envy tried explaining it away that it must have fallen out of the main box and fell under the seat. But as you and all of us knows, the main boxes are taped closed with a seal on them. There is no way, that any individual sample box could have accidentally fallen out of the main box.

SUPERVISOR: I pressed Envy and told him, we all know the only way the box could have gotten there is he brought it into his car and there is no getting around this.

VP: We asked him to go with us back into my office and he was concerned and nervous. I told him, we have two choices, either he signs a resignation form and leaves the office immediately or we call the police and open a complete investigation. He signed a resignation letter and yesterday was his last day working here.

CHRISTIAN: Now my reputation and my children's lives can go back to normal.

VP: As we said on the phone, we want you to come back, but not in your former position.

CHRISTIAN: Are you thinking of Envy's position?

VP: No, we're thinking of my position.

CHRISTIAN: What?

NARRATOR: VP and Supervisor are now laughing.

VP: Sr VP is retiring, and Company Owner is promoting me to Sr VP. Company Owner and myself talked to Supervisor about taking over my position, but he turned us down.

CHRISTIAN: Supervisor, you turned down a VP position, why?

SUPERVISOR: There is too much strategic planning involved in the position, to many numbers. I would have a headache at the end of every day (laughing). But Christian, you are a numbers guy. You are a great strategic planner and great at client acquisition strategies. So, I suggested you.

VP: I will be the new Sr. VP as of the first of the month and I would like you to be the new VP. If you are interested.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I definitely am.

VP: After all of the time you've been here and around my office, I'm sure you are very familiar with what I do.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I am.

VP: Well that is what you would be doing. I would still be here, so you would always have the ability of picking up the phone or walking to my office if you have a question about anything. Because you would also probably be doing daily remote training and weekly via video conferencing. We will be having the two offices on the second floor converted into a video conference room. Christian wait until you see the

plans. It's being set up as a small recording studio. We will have an onsite engineer to take care of all of the audio and video equipment, editing and distribution.

CHRISTIAN: That sounds incredible. But what about traveling?

VP: There will be no traveling. Well, unless you wanted to make a trip with Christiana once or twice a year to stop in and say hello to a client. How do you feel about the offer, are you interested?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I am interested, but I have a few questions.

VP: Of course, you do. let me see, could one of them be about the salary and maybe bonuses, perks, company car, vacations. That kind of stuff?

CHRISTIAN: (laughing) yes that pretty much covers it.

NARRATOR: VP slides over a packet of information with Christians compensation plan, and Christian skims over the pages.

CHRISTIAN: This over doubles my pay and with bonuses over the existing office and expansion offices.

VP: Yes, that's right Christian

SUPERVISOR: Hey Christian, I mean Boss. Can you afford to buy me lunch for recommending you?

CHRISTIAN: (laughing) Guys when I came in today, I didn't know how I would react to being offered my job back. But I'm blown away. I am really excited about the challenge of this. You know I love the strategic planning and developing client acquisition strategies. I mean that sounds great and the money is more than I ever thought possible.

VP: Christian that is more money than I made as a VP. But with the expansion and added responsibility that is what Company Owner and I thought would be appropriate. Christian most importantly, we want you to realize how we all feel about you here. Supervisor, myself, Company Owner, the rest of the Account Executives. We all think the world of you, and we hope this shows that.

CHRISTIAN: It definitely does.

VP: So, is that a yes?

CHRISTIAN: um, guys, is it possible that I talk to Christiana about this and let you know tomorrow. I mean she has been through a lot with me after I left the company.

VP: Christian, absolutely. I completely understand.

NARRATOR: Christian, VP and Supervisor shake hands, give each other a pat on the back and Christian heads out. Christian gets in the car and is overwhelmed. He wonders God was this you. Did you do this? I mean Supervisor turning down this position and then offering it to me is incredible. Christian feels an incredible peace as he calls Christiana and tells her about the meeting.

Christian arrives home and pulls into the garage. There standing inside the garage are Christiana, Jennifer, Bill, and Johnny all waiting to congratulate him.

CHRISTIAN: Hey what's this all about?

BILL: Dad, mom asked us to all get together after you left for your meeting and pray. We've been praying ever since you left.

JENNIFER: We've been praying that God would make you and mom's decision absolutely clear about your job.

JOHNNY: Yea, she said, she wants to make sure we are listening to God and following His direction. So, we prayed until you called that your meeting was over.

CHRISTIAN: Well guys, your prayers worked they offered me a VP position and I feel great about it. But I still want your mom and I to pray about it tonight. I want us to be sure and know it's a confirmation from God, and not just acting on emotions. Christiana, it was like I never left. The client acquisition strategy planning you know I love that stuff and I don't have to travel. Christiana, I love this offer.

NARRATOR: That next day Christiana and Christian, both feel good about the offer and he calls his old company.

CHRISTIAN: Hello VP, this is Christian

VP: Hello Christian, do you have good news for me? Are you coming back?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I am. I really want to thank you for your faith in me. I am really excited about the opportunity.

VP: That's great. I will break the news to Supervisor.

CHRISTIAN: What do you mean break the news?

VP: Well he has now lost his #1 and #3 account executives, because you are being promoted and Envy is gone. You were #1 and Envy was #3. So he has to somehow find a way of replacing you and Envy.

CHRISTIAN: I didn't think about that

VP: Supervisor has. His exact words to me when you left yesterday were. He is going to take a 12-month vacation (laughing) and he expects everything to be running smoothly and sales number higher than ever when he gets back.

CHRISTIAN: That sounds like him.

VP: Take the next few weeks and we will see you on the first of the Month as the new VP. How does that sound VP Christian?

CHRISTIAN: I like it Sr. VP.

NARRATOR: They both say goodbye and hang up. Christian tells Christiana about the call and his start date as the new VP of the company

CHRISTIAN: Christiana how about a ride to the restaurant on the lake for a late lunch.

CHRISTIANA: That sounds great, a celebration lunch.

CHRISTIAN: I'm driving

CHRISTIANA: Do you want to call Faithful and Gentleness and see if they are available to meet afterwards for coffee or ice cream?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, we can call them from the car. I was thinking about him this morning wondering if they made a decision on coming back to the city as the Senior Pastor of the church.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana drive to the restaurant for lunch. Faithful and Gentleness were not available to meet. But they set up a time to meet Friday for dinner in the city.

CHRISTIAN: I wonder why Faithful and Gentleness are coming into the city on Friday.

CHRISTIANA: Do you think they are meeting with the church board?

CHRISTIAN: It's possible. But don't you think they would have said something to us about it?

CHRISTIANA: No not really. Suppose they did and we mentioned it to someone, and it got back to the church board before Faithful had a chance to talk to them personally. That wouldn't be good.

CHRISTIAN: Good point.

Chapter 10

NARRATOR: Bill heads out to meet with some friends at the arcade. One of his friends walks up to him.

FRIEND #1: Bill, look at this, the game is broke.

NARRATOR: Friend #1 shows Bill the game receipt.

BILL: Wow, 1,400 points

FRIEND #1: Yea dude it shows 1,400 but it's only supposed to be 140. I noticed the game is paying out 10 times the amount it's supposed to. So I kept playing it. Bill, come on play it. All you need is 520 more points for the cell phone projector you want.

NARRATOR: Bill and Friend #1 start walking over to the game that Friend #1 was playing.

FRIEND #1: Come on Bill put your card in and start playing what are you waiting for?

BILL: I don't know. It doesn't feel right. It feels like stealing.

FRIEND #1: Stealing, what are you a little girl? Come on dude, play the game already. Put your card in the slot.

BILL: I don't know. It doesn't seem right

FRIEND #1: Come on, I can't believe you. I could have still bene playing the game. But I came over to tell you because your my best friend and you're acting like a little girl.

BILL: Friend #1 this isn't right. It's stealing. What's the difference between taking these points and just taking the item right off their shelf?

FRIEND #1: Because taking it off the shelf is stealing. This is good fortune. The luck of the Irish, you know finders keepers, losers weepers and all that stuff the old people say.

BILL: Friend #1, if someone asked you if you had change for a \$10 bill and you gave them two Fives, but they gave you a Twenty by mistake, what would you do?

FRIEND #1: Are you kidding me? I would keep it. If they're that stupid not to look at the bill they're giving me, that's their problem.

BILL: No, I think that's our problem. I think we've been conditioned to think it's ok to take advantage of people. Taking advantage of their misfortune is wrong. No Friend #1, I'm not going to play the game and I think you should tell the manager the game isn't working right and have them adjust your points.

FRIEND #1: The hypocrite speaks. Do you remember just a few months ago, when we were at the electronics store and you bought the speaker for your cell phone?

BILL: Yes, what about it?

FRIEND #1: Do you remember the guy gave you back \$10 to much. Let's see, what did you say after we got out of the store? Oh yea, I remember, you called the guy a chump.

BILL: I forgot about that. That was wrong. Thanks for reminding me about it.

FRIEND #1: Hey Bill, where are you going?

BILL: I'm going to the electronics store to give the guy the \$10 back.

FRIEND #1: What are you crazy? Come here.

NARRATOR: Friend #1 grabs Bill by the arm and pulls him a few feet to the side.

FRIEND #1: What gives? Who are you? You're acting really weird. Are you ok?

BILL: I'm fine. Better than I've ever been. Come on I want to take you somewhere.

vFriend #1 gets in Bill's car and Bill drives away.

FRIEND #1: Where are we going?

BILL: Trust me, you will like this experience.

FRIEND #1: Based on how you're acting, I'm not so sure.

NARRATOR: Bill pulls into the parking lot of the electronics store.

BILL: Come on Friend #1, I want you to come in with me.

NARRATOR: They walk into the store and up to the register.

BILL: Hi is a manger in?

REGISTER CLERK: Yea he's the guy over there by the wall in the blue shirt.

NARRATOR: Bill walks up to the store manager with Friend #1 cautiously walking a few feet behind.

BILL: Hi are you the manager?

STORE MANAGER: Yes, I am, how can I help you?

BILL: There was a guy working here about 2 months ago. He was probably about 20 years old with short black hair almost like a crew cut and he wears glasses.

STORE MANAGER: That sounds like Brian. He's off today. Is there a problem?

BILL: Yes and No. I bought a Bluetooth speaker when I was here, and it was really busy. There was an older guy around 40 that started yelling at a girl employee. Then a few customers stepped in and tried to calm things down. But it didn't help, he just yelled more.

STORE MANAGER: I wasn't working that night, but I remember it happened. Were you one of the guys that tried to calm things down?

BILL: No, I was the guy at the register buying something and the girl yelled for the guy to come help her just as he was getting my change. He quickly handed me my change. But in the commotion, he gave me \$10 to much. I wanted to give it back to the store.

STORE MANAGER: I remember they were short \$10 that night. That was the only time either Brian or Christiana were ever short in their register. The employees had to pay for it. Both the guy and girl were working the register, so we didn't know who made the mistake. But the guy felt bad for the girl being harassed by a customer, so he paid the \$10. It turned out to be all the money he had on him. I remember him saying he went straight home that evening to save gas until he got paid in a few days.

BILL: I'm really sorry I caused him any inconvenience, is he working today? I would like to apologize to him personally.

STORE MANAGER: Are you kidding me? Are you for real? Not only are you bringing back the \$10 two months later, but you want to see the guy so you can apologize to him?

FRIEND #1: I know that's what I've been telling him. This is crazy.

BILL: No this is what's right. Listen, I realize no one here knows I got an extra \$10. But it's \$10 that came out of that guy's pocket and caused him some issues. Ok so you don't know it was me and he doesn't know it was me, but God, knows it was me and that's what's important to me.

FRIEND #1: Ok, now I get it. You went off the deep end. Do your parents know you're talking about God? They will literally kick your butt out of the house before you can blink if they find this out.

NARRATOR: Store Manager stares at Bill for a few seconds.

STORE MANAGER: I can't say I understand your logic or understand what God has to do with this, or if there is even a God. But if you want, I will take the \$10 and tell Brian when he comes in tomorrow.

BILL: That would be great. Can I have a receipt or something showing I gave you the \$10? And what time does Store Employee come in tomorrow?

STORE MANAGER: I will write you a receipt out for this on some paper.. Sorry but we don't have a We gave you too much change back 2 months ago and now I decided to bring it back receipt. Brian, comes in at 11am tomorrow.

NARRATOR: Bill gets his receipt for the \$10 and leaves with Friend #1 trailing behind him, shaking his head in utter disbelief. They get in the car and head back to the arcade.

BILL: Now I feel better, thanks for reminding me about that \$10 Friend #1.

FRIEND #1: Hey dude, I'm speechless over here. I don't know what to say.

BILL: Well you could say you'll tell the Arcade manager about the broken machine.

FRIEND #1: I'm sure they found out about it by now. Some kid probably went around screaming about all the points he got and they shut the game off.

BILL: That's not the point. The point is you still have over 1,000 points you don't deserve.

FRIEND #1: You got to be kidding me. Get off this, ok. I'm not doing it. This is such a small thing.

BILL: Do you know in Luke 16:10 it says,

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.”

FRIEND #1: What who is Luke and what is 1,610? Is that his address?

BILL: Just listen to the words; Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. Did you hear that? God doesn't care if it's \$1 or \$1 Million. He is saying if you can be trusted with a little, then you can be trusted with a lot and if you can't be trusted with a little, He will not give you a lot. I don't know about you Friend #1, but personally, I want a lot. Honesty is honesty, integrity is integrity. What you do when no one can see you, that is really what determines who you are as a person.

FRIEND #1: Why are you telling me all of this?

BILL: Because you need to know. You need to know a lot.

NARRATOR: Friend #1 sits silently trying to figure out what has come over his friend. He can tell this is not some phony act. This is Bill really saying and doing these things. They go back in the arcade and find some of their other friends.

FRIEND #2: Hey where have you guys been?

BILL: I had to go do something.

FRIEND #2: You wouldn't believe all of the commotion. Apparently, one of the games malfunctioned and some kid ran up over 10,000 points. When he went to cash them in for a prize. The manager looked at the receipt and said that's impossible. The kid started arguing saying it doesn't matter and

he wants his prize. The manager said he will have to wait until tomorrow during the day to get his prize, because he has to talk to the owner. Well the kid just blew up and started arguing and then one of his friends started yelling this place is a rip off, this place is a rip off. Some of their other friends, kept backing up from the counter and shaking their heads back and forth like they were saying, hey we have nothing to do with this.

FRIEND #1: If the game printed out the receipt for that many points, and the kid has it, then the arcade should accept it and let him have his prize.

FRIEND #2: The manager called the owner and explained what was going on, while the kid was still yelling at him. When the manager got off the phone, he told the kid, listen I never said you weren't going to get credit for the points or get your prize. I said was I would have to the owner tomorrow. We have always honored the points our games print out. Even if there's a mistake, we have always honored the receipt. So, you can pick out your price. The kid picked something out. Then the manager said, because you and your friend have caused such a problem, to the point where a mother took her two children and left out of concern and fear, you are both banned from the arcade for life. Please leave right now with no further disturbance of I will call the police.

NARRATOR: Bill looks over at Friend #1.

BILL: Well, do you want to redeem those points you have now? I mean after all, it's not like we're 12 years old like those kids. You have a lot of other places to hang out at if you get banned for life.

FRIEND #1: Yea, I'm still going to redeem them. But I'm just not going to make a scene like they did. I'm going to be a nice gentleman about it. I'm going to handle it with dignity.

NARRATOR: Friend #1 walks up to the counter and says hello to the manager.

FRIEND #1: It sounds like you had a handful with some little punk kids a while ago.

MANAGER: Yes, we did. You know what amazes me is the Arcade Owner does so much for the kids and the community. He donates a lot of

the proceeds to the park district activities. Did you know the owner donated the money for all new basketball nets and he paid to have the court resurfaced? He didn't want to wait for the city to get around to it in a couple of years. He also paid to have the little league baseball fields resodded. Because kids were tripping and falling because of the ruts and holes in the grass.

FRIEND #1: I didn't that.

MANAGER: Did you know about the Music House that opened up down the block last year? It's a nonprofit place and relies on donations to stay open. They offer Free music lessons to kids up to 18 that can't afford it. The owner's donations have given 46 kids a chance to have music lessons. Forty-six kids. He also donated money for the library to have speakers come in for high schoolers that talk about things the kids could relate to and give them direction.

FRIEND #1: I didn't know about him giving money to any of that stuff. I heard about the library thing. But I'm not a library kind of guy (laughing).

MANAGER: No, it's not a library kind of thing. It helps direct high schoolers with career preparation. For example, the library might have someone that owns a construction company come in and talk about construction. It might cover different types of trades like, carpentry, electrical, plumbing, that kind of stuff. Then if any of the kids are interested, they set it up with a company to let the guy or girl shadow someone on the job for a few days. You know, to get a feel for what working in that trade is like. The arcade owner has paid for all of the speakers. He came up with the idea. They've had owners from car repair shops, computer IT, Software development, lawyers, nurses, man let me think, there's more. Well you get the idea, don't you?

FRIEND #1: I had no idea. Does the owner even make any money from this place?

MANAGER: I have no idea how much or little he makes. I know he owns a couple of restaurants. He owns a family style restaurant and an upscale kind of restaurant. Oh yea, he's had one of the chef's and restaurant manager speak at the library too.

NARRATOR: Friend #1 stands silently at the counter. Bill puts his hand on Friend #1's shoulder, but doesn't look at him or say a word.

FRIEND #1: You know what Manager; I played that game that malfunctioned earlier today. I had 140 points. But the receipt showed 1,400 points. I initially walked up here to claim a prize for the 1,400 points. But after talking to you and hearing about everything the Arcade Owner does for the community and people my age. I don't feel right about doing it. I feel like I would be stealing from him. I'm not sure what to do with this.

NARRATOR: Friend #1 hands his receipt to the Manager.

MANAGER: Can you give me a minute?

FRIEND #1: (quietly mumbles) Sure, yea, no problem.

NARRATOR: Manager makes a call from his cell phone. Friend #1 can hear what Manager is saying, but not the other person. So he has to try to figure out what the other person is saying.

MANAGER: Hi, there is a guy standing in front of me at the counter. He seems like an honest guy. We were talking about what happened earlier with the kids and the game that malfunctioned. I was telling him about all of the things you do for the community with the proceeds from the arcade. Then he said he had a receipt from the game that malfunctioned, and it was for 1,400 points. But in the same breath he says it was only supposed to be 140 points. He said he initially was going to redeem it for a 1,400 point prize. But after hearing about everything you do for the area; he doesn't feel right about doing that. I thought you would want to know. Yea ok I understand.

NARRATOR: Manager looks up at Friend #1 and reaches out his cell phone to him and says/

MANAGER: Arcade Owner would like to talk to you.

NARRATOR: Friend #1 looks shocked.

FRIEND #1: I don't know what to say to him.

MANAGER: That's ok, here.

FRIEND #1: Hello my name is Friend #1.

ARCADE OWNER: Hello Friend #1, I wanted to say how proud I was of your honesty and integrity by not trying to take advantage of a situation. You know most people wouldn't do what you are doing.

FRIEND #1: Well, um, yea, well, I wasn't going to do it at first. But after hearing everything you do for our community, I felt like I would be stealing from you if I tried cashing the points in.

ARCADE OWNER: I'm glad to hear you listening to that still small voice inside of you. But I would like to say, I really hope in the future, if a situation arises someplace that you have a choice of doing the right thing or taking advantage of someone or a situation you will listen to that still small voice inside of you again even if they don't do anything special for anyone.

FRIEND #1: Um yea, I can see that now.

ARCADE OWNER: Friend #1, can I ask if you're still in school?

FRIEND #1: Yes, I am a Senior at Materialism South High School.

ARCADE OWNER: Do you have any plans for college?

FRIEND #1: Not really just probably going to the Junior College. I wasn't really good in school. Which was a real disappointment to my father. I'm the youngest child and everyone else did really good in high school and went on to college. I guess I'm the black sheep of the family.

ARCADE OWNER: Friend #1, I didn't do good in High School either. In fact, I didn't graduate. I went back in my late 20s and got my GED. Then I took a couple of business and marketing classes at the Junior College. You know what, from what I've seen in you today, you are far from being a black sheep. Maybe you just haven't identified your calling or purpose yet.

FRIEND #1: That's stuff for other people. Not for me. The writing is on the wall for me.

ARCADE OWNER: Listen I come into the arcade on Saturday mornings, do you have a few minutes to stop by and we can talk?

FRIEND #1: Am I in some type of trouble?

ARCADE OWNER: No not at all. I just thought it would be nice to talk to you. I'd like to meet the person that had enough integrity to be honest with

Manager and not take advantage of us. By the way, I'm going to give you credit for the full what was it 1,300 or 1,400 points on your game receipt?
FRIEND #1: It's 1,400 points and no really I don't want it, I didn't earn it. I wouldn't feel good about taking it.

ARCADE OWNER: Ok, well how about meeting at the Arcade Saturday morning around 9am?

FRIEND #1: Sure, that sounds ok.

ARCADE OWNER: Great, put Manger back on please and I will see you then.

NARRATOR: Friend #1 hands the phone back to Manager and waits until he ends the call.

FRIEND #1: I want to redeem this receipt for the 140 points I actually earned.

NARRATOR: Friend #2 and Friend #3 are staring in disbelief. Friend #1 would never do something like that. This guy would take candy from a baby if no one was looking.

FRIEND #1: Hey guys what are you staring at?

FRIEND #2: I'm not sure, what's gotten into you?

FRIEND #1: Nothing, I did what was right. No big deal. Wouldn't you guys have done the same thing?

FRIEND #2: We're not talking about me. We're talking about you (laughing). What made you do something right? I mean come on. We've known you since we were kids. I've seen you con more people than anyone would believe.

FRIEND #1: I guess people change.

FRIEND #3: Not you. I remember you trading that broken-down bike of yours for a skateboard. The chain kept popping off because the sprocket was bent. So you loosened the brake cables from the hand grips and told the guy, all you have to do is tighten up these lose cables and the brakes will work just fine. But I wouldn't ride it right now if I were you. It could be dangerous.

FRIEND #1: Yea, I remember that. That wasn't right.

Bill: What are you going to do about it.

FRIEND #1: Nothing, right now. But do you want to go somewhere with me tomorrow?

BILL: Sure, I think it would be a good idea.

FRIEND #3: Where are you guys going? What about us? Aren't we invited?

FRIEND #1: I don't think you guys would understand right now. I think it's best if just Bill comes with me. I need to talk to him about it.

FRIEND #2: You're making no sense at all. None. I'm going back to playing a game.

FRIEND #3: Do you guys want to leave here and go to the Hamburger joint? Brianna and her friends were going up there tonight.

FRIEND #1: No, not me. I think I'm going home.

FRIEND #3: Well I'm with you on meeting the girls. Plus, you're driving. So I don't have much of a choice. Let's see, either walk 3 miles to get home or go meet with girls. Um, ok let's go.

NARRATOR: Friend #2 and Friend #3 start walking out of the arcade and Friend #1 looks over at Bill.

FRIEND #1: Bill, you got some time to talk?

BILL: Yea where do you want to go?

FRIEND #1: Nowhere special. How about if we go through the drive through and get a couple of pops and just drive around.

BILL: Ok whose driving?

FRIEND #1: I think you should, and I'll pay for the pop.

NARRATOR: Bill and Friend #1 leave and head to the get some pop and start driving around.

FRIEND #1: Bill is this thing I'm feeling, is this what you were talking about, I mean about God?

BILL: I think it is. I mean, I know God is real and so is His Spirit.

FRIEND #1: I don't really understand how I'm feeling right now. It's just all of a sudden when the manager was talking about all of the things the Arcade Owner did for everyone in the area, I mean it was so unselfish of

him. He could be keeping all that money for himself. I know he probably makes a lot more money from his restaurants, but still. It just made me feel weird thinking of taking advantage of them. When Manager was talking, it's like something clicked inside of me. I didn't care about the 1,400 points or the prize. I just didn't want to take advantage of him. It reminded me of what we just did at the electronic shop. You know giving back the \$10. You didn't do that for attention, and I don't think the Arcade Owner is doing what he does for attention. I feel like there is something bigger, something that is affecting people's actions, something that is making people do the right thing. But not because they want people to give them credit for doing the right thing, but because doing it, is the right thing. Does that make sense?

BILL: I completely understand.

FRIEND #1: So what's up with all of this?

BILL: Friend #1 the Bible says it's about our heart, our motives. Why are we doing what we are doing. Are we doing it just to win brownie points, or are we doing it because we are really listening and obeying the Holy Spirit's direction?

FRIEND #1: You're overwhelming me here buddy.

BILL: Do you remember telling me that people at the church your parents used to take you to would base everything on how many good things they did verses the bad things they did? It sounded like a ledger sheet. Do you remember they made you believe as long as a person did one more good thing than bad thing in their life they would go to heaven?

FRIEND #1: Yes

BILL: That's all wrong. That is not what the Bible says. God is not keeping score like that. A lot of ministers are trying to get people to change and be better people. So, they tell people if you want to please god then keep doing good things, like God is keeping score.

FRIEND #1: Well then how does all of this work?

NARRATOR: Bill quietly ask the Holy Spirit to guide his thoughts and words so it's the Holy Spirit that is touching Friend #1's heart and not Bill's talking ability.

BILL: Friend #1, can you give me a minute to think about what's the best way to explain it.

FRIEND #1: Yea, sure.

BILL: Ok, let me start with this. Do you understand what people mean when they say someone is saved?

FRIEND #1: I think they mean the person is going to heaven, right?

BILL: Yes. But like I said most of the people have it all wrong.

FRIEND #1: How can that be? You mean all of these ministers and churches and people have it wrong?

BILL: Friend #1, I didn't say all. I said most. Let me explain what I mean. First of all, even though you don't believe in God, and you don't go to church and you don't own a Bible, would you agree that the basis for Christianity is the Bible?

FRIEND #1: Yes of course.

BILL: Ok, so all that should matter is what the Bible says. It's not what I say, and it's not what a minister or pastor at church #1 or church #2 or church #3 says. All that matters is what the Bible says, right?

FRIEND #1: Yes. What's your point?

BILL: I'm getting to it. The ministers and pastors should be teaching people what the Bible actually says and that's what the people should be following, right?

FRIEND #1: Yes that's obvious, but, what's your point?

BILL: Friend #1, Christians say the Bible is the anointed word of God, the final authority on God's word and His promises. Hang on, let me read you something.

NARRATOR: BILL takes out a pocket Bible his father bought him.

BILL: In the book of Ephesians in chapter 2 verses 8 and 9 it says,
"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast."

Do you understand that?

FRIEND #1: I'm not sure.

BILL: It's saying we are saved by grace, through faith. That means by God's grace a person is saved through them having faith that Jesus died on

the cross for the forgiveness of their sins. Saved by grace, through faith. Do you understand that part?

FRIEND #1: Yes, so far.

BILL: It also says, it is not about anything the person can do, it is not about our good deeds or good works of any kind. It is not about keeping score or a ledger sheet. It actually says it is a gift of God. It can't be earned. Then it drives that point home by saying, it's not about anything a person does, it's not about their good works, so that no one can boast or take credit for earning their Salvation. The Bible is making it clear that salvation is a gift and that it can not be earned in anyway, no matter how many good things someone does. This is so nobody can say, I did it on my own. I earned my salvation because I did more good things than bad things. You can't earn it. It doesn't matter how nice of a person someone is. The only way to be saved is by God's grace, through our faith that Jesus is our Savior and through that our Salvation is a gift from God. Do you see that?

FRIEND #1: Yes I do. I never realized that before. That's not what the churches are teaching.

BILL: That's exactly my point. That is what this whole conversation is about isn't it?

FRIEND #1: Yes, you're right. Most churches and pastors are teaching people the wrong stuff.

BILL: Friend #1, none of us deserves our Salvation. None of us deserves to be forgiven of our sins. None of us deserves to be absolved of our sins. No one deserves to have their entire slate and record of sins wiped clean and forever forgotten. But God does it anyway because of His merciful grace. Do you understand that now?

FRIEND #1: Yes, I do.

BILL: I want to make sure you understand what the Bible says about who Jesus is. In John 3:16 it says,

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”

And in John 14:6 Jesus says,

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Do you understand the Bible is saying the only way to have eternal life in heaven is by accepting Jesus?

FRIEND #1: Yes, I do is there more to it?

BILL: Friend #1, you must repent for your past sins. That doesn't mean to carry around guilt or beat yourself with a whip for years or months or even seconds to prove how sorry you are. It means we must sincerely apologize to God for our past sins with a sincere intention to not keep repeating them. Are you ready to do that?

FRIEND #1: Did you do that?

BILL: Yes, I did. You don't have to say the stuff out loud. Just in your mind between you and God.

FRIEND #1: Ok, I'm ready.

BILL: Ok say what I say but in your own words if you want.

NARRATOR: Bill leads Friend #1 asking God to forgive him of his sins and thanking God for his merciful grace and to give thanks to Jesus for sacrificing himself and taking the punishment that should have been Friend #1's, so that he can be saved and then to ask God to fill his heart with His Spirit and then to commit to not repeat the sins of his past and promises to be Baptized into the Kingdom of God as soon as he can.

FRIEND #1: Bill I have to tell you I feel pretty good inside. I really do. This has been an incredible evening.

BILL: Great congratulations Friend #1, but there is even more good news, really good news.

FRIEND #1: You're kidding better than this?

BILL: I don't think anything is better than being saved. But, there are incredible benefits with being a saved, born again Christian.

FRIEND #1: Like what?

NARRATOR: Bill gives Friend #1 his pocket Bible and tells him where to find the book of Acts.

BILL: Once you find the book of acts, go to chapter 2 and read verse 38. ,

“Peter replied, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

FRIEND #1: What? A gift of the Holy Spirit, what are you talking about?

BILL: Wait until you hear about this. You see Salvation is a gift from God for when we die, our eternal Salvation. But the Holy Spirit is our Gift while we are alive on earth. The Holy Spirit empowers us. Friend #1, this is going to blow you away. I want to pull over and park some place so I can show you something. I don't want to say it wrong.

NARRATOR: Bill pulls over into a parking lot and looks through his pocket Bible. Bill feels a joy in his heart, because he knows his friend has entered into the Kingdom of God. He will be spared the torment of hell and spend the rest of eternity in heaven and be empowered by the Holy Spirit while on earth.

BILL: The Bible says, Jesus said His followers will receive a comforter when He dies and goes to Heaven. The comforter is the Holy Spirit that will never leave you or forsake you. He will empower you with His fruit (Fruit of the Spirit), and His Gifts. The Bible says they will MANIFEST in your life. Ok here it is. In the book of John chapter 14:26 it says,

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

Jesus is telling us we will receive the Holy Spirit that the Father will send to us. Ok now listen to this, it's incredible. In the book of John again chapter 14 in verses 16 to 20 Jesus is talking to His disciples and says,

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who

loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

Did you catch all of that?

FRIEND #1: Read it again but explain it as you're reading it.

BILL: Ok, it says,

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate, the Spirit of truth."

The advocate, the Spirit of Truth is the Holy Spirit to help you and be with you forever, Friend #1, this is important it says forever, not sometimes, but forever. Some people think the Holy Spirit only comes to us during times of trouble. But the Bible says the Holy Spirit lives in believers and He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do you understand?

FRIEND #1: Yes, go on.

BILL:

"The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him."

That means the people in the world that do not accept and believe in Jesus will not be able to receive the Holy Spirit because they do not believe in Him.

"But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."

That says as a Believer you know who the Holy Spirit is and He will live in you, did you catch that He will be in you.

"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."

Jesus is assuring us; He will not be leaving us alone after He dies and goes to Heaven. He will not leave us without help, without guidance, because His Spirit will come to be in us.

"Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me."

The world will not see Jesus, because His physical body will be dead, but His followers, Believers will have the Holy Spirit living in them and they will know He is still alive.

"Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."

Now keep in mind Jesus is talking to His followers. He says one day we will realize that He is in the Father and we as Believers are in Jesus and

Jesus is living in us. Did you hear that, the Bible again says the Spirit of God, Jesus is living in us?

FRIEND #1: Yes I see that, it's incredible. I can't wait to hear more.

BILL: In the book of John chapter 14 and verses 12-14 it says,

“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”

Friend #1, did you hear that? Let's review this, Jesus is saying that when he goes to be with the Father in heaven the Holy Spirit will come to live in us. Friend #1, that is the exact same Spirit of God that empowered Jesus throughout His ministry. That is the same Spirit that created heaven and earth and rose Jesus from the dead. Friend #1, that same Spirit of God is now living inside of you and me and empowering us to do the same things Jesus did while He was on earth. What do you think about that?

FRIEND #1: I'm overwhelmed, I'm speechless.

BILL: I know the feeling, but wait, there's more.

FRIEND #1: There is still more?

BILL: Yep. The Holy Spirit has supernatural gifts and Fruit for each and every one of the Believers and He wants those gifts to manifest in our lives daily. The Bible actually uses the word manifest when it talks about the Holy Spirit. Is that powerful or what?

FRIEND #1: Yes, tell me more.

BILL: The Fruit of the Spirit is God's own character, His nature. If God is living in us, then His nature is going to be living in us. God wants His nature and His character to manifest through us to the world. Friend #1, God doesn't possess us like some evil forceful demon. God gave us free will. That means free choice to make our own decisions. This gives us complete control to either allow God to work through us as His earthly vessel or refuse HIM and try to do everything on our own. We have a choice to rely on, our own determination, will power, and stubbornness, of the Holy Spirit. Most Christians and ministers ignore this whole thing about the Holy Spirit. Some churches refuse to accept Him, and some churches believe the Holy Spirit has no power and can't manifest through people.

FRIEND #1: But how? Why? I mean that is what the Bible says isn't it?

BILL: Yes, it does. I think it's because of pride. In other words, if a minister or a church group leader is questioned why people don't see the Holy Spirit manifesting through them, what are they going to say?

FRIEND #1: They can be like the disciples that asked Jesus why they couldn't heal the man's son and be honest and say they are seeking Jesus for an answer to that exact question. Or I guess they can make up excuses so it they don't look bad. Oh, I get it. Pride.

BILL: Unfortunately, most people aren't going to admit they are missing something. So they make up an excuse and say the Holy Spirit, His gifts and Fruit aren't real. Friend #1, the sad part is, I really believe those ministers and Christians really believe that, I think they really believe the Holy Spirit either doesn't exist and is powerless. Think about how sad that is. Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins and for the Holy Spirit to come live in believers. Jesus literally says that as fact multiple times. It's almost like calling Jesus a liar. I really don't understand it.

FRIEND #1: But you read it to me. You showed me the words right on the pages. How can they deny that?

BILL: Good question Friend #1. I think some of those ministers pick and choose what they want to believe. Then they hand pick parts of scripture verses that they can use to support their position. Unfortunately, most Christians don't even read the Bible and most of the ones that do just read it like it's a novel or school book. They miss the real revelation that is the anointed word of God. So they read it with a preconceived idea of what the verses are saying because of what the minister taught them. Let me give you an example. I've heard that some ministers use the following scripture to make people feel good about themselves. It's in the book of Romans chapter 8 verse 1. It says,

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"

Doesn't that make you feel great. Imagine an entire church shouting Amen, we are free.

FRIEND #1: Great, I like it, I'm free of condemnation. I like it. Wait, you're setting me up. That's not really what it says is it?

BILL: No that is exactly what it says. But it's just not the whole verse. You see some ministers and people use part of a verse out of context, to

justify their point. Here I will let you read the entire verse. Read it out loud and pay attention to the words after the comma. Those words are still part of the same verse.

FRIEND #1:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

What does that mean, but after the Spirit?

BILL: It means just because a person accepts Jesus and is saved, it doesn't mean they're denying their fleshly desires, thoughts, and ways. It doesn't mean they are walking by and following the Holy Spirit.

FRIEND #1: I can see your point. A few words left out of a verse or sentence can change its whole meaning. I'm surprised and I guess I'm not surprised to hear that some ministers do things like that. Probably just to attract more people, because saying things like that makes it seem like such a positive uplifting environment. I can picture that type of place. A place where no one has to take responsibility for their actions, because everyone is free of condemnation. The aggressive personalities end up abusing the quieter people and get away with it. Because no one is ever called on it, no one is ever held accountable. Is that right?

BILL: I don't know for sure. I agree it sure seems like it would create an extremely dangerous and abusive environment.

FRIEND #1: Anything else?

BILL: There's a lot. But I think we covered enough for tonight. I do want to make sure you understand, trying to live a life free of sin is impossible in the flesh. That is one of the reasons the Holy Spirit came to live in us. Through the Spirit we are empowered to resist and defeat sin in our lives. Before you go remember satan will not be happy that you have accepted Jesus. Here look at this in the book of John chapter 10 verse 10 it says,

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

The thief is satan. And in the book of 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 8 it says,

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

So, keep in mind not everyone is going to be excited about your newfound faith in Jesus. As you grow you will understand more about Spiritual discernment. That's when you can sense the Holy Spirit directing your

steps and words. A lot of well-meaning overzealous people actually push people away from God, because they are trying to do things their way. They are trying to push their own agenda and not listening to the Holy Spirit's still small voice to direct them.

FRIEND #1: I got it, I understand.

BILL: Let's call it a night, it's getting pretty late. Here take a look at this Bible app. It has the complete Bible on it and in different versions. I'll explain about the different versions later. But if you are interested in reading anything, I would suggest starting in the book of John in the New Testament.

FRIEND #1: Yes absolutely. Thanks Bill.

BILL: No problem Friend #1

NARRATOR: Bill drives Friend #1 back to the Arcade so he can get his car and drive home. Bill heads home and walks in the house.

BILL: Hi Mom, Hi Dad, I just had an incredible evening.

CHRISTIANA: Hi Bill, what happened?

CHRISTIAN: Hi son.

NARRATOR: Bill excitedly explains the entire evening to his parents.

CHRISTIAN: I'm proud of you son.

CHRISTIANA: Bill you are a real man of God.

BILL: I am really excited about this journey.

CHRISTIANA: I am too. I'm also really proud of your dad. Christian the progress you've made in such a short time is amazing, plus leading us all to Jesus.

CHRISTIAN: This has been great. I can't wait until Friday to meet with Faithful and Gentleness. Wouldn't it be great if he came back to the church as the Senior Pastor? Our search for a church would be over.

CHRISTIANA: I'm excited about talking to them too.

BILL: I'm going up to my room. Thanks for everything guys.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana say goodnight and Bill leaves the room.

The next morning Bill gets a text from Friend #1, it isn't good. Friend #1 was so excited when he got home last night, he tried telling his dad about how his church was wrong. Friend #1's dad got very argumentative and demeaning to Friend #1. Friend #1's dad was raised in the church that Friend #1 was saying wasn't teaching the truth and was leading people astray. It was a typical Friend #1 and his father argument. No matter how excited Friend #1 is about something, his father will knock it and demean Friend #1. He makes him feel so inadequate and like a failure or loser. It's also a typical Friend #1 conversation, where he comes out like a bull in a China shop, just trying to prove someone is wrong. Bill has been at their house a few times and has seen Friend #1's dad yell at Friend #1. Bill calls Friend #1.

FRIEND #1: Hello.

BILL: What happened?

FRIEND #1: Pretty much what I told you. I'm stupid, I'm a loser, I'm a failure, I'm a disappointment and embarrassment to everyone in the family.

BILL: That's not true Friend #1.

FRIEND #1: Bill, I don't know about this whole Jesus thing. I mean if there was really a God, how could he allow this to happen. Wouldn't my dad have been happy and excited about this? But no, I walk in and get completely blindsided. I was on such a high about the evening and the emotional fall this time was hard, real hard.

BILL: Friend #1, it's not God's fault, I should have prepared you better. Not everyone is going to accept or be happy for your newfound life. In fact, some people will try to destroy that in you. I should have warned you more about using discernment and not be like a bull in the china shop. Friend #1 I'm so sorry. This is all my fault. I should have warned you and prepared you.

FRIEND #1: No man, you didn't do anything wrong. You didn't force anything on me. I asked for it. I'm done with it now.

BILL: Friend #1, no, don't say that. Please don't say that.

FRIEND #1: Listen I got to go. I'll talk to you some time.

BILL: No wait.

NARRATOR: But Friend #1 has already ended the call. Bill goes downstairs to talk to his dad and mom.

CHRISTIAN: Hi Bill, how are you this morning?

Bill: Not good dad. I really screwed up last night. I screwed up really bad.

CHRISTIAN: What do you mean?

NARRATOR: Bill explains about the text and the phone call with Friend #1 and what they talked about last night.

CHRISTIAN: Bill you said you told him about the Holy Spirit and how the Spirit will lead us and protect us. You also told him we have to listen for the Holy Spirit's direction and follow it. You told him that satan roams the earth to see who may devour. You told him not everyone would be excited about his newfound faith. You told him we have to use Spiritual discernment on what to say or do and when. Bill you didn't do anything wrong. You did everything you could to prepare him. Friend #1 and his father have a very strained and explosive relationship to begin with. You didn't cause this problem.

BILL: But dad, he is throwing his walk with Jesus out the window. He said he is done with it all.

CHRISTIAN: Bill, you did what you could do. We have to pray for him and his father.

NARRATOR: Christian and Bill spend some time praying for Friend #1 and his father. But this really takes a toll on Bill. The first-person Bill witnessed to turns his back on God within hours. Bill continues praying that Friend #1 opens his heart and allows the Holy Spirit to direct him. A few days go by and Friend #1 is not returning Bill's calls or text messages. Bill prays for wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit. Bill wants to go to Friend #1's house and try to talk to him. But he doesn't want to act unwisely and cause more harm than good. Bill continues to seek direction from the Holy Spirit. Later that day, Bill feels convicted to go to Friend #1's house and he believes it is the Holy Spirit prompting him. Bill is praying as he drives to Friend #1's house, that the Holy Spirit guides him as he talks. Bill wants to make sure he doesn't act on what he thinks is the

best way of handling the situation, but to do what the Holy Spirit directs him to say and do. He starts getting overwhelmed and pulls into a parking lot and tears start flowing from his eyes. Bill starts seeking the Holy Spirit more and asking Him to manifest in his life, to guide him, direct him and give him the right words to say to Friend #1. Bill starts praying in the Spirit for the first time. Sometime later he looks up at the clock in his car and almost an hour has passed. He feels peace, complete and total peace and starts heading to Friend #1's house, still praying as he is driving. Bill finally arrives and rings the doorbell.

Chapter 11

BILL: Hello is Friend #1 home?

FRIEND #1's FATHER: Hello Bill, no he isn't. He's been staying at his uncles house the last few days. I'm sure you know why.

BILL: Sir, I'm sorry about all of this. Can I please come in and talk to you?

FRIEND #1's FATHER: Yes, we can talk in my den.

NARRATOR: Bill follows Friend #1's father into his den and still praying to himself and asking the Holy Spirit to use this opportunity to plant seeds of healing in their relationship and to touch Friend #1's heart to accept Jesus.

BILL: Sir.

FRIEND #1's FATHER: Bill you can call me Life Coach.

BILL: I'm sorry about any problem my talking to Friend #1 caused you and him.

LIFE COACH: Bill, we already had problems. This just tipped the cow over.

BILL: Why are you so angry?

LIFE COACH: Because he is weak. He is a loser. How do you think he makes me look to my friends, my colleagues, my clients, and students?

BILL: Why do you feel he is weak and a loser?

LIFE COACH: Look at him. He's a failure. He will never amount to anything. Do you have any idea how much time I have spent with him? How much I've tried to mentor him, develop him and guide him to follow in the footsteps of his other brothers?

BILL: Life Coach, maybe God doesn't want him to follow in their footsteps. The Bible says the Holy Spirit has a calling for every one of us and maybe following in his brother's footsteps isn't his calling or purpose. Maybe that's why it's so difficult for him to follow your direction.

LIFE COACH: Do not, I repeat do not come into my house and start preaching to me about God. I go to church every Sunday, I'm an usher for

pete's sake. I help with the men's ministry and the youth camp. So, don't push this.

NARRATOR: Bill silently prays. He does not want to push Life Coach's buttons and get thrown out of the house. He knows this is not about proving he is right at the expense of pushing life coach away. He wants to plant seeds and hope a door opens so he can help Life Coach see Friend #1 in a different light.

BILL: I understand Life Coach. I know you are an important person and very involved in your church.

LIFE COACH: What do you parents think of your newfound faith? Doesn't you father hate God because your grandfather died when your father was a young boy?

BILL: I don't know about anything with my grandfather. My father never talks about him or what happened. But I do know my dad and mom both have accepted Jesus as their Savior recently.

LIFE COACH: Oh really, that's interesting. Are they the ones filling your head with all of this nonsense? Are they the ones preaching that all of the ministers, churches have it all wrong? But my brilliant son has it all figured out. Is that where this is coming from?

BILL: I don't think anyone ever said all pastors or churches are teaching people the wrong stuff. I'm sure there are a lot of pastors and churches that are preaching truth. I just know what I've been shown in the Bible.

LIFE COACH: What you've been shown in the Bible, like what? Tell me, teach me something. Go ahead Bill. I want to hear how the churches and denominations that have been around for hundreds of years have this all wrong. But you, an 18-year-old kid and my son have it all figured out.

NARRATOR: Bill looks down and takes a deep breath and silently says Holy Spirit guide me right now. Give me the words to speak. Let it be your Spirit that flows from me and not my own words and personality. I know Lord it's not by might not by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord of Host.

BILL: Can I have a minute to gather my thoughts?

LIFE COACH: Sure, take your time. I'll be sitting right here waiting.

NARRATOR: Not even a minute has gone by, but to Life Coach it probably seems like hours.

BILL: Well first I want to be clear that I never said all churches or ministers got it wrong, I said most.

LIFE COACH: OK, go ahead Bill.

BILL: Would you agree the basis for Christianity is the Bible?

LIFE COACH: Yes of course. Are you going to waste my time or are you going to blow me away with some miraculous insight?

BILL: Ok, um, well, I just want to be sure. So, I know we both agree. Would you agree it's not about what I say or think or what you say or think, or the minister at church #1 or church #2 or church #3 says right?

LIFE COACH: Yes, I agree.

BILL: Ok, um, we both agree that all that matters is what the Bible says. The pastors and ministers should be teaching people what the Bible says and not their personal views or feelings on things and that's what the people should be following, right?

LIFE COACH: Yes, that's obvious. What's your point?

BILL: Well, in the Bible in the book of Ephesians in chapter 2 verses 8 and 9 it says,

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Is that right?

LIFE COACH: I'm not sure about the scripture number, but it sounds familiar.

BILL: Can I look it up really quick? It's important that I'm using the right words.

NARRATOR: Bill takes out his pocket Bible.

LIFE COACH: No, just keep going. If I want, I can look it up myself. I have a Bible right here on the credenza.

BILL: Wow. It looks like a nice one. Is that your everyday Bible?

LIFE COACH: My everyday Bible? If you mean do I have it out every day, the answer is yes.

BILL: It looks brand new. You must take very good care of it.

LIFE COACH: I do Bill. I've had it for almost 4 years. I just took it out of the box a few months ago to have my name engraved on it. So, continue with the life changing lesson.

BILL: From my understanding the verses I quoted are saying we are saved by grace. That means because of the merciful grace of God, through us having faith Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, our sins are forgiven, and we are saved. It says it is not about anything we do. It is not about our good deeds or works of any kind. In fact, it says it is a Gift of God and not about anything a person does. This way no person can boast or take credit for deserving or earning their Salvation. Do you agree?

LIFE COACH: If what you said is accurate, yes. But that's making a big assumption. Go ahead and read that part from your Bible.

BILL:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast.”

LIFE COACH: What verse is that again. I want to read it from my Bible.

BILL: It's Ephesians chapter 2 verses 8 and 9.

NARRATOR: Life Coach starts scrolling through his untouched Bible for the book of Ephesians. Bill notices it looks like Life Coach is looking in the Old Testament.

BILL: Can I help you?

LIFE COACH: Where is it at? This is a new Bible to me. So, I'm not sure where everything is at.

BILL: I completely understand. Here, it's in the New Testament, keep going. Keep going. Ok it's right after Galatians. Ok chapter 2 verses 8 and 9. What version Bible do you have?

LIFE COACH: It's a Christian version, what do you think I have?

BILL: No I mean is it a King James or NIV or Amplified or?

LIFE COACH: What?

BILL: There are different versions. That means there are different translations, some have changed the words to more modern used English, but some have changed the meaning from the King James that a lot of churches use.

NARRATOR: Life Coach closes the Bible.

LIFE COACH: Ok I get it, so you and your family are using some new twisted version of the Bible and you're trying to prepare me if mine says something different. You're wasting my time.

BILL: No please Life Coach. Don't stop. Let's just see what it says.

LIFE COACH: Fine, I want to see the look on your face when it doesn't say the same thing your twisted version does.

BILL: Can we at least see what version it is?

LIFE COACH: Where does it say that?

BILL: It should say it on the side or inside. Oh wait, right there by your thumb.

LIFE COACH: It says Amplified Bible. So, are we in for a treat? Is it going to expose your Bible as a fraud?

BILL: I honestly don't know what to expect, I've never looked at an Amplified Bible. I have no idea what it says. So, we can find out together. Does that sound fair?

LIFE COACH: Sure. I got them. It says,

“For it is by grace [God’s remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God; not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law], so that no one will [be able to] boast or take credit in any way [for his salvation].”

BILL: That is really clear. I like that Bible. It gives you an explanation of the words. It's like having a Bible study right in the Bible.

LIFE COACH: Hang on, I need to call someone.

NARRATOR: Life Coach picks up his cell phone.

LIFE COACH: Hello Pastor Stephen, this is Life Coach, I have a quick question. What Bible do we use at church?

NARRATOR: Life Coach listens silently.

LIFE COACH: Ok I got it, that makes complete sense. So, if I use that Bible whatever it says in there, I can be assured it is the absolute truth?

Life Coach listens silently.

LIFE COACH: I understand. That clears up some things for me. Thank you very much for your time.

NARRATOR: Life Coach ends the call.

BILL: What did he say?

LIFE COACH: He said we use the Amplified Bible at our church. Which is probably why I bought this one a few years ago. But, but, um, this doesn't make sense.

BILL: What doesn't?

LIFE COACH: Listen I know we are saved by grace through faith that Jesus is our Savior. Everyone knows that. But I never heard or read anything about that it has nothing to do with our works or good deeds. Then why in the world does our church keep pushing people to do good deeds and make us feel like we are keeping a ledger?

BILL: Can I read it Life Coach? I want to hear what it says again?

LIFE COACH: Sure here.

BILL:

“For it is by grace [God’s remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God; not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law], so that no one

will [be able to] boast or take credit in any way [for his salvation].”

BILL: It absolutely says salvation is not a matter of your own effort or works. It's not a matter of keeping the Old Testament laws. It does say it's a gift of God so that no one can brag about how good he is or how much good he did in his life to earn salvation.

LIFE COACH: Yea I know. I read it. This doesn't make sense.

NARRATOR: Bill sits silently. He wants to jump up and reinforce that Life Coach agreed whatever the Bible says is truth and not what any minister is teaching. But he is feeling prompted to just sit in silence and let the Holy Spirit work. There is absolute silence for about 10 minutes. Then Life Coach picks up his cell phone again and makes another call.

LIFE COACH: Hello Adam, do you have a minute?

NARRATOR: Adam is talking.

LIFE COACH: How important do you think all of the good things we do for God are? I mean I know they are important, but do you believe being a good person gets us into heaven?

NARRATOR: Adam is talking.

LIFE COACH: Listen I have one of my son's friends over and he and I were just reading something in the Bible and I want to read it to you, it's not long, ok?

NARRATOR: Adam is talking and makes Life Coach laugh.

LIFE COACH: Yes, I know I'm going to get fingerprints on my new Bible. But seriously, this is important ok?

NARRATOR: Life Coach reads the verses in Ephesians. Then ask Adam, what do you think of that?

NARRATOR: Adam is talking.

LIFE COACH: I already thought of that. I called Pastor Stephen, and this is the Bible we use at church, Bill, what Type of Bible is this again?

BILL: Amplified Bible

LIFE COACH: It's an Amplified Bible version or translation or something. But it says Amplified and that's what Pastor Stephen says we use at church. Adam, he actually said he used that Bible because it gives a clearer understanding of what the Bible means and that if it says it in this Bible then it's truth. What do you make of this?

NARRATOR: Adam is talking.

LIFE COACH: I agree. But I think I should talk to him by myself, and ask him if he could clarify our churches position and what the Bible is saying. If we go in together or as a group, it could look like were ganging up on him and accusing him of something.

NARRATOR: Adam is talking.

LIFE COACH: I know, I know, this is very disturbing to me too. I'm hoping I'm just misunderstanding what he has been teaching. I mean in all honesty, I'm not in the service all of the time being an usher. Wait what did you say?

NARRATOR: Adam is talking.

LIFE COACH: You're kidding. Where did he get that idea from? Ok listen Adam I have to go. Thanks for your time. I will let you know what Pastor Stephen says.

NARRATOR: They end their call.

LIFE COACH: Well Bill you're point is well made, it's right there in front of both of us and both the pastor at my church and the head usher both say that is the Bible we use.

BILL: I'm sorry Life Coach.

LIFE COACH: What are you sorry for?

BILL: I feel like I caused you to be disappointed in someone you respect.

LIFE COACH: Wow, that's pretty deep Bill. Especially from someone only 18 years old. What else do you want to tell me?

BILL: I don't know, do you want to talk more about Jesus being the only way to Salvation.

LIFE COACH: No, I already know that. There are no other God's and it's only through Jesus. But I'm thrown off by the doing good deeds thing. I knew you have to believe Jesus is your Savior. But I really thought it's your good deeds that make the real difference. Anything else Bill?

NARRATOR: Bill looks down for a minute and silently prays and ask the Holy Spirit for direction. Should he start talking about the Holy Spirit or could that be too much for him to handle right now and destroy all of the progress that has been made? Should he just stop now and take the progress that has been made and build on that? Bill feels a direction from the Holy Spirit and looks up.

BILL: Life Coach, there is a lot more I would like to share. But I think what's most important right now is, well, um, well I was wondering if you realize just how brave and courageous your son Friend #1 really is? I mean he stood up to you, didn't he? He bucked the system you created for your house, didn't he? Isn't that what you've been trying to do as a Life Coach for him? Be a leader, not following blindly? I am hoping you understand Friend #1 does have a calling on his life. The Holy Spirit guarantees us all that. If I can just share one more verse, it's in the book of Romans chapter 11 verse 29.

NARRATOR: Life Coach starts trying to find the book of Romans in his Bible and then hands it over to Bill.

LIFE COACH: Here Bill why don't you find it. I think it will be a lot quicker that way.

NARRATOR: Bill quickly scrolls through the New Testament and finds the verse.

BILL: Here it is.

NARRATOR: Bill hands the Bible back to Life Coach and points to verse 29.

LIFE COACH:

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable [for He does not withdraw what He has given, nor does He change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call].”

BILL: I never heard it from the Amplified Bible before.

LIFE COACH: That is empowering. I’m going to use that in my teaching and mentoring.

BILL: Life Coach can you see that Friend #1 has a calling from the Holy Spirit and it might not be what you have planned for him? Consider how strongly he feels about it and that he has the courage to stand up to you. But not in defiance or disrespect. But as someone who has listened and learned from your mentoring to not just go through life following what others tell you to do. Doesn’t that make you feel proud of him?

NARRATOR: Life Coach picks up his cell phone again.

LIFE COACH: I have one more call to make. But this time, I am going to have it on speaker phone.

FRIEND #1: Hello dad

LIFE COACH: Hello son, I have Bill here with me and we are on speaker phone. We have been talking for about an hour and I want to tell you I am sorry. I am sorry for how I have treated you. I am sorry for how I have demeaned you. I am sorry for how I have tried to force you into my life choices for you. Will you please forgive me and come home this evening?

NARRATOR: You can hear Friend #1 quietly crying through the phone

FRIEND #1: Dad are you serious?

LIFE COACH: Yes son, I am. I also want to say how proud I am of you for the choices you have made in your friends. Bill is one of the most insightful people I have ever met. Then when I consider his age, I am incredibly impressed and proud you listened to him a few nights ago and accepted Jesus.

LIFE COACH: Hi Bill, Thank You. How did you guys get to talk?

BILL: Your dad can explain all of that to you. But I have to say thank you Life Coach for the incredible compliments. But I really want to stress, this wasn't about me talking. You have no idea how much praying I did for the Holy Spirit to guide me and my words. To help me fight off my own personal thoughts of how I should handle this and what I should say. In fact, I pulled over into a parking lot and just prayed for about an hour in the Spirit on the way over here.

LIFE COACH: You prayed in what?

BILL: Life Coach, can we just save that part for another time and just focus on how great everything is right now?

LIFE COACH: (laughing) sure my friend, sure.

NARRATOR: Life Coach reaches his hand out to shake Bills and says thank you again.

LIFE COACH: Son are you coming home tonight? I want to hear about everything Bill shared with you and I promise I will listen to every word you say with an open mind.

FRIEND #1: Yes, dad I will. I will tell uncle your coming to pick me up, or do you want me to ask him to drive me home?

LIFE COACH: No way, I want to pick you up personally and shake your hand, no I want to give you a hug and tell you in person how proud I am of you. It's way overdue. I will leave now, and I will be there in about 30 minutes.

NARRATOR: Life Coach ends his call and stands up and looks Bill in the eyes.

LIFE COACH: Bill somehow, somewhere I got lost. I got off track with my own family. I got consumed in my own success and believing I was a self-made man and not giving God credit for anything. If I would have only done what you have done multiple times tonight. I have been focused on how I wanted to handle things and not on how God wanted to handle them. Bill, I have to tell you. This is a new mindset for me. But I know it's the right mindset. I will start with Friend #1 and help him identify what God's calling is in his life. But I would like your help and assurance that you will be there to help mentor him. I know he respects you and you obviously have a better foundation of the Bible than I do at this point. I feel like I have a lot of relearning to do and probably a lot of restructuring my teaching to other people.

BILL: Thank you for listening Life Coach. This meant a lot to me, more than you know, and you have my word, I will be there for Friend #1

NARRATOR: They both walk out the door and head for their cars and drive off for the time being in two different directions, but in their hearts and Spirits, they are on the same path.

Christian and Christiana are just getting ready to leave and meet with Faithful and Gentleness for a late dinner. As they are pulling out of the driveway, they get a call from Bill. Bill fills them in on the conversation with Life Coach and how he called and apologized to his son Friend #1. Christian and Christiana are filled with Joy over what Bill did. Bill went from feeling discouraged and even depressed to being lifted up through prayer. He was sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit to hear that still small voice and then follow His prompting.

CHRISTIAN: Bill, I can't tell you how excited and encouraged we are by this. I hope you really understand. It really does encourage us. The more we hear about God moving in people's lives, the more it encourages us to continue to seek God and worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

CHRISTIANA: Bill I really love how many times you stopped from just saying whatever came into your mind and asked the Holy Spirit to guide you and you listened to him. That is so good.

CHRISTIAN: I agree. Especially when Life Coach asked you if there was more and you were thinking of talking to him about the Holy Spirit. But

you were sensitive enough to the Spirit to sense His prompting to Stop, don't do it. Instead use the progress you've made with Life Coach towards healing the relationship between Life Coach and his son. You were really wise to ignore the temptation to keep going. You ignored the prideful act of relying on your own ideas and thoughts and handling it how you thought it would best. That is incredible. Can you imagine how things could have turned out differently if you listened to you own feelings? You could have ended up verbally puking all over Life Coach with your own thoughts and words and completely destroyed the progress you made. That is a perfect example of how we as Christian's should live.

CHRISTIANA: It was powerful to hear you tell Life Coach how Friend #1 wasn't a failure. But in fact, was the strong-willed person Life Coach wanted him to be. Bill, that changed that family's life forever. How did you think of saying that?

BILL: I felt prompted to say it. I really believe it was the Holy Spirit. That's why when Life Coach started complementing me about how I handled it, I wanted to make sure it was God that got the glory and not me. I remember reading in the Bible about pride and I want to be very aware of how the spirit of pride affects people. It's tough Mom. Because we all like to feel good about ourselves. We all like to feel special. We all like to be complimented. But I am realizing that our self-worth shouldn't come from another person, but from God.

CHRISTIAN: Bill, you just taught me a good lesson. I know pride is dangerous. But I never looked at it in the way you just explained it.

CHRISTIANA: Bill, we hate to cut this call short. We really don't want to. We are in the parking lot at the restaurant waiting for Faithful and Gentleness and they just walked in. We don't want to keep them waiting. Can we talk more about this when we get home?

BILL: Absolutely. Bye dad, bye mom. I'll be praying your dinner with Faithful and Gentleness goes well. Please call me when you leave. I've been praying Faithful gets the position back as Senior Pastor at the church.

CHRISTIANA: We're praying for the same thing Bill. We love you, see you in a couple of hours.

Chapter 12

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana walk into the restaurant and see Faithful and Gentleness waiting for them by the counter. They greet each other with smiles and hugs and then follow the hostess to a table.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: It is great to see you guys again.

CHRISTIAN: We feel the same way.

CHRISTIANA: We've really been looking forward to this evening and praying about what our conversation might be about.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Oh really, is there something special you are expecting us to say? Did you expect some type of announcement?

GENTLENESS: Faithful, stop teasing them. Go ahead and tell them. They probably already sense it. Look at their faces.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: We had a meeting with the executive board and deacons of the church about an hour ago. We accepted the position of Senior Pastor back.

CHRISTIAN: Thank you Lord. We are so happy to hear that.

NARRATOR: Christian reaches out to shake Faithful's hand. Christiana stands up and leans over to give Gentleness a hug. But Gentleness puts her hand out to stop Christiana and says, let's do this right. Gentleness stands up and they both embrace in a hug that has the emotions of two longtime friends being reunited.

CHRISTIANA: I feel like we have known both of you for such a long time, and this is a happy reunion.

GENTLENESS: Christiana, we feel the same.

CHRISTIANA: I am so happy.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Christian, Christiana, we know, God has a plan, a calling for both of you. Are you both aware of Romans 11:29 where it says the Holy Spirit has Gifts and a calling for each one of us and it is irrevocable?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, I am.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it's a pretty exciting verse. I know my two sons Johnny and Bill love that promise from God.

GENTLENESS: Both Faithful and I feel we can sense what those Gifts and Calling are in you. If you feel prompted by the Spirit to, we would feel honored if you allowed us to help you bring out those gifts and develop your calling.

CHRISTIAN: I think both Christiana and I have already decided we would like to come to your church. Right Christiana?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, absolutely. I would love someone to help me find out what my Spiritual gifts and calling are. Can you tell me now?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I don't think that would be right at this point.

CHRISTIAN: Why not? I would love to know too.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: There are potential problems that could occur when someone tells you prematurely. Christian, Christiana the flesh is very Impatient. It wants things now. If I told you what I thought your gifts and calling are, there is a good chance you will get ahead of God. You might start jumping out and doing things in the flesh out of excitement. You might have good intentions. It might be out of a desire to please God and to expand God's Kingdom. Or it could be for self-satisfaction to fill a need inside of you.

The most important thing to a believer is being sensitive to the Holy Spirit and follow His prompting, His direction, His timing. Do you understand God's timing is just as important as God's direction is?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I think we both do.

CHRISTIANA: No absolutely not, they could get lost, hit by a car, kidnapped. No that would not be a good. Oh, I get it. Impatience, right?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Exactly, here let me read you something.

NARRATOR: Faithful takes out a small pocket Bible from his shirt pocket.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: This is from Acts 16:6

"Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the

border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.”

Do you see the Spirit of God stopped Paul from entering those cities? If Paul would have disobeyed the Spirit because of overzealousness, or because he had his own thoughts on how to handle things and went in anyway, who knows what would have happened. Even if we have a sense of God’s plan. We don’t always know God’s timing for things. I’m sure the Holy Spirit didn’t jump out from behind a tree and put his hand out and say stop. Don’t go into that city. Or run up from behind and tackle him. When you get sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit, you can hear His still soft voice prompting you. If a person isn’t close enough to the Holy Spirit, they won’t be able to hear him. In Psalm 27:14 it says:

“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”

People have to learn it’s not just about doing something for God. It’s about doing it when the Spirit tells them to do it. Too many people step out on their own because of their own excitement. Or fill a void in their self-worth. It doesn’t matter the reason if it isn’t God’s timing, they are going to mess things up and maybe mess them up bad. Gentleness and I will help guide you and direct you. But it will be up to you to grow to be sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit to identify your Spiritual gifts and calling. Then to be sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit on when to use them and how. Can you accept those terms?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, absolutely it makes complete sense.

CHRISTIANA: Me too. I understand, and I can see the importance of it. I can see it’s not just about identifying our gifts and calling is it? It’s about being sensitive to the Holy Spirit and learning to trust Him and not be impatient about anything. But to wait upon the Lord for His direction, right?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: That’s right. But that is so difficult for people. In the flesh most people crave attention, approval, a feeling of self-worth. But those things are worthless and dangerous when they are filled through other people. It is only through God, that someone’s true self-worth and approval is sealed and meaningful.

CHRISTIAN: Our son Bill just said those exact words about a conversation he had with his friend's father.

CHRISTIANA: Yes, we were literally sitting in the parking lot waiting for you and talking to him on the phone when he said it.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: If only more young people would understand and accept the incredible power the Holy Spirit. How the Holy Spirit will empower them to face the challenges and turmoil of life. And please understand. We will face challenges, turmoil, and ridicule from others. Being a Christian doesn't exclude us from those things while we are on earth. But the Holy Spirit can guide us and give us strength, peace, and faith while we go through them. This is so important to understand.

CHRISTIAN: I understand.

CHRISTIANA: Me too. Faithful, can I ask when you will be starting back as the Senior Pastor?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: In a few weeks. They have a few ministers scheduled to preach over the next 3 Sundays. But in the meantime.

GENTLENESS: Oh, we are so excited about this.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Gentleness, why don't you tell them, God put it on your heart, and it was truly inspired by God.

GENTLENESS: We are reaching out to some of the church members to start meeting during the week to pray. God put it on my heart that He wants to do something special in the church and we want to be prepared. Don't get me wrong. This is not just about our church. God wants to do something special in every one of His churches. But, unfortunately, a lot of pastors have their own agenda. Sadly, after some pastors have spent hours preparing their message if Jesus Himself walked through the church doors and sat in the front row the pastor would not change his agenda. They are going to preach that message they prepared, and nothing is going to get in his way or change his mind. We know that is wrong. Sometimes the pastor gets lost or even prideful and tries taking the church in his own direction and not God's direction. We have to all be very careful of that. Pride is a very sneaky thing. You don't even realize it's taking root. Do you know why?

CHRISTIAN: No.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Because pride usually makes you feel good, really good. Pride starts taking root because of compliments we get or

accomplishment we achieve. If we are not careful, it goes to our head. We start thinking I did it, or we did it. If you're sensitive enough you can even sense it developing. One of the most obvious signs are peoples own words. People will say things like; they said it couldn't be done, but they don't realize how good I am, or I knew I could talk them into it, or I could sell ice cubes to Eskimo's. What do you hear in those words?

CHRISTIAN: Unfortunately, me. That's how I used to think and talk. I can see how as people were congratulating me on an accomplishment, it started going right to my head. Instead, I should have said thank you and humbly thanked God for making it all possible. I can actually see how it all went to my head and I started getting more and more self-reliant and prideful. I just started seeing that talking to Bill in the car and you have made it clearer. I never saw that before.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: You've made a lot of progress Christian. Gentleness, sorry I really got us off track there.

GENTLENESS: That's ok Faithful, that was a very important lesson.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, it was.

GENTLENESS: Well Faithful and I would like to invite both of you to join us for the prayer meetings at the church. You can come whenever you feel prompted to come. There won't be any preaching, just some quiet worship music and praying. If you can't come and you want to pray at home, that's good too. The Holy Spirit isn't shackled by mere walls. We are going to have open prayer meetings at the church every night Monday through Friday with the belief that the Holy Spirit will manifest in and through our church and reach out to the community, the city and the world. I know that sounds like a big vision, but we serve a big God. The only thing stopping God from moving is us. It's amazing how we place God in a box. With all of the miraculous proof in the Bible, we still limit God's actions by our own ideas and thoughts of what we believe is possible. We are going to start the church by breaking down those barriers in our mind and freeing the Holy Spirit to flow.

CHRISTIAN: That sounds incredible. I would love to be part of that

CHRISTIANA: Me too, what about the kids.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Kids are welcome. But remember it is a time for prayer. Understand, no one is expected to be there every night. You are invited to come when you can, no obligations. Gentleness and I will be

there every evening at 7pm until maybe 10pm or so, depending on what happens.

CHRISTIAN: How many people do you expect to be there?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: It's hard to say for every night. If it was just one night a week, I would figure about 20 or 25 people. So, it might average about 5 or 10 people a night and we will see where the Holy Spirit leads us. But, understand we are not going to stop. Whether it's takes a week, a month, a year or longer, we will remain in prayer, worshipping God in Spirit and truth until His Spirit flows.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, can you imagine what is going to happen there.

CHRISTIANA: You know, I've heard people talk about their church having prayer meetings during the week. But they were for a week or maybe 30 days. They always had a set time. Now when I think about it, it seems they always put a time limit on God. As if they were saying ok God, we want you to move and here are the conditions we are setting. We are giving you 7 days or 30 days to move and if you don't do something by then, we are stopping. I've never heard of a church saying, we are NOT going to stop. I've never heard someone say we know what the Bible says, we know the promises of God and we know God wants to move today, right now. If God doesn't move, it's not because of God not wanting to, it's because of us. We have walls up and are not allowing His Spirit to flow. I know I'm new to this and up to recently I didn't even believe in God, but I've heard Christians talk in the past. Hearing you say, you are not going to stop seeking God until we break down our own walls so the Holy Spirit can move is exciting.

GENTLENESS: Amen, Amen, that's right Christiana.

CHRISTIANA: Then count me completely in.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Gentleness and I both knew what was in your hearts. Are you guys ready for this adventure?

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana both respond yes.

CHRISTIAN: Will there be anyone at the prayer meetings we know?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Yes, there will be. Evangelist will be there we just had coffee with him. He will be coming back to the church, Police Officer Faithful, Joy and Peaceful, Arcade Owner, do you know him?

CHRISTIAN: Know we don't.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: He owns the Arcade and does a lot for the youth in the area. I think that might be it.

CHRISTIAN: I always thought Evangelist was a pastor or minister someplace. But someone told me he isn't.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: He was a pastor at a church for over 10 years and then one day the words on the page of the Bible jumped out at him and he realized he had been denying the power of the Holy Spirit. He tried to put a message together for the next Sunday about what God revealed to him. Well, it wasn't accepted really well by most of the people. You see the church believed the Holy Spirit exists, but only comes down to help people occasionally during extreme times of trouble or sorrow.

CHRISTIANA: What happened?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Evangelist, continued to teach over the next few weeks on what he had learned about the Holy Spirit. His new message was accepted by a few people. But the majority of the church and the board, were infuriated. He ended up resigning. From the very next day he started going downtown handing out the Scripture pamphlets. I don't think he has missed a day in over 15 years.

CHRISTIAN: That's sad. What happened to the people at the church, that accepted the truth?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: They ended leaving. One person started a church in a different state, another person moved out of town and is working for a Christian publishing company. File that in the back of your mind, in case you ever want to write a book. Gentleness and I asked Evangelist to start a home church and he said that's not where God is leading him. But, if Gentleness and I wanted to learn more about the Holy Spirit, then we should teach others. So, we started a home church and Evangelist started coming to our house. It grew to about 20 people pretty quickly. We started renting a room on Sunday's. The attendance grew over the next few months to over 100 people. That's when we received a call from the New Beginning's church in Materialism to be the Sr Pastor. It was a challenge, because while the board said they believed in the Holy Spirit and following His direction. We quickly realized; they didn't really understand. So, we went on a slow journey of trying to lead the people from a preconditioned belief of really who the Holy Spirit is and why and

how He manifest in our lives to the truths of the Bible. And you know the rest after that.

CHRISTIAN: I've realized that from visiting a few churches. The pastor, the people, even their website says they believe they are saved by Grace through faith and they believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. But when you get there you realize their idea of being saved by grace through faith and the power of the Holy Spirit and what the Bible says are two different things.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I once heard a brother I think his name was David say, some people are so confident about their beliefs their pastor taught them, they won't let anything sway them, not even the truths of the Bible.

CHRISTIANA: I like that.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I will let Evangelist tell you about his journey. It is powerful.

CHRISTIANA: You mentioned Shelly's parents Joy and Peaceful. Did we tell you that our daughter Jennifer was saved at their house last year and Evangelist helped her write a prayer for our salvation that she has been saying every night?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: The answer to a child's prayers for her parent's salvation. Do you know Belief and Trust? They live around here too; I think their children are around your children's ages.

CHRISTIAN: No, I don't recognize their names.

GENTLENESS: You two will like them. The first Sunday Faithful preached at the church; they were first time visitors. It was kind of funny, because when we said hello to them after the service. We asked if this was their first time here and they said yes. They said they really didn't know anyone and Faithful said, well it's our first time preaching here, and we really don't know anyone either. So, if you come back next Sunday maybe we can meet some new people together.

NARRATOR: Faithful starts laughing.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I remember that. They came back the next Sunday and sat in the front row. They have a little girl that must have been around 3 years old at the time. The cutest little thing. She kept waving to me while I was preaching. You know holding her hand in front of her and just

moving her fingers open and closed type of wave. I felt so bad. It was only my second time preaching there, and I was trying to concentrate. But this precious little girl kept waving and I didn't want to ignore her.

CHRISTIANA: What did you do?

GENTLENESS: Listen to this.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Well I could feel the Holy Spirit prompting me to stop preaching, so I did. I felt the need to address the little girl. Wow, Gentleness I still remember this. I looked up at the congregation and said, there is a precious little girl sitting right here in the front row. I looked at her, smiled and waved with my fingers just like she had been doing. I looked back up at the congregation and said this precious little girl has been waving to me all service. I haven't wanted to interrupt my message, especially since this was only my second time preaching here. But you know what? I can't go any longer without addressing this. I looked back at the little girl and asked what her name was. She said Kindness. I looked over at her parents Belief and Trust and asked if it was ok if I gave their daughter a hug. They said sure. So, I stepped down from the pulpit and got down on my knees. I smiled and gave her a hug and said, Jesus loves you so much. You are a special gift to all of us. Then she looks me in the eyes and says, I know, and Jesus loves you too. I mean really, I started crying. I couldn't stop. And she was only 3 years old. That pure innocence of a child. One of God's little children just melted my heart. Well, I never got to finish my message that day. I raised my arms and started praising God. Then Belief and Trust did the same and then Evangelist came up to the front and started praising God in Spirit. Then another couple stood up and started praising God and then another and another and another. Then I started hearing some soft piano music behind me and when I turned around, there was a woman playing the piano. I didn't recognize her, but I really didn't know everyone. The music was a soft type of background sound. It was like something you would expect Angels to be singing too. I didn't know this at the time. But the woman that walked up to the stage and started playing the piano was not the regular piano player. In fact, she wasn't a church member, and no one from the church knew who she was. They all thought she must have been a friend of Gentleness and mine that was visiting. She just walked up to the piano and started playing like she belonged there. No one ever saw her before, and no one has seen her since.

Oh, the stories that started going around the church after that day. Was she someone from out of town that just stopped into our church for the service and then left town that afternoon? Was it an Angel or was it someone that attends another church in the area that just stopped in? We never found out who she was.

CHRISTIAN: Wow.

CHRISTIANA: I have goose bumps on my arms.

GENTLENESS: How's that for a starting month for a new pastor?

CHRISTIAN: Incredible. It must have convinced people about the power of the Holy Spirit.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: That's what Gentleness and I thought after the service. But that's not what happened. We learned strongholds, can only be broken in people that want them to be broken. If people still want to believe what they always have, a brick wall can fall on them and it won't change their minds.

GENTLENESS: Most of the people wrote it off as a one-time situation and still had a closed mind.

CHRISTIAN: But you obviously made some good progress with people.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Yes and no. The board was extremely strict on me advancing their beliefs. So, I had to take things in baby steps.

CHRISTIAN: I'm confused. Then why would you want to go back into their environment?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: My coming back were based on the specific terms, that I was allowed to preach based on the direction that the Holy Spirit was giving me. I am going to raise the bar. I am going to trust God. Too many people worry that if they do something the people will revolt or leave. That is fleshly thinking. I told the board, either they and I trust God and not our own ideas, concerns or worries and allow God to work in people's hearts and minds or I don't come back.

CHRISTIANA: I have goose bumps again.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I pointed out what happened before. When you cater to a few people that might be offended or upset by the truth, you sacrifice everyone else's growth. I am going to preach the truth of the Bible. I'm going to focus on two things; One people are saved by grace through faith and salvation is a gift from God and not by any good works a man does, so that no man can boast it's because of them. And second is

about the Holy Spirit. That the Holy Spirit lives in believers and He wants His fruit to manifest in our lives daily, not just when someone is traumatized. And that He has gifts and a call for everyone. I will lay out the truth of the Bible and allow the Holy Spirit to work in people. I told the church board, if I come back, I will not compromise the truths of the Bible no matter how many people get offended. We are going to set non-believers free of the curse of the law and lead them to Jesus. And we are going to set believers free from the bondage and chains of living a life based on works and relying on their own fleshly thoughts and ideas and denying the power, authority, Fruit and Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The board voted unanimously yes to that.

CHRISTIAN: It must have really hurt when you had to leave the church.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Yes, it did. The church started changing over the last 2 years we were there. It started with one new person. Then another new family and then another new family. I could see they just didn't fit in with our beliefs. I tried meeting with them one on one to talk to them and see if I could clarify some of their beliefs. But they were set in their ways. I didn't understand why they kept coming back when their beliefs were so different than ours. Then they started having an influence on other members and it became like a cancer spreading in the church. I had meetings with the board and deacons about them. I felt in my Spirit that we should have a direct talk with some of the people and if need be ask them to leave the church. But neither the board nor the deacons agreed with me. They thought it would offend people and others in the church if we ever asked someone to leave. So, I didn't. But it continued and then well, we ended up being accused of stealing money and we were asked to leave. Go figure, right?

CHRISTIAN: That is an incredible story. Are some of the people that caused trouble still there?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: None of the original three families. We were told they never came back after the announcement was made that we stepped down the following Sunday.

CHRISTIAN: This might sound completely crazy. But could it be that those people were not there to learn or worship God at all? Could they have been sent by, well, um, could they have been sent by satan, to disrupt the church or even destroy your ministry.

GENTLENESS: Now I'm going to say wow, that's what we think.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: That is exactly what we think. Just as God has people like you two and others working for His kingdom, satan has people doing his bidding also. In most cases, I people don't even think those people realize what they are doing. They don't realize they are actually doing satan's dirty work. But in some cases, they know exactly what they are doing. There are people that worship satan. You hear about it sometimes in the news. That a group is complaining or filing a lawsuit because a city is doing something Christian based and they find it offensive. Then you find out those groups are atheist, agnostics and satan worshippers.

CHRISTIANA: You don't have to convince us. We have met some of them over the years. They are flat out committed to satan as much as we are to God now. Some of them are into some serious evil stuff.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Unfortunately, a lot of Christians think some of it is just innocent fun. But it's not. There is no such thing as White magic. If the power or force comes from anything except God, then it is evil.

CHRISTIAN: Will you be able to handle the couple of people that are still there?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Yes absolutely. We addressed that with the board today. They are people that have been there awhile and were manipulated by those families. It will be one of our first issues to deal with.

GENTLENESS: It will be Ok.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I encourage people to come and talk to me if they have questions or don't agree with something. We can have an open and honest talk and I've learned things from other people's perspectives. But I won't tolerate, deception or lying.

CHRISTIANA: I'm really glad to hear that.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Ok how about if you guys fill us in on what's been going on in your lives the last few weeks.

CHRISTIAN: Where do we begin?

NARRATOR: Christian tells Faithful and Gentleness about the rollercoaster ride over the last few weeks.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Now it's my turn to say wow.

CHRISTIAN: Is this kind of stuff normal for a new Christian?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Sadly, it's not. Most new Christians try to handle everything on their own, using their own common sense, thoughts, or ideas to make decisions and it actually destroys the Holy Spirit's efforts. Kind of what happened to Friend #1 talking to his father. Friend #1 meant well. But he didn't use discernment. He based his actions on his own emotions and not the Holy Spirit's direction. Your son didn't just react or follow his own emotions and try to force anything with his friend. He prayed, waited, and then listened to the Holy Spirit's prompting for what to say and when. It's a perfect example of God turning around something for good, that Satan meant for evil. But it happened because your son Bill, was sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit to follow His prompting.

CHRISTIANA: We are so proud of him.

GENTLENESS: We can't wait for him to meet our son. I think they will have a lot in common.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Unfortunately, there are a lot of well-meaning people that do more harm than good to the Kingdom of God. It's a shame. People don't realize how they can do more harm than good by taking matters into their own hands and not listening to the Holy Spirit and what, when and how to deal with a situation. Because they want to help. The sad part is when things don't work out, they blame God. I have to be honest, I am so tired of hearing people say, why did God allow this to happen. When God didn't allow it to happen, they did. Either they did something against the Holy Spirit's prompting, or they didn't do something the Holy Spirit was prompting them to do. They ignore talking about the 99 people they push away from God, and brag about the one person, they talked into accepting Jesus. It's like the Bull in a China shop quote. Sometimes I wish I could get shirts printed for people that say, I mean well, but beware. This is why we are so serious about helping set believers free of the bondage and chains of the flesh. To free them to allow the Holy Spirit to manifest in their lives.

CHRISTIAN: Do all new believers grow as fast as we are?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: No. I believe you guys are truly seeking God. I believe you really believe the Holy Spirit is real. That He lives in you and wants to guide you and wants His Fruit to manifest in your lives daily. Is that correct?

NARRATOR: Both Christian and Christiana answer yes.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: That is one of the biggest reasons right there. Most people do not even read the Bible. Most of the people that do read the Bible, read it like it's a novel or a schoolbook. Not like it is the absolute anointed word of God. Have you read John 1:1? It says,

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

It's saying the Word was God. Most people have never heard that part. You know the words after the comma thing. You guys will be amazed at how much more there is after the commas.

Understand, God needs His children to know His truths. He needs them to be His earthly vessels. Just like God used people to write out His words on paper to be the Bible. How he used Moses to lead His people to freedom. He used the disciples to believe the Holy Spirit's healing power would flow through them and heal people when they laid hands on them or spoke truth over them. Do you see the power in people believing God will do what he promises? I sincerely you are hungry to learn from God's word and His promises. What's important is you really believe what you are reading. No matter how much your flesh might say that doesn't sound practical, or that sounds impossible, you still believe. Never forget, Jesus told people to only believe and do not doubt. Do you guys believe what the Bible says?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, we do.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Christians have to understand the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in believers to empower them to resist temptation. Jesus Himself didn't try to confront satan in the flesh. He waited until He was empowered and led by the Spirit. In John 4:1 it says,

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”

One of responses Jesus gave to satan's temptation was described in Matthew 4:4,

“ and Jesus said, But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

And every word that comes from the mouth of God is written in the Bible. I can't stress how important it is to read the Bible, to get immersed in it. To read it as if God was speaking to you Himself, because he is. Pilgrim, that is what your family has been doing isn't it?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, we have.

PASTOR CHRISTIAN: FAITHFUL: The Holy Spirit wants to manifest His fruit and gifts in you and through you. If someone has doubt and unbelief about that, how can they expect to see the Holy Spirit manifest? The word of God is our life blood.

CHRISTIANA: Pastor Faithful, why don't some people change when they accept Jesus as their Savior?

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Because too many churches are just playing church. They are and letting people believe that since God loves them right where they are, they can do whatever they want, and God will forgive them because of Grace. They treat grace like it's a permanent get out of jail free card for sin. People say they believe and have faith in the promises of God. But they ignore the sanctity of the blood Jesus shed on the cross? Paul tells us we should not continue to sin, just because of grace. How can a man continue to willfully sin one minute and then say he has complete faith and belief in the promises of God the next minute? He is a double-minded man. And the Bible says a double-minded man should expect to receive nothing from God. I mean how much clearer can the Bible's warnings be.

In James 1:6- 8 it says,

“But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.”

There is a difference between willfully continuing to sin and accidentally doing something wrong. Sinning knowingly and willfully is not acceptable to God. It shows people are still walking by the flesh and not the Spirit. They are willfully ignoring the Holy Spirit living in them.

Listen I know those are harsh words. But it is TRUTH. It is why we do not see Christians experience the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in their life. It is because they are double-minded. They have doubt and unbelief along with their faith and that makes them double-minded. If they truly believe in the promises of God, they will walk by the Spirit and not the Flesh and be empowered by the Spirit to resist sin. Remember Romans 8:1 it says,

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Again, notice it says who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. That is where the power comes from. The power of the Holy Spirit to resist sin, to be empowered with His Fruit and Gifts manifesting in our lives. If a person walks sometimes by the flesh with doubt and unbelief and sometimes by the Spirit, that is a double-minded person. Churches have to stop sugar coating God’s word. They are hurting people. They are creating a generation of powerless Christians that have no ability to fight off satan’s attacks. They have, no ability to resist sin. Let me show you how serious of a situation this is, in Hebrews 10: 26-29 it makes it clear. Let me stress this was directed towards believers,

“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?”

I want to stress those words are meant for believers. I’ve seen many things written in books and online that those verses are meant for the unsaved. But in the very first sentence it says’ after we have received the knowledge of the truth. Those verses are absolutely meant for believers. They are a strong warning to Believers that God does not expect people to continue to sin and to be careful not to treat the blood Jesus shed as something common or unholy, the blood that created the new covenant that washed people’s sins away.

Sadly, many churches are creating a generation of powerless and ineffective Believers. They have cast the Holy Spirit aside and replaced him with modern marketing strategies and technology. They don't rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to work through believers to build God's church. Too many churches are relying on bulk mailers, emails, social media posts and ads, billboards, radio and Tv ads, everything a man can think of in his own self-reliant mind. They think of everything except relying on the Holy Spirit. So how can you really expect the church members to think any differently? Everything is a program, a course, or study plan on how to be more effective at something. It all takes away from relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. God has not only been kicked out of public schools; God has been kicked out of many churches. CHRISTIAN: I can see that. It makes me think of Bill, witnessing to his friend and his friends' father. He specifically tried to avoid acting on what he personally thought would work best and kept praying for the Holy Spirit to guide his actions and words.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: I know we have been talking for a long time. But before we leave, I want to really stress please read and reread the chapter on the parable of the sower and the explanation it contains in the chapter. I also want to share one last parting thought with you. You might have read or heard the verse I am going to share with you before. But, until I see it manifest in a person's life, you will continue to hear me preach about it over and over again. Until the Holy Spirit is manifesting in your lives. The verse I'm speaking of is John 14:12,

“ Jesus said, Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”

Do you really understand what Jesus is saying? As Believers we have received the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that created heaven and earth and empowered Jesus during His ministry on earth, the same Spirit that rose Jesus from the dead is now living in us. That same Holy Spirit will do the same works through us as He did through Jesus and even greater things, if we believe, and do not doubt and allow him to work through us as a willing vessel. Do you understand what that means?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, I do.

CHRISTIAN: I can see from the few churches I've visited there is a great spiritual separation between what God's word says and what people in churches are being taught and believe.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Let me explain what that verse in John means to you and me. In the book of Mark, it describes Jesus final words before ascending to heaven. Have you read those words?

CHRISTIAN: Peaceful read it to us when we are their house. But please tell us about them again.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: In Mark 16 verses 15 through 20 Jesus was talking to His disciples just literally minutes before He ascended into heaven after His resurrection. These were the words He left for all mankind to live by until His return. And He said to them,

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.”

Jesus was declaring a promise to those who Believe. It means everyone who believes will do what He has been doing and even greater things than these. Did you notice, it also said the Lord was working with them and confirming the word through miraculous signs? God is waiting, He is waiting for His children to realize the supernatural gift we have been given. A gift to continue Jesus ministry with the help from the same Holy Spirit. Are you ready to step out in faith? Are you ready to believe and allow the Holy Spirit to manifest in your lives?

NARRATOR: Christiana has tears flowing from her eyes and Christian is smiling and nodding his head yes. They end their dinner with those words and part ways until the Monday evening prayer meeting.

Chapter 14

NARRATOR: Saturday Bill gets a call from his Friend #1.

BILL: Hey Friend #1

FRIEND #1: Hey Bill, are you doing anything for lunch today?

BILL: No, do you want to go to the hamburger place or the Drive Up?

FRIEND #1: How about the Drive Up. This way we can sit in the car and talk, and they can bring our burgers out to us.

BILL: Sounds good, whose driving?

FRIEND #1: I'll pick you up around 11:30 is that ok?

BILL: Sure. how's everything with your dad?

FRIEND #1: It has been incredible. He is like a new person. I will fill you in when I see you. You have to tell me what you said to him.

BILL: Ok.

FRIEND #1: Listen, I'm sorry about turning on God so quickly. I don't know what got into me. I, well I, do you understand I don't feel that way anymore. But I'm worried that God hates me now.

BILL: No, Friend #1 He doesn't hate you, I guarantee you. Remember God's Grace is always there. Just sincerely repent. You know apologize to God for how you felt and what you said and commit to trust in Him and not do it again and that's it. Your slate is wiped clean.

FRIEND #1: This just sounds too easy. Almost too good to be true.

BILL: I will explain more when I see you. I've been studying about it in the Bible.

FRIEND #1: Ok see you later.

NARRATOR: Later at lunch Friend #1 tells Bill about how great and supportive his father has been to him.

FRIEND #1: My father said you showed him I have a calling from God on my life. That my father's plan for me, might not be what God's plan is and that's why I keep fighting it. Bill, do you believe that?

BILL: Absolutely, we all have a call and spiritual gifts. I read it in the Bible it's Romans chapter 11 verse 29 and it says:

“for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.”

Friend #1, that promise is for everyone and it specifically says it is irrevocable. God will not take it away. In fact, He can’t take it away, because it is a promise, He made to us in the Bible. God doesn’t break His promises. Do you believe that?

FRIEND #1: Yes, I do. Since I accepted Jesus as my Savior, is that the end of the journey and the rest is up to me to struggle through life?

BILL: No Friend #1. This is not the end of the journey. It’s the beginning of an incredible journey. You can call it the ultimate journey. I’ve definitely learned that for sure. Remember, the first time we went through the corn maze by ourselves?

FRIEND #1: Yea, I remember, we couldn’t find our way out and finally asked some adults if we could follow them.

BILL: Exactly, we asked them. Because we thought they knew more than we did. They were wiser and they could lead us through the maze.

FRIEND #1: I get it. We have the Bible to guide us through the maze of life. It’s like how the older people in the corn maze gave us direction, right?

BILL: You got it. Unfortunately, most people feel they are doing fine on their own. That includes Christians. Most people aren’t motivated to change or better themselves until they are faced with a serious issue. For example, how many people in school did just enough to get by?

FRIEND #1: Probably most of them, including me.

BILL: Do you remember what happened last year?

FRIEND #1: I’m not sure what you’re getting at.

BILL: Remember, the change the school board made about athletes grades?

FRIEND #1: Yes, if athletes didn’t have at least a C in every grade they couldn’t play sports? Some of the guys were absolutely panicked, because there wasn’t a lot of time before the season started.

FRIEND #1: I remember, because I was one of them.

BILL: Every guy always had the schoolbook to study. They always had the teacher to ask for help. But they were content with just getting by and putting in their time. But then they were faced with a challenge and it was too late for some people. They weren’t prepared.

FRIEND #1: I remember, Steve, Phil, Marty, and Justin couldn't play last year. The team really suffered with them not being there.

BILL: Wow, that just made me think of something. If everyone of us has a spiritual gift and a calling, but we are not accepting it or allowing the Holy Spirit to manifest it in our lives, then it's like a team member in God's Kingdom not playing in the game. The whole team suffers. Because a team member is missing. Think about this; suppose a believer wasn't allowing the Holy Spirit to manifest their spiritual gifts and they were supposed to be helping you and your family. But they were just going through the motions. They were happy getting a D because it was a passing grade. But not enough to get in the game. They were in uniform but sitting on the bench like a spectator. To be blunt, suppose, I never accepted Jesus and really sought the Holy Spirit for direction and guidance on talking to you and your dad? Suppose I tried to figure it out myself and handled things the way I thought would be best and when I wanted to.

FRIEND #1: I get it, I get it. I might never have accepted Jesus, or it might have been years or decades and the relationship with my dad and me would not be what it is today. And I could be that team player that the Holy Spirit wants to use to help someone else. Just like you were to my dad and me. Wow, that really gives things a much different perspective.

BILL: Yes, with me too. I never looked at it that way. Hey, it's like we came up with our own parable in a way to learn from. The parable of the football player.

FRIEND #1: I like parables, it makes things easier to understand and relate too.

BILL: You know Friend #1; I think some people have become conditioned to just do enough to get by. You know, like just do enough not to fail the class, or just do enough not to get fired, or just do enough not to have your girlfriend break up with you, or just do enough to make the team. I think some people have conditioned themselves with that mindset. So, they automatically default to that mindset when it comes to God. They are just doing enough to get by because that is all they know.

FRIEND #1: Unless someone sets an example for them to follow. Not just telling them. Because if people see something is real, that is worth a million words.

BILL: Exactly, like the old saying a picture is worth 1,000 words, seeing the example is worth 1 Million words. Friend #1, you just came up with a great example. This reminds me of the parable of the sower. I've been told, no matter how many times you hear this parable, if the Holy Spirit isn't manifesting in your life, then you have to keep hearing or reading it again and again. I'll give you an overview of it, Ok?

FRIEND #1: Ok.

BILL: What's really exciting to me it says it contains the secrets to the kingdom.

FRIEND #1: Now, that I want to hear.

NARRATOR: Bill pulls out his pocket Bible from his back pocket.

BILL: Let me read a couple of the verses. There are two parts to it. One is the parable and then the explanation of it. In Matthew chapter 13 verses 4 to 8 Jesus teaches us.

“As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Now in verses 19 to 23 it gives one of the explanations.

“When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who

hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Do you understand what that is saying?

FRIEND #1: The first seed that falls on the path has no way of taking root. That sounds like when a person that hears or reads something from the Bible but doesn't understand it. Then it is really easy for satan to come within minutes or hours and put the same old thoughts back in the person's mind and wipe out the word of God. Is that right?

BILL: Sounds good to me. If you gave me that explanation, I would understand it.

FRIEND #1: What was the second one again?

BILL: That seed fell on rocky ground.

FRIEND #1: Ok yea, that seed falls on rocky ground and it's kind of like the seed that fell on the path. But the word can last a little longer in the person's mind. But it still can't take root. It would be like a person who reads or hears the word of God and gets excited about it/ They think they grasp what it is saying. But, at the first or maybe second problem comes up, then doubt and unbelief in the truth of God's word takes over his thinking. Kind of like what happened to me. When the argument with my dad happened. Is that right?

BILL: Again, I think you nailed it.

FRIEND #1: Which one is next?

BILL: Hang on let me look. The seed that fell among thorns, I guess they're like strong weeds.

FRIEND #1: That one makes me think of a person that continues to live among their old friends and is constantly being tempted by his old ways. They don't grow enough to be an example for their friends and instead they continuously get influenced by them. Their friends are like the weeds that eventually choke him off from growing in the Holy Spirit. This is the exact opposite of you. Instead of you being influenced by me or Friend #2 and Friend #3, your relationship with God was sincere and it influenced me. You know, I wonder if people even realize they are like a seed among thorns? Because the weeds sometimes grow slowly and sneak up on you. I know my mom has to be vigilant and make a conscious effort to pull the weeds in her flower garden. If people are distracted with life and don't pay attention, their garden can be overtaken by weeds. The weeds could have

taken root and could be choking off the nutrients the flowers need to continue to grow. In fact, my mom has said if you don't pay attention to your garden and pull the weeds when they start sprouting, it is a lot more difficult when they get bigger. She said once a weed has taken root, you will probably not get all of the root if you try pulling it. The weed will keep coming back. Wow, I get it Bill, I get it.

BILL: That is a great example. Ok what you have you got for the last one, the seed that falls on good soil?

FRIEND #1: That is a person that hears the word of God and doesn't get distracted from it. A person that keeps reading the Bible and seeks the Holy Spirit. A person who spends time with other people like you, that will help them understand and learn more. A person that continues to grow and becomes more and more sensitive to the Holy Spirit to hear His promptings. A person who has the courage to follow the Holy Spirit's direction. Just like you did with me and my dad. You didn't follow your own thoughts. You didn't rush over to my house the next day and try to handle it with you own ideas. Bill, that would have probably pushed me away.

BILL: Well then that is proof. It's not about us doing things the way we think is best or when we think we should do something. But when the Holy Spirit prompts us and do follow His direction. Hang on let me look a Bible verse up. Here it is. It's Isaiah 55:8-9 it says,

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

FRIEND #1: I agree. Bill, I could tell that what you were doing or saying wasn't an act. I can see, you gave the \$10 back and met with my dad, because you were led the Holy Spirit, not because you were trying to get points with God or impress anyone. You never even said anything to Friend #2 or Friend #3 to try to get glory for yourself. Hey, should we talk to them about God. What do you think?

BILL: Absolutely. But we should pray first for the Holy Spirit's prompting, right?

FRIEND #1: Yes, you're right. What about church? Have you been going to church?

BILL: I went once last week, and we didn't agree with how the minister was preaching. But my dad and mom met the former pastor of the New Beginnings church. The one over by the mall with the steeple and church bell.

FRIEND #1: I really think I should start reading the Bible. I used the Bible app you told me about. But I want to get a book and one of the pocket Bibles like you have to carry with me.

BILL: Do you have a few bucks? My dad bought my ours at a Christian bookstore in town. Do you want to go check them out?

FRIEND #1: Do you know how much they are?

BILL: I have no idea. My dad bought me this one. I going to use my phone. He thought it would be beneficial to have a pocket Bible and it has been.

FRIEND #1: Ok, where is it at?

BILL: I don't know. Let me look it up.

NARRATOR: Bill looks it up on his phone and gives Friend #1 directions. They get to the bookstore and walk in. Bill immediately recognizes the girl behind the counter is the same girl that worked at the electronic shop.

BILL: Hello.

GIRL EMPLOYEE: Hi, aren't you the guy that came into the electronic shop to return \$10?

BILL: Yes, my name is Bill, and this is my friend Friend #1.

GIRL EMPLOYEE: Hi my name is Grace.

FRIEND #1: Hello Grace.

GRACE: Can I help you guys find something?

BILL: Well, I just accepted Jesus a few weeks ago and my friend Friend #1 just accepted Jesus a few days ago and he is considering getting a Bible.

FRIEND #1: I like the pocket Bible Bill carries with him. He's used it a few times with me. For some reason, the words seem more important to me on paper than on my phone.

GRACE: Congratulations guys. You know, there aren't a lot of people our age willing to accept Jesus. There are so many influences that pull them

away. I'm really glad to meet you guys. Come with me. That wall over there is where the Bibles are.

NARRATOR: Grace shows Friend #1 a few different Bibles and explains the differences between them.

BILL: Can I ask a question?

GRACE: Sure.

BILL: Where do you go to church?

GRACE: I go to New Beginnings church.

BILL: Where is that at?

GRACE: Over by the mall.

BILL: Wait the church with the steeple and the bell?

GRACE: Yes, have you been there?

NARRATOR: Bill looks over at Friend #1 and shakes his head.

BILL: Wow, no I haven't but my dad and mom have become good friends with the pastor that used to be there.

GRACE: You mean Pastor Faithful? Do you know him? My parents just heard he's coming back in a few weeks. He baptized me.

BILL: I never met him personally. But my dad and mom have meeting him and his wife a lot over the last few weeks. I guess, he is going to start having prayer meetings at the church every night.

GRACE: I haven't heard about that. When does it start?

BILL: I'm not sure. I can ask my parents and let you know. Why don't you give me your number and I can call you or text you the info?

NARRATOR: The 3 of them exchange cell phone numbers.

GRACE: This is so exciting. I can't wait to tell my parents about the prayer meetings. Things haven't been the same there since he left. We've had about 7 different visiting ministers come in and preach during the last year. Some of the people left because they felt the church was unstable without an official Senior pastor.

BILL: What did you think?

GRACE: I don't know. Sometimes I felt like they just haven't found the person that God had for us and other times I would get impatient.

BILL: Well it looks like God was keeping that position open for Pastor Faithful's return.

GRACE: Yes, it does.

BILL: Can I ask another question?

GRACE: Sure.

BILL: What do you do for fun? I mean as a Christian. I don't want to do some of the things I used to do, I know that wouldn't be pleasing to God. I want to stay close to some of my old friends so I can be there to witness to them when the Holy Spirit leads me. But I don't want to be constantly influenced and tempted by some of things they do. I feel kind of stuck. I'm really thankful for Friend #1. He's been my best friend since we were kids. When he accepted Jesus, I was not only excited because of his salvation, but because I now had someone to talk to besides my family.

GRACE: I completely understand. There are about 4 other people in the church around our age, from about 17 to 20 and we do a lot of things together.

FRIEND #1: Like what? What is there to do?

GRACE: (laughing) There's a lot of things to do. Your whole life doesn't get wiped out. We've been rafting, golfing, we join with other churches to play sports, go to a baseball games over in Major City, we go to some movies, we listen to music, play video games, cruise around town, go to the arcade, we play music, the hamburger shop a lot of things. Does that give you an idea?

FRIEND #1: So, it's not that much different than what we do now. Except you try to be careful not to do things that could lead to temptations.

GRACE: Exactly. There are some churches that completely avoid television, the internet, and other things. But we believe, it's a matter of using Spiritual Discernment. Not everything on TV is bad. There are a lot of good ministers that preach through TV. There are some good Christian programs on TV and even sports. So, we use discernment and as Friend #1 says, avoid things or situations that could present temptations. It's hard by yourself. But when you have other people to do things with, it makes it a lot easier. I feel it's generally the people that you're with that make the time spent fun, not necessarily the activity. I mean sometimes just sitting

in the car at the hamburger drive up and talking with friends is a great time.

BILL: That is exactly where Friend #1 and I just came from.

GRACE: You know I'm getting together with some friends this evening; would you guys like to come over?

BILL: What are you going to do?

GRACE: I don't know, maybe we'll make paper airplanes and fly them around all evening (laughing)

BILL: Are you serious?

GRACE: No, I'm kidding. I told you there are a lot of things to do that are still fun.

FRIEND #1: I don't know. I'm kind of in on the paper airplane idea (laughing).

GRACE: My father fixed up our basement as kind of a place to hang out with our friends. We have a pool table, foosball and hockey table, pinball machines, car racing with dual stations, a large tv, and stereo, ping pong and outside we have a tennis court and basketball court.

BILL: It sounds like fun. Sure, we would like to come by.

NARRATOR: Friend #1 buys a small pocket Bible and they all say goodbye until that evening. They start driving around and decide to go to the state park by the river.

FRIEND #1: You know Grace is cute. Did you notice (laughing)?

BILL: Yea, I noticed. She probably has a boyfriend.

FRIEND #1: Maybe she does and maybe she doesn't.

BILL: Talking about boyfriend, girlfriend stuff. How are things with Dee? You haven't talked about her recently.

FRIEND #1: It's not good. She's been talking about going out to the west coast for college and then staying out there after she graduates.

BILL: That doesn't sound good.

FRIEND #1: Nope. She's been going out a lot more with her girlfriends at night and not returning my calls or texts until the next day.

BILL: Have you told her about you accepting Jesus?

FRIEND #1: No, I haven't, after what happened with my dad. I'm being very careful to try to listen to the Holy Spirit, like you do. I just told her

me and my dad had another argument and then you went over and talked to him and everything has been great. Better than it has ever been. She asked what you said, and I told her I would explain it all when I see her. But who knows when that will be?

BILL: That's probably the best idea.

FRIEND #1: I realize that I was wrongly blaming God, when it was satan that was causing the problems. It makes me wonder about something. You know the seed that fell on rocky ground or on the path that was kind of me. I was very new to things and not prepared for a situation like that. But then it's like you came along and picked up my seed and tossed it onto better ground. Can that happen? Can someone help move a seed from the rocky ground or the path and move it to better ground?

BILL: I never thought about that. That's interesting. Can we help someone's seed that fell on rocky ground or the path, that will be destroyed by satan and move it to better ground?

FRIEND #1: Maybe we can't actually lift up the person and replant them someplace else. But we can help encourage them, support them, and lead them to grow in the word of God. Then they are moving their seed on their own.

BILL: I agree. I know God doesn't want any of His children to die spiritually on rocky ground or the path or choked by the weeds. So, he allows us to help them grow and replant themselves.

FRIEND #1: That's a pretty cool thought. Now it's up to me to make sure, I continue to grow and keep moving to better ground.

BILL: You got this. I know we are going to still have struggles, because satan doesn't want to give us up. But I also know, no matter who satan uses to try and tempt me with lust, anger, bitterness or unforgiveness it's up to me to realize it's not about the person involved. It's a spiritual battle. Remember that scripture verse in Ephesians.

FRIEND #1: Can I look it up in my new pocket Bible?

BILL: Sure, do you know where Ephesians is?

FRIEND #1: Nope.

BILL: I don't either.

FRIEND #1: I'll look at the table of contents. I have to learn how to use this.

BILL: I agree. I'm proud of you buddy.

FRIEND #1: I got it, here is what it says in my Amplified Bible.

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this [present] darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) *places*.”

BILL: Spiritual warfare is real. But there are so many people that argue it isn't. There is something in the book of Daniel about a fight between an Angel and an evil spirit.

FRIEND #1: Do you want to search for that online and then we can look up the verses in both are Bibles?

BILL: Yea that's a good idea.

FRIEND #1: I got it. Why don't you read yours first and then we will read mine? It's in the book of Daniel chapter 10.

BILL: Ok, I got it. Starting In verse 4 it says.

“On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, Verse 5, I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. Verse 6, His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.”

Then in verse 12 and 13 says,

“Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

Verse 20 says,

“So, he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; ^{but} first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.)

FRIEND #1: Who do you think the Prince of the Persian Kingdom who stopped the Angel was?

BILL: I don't know let's search online for an answer for now.

NARRATOR: A few minutes later.

FRIEND #1: Everything I see, says it's a demon or evil spirit or one of satans spirits.

BILL: Yea, that's pretty much what I'm seeing too. That makes sense. It has to be an evil spirit who or what else would try to stop a messenger of God and then fight with an Angel, right?

FRIEND #1: I agree. Then the verses say that Michael one of the Chief Princess's came to help the Angel and took over the battle and then the Prince of Greece is going to show up. There are a lot of battles being fought in the Spiritual realm aren't there?

BILL: Yes, it sure seems that way. We have to stay strong and empowered through the Holy Spirit. Remember in Ephesians chapter 6 it says we have the Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. In fact, it looks like it is the only offensive weapon we have.

FRIEND #1: Well that shows just how important and powerful the word of God is, doesn't it?

BILL: This is great. Hey, listen it's getting late and I have to get home and cut the grass if we're going to Grace's house tonight.

NARRATOR: Friend #1 drives Bill home.
That evening Christian gets a phone call.

CHRISTIAN: Hello.

MANIPULATOR: Hey Buddy, you must be pretty happy. I heard you not only got your job back, but you got a promotion to VP and Envy got the canned. I'm surprised I haven't heard from you. I would have thought I would at least get a thank you for me making it all possible.

CHRISTIAN: Manipulator, you're right. Thank You for talking to Head of Company.

MANIPULATOR: Talking to him? You got to be kidding me. I did a lot more than talk to him. I put my neck on the line and talked him into

reviewing the security video and then agree to meet with. Remember you wasted our time and never even called me back the first time. Then you play some kind of holier than thou act and not want to party with the ladies and all you can say is thank you for talking to him?

CHRISTIAN: Manipulator, what are you expecting? I really do appreciate you going out of your way to talk to Head of Company. But I am not comfortable with your lifestyle. The first time we met, you told me you had an opportunity for me. That was something I desperately needed. But, instead of talking to me about it, you talked to me about spending thousands of dollars for clothes and take over the payments on a Maserrari

NARRATOR: Manipulator interrupts Christian.

MANIPULATOR: How does Christiana like the Maserrari? Come on I know she must love it. Especially with the nice weather we've been having. Tell me the truth does she like it?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, she likes it.

MANIPULATOR: And instead of thanking me, you're nitpicking things. Come on buddy.

CHRISTIAN: I'm not nit picking you Manipulator. I'm flat out telling you I do not agree with your lifestyle and I do not want to live that kind of life.

MANIPULATOR: Well, listen to this. You got your job back and a huge promotion with a lot more money so now your better than everyone else. What do you think I am, some type of low life scammer? Well let me tell you something. You owe me. That job you got, didn't come free.

CHRISTIAN: What do you mean?

MANIPULATOR: You figure it out, you're the big VP.

CHRISTIAN: What are you talking about, it didn't come free?

MANIPULATOR: You owe me buddy. You owe me big time.

CHRISTIAN: For what? Are you responsible for all my years of hard work and sales accomplishments? Are you responsible for the great relationships I have developed with my clients? Are you responsible for the person my Supervisor and VP see when they look at me? Tell me Manipulator, what did you have to do with any of that?

MANIPULATOR: Nothing, nothing at all. But I had everything to do convincing Head of Company to look at the security video. You didn't stand a chance of him doing that without me. You got that Christian?

CHRISTIAN: I realize that, and I do appreciate you talking to him. So, what are you expecting, a gift? Great, sure, I'll pick you up a thank you gift and send it to you.

MANIPULATOR: Oh, that is so generous of you. So, Christian, how much more money are you getting with the new position?

CHRISTIAN: That's none of your business.

MANIPULATOR: I don't need to know exactly; I got a pretty good idea.

CHRISTIAN: Listen, I'm ending this call. Don't call me again. Have a nice day.

MANIPULATOR: No, no, no Christian. We are not done yet. We haven't talked about what I get out of this deal.

CHRISTIAN: You get a thank you and a nice pen set that I will mail to you.

MANIPULATOR: No, no, no Christian. That's not going to do. You're not getting off that easy.

CHRISTIAN: Now you pushed it too far, now I'm not even getting you the pen set. Have a nice day, goodbye.

MANIPULATOR: Christian, you never know what type of information could leak out about the party with Lustful and Temptress.

CHRISTIAN: What are you talking about?

MANIPULATOR: Let's just say I'll be in touch.

CHRISTIAN: No, you won't be in touch at all. I've tried to be patient with you. But I'm through with it and you.

MANIPULATOR: Well goodbye Christian and oh by the way Lustful and Temptress said to say hello. Temptress said to say thank you for helping her look for her earring in the backseat in the dark. She said you have real soft hands. Wow, Christian, you player you. Well Christian, we will talk again soon. Call me if you decide on a nice thank you gift for me.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana knows about your little romp with the two women. So, if you're thinking of playing that card, it won't work. I called her as soon as I walked out of the convention center and there is no way she would believe you over me.

NARRATOR: Christian ends the call and is extremely furious with manipulator. Manipulator was insinuating he would lie and tell Christiana that something happened between him and Temptriss. Anger builds up in Christian. The thought someone would lie and try to destroy a marriage and family out of jealousy, pride and greed amazes him. Christian drops to his knees and starts praying. Not for fear of what Manipulator might say to Christiana. But because of the anger he has towards Manipulator and the thoughts of what he wants to do to him. He knows he must take control of those thoughts right now, before they take root in his mind.

Bill arrives home and walks in the door.

BILL: Hello, anyone home?

CHRISTIAN: I'm in my den Bill.

BILL: Hi dad, you wouldn't believe the great talk I had with Friend #1 and we met another Christian our age at the Christian bookstore. We are going over to meet with her and her friends this evening. That should be good for us. I'm going to go cut the grass and

NARRATOR: Bill realizes there is something wrong with his dad and never finishes his sentence.

BILL: Dad are you ok?

CHRISTIAN: Everything is fine son. An old acquaintance just called and upset me with his nonsense talk. That's all.

BILL: From your face, you seem pretty upset.

CHRISTIAN: I'm fine. I know, my battle isn't against people. It's against evil principalities that seduce people into doing and saying things. Just seeing your smiling face and hearing the excitement in your voice, distracted my mind from the thoughts. So, tell me more.

BILL: Well that's pretty much it. Friend #1 and his dad have been doing really great. Friend #1 said it's like the father he never had.

CHRISTIAN: I'm proud of you son.

BILL: Friend #1 and me went to get him a pocket Bible like you got me. The girl that was working at the electronic shop was working at the Christian bookstore. She said she remembers me going in that day and both her and the guy kept saying, they couldn't believe I came back to

return the money. She said, she told him there was something special about me. That was nice. She and a group of Christian guys and girls from different churches hang out a lot. I have to get going to cut the grass.

CHRISTIAN: I'm glad to hear that. You and Friend #1 need some people your age to hang out with. They can help you understand how the Bible can direct you with the challenges people your age face. I'm sure some of them will be different than what us old married people deal with.

BILL: That makes sense. I think they're going to just hang out and watch the baseball game. She said their basement is set up like a giant arcade and entertainment room. That should be cool. I have to start cutting the grass, so I have time to get ready to go.

CHRISTIAN: Hey you know what. Let me do it. I can use the exercise and it will give you more time to relax and get ready to go.

BILL: Dad are you sure?

CHRISTIAN: Absolutely. It will give me some private time with God and give you a break. You deserve it Bill.

BILL: Thanks Dad.

NARRATOR: Christian goes to change into some older clothes to cut the grass and Bill heads to the family room to watch tv. Later that day Friend #1 comes by to pick up Bill to go to Grace's house. Later Christiana gets home from a day out with Joy.

CHRISTIANA: Hello anyone home?

CHRISTIAN: I'm in the den.

CHRISTIANA: Why are you in your old clothes?

CHRISTIAN: I cut the grass for Bill. I thought he deserved a break and I needed a distraction and used the time to pray.

CHRISTIANA: What did you need a distraction from?

NARRATOR: Christian tells Christiana about the call with Manipulator.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, don't worry about him. He's a jerk. He's a tool of satan and he doesn't even realize it. You do realize, that don't you?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I've been telling myself my battle is not against a person but against spiritual forces that seduce people to do their bidding.

But I have to be honest with you. I was really angry when I got off the phone.

CHRISTIANA: Did you control yourself when you were talking to him? You know he was just trying to instigate a response from you. That's what satan wants. He wants to see us lose it and act out in the flesh, instead of walking with the Holy Spirit.

CHRISTIAN: I agree. It was tough. But I think I did surprisingly good. When I realized what he was trying to do, I got really angry. But, as soon as I got off the phone I repented for my anger and then started repeating a couple of scripture verses to overcome and destroy those seeds of anger and unforgiveness. That's when Bill got home. So, cutting the grass gave me a distraction from just sitting in the house and having satan try to continuously plant seeds of anger, fear and unforgiveness in me. By being outside I was able to pray and repeat scriptures. The change of environment really helped. I don't know if the change of scenery from being inside the house helps every time. But it definitely helped me today.

CHRISTIANA: You know, that might make sense. Getting away from the environment you were in. That could maybe help you refocus your thoughts on God. Maybe there is something to that.

CHRISTIAN: I know I've heard people say they just wanted a distraction to get their minds off of something. But I did it with the intention of praying and repeating scriptures. I think when most people do it, they aren't relying on God. They aren't seeking God. They aren't filling their mind with scripture to defeat and tear down any strongholds or seeds that were being planted by satan. So even if they successfully distract themselves

NARRATOR: Christiana interrupts Christian

CHRISTIANA: It's just temporary right? The thoughts, fears, concerns, anger or whatever are still there. They've just been pushed back a bit because of the new thoughts that are coming in. But those new thoughts won't last. They won't defeat the attacking thoughts at all. You need to defeat the attacking thoughts with the Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, I agree completely. That is what I was trying to do. I know it's about relying on God and destroying those thoughts before they take root. I went outside so I could pray and just repeat scripture verses of victory rather than putting on TV and vegetating. I know it would have been better to not do anything except praying. I understand even cutting the grass was kind of a distraction from me focusing on God. But I wanted to help Bill and do something nice for him. So, instead of just vegetating in front of a tv which is what I would have done in the past. I am focused on aggressively destroying those thoughts. I can see why the thoughts or feelings would continue to come back all of the time. I was never defeating them. I was allowing them to quietly take root, while I was distracted with something else.

CHRISTIANA: We used to fall right into satan's trap. We thought just distracting ourselves from the problem or thought was a good think. But in reality, it is exactly what satan wants. Instead of attacking and destroying those thought seeds with the word of God, we have tried to not think about them and that allows satan to water those seeds and make them take root and get stronger. We were doing exactly what satan wanted us to do, without even realizing it.

CHRISTIAN: You know it's making me think of the yard. Let's say we see some weeds starting to sprout up in our flower garden. We can continue on with our life and completely ignore them. But we know what will happen. They will take root and overtake our beautiful flower garden. At that point, just going out there and throwing down some mulch or stones will only temporarily hide the problem. Those weeds are still there and under the surface they are still growing, and they are growing stronger.

CHRISTIANA: Exactly, eventually the weeds will grow right through the mulch and between the stones and they will still overtake the flower garden.

CHRISTIAN: Yep. It's like trying to distract ourselves from an attacking thought, versus facing it head on and destroying it through the power of the Holy Spirit and scriptures. It's like putting TV on or doing something else to distract us from an attacking thought. Sooner or later those attacking thoughts are going to take root and cause us a lot of problems. Most people don't even realize what's going on at the time/

CHRISTIANA: Until those thoughts pop back up and affect them in different areas of their life. At that point, they could have become strongly rooted. I'm just thinking of how many times I've done just that. I mean using the TV, the internet or even cleaning the house as a distraction and never dealing with the attacking thought. I can see now how dangerous that was.

CHRISTIAN: Me too. I want to look up some scripture verses. Do you want to do it with me?

CHRISTIANA: Sure, I'll get the Bible handbook that lists the scripture verses on individual subjects. But what would you look at, anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, anxiety, what do you think?

CHRISTIAN: Right now, let's look up anger and anxiety.

NARRATOR: Christiana and Christian look through the Bible handbook and find quite a few scriptures on the issues. Christian identifies 3 that really stand out to him.

CHRISTIAN: I wrote out 3 scripture verses and I'm going to focus on those for now. Christiana, if you don't mind, I'm going to spend some time praying and repeating these verses to defeat those attacking thoughts of satan that came through Manipulator.

CHRISTIANA: Ok, I will leave you alone. When you're done can we pray together. I really do think it's important that we pray together.

CHRISTIAN: I agree, in fact if it's ok with you, can we pray together right now?

CHRISTIANA: Yes absolutely. I feel we're stronger when we pray together.

NARRATOR: Later that day Patience and Joy stop by unexpectedly.

CHRISTIANA: Hi guys come on in. Have a seat, I will go get Christian.

NARRATOR: Christian hears the doorbell and walks into the living room and sees Christiana talking to Patience and Joy.

CHRISTIAN: Hi Patience, Hi Joy.

PATIENCE: Hi Christian. I hope you don't mind us stopping by.

CHRISTIANA: No not at all.

PATIENCE: Pastor Faithful told us he and Gentleness met with you guys for dinner yesterday. He said you were thinking about coming to the prayer meetings. Is that right?

CHRISTIAN: Yes. it is.

CHRISTIANA: We are really excited about it.

PEACEFUL: That is great. Well Joy and I were wondering what you guys were doing tomorrow for church?

CHRISTIAN: We're not doing anything. We haven't had much success so far finding a good church. We thought we would just wait until Pastor Faithful comes back.

PATIENCE: Would you want to come to New Beginnings Church with us tomorrow and meet some of the people? I know the minister that will be preaching. He has preached at the church a few times over the years. He is a personal friend of Pastor Faithful. So, I'm pretty confident you will like his message.

CHRISTIAN: Will Pastor Faithful be there?

PATIENCE: No, the he and the board thought it would be best for him to avoid Sunday mornings until his official first Sunday back. It could present an uncomfortable situation for a visiting minister with all of the attention Pastor Faithful and Gentleness would be getting.

CHRISTIAN: I can see that could be a bit uncomfortable for a visiting minister.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, what do you think? I would like to go.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, me too. It sounds like a good idea. We really appreciate you guys thinking about us like this. You know it really does show something about the church. Over the last few months, I visited a few churches and it wasn't a good experience.

PATIENCE: What happened?

NARRATOR: Christian tells them about his experience visiting churches.

JOY: Christian, I am so sorry you experienced those types of situations in God's house. To be honest there are a lot of Pastors, that really shouldn't be pastors. Their understanding of the word of God has been warped and

perverted by their own desires and some have ulterior motives. Sometimes it's to feed their own pride and ego and sometimes it's to feed their own bank account.

PATIENCE: After Pastor Faithful left, we visited a few churches when we were considering leaving. One that really stands out in my mind should be called the First Country Club Church. The pastor talked about how everyone was perfect the way they were, and their church doesn't try to fix you. Just be yourself. Their big message was they will never hold you accountable for anything. Because it's not their job to judge anyone. They believe in lifting everyone up and not addressing any problems they've caused. It reminded me of a movie where the mayor said, they will no longer arrest people for stealing. It attracted more and more people that fit into that environment and the good people suffered. The good people were abused, taken advantage of, and robbed. Because the more aggressive and evil people knew they weren't going to be held accountable. God does say He welcomes all sinners. But He doesn't expect people to stay that way. I can't even count how many partial scripture verses they used. Which changed the entire meaning of the scripture, to justify the point he was trying to make. Shockingly, people are reading right along with him in their Bible or on the projector screen and nodding in agreement and shouting Amen. Like they were under some type of spell.

JOY: What about the monthly membership church?

PATIENCE: One churches seemed to be focused completely on business principles. They kept coming up with catch phrases and posting them around the church and online to brand themselves. The pastor even started a paid monthly membership plan. Church members could sign up for a monthly fee and get more information on the pastor's sermons on the members only website. Christian, have you ever seen infomercials for real estate investing on tv or business opportunities on social media that promote a free seminar?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, I actually went to one.

PATIENCE: The seminars are based on enticing you enough information to get you interested or excited. Then they say if you want more information, you can sign up for their paid online program or buy their manual at the back of the seminar room.

CHRISTIAN: But, is there's anything wrong with that. I mean they are doing it to make money, right? I mean that is the motive of the free seminar.

PATIENCE: Exactly, their motive is to make money. Their agenda is to make money from selling the rest of the information, right?

CHRISTIAN: That's right.

PATIENCE: But what about a pastor that charges a monthly membership fee for people to get the rest of the information about the message that was preached on Sunday? It was as if he was using the pulpit to conduct a free seminar to entice people to sign up for the paid monthly membership to get more information.

CHRISTIAN: I'm speechless. Did people sign up?

PATIENCE: Yes, almost everyone in the church. Then the pastor raised the monthly fee. He told the church members they get to keep their old lower monthly fee as a benefit of attending his church. Now get this. If a church member refers a friend that doesn't attend their church to the membership website and enters the church members name, the church member that gets a commission every month from the person's monthly membership fee.

CHRISTIANA: I don't know if that sounds right.

Patience: The bottom line is both Joy and I know how some pastors have very warped ideas of what the Bible says, and some have ulterior motives. We understand how you felt.

CHRISTIAN: It is a shame and they don't even consider they could be disrespecting God and in His church.

CHRISTIANA: Makes me think of the money changers in the Bible. Look how Jesus reacted to them disrespecting God's house. Well I'm glad Pastor Faithful is coming back. What time does the service start tomorrow?

JOY: It starts at 10am and goes to about 11:15am. But if you want to come earlier maybe around 9:30, we can introduce you to some of the people and show you around.

CHRISTIAN: That sounds great. Can we get you guys some coffee or lemonade?

PATIENCE: No Thank You, we have to be getting home. We are looking forward to seeing you tomorrow.

NARRATOR: Patience and Joy head home and Christian looks over at Christiana.

CHRISTIAN: How about a drive to the lake?

CHRISTIANA: Yes, that would be nice. Can I drive?

CHRISTIAN: How about if I drive today and you can drive to church tomorrow?

CHRISTIANA: (laughing) oh yea that's equal time.

CHRISTIAN: Well, we will probably go out to lunch afterwards. So, Bill can drive Johnny and Jennifer home and then you can drive to lunch.

CHRISTIANA: To the restaurant at the lake?

CHRISTIAN: No probably the Sandwich shop across the street from the church (laughing)

CHRISTIANA: Christian stop it.

CHRISTIAN: Ok, Ok, how about if you drive to the restaurant and I drive home?

CHRISTIANA: Wow, a compromise. I can't believe it. That actually sounds fair.

NARRATOR: Christian gets changed and they head out to the restaurant on the lake.

Chapter 15

NARRATOR: The next morning, they get in the SUV and head to church. But as a surprise, they let Bill drive the Maserrari to church. A greeter says hello to Christian, Christiana, Johnny, and Jennifer. Jennifer sees her friend Shelly.

JENNIFER: There's Shelly can I go over by her?

CHRISTIANA: Sure, go ahead.

CHURCH GREETER: Hello and welcome to New Beginnings church.

CHRISTIAN: Hello, we're looking for Patience and Joy.

CHURCH GREETER: They are walking up right behind you.

NARRATOR: Patience, Joy and Christian and Christiana share hellos.

PATIENCE: Johnny, we have an outdoors boy's group here, the head of it is right over there. Would you like to meet him?

JOHNNY: Wow, that's cool. Dad, can I?

CHRISTIAN: Sure, I think you are pretty safe at this church (smiling)

CHRISTIANA: This church looks like something you would see on tv.

CHRISTIAN: It reminds me of the church I went to with my parents when I was a little boy before my dad, um, before my dad died.

CHRISTIANA: Does it still bother you to think about?

CHRISTIAN: I miss him. I wish he was around when I was growing up. But that's not what I'm thinking about right now.

CHRISTIANA: What are you thinking about?

CHRISTIAN: I'm feeling. Can you guys give me a minute?

PATIENCE: Sure, no problem.

NARRATOR: Patience points over to a corner.

PATIENCE: We will be over there helping them set up the coffee and the donut table when you're ready.

CHRISTIAN: Ok, thanks, I'll be back in a few minutes.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana walk outside.

CHRISTIANA: What's wrong?

CHRISTIAN: You know for many, many years I blamed God for my father dying. I remember when my father was in the hospital. I would pray and pray. I promised God I would do anything he wanted if God would just let my father live. But he didn't. He died.

CHRISTIANA: You've never talked about your father. I never knew what happened.

CHRISTIAN: He was killed by a drunk driver that ran a red light and hit my father's car. My father was in intensive care for 2 days. He never regained consciousness. I was never able to tell him I loved him. I was never able to tell him I was sorry for scratching his car with my bike that morning before the accident. I remember he was so angry. He just yelled at me and sent me to my room and went out. The last time I talked to my father he was yelling at me.

NARRATOR: A tear starts falling from Christian's eyes.
Christiana starts praying for Christian.

CHRISTIAN: I blamed God for taking my father from me. All of these years, I just got angrier and angrier with God. I would lay in bed at night and wonder how could God let my father die and leave me without a father? The anger built up and then hatred towards God. But I now know that wasn't the truth at all. It was satan that took my dad, not God. God loves us. The Bible shows us in so many places that satan brings destruction and death and God wants the best for us. Oh, Christiana I was so wrong, so so wrong. I've blamed God all of these years.

CHRISTIANA: Christian God understands. Didn't you repent for this.

CHRISTIAN: I thought I did. But maybe it wasn't a real sincere repentance and it's just hitting me now. I'm sorry God. Please forgive me for blaming you wrongly. I am sorry.

CHRISTIANA: I love you Christian and God loves you too and the Bible says He does forgive you.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, I remember the minister at my dad's funeral walking up to me. He said I should be proud of my dad. Because God

thought so much of my dad that he called him home and made him an angel. I mean the minister himself told me God took my father. That is so wrong. Rather than explaining satan is the one that took my father and not God. It caused me to live my entire life hating God. What is wrong with some of ministers. Don't they realize the harm and damage lies they are telling people is causing. The anger they are causing people to have towards God. That isn't right.

NARRATOR: Christiana leans over and gives Christian a hug.

CHRISTIANA: Christian, the important thing is now we know the truth. We know what the Bible says. We can be God's witnesses on earth. We can tell young people and old people the truth about satan and God.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, you're right. Remember the Bible says we all have gifts and a calling from the Holy Spirit. Maybe this is it. But, no matter what, I will stand up and defend God from false teachings and blasphemous comments.

CHRISTIANA: I will too Christian. I'm right by your side.

CHRISTIAN: Let's go back in.

NARRATOR: Christian and Christiana walk back into the church and find Patience and Joy.

CHRISTIAN: Hi guys, sorry about that. Walking into this church brought out some emotions that I didn't know were there. I needed to talk to Christiana and go outside and talk to God.

PATIENCE: No problem Christian. You are not the first person that God spoke to when they walked through those doors. Are you ready to meet some people?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, thank you for this.

NARRATOR: Patience and Joy introduce Christian and Christiana to some couples at the church. One of the couples has a teenage daughter standing with them. Her name is Grace. They all say hello and talk for a short while.

CHRISTIAN: Grace do you work at the Christian Bookstore?

GRACE: Yes, I do have you been in there?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, a couple of times. But my son Bill was in the store yesterday with a friend to buy a Bible.

GRACE: Yes, that's me. Is Bill with you? He said he was coming today.

CHRISTIAN: Actually, he should be here by now. He's had such an incredible week, we let him take the sports car.

GRACE: Mom, do you remember Bill and Friend #1? They were the two new guys that came over to the house last night.

GRACE'S MOTHER: Yes, I do. He is a nice person. In fact, he helped us clean up after everyone left. Not too many young people do that.

GRACE: I should probably go look for him. You start feeling uncomfortable if you're walking around by yourself.

GRACE'S FATHER: That sounds like a good idea.

PATIENCE: Christian and Christiana are newer Believers, what maybe a couple months?

CHRISTIAN: About that, yes. But it has been an incredible couple of months.

PATIENCE: Christian and Christiana know Pastor Faithful.

GRACE'S FATHER: Oh, how do you guys know each other?

CHRISTIANA: We met them one day at lunch at the restaurant at the lake. They were sitting at the table next to us and we started talking.

GRACE'S FATHER: Were you guys Believers at that point.

CHRISTIAN: I secretly was. But Christiana wasn't.

CHRISTIANA: No not me at all. In fact, I was hesitant to even talk to Pastor Faithful, when I found out he used to be a Pastor. But there was just something about him and Gentleness. Something that just seemed real and honest.

GRACE'S FATHER: Yes, that describes them perfectly. We are really excited to have them back. It's such a shame about what happened. In fact, Patience, Joy, we had a board meeting this morning and we are having a special surprise welcome back luncheon at the Banquet Room immediately after their first service. We just have to figure a way of getting them there.

PATIENCE: That sounds great.

NARRATOR: Grace's Father looks back over at Christian and Christiana.

GRACE'S FATHER: We would like to invite you both and your family to be there if you can make it.

CHRISTIAN: That sounds great. Thank You for the invitation.

PATIENCE: Grace's Father and Mother, if you don't mind, I would like to introduce Christian and Christiana to a few other families.

GRACE'S FATHER: I understand, and it was a pleasure meeting you both. We look forward to spending some time with you.

NARRATOR: As they are walking away

CHRISTIANA: Look there's Bill. He's with Grace. You know she seems like a real nice girl.

PATIENCE: I can assure you; she is as honest and sincere as she appears.

CHRISTIAN: Hi Bill, how was the drive over?

BILL: (laughing) It was great, I took the long way.

CHRISTIAN: I don't blame you (laughing). Can I talk to you for a minute?

BILL: Sure, excuse me Grace.

NARRATOR: Christian walks towards the door with Bill walking next to him. Christiana stays and talks with Grace.

CHRISTIAN: Grace seems like a real nice girl.

BILL: She is Dad. I liked talking to her last night.

CHRISTIAN: What are you going to do after church?

BILL: I don't know

CHRISTIAN: Have you thought about asking Grace if she wants to take a ride or get something to eat?

BILL: Yea, I thought about it. But I have the Maserrari and I didn't know if it would be ok for me to use it. Plus, I only have \$4.

CHRISTIAN: Reaches in his front pocket and inconspicuously takes some money from his money clip and hands it to Bill. Here this should be more than enough for you to have lunch at the Diner or the Hamburger Drive Up if she wants to go.

BILL: Wow, thanks dad.

CHRISTIAN: Bill. I really hope she says yes. There seems to be something special about her.

BILL: Thanks again dad and I agree. I think there is something special about her.

NARRATOR: Christian and Bill start walking back.

CHRISTIAN: At first, I was thinking it was a shame that Friend #1 had to go to his grandparents this morning for their anniversary. But you know what, it might have worked out for the best.

NARRATOR: There is now a group of about 10 people with Christiana.

CHRISTIAN: Hello everyone, I'm Christian, Christiana's husband.

BILL: Grace, do you have a minute.

GRACE: Sure.

BILL: Would you like to go outside for a minute before the service starts? Last night your dad was saying he's a car guy and you went with him to car shows. Do you like cars?

GRACE: Yes, my dad taught me what cropped, shaved, and channeled meant on collector cars before I was 8 years old. When I was 10 years old, I was helping my dad work on his 1970 Mustang in the garage. Well by helping, I mean I watched and brought him lemonade (laughing). He showed me how to tune import cars with turbos on a laptop and I learned how to drive on a 4-speed manual in his 1970 Dodge Challenger.

BILL: Wow, I don't know about any of that stuff. My dad wasn't into cars. I've been to some cruise nights just to walk around. But I really don't know what I'm looking at.

GRACE: Don't worry if anyone ever ask you any car questions, I'll whisper the answer in your ear.

BILL: Thanks, now I feel at peace. I was wondering if you would like to have lunch after church and maybe drive around and talk?

GRACE: Yes, I would Bill. That would be nice. Ok, let me guess which car you're driving. Is it this one?

BILL: No.

GRACE: Is it this one?

BILL: No, we already passed it up.

GRACE: Which one?

BILL: The Blue one.

GRACE: No way the Maserrari?

BILL: Yes. That's it, but it's not mine. I have an older Toyota 4 door.

That's my dad and mom's car. They let me drive it today.

GRACE: My dad works at the Maserrari dealership in General City. He's the Service Manager.

BILL: You're kidding me?

GRACE: No, he was the Sales Manager for a while, but he has always liked working on cars. He was a mechanic for years and wanted to go back to wrenching as he calls it. The owner of the dealership's brother owned the shop by dad used to be a mechanic at. But her died and his wife sold the business to a chain repair shop. They were paying a lot less money than my dad was making. So, he had to quit.

BILL: I'm sorry that must have been a rough time. We just went through a time with my dad being out of work. So, what happened with your dad?

GRACE: The owner's wife used to come into the shop a lot and knew my dad and talked to her brother in law that owned the Maserrari dealership. My dad had an interview with the owner, and they hired him as the Service Manager.

BILL: That is incredible.

GRACE: The worship team is starting, we should go in.

NARRATOR: Bill and Grace head back into the building and sit towards the back. Bill tries to sing along to the worship songs following the words on the projector screen. But he didn't know the songs or the melody. Grace leans over to Bill.

GRACE: You have a great voice.

BILL: I don't know the songs, but thanks. You really have a great voice too.

GRACE: Thank You.

NARRATOR: After the worship, the visiting minister walks to the pulpit.

MINISTER: Hello everyone. I have an interesting message for you this morning. It's not what I had planned. God has been prompting me to change my message and as you know God's plan is not our plan, is it.

CONGREGATION: Amen.

NARRATOR: When the service ends Bill walks up to his dad in the lobby.

BILL: Dad, Grace said she would like to go to lunch, so if it's ok, I would like to have the car for the day.

CHRISTIAN: Good, I'm glad to hear it. But be careful. You know that car has a lot of power.

BILL: I realized that and by the way here. By the way, Grace's dad is the Service Manager at a Maserrari dealership in General City, bye talk to you later (laughing as he walks away)

CHRISTIAN: Hey wait.

NARRATOR: Bill turns around and smiles at Christian.

BILL: Tell Grace's dad you have a Maserrari, bye.

NARRATOR: Bill and Grace are walking out to the car.

BILL: Where would you like to go to eat?

GRACE: It doesn't matter to me. I'll take a hamburger or beef sandwich, or pasta or tacos, or whatever. Bill, I'm not fussy. What do you have the taste for?

BILL: I kind of like the Hamburger Drive Up. They have a lot of choices. But I don't think we should eat in my dad's car.

GRACE: That sounds good. I go there a lot with my friends.

NARRATOR: Bill and Grace pull up to the restaurant and park. They walk in and sit at a booth by the window, so Bill can keep an eye on his dad's car. They start up a general conversation while they are eating, asking basic questions about each other.

BILL: I liked the songs at church today. But I wasn't familiar with the melody and I didn't know where the notes were going (laughing) I anticipated wrong a few times.

GRACE: It is a great time of worship. It was probably harder for you to really worship though when you're concentrating on reading the words on the screen and trying to figure out the melody.

BILL: Yes, it was.

GRACE: The worship team used to be bigger. But a lot of people kind of drifted away after Pastor Faithful left. The worship team leader left about 2 months later and then there were some disagreements on song choices. One of the older people wanted to start singing older church hymns and it caused a lot of uncomfortable moments. That's when I left.

BILL: You sang on the worship team?

GRACE: Yes, I was actually the main vocalist for about a year.

BILL: That makes sense because you have a great voice.

GRACE: You do to. Do you sing?

BILL: A little. You know messing around with garage bands. I play the guitar and Friend #1 plays the drums and there were a couple other guys. We played at the park district a few times and at the 4th of July festival 2 years ago.

GRACE: Any dreams of going somewhere with it?

BILL: I did at one point. I wrote some songs. But I know it was probably just kid's stuff. You know like a kid wanting to be a major league baseball player or President.

GRACE: I don't know. Did you ever read Romans 11:29?

BILL: Yes, for the gifts and call of God are irrevocable.

GRACE: What do you think that means?

BILL: I would think it means the Holy Spirit has gifts to help a person carry out the call God has for their life, right?

GRACE: I think what happens is the Holy Spirit puts a desire in someone's mind and heart. But the person has to be sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit to follow His plan of how to use it. Knowing the path and the timing is just as important as identifying the gifts and call. Bill, maybe that desire you have for music is from the Holy Spirit. But maybe not in the way you have thought. Maybe it's something to keep praying about and see if the Holy Spirit gives you more intuition about it.

BILL: You know it's funny that you are saying this. In between two of the worship songs some words and melody came to my mind. It was a strange thing.

GRACE: Do you remember them? Write it down.

NARRATOR: Bill takes a napkin and writes down a few words and the notes that went with them.

GRACE: What kind of music do you usually play?

BILL: Basically, rock and some acoustic. I have two different electric guitars and one acoustic.

NARRATOR: Bill and Grace finish their lunch and decide to take a ride to the park by the river and walk around. They end up sitting at a picnic bench and talking.

GRACE: I'm thinking about rejoining the worship team when Pastor Faithful comes back. You should join it with me.

BILL: I don't know. I would feel awkward. I mean today was my first day at the church.

GRACE: Why should that matter? Do you think you will be going back?

BILL: Yes, absolutely.

GRACE: OK then. Why don't you think about it?

BILL: I don't know any of the songs.

GRACE: If you want, we can go back to my house and listen to some of them. We can look up the lyrics online. Listen to the song once or twice so you have a feel for the melody and then go to the next one.

BILL: Would you want to do that?

GRACE: Sure, I like music and I think it will help you feel more comfortable with the songs next Sunday. They generally rotate between 8 songs right now.

BILL: Do you think your parents would mind?

GRACE: No, they usually sit upstairs in the family room. They built out the basement for me, my sister and brother to hang out with friends.

BILL: Ok, let's go.

NARRATOR: Bill and Grace drive back to Grace's house. They spend a few minutes talking to her parents. Grace's father goes outside with them to look at the Maserrari. A few minutes later Grace and Bill head downstairs. Grace's cell phone is connected to an impressive sound system downstairs via Bluetooth. When she starts the first song, Bill feels like he is at a concert. They listen to some songs for about an hour.

BILL: I think I have a couple of these down really good. The website I'm looking at with the lyrics and the chords. That will help me if I want to play my guitar while I am singing them at home. In fact, maybe my family will join in and we can have a little worship time every now and then.

GRACE: Would you like to try it now? My father has an acoustic guitar. I can ask him if we can use it? He lets me and my friends use it when we are having worship time down here.

BILL: I don't know.

GRACE: Why don't I ask him. If it's ok, I'll bring it down and if you want to use it, it will be here and if not, then no problem.

BILL: Ok.

NARRATOR: Grace goes upstairs and comes down a few minutes later with a Jefferson Z45 guitar.

BILL: Wow a Jefferson Z45. That's my dream acoustic. Your dad must really be into his guitar playing.

GRACE: He plays a lot to relax. He played a few times with the worship team a few years ago. Here try it out.

NARRATOR: Grace hands Bill the guitar. Bill, strums a few chords

BILL: Wow the sound from this guitar is incredible.

GRACE: Which song do you like the best so far?

NARRATOR: Bill names a song and Grace selects it on her phone and Bill brings it back up on his phone so he can see the lyrics and chords. As the song starts Bill starts playing along cautiously at first. But quickly starts feeling more comfortable. Shortly after they Grace starts singing.

Bill actually gets distracted for a second when he hears her voice and misses a chord. But quickly recovers. They finish the song and decide to play it a few more times on autorepeat. This time Bill starts singing along. During the third time through, Bill is no longer focused on the words, melody, or the chords. He is engulfed in worshipping God. A few minutes later he feels a hand on his shoulder and words of praise coming from Grace's father behind him. A few minutes later everyone has stopped praying and praising God.

GRACE'S FATHER: I hope you don't mind us coming down and joining you. We could feel the Holy Spirit moving all the way upstairs and we wanted to join you.

GRACE: It's ok with me.

BILL: Yes, thank you for praying for me.

GRACE'S FATHER: Bill you are really good with that guitar.

BILL: I love the sound of it. I have an acoustic, but the Jefferson Z45 has such a deep rich sound to it.

GRACE'S FATHER: Yes, it does. We will go back upstairs. Bill, are you considering being part of the worship team?

BILL: I think I might.

GRACE'S FATHER: You know, our worship team has kind of fallen apart the last year. There is not a lead rhythm guitar player or drummer left in the church.

GRACE: Dad you play the guitar.

GRACE'S FATHER: I do, but right now I believe our worship team should have younger people in it, that God wants to move through.

GRACE: Bill, I have an idea. What about if we start practicing a song and then talk to Pastor Faithful. Maybe we can sing it on his first Sunday back. That would be such a special occasion.

BILL: Just you and me?

GRACE: Yes, it's just a thought.

BILL: If you sing, I could accompany you with an acoustic.

GRACE'S FATHER: Would you feel more comfortable with your guitar or would you like to use my Jefferson?

BILL: If I could use your Jefferson, it would make me feel like a professional musician (laughing).

GRACE: Why don't we just consider it. It wouldn't take a lot of practice. You picked them up the songs really quick. We would just have to practice some harmony.

BILL: You know I would really, really like that. I really would.

GRACE: Ok we can start going over some songs and seeing where our harmony fits the best.

BILL: Thank you Grace's Father for letting me use your guitar for this.

GRACE'S FATHER: No problem Bill. I have a feeling you are going to do some great things for the Kingdom of God. I sense a willingness and passion in you, that I haven't seen in many young men around here.

BILL: Thank you sir.

NARRATOR: Bill and Grace start rehearsing different songs.

BILL: You know Grace you are really a special girl. I've never met anyone like you before.

GRACE: Bill, when you came into the electronic shop to apologize and return the extra \$10 you got, I knew there was something special about you. Bill, your actions that day is how God wants everyone to act. We all have the same Spirit. We all have the same free will. In most cases people can't sense the Holy Spirit's prompting. Unfortunately, when some of them do, they don't want to follow it. Because it's not what they want to do.

BILL: I'm beginning to realize that. We have to be careful that pride doesn't take root when we do something in obedience to the Holy Spirit. It doesn't mean we are special. It means we obeyed.

GRACE: Exactly.

BILL: How do you even know Pastor Faithful will let us sing on his first day back preaching?

GRACE: Because, he asked me to sing. I told him I wasn't sure and he said to please pray about it. I've been praying if God wanted me to sing to make it clear to me. While you and I were singing, it became clear I wanted to sing again.

BILL: That's great. If you don't mind I want to text my dad and let him know I'm here and just make sure they don't want to use the car this evening.

GRACE: Sure, I understand.

NARRATOR: Bill's father text back, it's not a problem. Bill and Grace continue to rehearse for a few hours.

That next morning Bill calls Friend #1 to tell him about the church service.

FRIEND #1: That sounds great. My dad said to tell you thank you again for talking with him. He actually asked me to go to a baseball game with him and his friends. I can't believe it. Wait, I have to stop saying I can't believe that God working. I have to get rid of the doubt and unbelief and start reinforcing the promises of God. I heard that on the radio yesterday. I listened to a church service online as we were driving to my grandparents for their anniversary. It was great.

BILL: Did your dad listen too?

FRIEND #1: No, I had earpieces in. But I asked my dad first, so he didn't think I was ignoring them.

BILL: What did you say?

FRIEND #1: I said, since we are just listening to the radio, do you mind if I put my earpiece in and listen to a church service on my phone, so it won't disturb you?

BILL: What was their reaction?

FRIEND #1: My brother said, lightening is going to strike the car. My dad thanked me for explaining what I was going to do so they didn't think I was just ignoring them and then he said he is proud of me.

BILL: That is great and you're right. We have to stop being surprised when God moves and start expecting God to move. If we are surprised when God moves, then we obviously didn't really believe he would. We had doubt and unbelief.

FRIEND #1: That's exactly what the minister said yesterday. He said, people walk around saying how they have faith. They say they don't have any doubt or unbelief. But then why are they surprised when God moves.

BILL: I agree completely. I have a lot to fill you in on. I'm going to be singing at the church I went to yesterday in a couple of weeks.

FRIEND #1: What? What are you talking about?

BILL: Grace used to sing on their worship team. That's what they call their musicians and singers. Pastor Faithful asked her to sing a song on his first day back and she asked me to sing and play the guitar with her.

FRIEND #1: You know she likes you. Her friend Mercy told me.

BILL: I kind of sense that and I like her too. I was at her house yesterday rehearsing some songs and her dad let me use his acoustic guitar. Friend #1, guess what he's got, go ahead guess.

FRIEND #1: No way, he's got a Jefferson Z45?

BILL: Yep and he let me play it. Man is it sweet. The sound is so incredible.

FRIEND #1: So, what's with the worship team?

BILL: It's kind of interesting. The worship team kind of fell apart when Pastor Faithful left and all they have are a few singers and a song track. Grace asked me if I was interested in joining the worship team to play the guitar and sing.

FRIEND #1: What kind of music do they play?

BILL: The same type of music they were playing at her house. Friend #1, her dad said they don't have a drummer. Would that be a cool way to start our walk with God. Me and you playing together?

FRIEND #1: Did you know Mercy plays the keyboard?

BILL: No, Grace didn't say anything about that.

FRIEND #1: She said she hasn't played there in about a year.

BILL: I got an idea, what about if I call Grace and throw an idea out to her about the 4 of us doing something?

FRIEND #1: Do you think they would have a problem with my electronic drums. You know a lot of people don't feel they are real drums.

BILL: Friend #1, those drums sound better than probably 90% of what the people around here have. What did you pay for them, like \$4,000?

FRIEND #1: About that, plus money for the Amps.

BILL: Grace said that no one is even heading up the worship team at this point. They are just rotating the songs every week between about 8 songs. I think we could probably join in and add to it.

FRIEND #1: I'm interested, if you really believe the church is good. I trust your judgement.

BILL: I'm on my way to pick you up. I will call Grace now and see what she thinks.

NARRATOR: Bill calls Grace and she thinks it's a great idea and she will call Mrs. Humility who has been kind of leading the worship team. Grace calls back a few minutes later as Bill is pulling up to Friend #1's house.

BILL: Hi Grace

GRACE: I talked to Mrs. Humility and she thinks it's a great idea. She said she's been talking to Pastor Faithful about offering me the position of worship team leader. She said she doesn't feel comfortable in that role. She said Pastor Faithful was going to talk to me about it this evening after the prayer meeting. Bill we can do this. We can really do this. I feel so excited. I we continue to pray and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance, we can help lead people in their worship. How do you feel about this?

BILL: I'm excited. I'm kind of overwhelmed. It seems like a lot of responsibility.

GRACE: We just trust in God and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit guiding us.

BILL: I can't believe things are happening so quickly. You know I just had a talk with Friend #1 about this a few minutes ago. We have to stop saying I can't believe it. If we truly believe God is God, then we should expect God to move.

GRACE: Ok, great. I'll see you tonight at the prayer meeting, right?

Bill: Yes, absolutely.

Bill hangs up and sees Friend #1 standing on the front porch.

BILL: Grace said we can do this, and she is actually being offered the worship team leader position.

FRIEND #1: You know I'm getting excited about this. I don't understand exactly why, but I am.

BILL: It's because, you sense something special is going to happen. Is anyone home?

FRIEND #1: No my dad is working and my mom went to my aunt's house, why?

BILL: I have the main songs they play at the church on my phone. What about if we listen to them to get a better feel for what they are? Then if we want, we can maybe try to play along with them.

FRIEND #1: Do you have your guitar?

BILL: No, I wasn't expecting this. But if we decide to practice, we can go get it.

NARRATOR: Bill and Friend #1 start listening to the songs through the stereo in basement where Bill's drums are set up. Bill looks over at Friend #1 after a few songs play.

BILL: What do you think?

FRIEND #1: I got this. There are only about 4 or 5 different rhythmic patterns used. Start them over and I'll get my drums ready.

NARRATOR: Friend #1 walks over to his drums and gets positioned. He runs through a few warmup patterns.

FRIEND #1: Ok, start it.

NARRATOR: Bill hits the play button and Friend #1 follows along perfectly like he has been playing the son for years. After the first son ends.

BILL: You got this. That was great.

FRIEND #1: Bill, this was different. I feel different. It's not just playing music for the enjoyment. I felt something different.

BILL: Lets go grab my guitar and amp and do some practicing, ok?

FRIEND #1: Yes, let's do this.

NARRATOR: Bill and Friend #1 spend the day rehearsing the songs. Bill leaves to go home for dinner and get ready for the prayer meeting that evening. Friend #1 will meet him up there.

After dinner Christian, Christiana along with Johnny and Jennifer get in the car to go to the prayer meeting and Bill takes his car to pick up Grace.

As they walk into the building there is Pastor Faithful and Gentleness with a big smile on their faces.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Welcome friends, this is going to be a special evening.

CHRISTIANA: We are all ready, aren't we kids?

CHRISTIAN: Pastor Faithful this is our youngest son Johnny and our daughter Jennifer.

NARRATOR: Jennifer and Johnny both say yes. Pastor Faithful talks to Jennifer and Johnny for a few minutes.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Is your son Bill coming? My son is here, I wanted them to meet.

CHRISTIAN: Yes, he is coming. He is picking up Grace.

GENTLENESS: Oh, Grace is such a sweet girl.

CHRISTIANA: She really seems to be. I like her.

CHRISTIAN: I think Bill likes her too.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: He couldn't find a better girl their age. I think the world of her.

CHRISTIAN: That is quite an endorsement coming from you.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Why don't you grab some coffee or grab a seat and we will be getting started in a few minutes.

NARRATOR: Christian leans over to Christiana as they are walking down the aisle.

CHRISTIAN: Christiana, you know we have been talking about being Baptized, what about this evening if Pastor Faithful can do it.

CHRISTIANA: Yes, that would be great. Things will probably be so hectic once he comes back to the church it might take months.

CHRISTIAN: I will go talk to him about it.

NARRATOR: Christian talks to Pastor Faithful and then comes back to their seats.

CHRISTIAN: Pastor Faithful said absolutely. The Baptismal is filled and heated. But he said it would be better to do it before prayer meeting. Because he doesn't know what will happen during prayer and how long it will go on for.

CHRISTIANA: What about our clothes?

CHRISTIAN: He said there are multiple changing rooms behind the baptismal tank. There are robes we can put on and then afterwards we go back in and dry off and put our clothes back on.

CHRISTIANA: I want to.

CHRISTIAN: Johnny, Jennifer, me, and mom are going to get baptized before the prayer meeting would guys like to also?

NARRATOR: They both say yes.

CHRISTIAN: Ok, I am going to tell Pastor Faithful and look for Bill and ask him.

NARRATOR: Christian finds Bill and talks to him. He says it would be a perfect time.

The family goes into the changing rooms and waits for Pastor Faithful to call them out. They start praying while they are waiting. Pastor Faithful walks up to Grace to talk to her privately. A few minutes later Pastor Faithful and Gentleness walk up to the Pulpit.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Hello everyone, I can't tell you how much I have missed all of you.

NARRATOR: The people start clapping and stand to their feet to welcome them back.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Thank you for the warm welcome. But I want to make sure this evening is all about God and not Gentleness or me. There will be no preaching. Just a time of praise and worship to our Lord. We are going to start this evening off with a very special celebration. The celebration of an entire family being baptized. I have gotten to know this

family very well over the last few months. I am so excited and proud to have the honor of being the person that baptizes them.

NARRATOR: Pastor Faithful calls Christian and his family out of the waiting room. They are dressed in robes. They individually step into the baptismal tank and are Baptized in the name of Jesus. As each person is baptized, the worship and praying gets louder and louder and doesn't stop. The church breaks out in a roar of praise to God. Mercy steps up to the keyboard and starts playing some soft worship music. Christian and his family stand dripping wet giving praise to God. None of them want to walk away and change clothes and miss any of the move of God. A few hours later Christian looks around and sees dozens and dozens of people immersed in the Holy Spirit. He has never seen anything like it. No one wants to leave, no one wants to walk out of the building. It must have been around 10pm when Christian and his family finally walk into the changing rooms to get dressed.

The prayer meeting ends sometime later, and they head home. Each evening the worship and praying gets more intense. More people start attending, even people that don't attend the church. Both the young and old are joined together praying for each other as a true family of God.

Over the next few days Bill, Grace, Friend #1, Mercy, and a few of the other worship team singers somehow find time to get together pray and rehearse a few songs for Pastor Faithful's first sermon.

Chapter 16

NARRATOR: Finally, the day arrives, and the church is packed to capacity. The ushers have set up chairs in the lower level gathering room. There must be another 100 people downstairs waiting in anticipation to watch the service on a large screen.

The worship team walks out of the side prayer room. Friend #1 sees Arcade Owner sitting in the second row smiling at him. Then sitting off to the side, Friend #1 sees his father. He invited him but he didn't really think he would come. He looks over and gives a small wave to his father, who smiles back and puts his hand over his heart and then points to Friend #1. The day seems surreal. The worship team walks up to the stage. Friend #1 positions himself behind his drums. Bill picks up his guitar. Mercy sits down behind her keyboard and Grace walks up to the center Microphone. Grace looks over at Bill.

GRACE: This is it Bill. This is what we have been practicing and praying about. Now's the time. Lead us there.

NARRATOR: Bill starts strumming his guitar. But it sounds different than he has ever heard it before. A tear starts flowing from his eyes. He turns around so the people can't see his face. He looks over at Friend #1 who has been with them at every prayer meeting. Friend #1 has his hands over his eyes. He is not even holding the drumsticks. Grace starts singing. Then Bill turns around to face the people and joins in. Mercy starts on the keyboard and starts singing. He hears an intense drum roll from Friend #1. The church starts worshiping. The people downstairs do not feel any separation between them and the people in upstairs. It's like the ceiling doesn't even exist. Nothing can stop the Holy Spirit, no walls, no ceilings, and no distance. The worship team finishes their 3 songs, including Grace and Bill's song. But the people are still praising God. Grace looks over at Pastor Faithful and he nods. She knows what that means. She looks over at Bill and smiles and rolls her finger. He starts strumming the chords to the first song again. The worship team ends up going through their set 3 times with the church filling the air with worship and praise to God. An usher

standing at the front doors that they had left open. He feels a tap on his shoulder. When he turns around there are dozens of people standing outside of the church with their hands raised worshipping God. Then as quick as it started the worship stops. Pastor Faithful, patiently waits to see how the Holy Spirit leads him. After about a minute of silence he walks up to the pulpit.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Brothers and Sisters in Christ. I did not prepare a message for this morning. I wanted to be completely sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit's guidance. I will share what He is putting on my heart. As I stand before you and before God, I pray His message flows from the Spirit through me.

Pastor Faithful starts speaking. Most people that hate God feel He is to blame for something bad that has happened in their life. But are they wrongly blaming God for something that satan caused? Maybe, it was a painful divorce, a lost job, foreclosure, bankruptcy, the death of a loved one or a family member being addicted to alcohol or drugs. Have you ever heard people say or have you ever thought, "why did God allow this to happen?"

What some people don't understand or don't accept is, satan is at the root of all sin, premature death and destruction. The Bible in John 10:10 says,

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

The thief is satan and it is him, that comes to steal, kill, and destroy.

Let's go back to the beginning to fully understand this and take a journey to find truth. God gave every one of us control over our thoughts and actions. It is referred to as Free Will or Free Choice. It dates back to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God gave them freedom to do whatever they wanted to do, with one warning. In Genesis chapter 2 verses 15 to 17 God warned Adam about not eating from the tree of knowledge, it says:

"So the LORD God took the man [He had made] and settled him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep It. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may freely (unconditionally) eat [the fruit] from every tree of the garden but [only] from the tree of the knowledge (recognition) of good and evil you shall not eat, otherwise on the day that you eat from it, you shall most

certainly die [because of your disobedience].” Now the LORD God said, “It is not good

When God is warning Adam about dying, he is not talking about dying physically, He is talking about dying Spiritually. Then God created woman, named Eve. In Genesis chapter 3 verses 3 to 7 it says.

“Now the serpent was more crafty (subtle, skilled in deceit) than any living creature of the field which the LORD God had made. And the serpent (Satan) said to the woman, “Can it really be that God has said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees of the garden, except the fruit from the tree which is in the middle of the garden. God said, ‘You shall not eat from it nor touch it, otherwise you will die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You certainly will not die! For God knows that on the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened [that is, you will have greater awareness], and you will be like God, knowing [the difference between] good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was delightful to look at, and a tree to be desired in order to make one wise and insightful, she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of the two of them were opened [that is, their awareness increased], and they knew that they were naked; and they fastened fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.”

Do you see the woman named Eve tried to resist the serpent’s temptation to eat the from the tree? The serpent is satan. She had free will to make her own decisions. She told the serpent they are not supposed to eat from that tree. The Bible says the serpent was craftier and more deceitful than any of the animals they had encountered. Adam and Eve were not ready or prepared for such a deceitful, manipulative, and sneaky creature. The verses show if they ate from that tree, they would be aware of the difference of Good and Evil.

Because of Adam and Eve’s sin we are responsible for knowing the difference between good and evil. That makes us responsible for our sins. It wasn’t God that brought sin into the world. It was satan through his lies and deceit.

Satan is the cause of sin, lies, destruction, and premature death. What is also important to realize, is God did not stop Adam or Eve from eating from the tree of knowledge. God gave them free will, free choice to make their own decisions and He wasn't going to take it back. But that freedom comes with consequences for our decisions. For example, think about the world we live in. Who is at the root of the tempting a person to pull a gun out and shoot someone? Was it satan or the Holy Spirit? The sinful thought originated from somewhere. Over time either satan or the Holy Spirit gets a stronger position in our thoughts. Who is at the root of a person taking that extra drink or 2 and driving their car and killing someone? Who is at the root of the person who lied about you because they were jealous? Was the initial thought rooted from satan or the Holy Spirit? Who do you think is responsible? These are simple questions and they only have one answer. Satan is the cause and the originator of all sin, lies, deceit, destruction, and premature death. So why are people blaming God?

It is all about Spiritual warfare. You might be thinking, what about the people that say Spiritual Warfare isn't real? That Spiritual Warfare is just a fantasy? I personally believe satan loves those people. Because they are doing his work for him. They are doing their best to convince people satan is not real or that he is not the cause of anything evil or bad. If people deny satan is real or responsible for sin, then satan can roam freely destroying lives with no interference.

In Daniel chapter 9 it shows Daniel received the answer to his prayers in literally minutes. But in Chapter 10 something changed. Daniel didn't get his answer to prayer in minutes, or hours or days. In fact, in verses 12 to 14 it shows Daniel had been praying and fasting for about 3 weeks with no answer to his prayers. How many of us would have remained diligent and kept believing and trusting God for an answer? How many people would have been getting upset with God? Would you be accusing God of abandoning you? Then finally on the 21st day the Angel Gabriel appeared with the answer to Daniel's prayers. The main question everyone ask is not what was the answer? It's what took so long? Let's look at the verses in the 10th chapter of Daniel and see exactly what caused the delay to Daniels prayers. It might open your eyes to the battles we face today.

An Angel appeared to Daniel and said.

“Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was standing in opposition to me for twenty-one days. Then, behold, Michael, one of the chief [of the celestial] princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.”

Did you hear that? The Angel bringing God’s answer to prayer was opposed and delayed by an evil spirit, the prince of Persia for 21 days. The Bible said God heard and sent out the answer to Daniel’s prayer on the first day that Daniel humbled himself with understanding. There you go. God reacted immediately to Daniels prayers. But satan caused the answer to prayer to be delayed. Think about how many people blame God when their prayers aren’t answered right away. Maybe they wrongly think God doesn’t love them, or God abandoned them, or God doesn’t care about them. Those are lies from satan to deceive people into blaming God. You can’t love a God you don’t trust, can you?

Let’s continue. Then the Angel Michael one of the chief celestial Angels came to help the Angel Gabriel. Whose fault was it that Daniel’s answer to prayer took so long?

That’s right it was satan’s fault. Satan is the liar, and a deceiver. He is the cause of all destruction and premature death in the world. Your heavenly father doesn’t want you to suffer or die prematurely. But think about our society. How many people would be blaming God within days if they didn’t see any results? Do you know why? It’s because of what Christians are being taught. Sadly, some churches are creating powerless and misinformed Christians. Christians that blame God at the first sign of a problem. Someone loses their job and the people yell, why did God allow it to happen. Someone close to them dies and the people yell, why did God allow it to happen. Someone’s marriage goes bad and the people yell, why did God allow it to happen. Do you see what satan has done? He has completely manipulated God’s children against God.

In the book of Matthew, the last 2 verses in chapter 3 verses 16 and 17 tells us that when Jesus came up from His water of Baptism, the Holy Spirit came upon Him.

“After Jesus was baptized, He came up immediately out of the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he (John) saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him (Jesus), and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased and delighted!”

Then in the very next verse that’s continued as the first verse of chapter 4 says Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness where He would be tempted by satan.

“Then Jesus was led by the [Holy] Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”

Please, please internalize that. Jesus waited until he was filled with the Holy Spirit before he went out knowing he would be tempted by satan. He didn’t try to do that in his flesh, or through his own will power, determination or abilities. He knew the flesh on its own is not capable of standing up to satan. After Jesus was in the wilderness, fasting and praying 40 days satan tried to lie, deceive, and tempt Him. Each of the 3 temptations started with satan saying; “If you are the son of God”. Now think about this. satan knew Jesus was the son of God. Satan knew exactly who Jesus was. So then why use the words, “if you are the son of God”? The Bible says Jesus had been fasting for 40 days and 40 nights. He was weak. He was tired. Satan knew if he could take advantage of Jesus weakness in the flesh, he could destroy God’s plan. If satan could get Jesus to deny who He was, he would have victory over Jesus. satan took Jesus to the highest point of the Temple and confidently confronted Jesus saying, if you are really the son of God throw yourself off and the angels will take care of you. Jesus resisted the temptation and did not deny who He was. Then satan took Jesus to the top of the mountain and promised Jesus everything His eyes could see if He would drop down and worship him. Jesus again resisted satan’s temptations and didn’t deny who He was. This is an important point that is often overlooked when these verses are taught. Where did Jesus get the strength to resist satan’s temptations? Anyone know?

NARRATOR: Shouts from the church members.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: That's right from the Holy Spirit. The Bible specifically told us Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by satan. We are to walk by the Spirit and not the flesh. Never forget that. Jesus in the flesh was a man. His earthly body could be hurt, beaten, and killed, just like ours. But this isn't about the flesh, it's about the Spirit. It was not until Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered that the Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness. The Holy Spirit gave Jesus the strength to resist sinning and resist denying who He was. Do you see that?

NARRATOR: Church responds with; Yes

PASTOR FAITHFUL: Let me ask you this, who are you? Who are you?

NARRATOR: Some church members say a child of God.

PASTOR FAITHFUL: That's right, you are a Child of God and satan the prince of lies, deceit, manipulation, destruction and death wants you to deny that truth. Satan wants you to question who you are. He wants to plant lies in your mind, so you have doubt that you are a child of God. He wants to tempt, deceive, and manipulate you to deny who you really are. Just like he tried tempting Jesus to deny who He was. But you have the same Holy Spirit living in you that empowered Jesus during His ministry on earth. The same Spirit that rose Jesus from the dead is living inside of you. You are a vessel for the Holy Spirit and satan knows it. The problem is most Christians are walking around powerless. They are, trying to get through life on their own common sense and determination. Until you accept and truly believe you have the Holy Spirit living in you, you will be a punching bag for satan. Yes, believers will absolutely go to heaven when they die. If they deny the power of the Holy Spirit living in them, they will be powerless on earth. They will go through life relying on their own strengths, their own ideas on how to handle situations, their own will power, their own determination, their own self-reliant mindset, and that is a formula for disaster. Even if you've been able to rely on your own will power and intelligence to get you through some struggles, what about your children, your parents, or your spouse? What if they don't have the same

abilities, will power or intelligence you do? Then what happens to them? They suffer. They suffer severely at the hands of satan. They become powerless spiritual punching bags in powerless fleshly bodies. You can't fight, resist or defeat satan in the flesh. They do not have the supernatural fruit of the spirit manifesting in their lives. The supernatural fruit of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Faith, Goodness, Gentleness, Kindness, Patience, and Self-Control. Jesus died for the forgiveness of your sins and for your salvation. Jesus death also gave believers the Holy Spirit to in them and empower them to resist sin and defeat satan's attacks. The Holy Spirit also empowers you the same way He did Jesus during His ministry on earth. The Bible says when you receive the Holy Spirit you will be able to do the same things and even greater things than Jesus to carry on His ministry.

In the book of John chapter 14 verses 12 and 13 Jesus Himself says.

"I assure you and most solemnly say to you, anyone who believes in Me [as Savior] will also do the things that I do; and he will do even greater things than these [in extent and outreach], because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name [as My representative], this I will do, so that the Father may be glorified and celebrated in the Son"

What does that mean? Everything Jesus did; we should see manifesting in our lives. Are you thinking, that's impossible? Those are the words from the Bible God's anointed word. Let me take it a step further and share the last words Jesus spoke on earth before ascending to heaven. In the book of Mark chapter 16 verses 14 to 20 Jesus is talking to His disciples. This takes place after he was crucified, resurrected, and walked with the people on the Earth for 40 days. This takes place on His last day on Earth, just minutes before He ascends to Heaven. These are Jesus final words to the people on Earth. They are Possibly some of the most important words spoken to Believers. Jesus could have talked about anything; He could have stressed the importance of anything, but these are the words He spoke.

I want you to notice, Jesus says His words are directed to whoever believes. Not just for the people who were alive back then. But for all people throughout the world, forever. Are you ready to hear Jesus final words?

NARRATOR: The church members shout out Yes

“Later, Jesus appeared to the eleven [disciples] themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He called them to account for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen [from death]. And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed [in Me] and has been baptized will be saved [from the penalty of God’s wrath and judgment]; but he who has not believed will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will get well.” So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord was working with them and confirming the word by the signs that followed.]

That does not happen through works of the flesh. It is not possible through someone’s own determination, skills, intelligence or practicing. It is only possible through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit through believers. They are acts birthed and conceived through the Holy Spirit, that no man shall take credit for.

Many churches deny the power of the Holy Spirit. They deny the miracles the Holy Spirit does. Sadly, some churches deny the promises in those verses are for today. But, if that was really true, then the entire commission in those verses should have ended. You can’t hand pick and eliminate certain words from Jesus commission because you don’t agree with it. Either it is all truth or none of it is truth. If those words are not for today, then that means we should have stopped going into all the world and preaching the gospel. If the miracles that Jesus spoke about really ended, then shouldn’t the commission to preach the Gospel also have ended? Jesus said whoever believes. Just because someone doesn’t see the Holy Spirit manifesting in their life doesn’t mean the Holy Spirit has stopped working or is not real. Let me be blunt. Denying Jesus words and

commission is calling Jesus a liar. I want to let that sink in for a minute. Denying Jesus words is calling Him a liar. Is that the type of teaching you want to be part of? If the Holy Spirit is not manifesting in someone's life, whose fault is it? Is it God's fault? Are we going to revert back to being like the people at the beginning of my message who immediately blames God for everything? Whose fault is it if the Holy Spirit isn't manifesting in your life? Make a decision, either Jesus was lying, and those verses are not true or it's our fault if the Holy Spirit is not manifesting in our life. You and only you are responsible for having the relationship necessary to allow the Holy Spirit to manifest in your life. We are the ones missing something. Our doubt and unbelief in the promises of God and our sensitivity to the Holy Spirit is the problem. The lack of belief in the final words of Jesus that says,

“And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord was working with them and confirming the word by the signs that followed.”

As believers, you have been empowered by the Holy Spirit. The supernatural fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit lives in you. You have been created to continue the ministry of Jesus on earth. You are empowered to set people free from the bondage of satan's invisible chains. To be set free from the torment and physical and emotional suffering people are going through because of satan's trail of destruction and premature death. Are you ready to pick up and wear the crown of a child of God? The crown Jesus death gave you. The crown of being a Holy Spirit filled child of God. Go out my friends and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and be led by His direction. Allow His supernatural power to flow through you as a vessel to all corners of the world.
Amen.